

16 *Climbing the hill: The burden of development placed on scholarship recipients*

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Overview

International scholarships facilitate the mobility of African students. Funders of scholarships have differing geopolitical, strategic, or business interests. Despite this, the inclusion of scholarships in the Sustainable Development Goals has construed these opportunities as social and economic development tools. The narrative is that African scholarship recipients must become transformative leaders – they must use their training to foster development in their countries of origin. This chapter is an autoethnographic account telling the author's story along with the stories of 25 other Africans who received scholarships to pursue studies outside the African continent. The data comprise personal reflection and semi-structured interviews supplemented by a review of scholarship databases. The research found that framing scholarships as a tool for development can be overburdening to students; some students accept this burden, while others reject it. If the burden of development is placed on scholarship recipients, scholarship programmes should invest in support structures to ameliorate the negative effects.

Introduction

International mobility in pursuit of higher education is constantly rising (Owusu-Kwarteng, 2020; Ye & Edwards, 2017). For most African students, this mobility is possible through scholarships that reduce or eliminate the costs of pursuing education outside their country of origin (Campbell, 2016). Currently, there are several types of scholarship providers, including, but not limited to, 'international organisations, private foundations, home and host universities, foreign and national governments, businesses and individual philanthropy' (Campbell, 2016, p. 76). Regardless of the type of provider, scholarships are construed as a tool to facilitate social and economic development. Students who win such opportunities are expected to utilise the high-quality training to empower themselves with skills that can be used to foster development in their countries of origin (Campbell & Neff, 2020). Because of this view, scholarships have been added as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN member states were invited to increase investment towards providing scholarships (Unesco, 2020).

While some agree that scholarships are indeed instruments of development, others argue that scholarships (usually given to students from the Global South to study in the Global North) are a way to propagate worldviews favourable to Western hegemonic interests (Perna et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the impact of these scholarships on the recipients should not be underestimated. When interviewing students from Liberia, Covington-Ward (2017) found that most students desired to study abroad. Studying abroad came with the potential to access wealth, higher living standards, and a more comfortable life for them, their families, and their communities. Such scholarships were referred to as 'heaven' or a 'golden opportunity' due to their ability to transform the trajectory of individuals and, potentially, their communities. (Covington-Ward, 2017, p. 1021; Hyams-Ssekasi, Mushibwe, & Caldwell, 2014).

The current situation is that there is a growing availability of scholarships for students in African countries. A key issue with this growth is that the motivation for providing these scholarships is complex. This research's contribution is to examine the personal aspect of scholarships from the recipients' point of view. It will highlight the need to create a greater understanding in future developments of scholarship programmes of the unique pressures on the individual scholar. To manage the scope of the research, this chapter will subscribe to the definition of international scholarships provided by Campbell and Neff (2020), which states that an international scholarship programme must have the following characteristics: first, the recipients should study at an accredited higher education institution outside their country of citizenship or domicile; second, the award must cover more than 50 per cent of the cost of international study; third, the scholarship should be part of an openly advertised programme with centralised administration.

This chapter follows the chronological journey of a scholarship recipient studying abroad. I begin by outlining the research methodology and then discuss the exodus and return of the scholarship recipient, outlining the theoretical underpinning of the chapter, which is Nyerere's (1979) allegory of 'the hill'. Throughout the journey, links to aspects of transformative leadership will be made, though the concepts are not explored in detail. The chapter describes the decisions and considerations scholarship recipients must factor in as they begin their journey. Moreover, the chapter shows what the decision to return or not return means to different students in different circumstances.

Research methodology

The point of departure of this research is unique in that as I am researching scholarship recipients, I am also a three-time scholarship recipient. I received a Google Foundation scholarship to attend the African Leadership Academy,

a Colgate-Palmolive corporate sponsorship to attend the African Leadership University, and a Mastercard Foundation scholarship to attend the University of Edinburgh. This means that I have an insider's view of the interlocutors' lifeworld. As Behar (1997, p. 21) states, '[i]n anthropology, everything depends on the emotional and intellectual baggage the anthropologist takes on the voyage'. Instead of enshrouding this baggage that will inevitably affect my research, I explore it, study it, and weave it into conversations with interviewees. The consequences of this insider view are that the line between self and field will, in many instances, blur or even cease to exist, which calls for an autoethnographic approach (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Moors, 2017). The term autoethnography is comprised of three parts: 'auto', the researcher's personal experiences and reflections; 'ethno', which seeks to uncover the cultural identities within which the self is embedded; and 'graphy', which in this case is the writing of this research piece (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Manning & Adams, 2015). While autoethnography is advantageous in that it gives the reader access to learners' private worlds, it bears a limitation in that personal narratives could limit the research conclusions (Méndez, 2013). In order to mitigate this limitation, this research undertook in-depth engagement with the data collected during interviews to enrich the discussion.

Three primary ways of collecting data were used in the research. The first was semi-structured interviews done via WhatsApp audio calls due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Twenty-five interviews, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes, were conducted for four main interviewee categories: 12 African students, either postgraduate or undergraduate, on scholarships (Scholarship Student); 10 African alumni of scholarships (Scholarship Alumni); two staff members in scholarship programmes (Scholarship Staff); and one expert researcher (Scholarship Researcher) on scholarship programmes. The number that follows each category is simply the number assigned to each participant.

To access these interviewees, I employed snowball sampling and purposive sampling, and I gained ethical approval for this study from the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science Research Ethics Board. Before all interviews, I sent out an information sheet and consent form and asked all participants to agree to participate in the research. It should be noted that the sample size is relatively small and may not be fully representative of all experiences of international students on scholarships.

The exodus and the climb

In 1970, Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere, delivered a speech that invited all Tanganyikan African National Union members to pledge, 'I shall educate myself to the best of my ability and use my education to the benefit of all' (Mhaiki & Hall, 1972, p. 10). This pledge provided the theme of the year, and

effectively the national strategy to ensure that the educated transformed their communities. Later, this pledge became the creed of the political party and a sentiment that reverberated throughout Tanzanian communities. By inviting all those who could educate themselves to serve as change agents, Nyerere began to blur the line between traditional 'leaders' and 'followers' – anyone could become a leader and drive change in their communities.

Fifty years later, the evidence of this narrative was still present within the Tanzanian communities where I spent my formative years. It was clear that education was paramount, and that any education attained should be used to fashion equitable change. Unbeknown to me, this was my first encounter with transformative leadership, which has been defined as leadership committed to unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom (Odora Hoppers, 2014; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2003).

The emphasis of this narrative was apparent even in the rituals of my family. Every time I left Tanzania in pursuit of education, my uncle asked me to kneel in front of the entire family, and they all laid their hands on my head and said a prayer thanking God for my big opportunity, which in many ways was their big opportunity, our big opportunity. My family, as well as those of many African scholars who have been lucky enough to receive an education, believes that this education is critical to individual and societal liberation from the shackles of poverty (Mulenga, 2001; Okoth, cited in Irungu, 2013).

Nyerere's allegory of the hill

Years after his famous 1970 speech, Nyerere introduced the allegory of 'the hill' to describe how education has the power to bring liberation. An excerpt from the allegory follows:

Education is like a big hill which climbs to the skies and gives a view over the surrounding countryside. And all of us can climb at least some of the way up so that all of us can gradually extend our vision and learn more of the things which affect our lives, or which can be made to help our lives. In fact, we are like the people of olden times who used to climb the nearby hill – or a tree if there was no hill – to see what was passing, or what was approaching them, so as to be ready to welcome the guests, or to protect themselves against invaders. We who live in the 20th century world, in which the activities of all the countries affect all the others, need to go on climbing this hill so as to get away from the danger of floods, to get away from the disease and misery we used to live in, and to take advantage of all mankind's knowledge for our own welfare. (Nyerere, 1979, p. 36)

Sanga (2018) further expounds on this allegory by describing the differences between being ‘on the hill’ versus being ‘in the valley’. He explains that the valley is plagued with floods, shadows, disease, and cold. Moreover, the line of vision is limited in the valley, and the valley-dwellers cannot see any enemies approaching. Although climbing the hill is hard, the height provides a broad view of things approaching (Mushi, 2009; Sanga, 2018). As such, Nyerere tasks ‘those who can’ climb out of the valley with the role of helping the community in the valley. He asks them to use their ability to see further and broader to advise the valley-dwellers of the dangers approaching (Sanga, 2018). In this allegory, Nyerere emphasises themes such as liberation and emancipation, which are values of transformative leadership as discussed by Shields (2010). The type of leader he calls for is outward-looking, primarily aiming to impact their society through their work, a distinctive feature of transformative leadership.

Scholarships particularly are perceived as key facilitators that enable young scholars to climb the hill. They are perceived with pride not only by the recipients, but also by ‘immediate and extended families, entire villages, communities, and governments’ (Irungu, 2013, p. 166). This perception is based on the expected impact that the scholarship recipients will bring to their communities. Considering the weight of the opportunity and its impact on the student and their community, if one receives a scholarship to finance one’s studies, studying abroad is an obvious path to take. A former studentship recipient from South Africa, Scholarship Alumni #21, also remarked that any option that could potentially lead to being in the United Kingdom, having access to work and an income, is a straightforward decision.

Going to the UK and being at work and earning an income and building a life; *if you can do that, you must.*

(Scholarship Alumni #21, South Africa, emphasis added)

The overall sentiment both of society at large and the individual student is that if one can climb higher for the benefit of all, they should.

Those who can, must!

The statement that concluded the quote mentioned above, ‘if you can do that, you must’ (Scholarship Alumni #21, South Africa), speaks to Nyerere’s (1979) comment that not everyone can climb high onto the hill and that some – a particular group of people – can rise higher than the rest. In the case of scholarships, this group of people is often identified by a set of eligibility criteria such as academic merit or having a list of accomplishments and awards. But beyond that, they should have a proven passion for driving change in local communities. A crucial part of most scholarship application processes is a

piece of writing, usually a personal statement. Students use these essays to communicate their passions and interests, and to express how they fit in with the mandate of the scholarship programme. In 2012, at age 17, I wrote my first scholarship application essays. Figure 16.1 is an excerpt from one of the very first essays I wrote as part of my application for a scholarship to United World Colleges, a network of high schools across the world.

Figure 16.1 Excerpt from author's application essay, 2012, aged 17

As a leader, I am committed to service and establishing myself well in the community existing while building and maintaining cooperation and collaboration among the members of the community. I believe a stable community is crucial for the betterment of individuals. That is where my role as a leader takes its place. Nevertheless, United World College has more to offer to me than what I can offer to it.

It reads:

As a leader, I am committed to service and establishing myself well in the community while building and maintaining cooperation and collaboration among the members of the community. I believe a stable community is crucial for the betterment of individuals. That is where my role as a leader takes its place. Nevertheless, United World College has more to offer to me than what I can offer to it.

I wrote this essay with the knowledge that if I studied outside Tanzania, I would want to come back and be a leader in my community. Beyond my personal story, the narrative is that those who can obtain such opportunities should take them so that they can be part of the development process. This narrative is propagated by members of local communities and by scholarship programmes themselves. Students are often encouraged to use their education as a means to develop their countries. The excerpt below is from the University of Cape Town's description¹

¹ This page no longer exists on the UCT website but the idea of 'Go back, Give back' is found on other university websites advertising the Scholars Program, for example <https://www.internationalscholarships.dhet.gov.za/index.php/scholarships/undergraduate-scholarships/56-south-africa-university-of-pretoria-mastercard-scholarship-2023-in-africa>.

of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program (2020), which reminds students that their skills must be invested in their country's development:

Go back, Give back: The vision of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is to create positive social and economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa through education. Scholars are encouraged to return to their home countries and invest their skills in their country's social and economic growth after study.

Because scholarships are highly regarded as a tool for development, most students have found themselves accepting scholarship offers, even those that have contracts with which they do not fully agree, because the students have limited agency. When asked why they accepted their scholarships, participants responded:

We accept these [scholarship contracts] because we do not have the privilege to say no or to pay. (Scholarship Student #2, Tunisia)

[The scholarship providers] tell you the motivation for providing these scholarships, what they are seeking to achieve. They ask: Are you comfortable with it? If you're comfortable, take it. If you're not comfortable, leave it. So, nobody's putting a gun on somebody's head to accept the scholarship. But in the absence of other opportunities that do not have any strings attached to them, if you're out of options, what do you do? (Scholarship Student #13, Ghana)

These quotes express how students acknowledge their level of agency, but recognise that they exist in situations where they might not feel able to reject the scholarship offers or the terms and conditions of these offers. And because these opportunities are highly regarded, most students accept the scholarship offers they receive. In many instances, 'those who can' usually do – for themselves and out of consideration for their communities (sometimes through care and sometimes through fear).

Climbing the hill

After accepting these scholarships, 'those who can' embark on the journey of climbing the hill. Sanga (2018, p. 85) remarks:

There are many challenges, and some people are tempted to give up along the way. Climbing the hill depicts the challenges a person is facing on the way to acquiring education. A journey towards education is full of obstacles; one can easily fail to persevere. It needs a personal determination to climb to the peak.

There are many distinct advantages of having a scholarship that make climbing the hill easier for 'those who can'. By virtue of having financial matters taken

care of by the scholarship provider, 'those who can' have fewer finance-related concerns. Moreover, some scholarship programmes, such as the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program and the Moshal Scholarship Program, offer support beyond finance through support meetings and academic monitoring to ensure that the student's experience is seamless. Moreover, beyond access to quality education free from financial worries, by climbing up the hill, 'those who can' get further from the valley, and move further away from their communities. This figurative and literal distance allows students space to reflect. Hyams-Ssekasi et al., (2014) find that this space and separation from one's community is vital in the self-discovery journey as students temporarily unplug from their community and explore other identities and other opportunities to experience change. On this theme, a student remarked:

Studying away from home gives you the opportunity to be by yourself. That has come with a lot of time to introspect and learn the things that I feel are important. So, I think, all in all, I've just become a more distilled version of myself and something that I think I appreciate very much. (Scholarship Student #20, Zimbabwe)

Overall, the hill's height allows students to have a broader view and learn new things about themselves outside their community and its social constructions. Being in a new space and having an opportunity to create a new identity is essential in freeing people and allowing them to try new experiences.

However, as much as scholarships have significant benefits for scholarship recipients, some of the recipients under consideration expressed that they felt pressure to excel for themselves and their communities. Giacobello (2000) explains that the pressures to overachieve come from internal and external sources, and can cause people to push themselves beyond what is normally possible. On a similar note, one participant shared the following sentiment:

We have these expectations that we are supposed to do so much, and we are supposed to do it well. You have to get good grades, be involved in the community, be outspoken, be loud, make a change. *We give ourselves little room to be ourselves, just be human, just be normal people.* It feels like there is a lot of pressure. But the Mastercard Foundation advisors tell us to take some time off, but we feel like we have to put in the work and be extra. (Scholarship Student #8, Tanzania, emphasis added)

Students feel this pressure to perform consistently, even when the donor does not expect it. One funder from the Mastercard Foundation, the programme that funded Scholarship Student #8 from Tanzania, remarks:

I hope that scholars feel like they can bring their whole selves to this; if that means failing at some point, or if it means a program change or

just the rollercoaster of life, I hope that people can do that, and we can be there for them. (Scholarship Staff #1, USA)

There is a dissonance between the intended reception of a scholarship and the lived experience of having received it; even though some scholarship providers do not put this pressure on the students, the value of the scholarship is central to imposing an unintended burden on students (Campbell & Neff, 2020). The donor–recipient relationship has, through the years, facilitated vertical distance between the party offering the assistance and the party receiving it, particularly when the scholarship provided by the donor is not reciprocated or paid back (Mawdsley, 2012). This burden towards maximising the scholarship is just the first part; the students face another burden, that of becoming transformative leaders in their communities.

The return: Going back and giving back

The topic of reintegration has attracted much interest in migration studies. Significant efforts have gone into designing strategies that can be used to facilitate a smooth reintegration into a migrant’s country of origin (Long, 2013; Nordstrom, 1997). These efforts acknowledge that when a person leaves their country, they change, and in addition, their country of origin also changes and evolves (Ghanem, 2003). Due to these changes, reintegration is not merely a physical return to the country of origin; it must be a holistic process that facilitates the re-establishment of a sense of ‘belonging on both an individual and a collective level’ (Long, 2013, p. 1; Nordstrom, 1997). In the interview process, I found that students and alumni who have studied outside their country of origin struggled to weave themselves back into the fabric of their society. Consider the quotes below.

Coming home was the hardest thing that I had to go through in my whole life. It was even worse than going abroad for the first time...

It was like going to a different country and starting all over again.

(Scholarship Alumni #17, Somalia)

I had changed so much within two years, that when I went home, I felt like a foreigner in my own home. I am more open-minded now.

(Scholarship Student #6, Kenya)

I got another culture shock going back home even though it was my own home, though I grew up there...I do not think it will be accepted 100% so I need to tailor myself back to how I was, so that I can fit in.

(Scholarship Student #15, Kenya)

From the quotes above, it is evident that the students and their communities both notice the changes that students undergo when studying abroad. However, not

all students face challenges in reintegrating. Some, particularly those who got a chance to travel back to their countries of origin during study breaks, found it easier to integrate.

I think the integration for me was easy because I've always come back home every summer. For someone who spent four years in the US, and all of a sudden integrated into the system, it could be a bit difficult. But for me, every single summer I spent in an African country, I spent solving local problems. It was not difficult for me to integrate once I graduated. (Scholarship Alumni #10, Kenya)

Nonetheless, reintegration into the country of origin comes with a set of challenges and critical decisions for students. Only a few, mainly those who have the funding to return to their country of origin during their studies, and those who have been able to adapt their definition of home, find the reintegration process easy.

After going back, students are expected to begin their journey as transformative leaders, and to give back. Giving back involves the process of using their education, skills, and knowledge to do meaningful work that can positively impact their communities. What this means is that the students are expected to become transformative leaders in action.

Those who can, and who do give back

Page and Mercer (2012) outline how remitting and other ways of giving back, particularly through financial support, is a matter of habit and that it is intrinsic to a diaspora lifestyle. Giving back is motivated by a myriad of factors, including 'states of emotion such as homesickness, guilt and exasperation or motivational knowledge such as understanding the pressures on those in the diaspora to remit and understanding the need of those at home for remittances' (Page & Mercer, 2012, p. 8).

With these factors in mind, it is not surprising that one scholarship student remarked:

Saving Africa is the natural progression from saving yourself. Because I feel like once you have saved yourself, you feel like there are other people that I need to save too. And I think it also boils down to a sense of identity...And I feel like it's my responsibility to ensure that I do as much as I possibly can to develop that ethnicity in that nationality. (Scholarship Student #20, Zimbabwe)

Page and Mercer (2012) argue that such acts of giving back may not be so much a choice as a natural habit, a natural part of one's lifestyle, and that the empathy

and the related emotions are deeply engraved into people in the diaspora, so that giving back becomes part of life and not an active decision. However, the next subgroup of 'those who can' proves that it could be a choice.

Those who can, but choose not to

The second subgroup of 'those who can' is those who choose not to give back. For these students, the decision not to give back was premised on the fact that the scholarships were already earned through the hard work that they put into winning the scholarship, and so they do not have to do more to pay back.

I do not think it's mandatory for everyone because not everyone can do that [give back]. And it's kind of weird how that is expected of African students, but I do not hear anyone telling Scottish students to go back and give back. It seems like when you make it to a certain level you're expected to start pulling others up, which is okay, but which can also be very difficult because already as African students, most people are coming from big families. They already have to pull up their siblings and stuff. Black children really have a lot of black tax, they're already giving back too much, so I would understand if someone is overwhelmed. (Scholarship Alumni #19, Zimbabwe)

In the book *Black Tax: Burden or Ubuntu?*, Mhlongo (2019) interviews Black South Africans to determine whether black tax is a burden or is an act of ubuntu – humanity towards others. Mhlongo (2019) defines black tax as a portion of income and support that Black and African people have to offer their families, which often lands people in financial distress. Through his interviews, he found that many people feel that by paying this black tax, they are taking over what is essentially the responsibility of the government – to improve the welfare of communities. On a similar note, a scholarship student from Morocco commented:

This is the money of our grandparents. While Morocco does not have a history with England per se, a lot of these universities were hubs for extending colonial power onto the African continent. A lot of the resources that England has been built with have come from the colonies and so for me it's only obvious that a little bit of redistribution is done through scholarships. (Scholarship Student #3, Morocco)

In her opinion, she doesn't feel like it's fair for African students to carry the burden of giving back, since the economic disparities that exist in the world root back to colonialism, and so to accept these scholarships without feeling the pressure to give back is a form of reparation.

Those who cannot

The final sub-group is composed of people who want to give back but cannot, because they either do not have the financial means to give back or pick higher-paying jobs instead of socially impactful jobs (Campbell, 2018). As expressed by Scholarship Student #20 from Zimbabwe, 'Saving Africa is the natural progression from saving yourself'. And so, saving Africa or impacting one's community can only happen after providing for oneself first. The interviews indicate that students find it difficult to give back to their communities while struggling to support themselves.

I was required to go back home after completing my degree. The programme just expects you to make a change without really knowing the struggles and obstacles you have to face when you return home... If I was not forced to go back home or was at least provided with some sort of assistance, I would have thought about creating connections and hopefully finding a job abroad. That would have put me in a better situation to help myself and my country. Now, I cannot even help myself... Only a successful student who accomplished all of his/her goals with a decent job can give back and be useful to his/her community. (Scholarship Alumni #17, Somalia)

My interview with an alumna from Kenya provoked a great deal of reflection. As the alumna shared her experience of returning to Kenya, she very emotionally explained:

You really need to know what you want out of this life; if it is building African economies, please do know that you pay quite a hefty price towards it. If you're willing to part with that hefty price, move back to Africa as soon as you graduate. But if not, I will say, please build your pocket, build the experience to the knowledge, build your network before coming back. (Scholarship Alumni #10, Kenya)

This alumna earned seven times less than she would have if she had stayed in the United States and would have been in a better financial position to support her family. That hefty price she refers to includes many things such as financial stability, giving up new-found homes, or changing career paths (Campbell, 2018). In as much as Scholarship Alumni #10 has a demonstrable passion for social change and has the willingness to transform the community, she outlines that there are clear trade-offs to be faced.

These subgroups show that, ultimately, students decide whether they want to give back, but in some cases, although students want to give back, they might not have the resources and the support systems to facilitate the giving-back

process. For most interviewees, returning to their country of origin after studying abroad was difficult. The return came with a lot of decisions, trade-offs, and burdens. It is important to note that students undergo considerable amounts of change during their time abroad. Their identity, perspectives, and aspirations change, and the expectation of scholarship programmes should factor in these potential changes. Giving back and paying it forward are burdensome for most students, and some students argue that improving social welfare should be the responsibility of governments and not of 'those who can'. Is it fair to expect 'those who can' to dedicate their lives to changing their communities by virtue of receiving a scholarship? A key criticism of transformative leadership is that 'it is sometimes believed to be too idealistic and too demanding and to place too much responsibility on the shoulders of educators and educational leaders for redressing global ills' (Shields, 2010, p. 572). While some of these leaders might have the commitment needed to foster change in their communities, it is unrealistic to expect all scholarship recipients to change their societies without extra support.

Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter, I see the statement 'I shall educate myself to the best of my ability and use my education to the benefit of all' very differently, as it signifies the burden that I will forever bear. This statement reminds me of my responsibilities towards my scholarship providers and my duties towards my community – the responsibility of being a transformative leader in my community. Although I have heard this statement for years, only now, after months of interviews and research, do I see that this pledge does not mention *my* personal benefit. Although, in some ways, my personal benefit is interwoven with the benefits of all.

Nyerere's (1979) allegory of the hill has been crucial in showing how education can facilitate economic mobility and, ultimately, community development. Moreover, the inclusion of scholarships as a UN Sustainable Development Goals target means more commitment to increasing the number of scholarships offered to students from the African continent. Indeed, education has the ability to empower young people to change their lives and become transformative leaders in their communities. However, although there is logical interconnectedness between education and development, there is a need to separate the discussion of scholarships as a means of providing access to education and scholarships as a tool to facilitate overall community development.

In addition to encouraging students to return to their countries of origin, scholarship programmes should consider investing in non-financial support structures, such as solid networks that students can call on post graduation, to facilitate smooth transitions upon their return home. Moreover, strategic programming, such as allowing students to return to their countries of origin

during their studies, will create links that help enable them to become integrated transformative leaders in their communities.

The current direction of most scholarship programmes is to design more inclusive recruitment methods to access the most marginalised groups, such as students from rural communities. There is room for research on the experiences of the most marginalised groups to determine how investments of the future can be used effectively to make the experiences of such students seamless.

Undoubtedly, geopolitical, strategic, or business interests are beneath the surface of most international scholarships; nonetheless, there is a need for a more humanistic approach and narrative framing within the scholarship space.

#LessenTheBurden #ScholarshipsAsDevelopmentTool

Scholarships as a tool for development can be overburdening to recipients. Scholarship providers need to offer additional support to assist in dealing with this burden.

Questions for discussion

1. Why should 25-year-olds bear the burdens of development? What does that do to state accountability?
2. If a 25-year-old accepts the challenge/burden of becoming a transformative leader, what support should be available to them? From whom?
3. What advice would you give a young graduate who feels burdened, overwhelmed, or pressurised by the need to be a transformative leader?

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