

**Discover News-sheet
for colleagues in Africa
August 2018**



Use locally available resources:

1. Your intelligence – for critical thinking!

Dear Friends

A few months ago I had a conversation with four Africans from Gambia, Kenya and Uganda. My question to them was, “in what ways do you think Europe holds Africa back and stops it developing?” I was thinking about the economic relationship between the continents which I believe benefits Europe much more than Africa. My question was forgotten as the group passionately discussed the legacy of colonialism, in particular the long-term effects of the education system and the religions which were introduced – my friends said “imposed”. They felt also that aspects of traditional African culture discourage critical thinking. Thus Africans seldom question the status quo, and struggle therefore to find their own distinctively African way forward in today’s global society.

This conversation made me think! Is this true? In this newsletter I want to share these questions and challenges with you too. Maybe you and your group would enjoy giving your answers to the questions in italics.

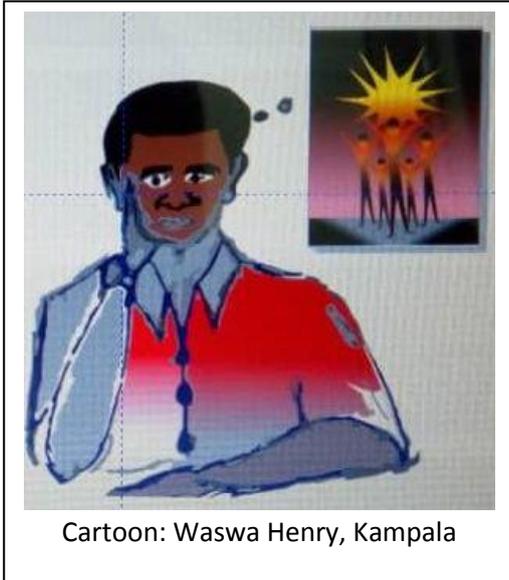
What is the aim of your work? I am delighted that many partners of Discover work with children and young people, often in schools.

If you do this, *what are your aims with the young people?* Do you encourage them to use critical thinking, to question what they see happening around them?

We have certain challenges.

What role does the school play? Does it encourage children to ask “Why?”, and to think for themselves? Or is questioning what the teacher says seen as being cheeky?

What role does the church or mosque play? Do they help children to think about how their faith guides them with regard to how to relate to other people, including of other tribes and religions, or how they should take responsibility for the environment, or what role they should play in society? Or does the church or mosque simply tell them what they must believe and how they should pray?



What role does the African tradition play? Are children encouraged to question, to develop their ideas and to make experiments, or are they simply told to be quiet and obedient?

A very wise Ethiopian who now lives in Germany says that “development aid only makes sense when it leads to people taking initiatives themselves”.

I believe (and hope) that Discover partners work exactly that way – does your training leads to people taking initiatives themselves? Do people ask questions and become excited? Are their eyes being opened, and do they see possibilities they

had never dreamed of?

I am sure that, following your training, most people do many things they would never have done otherwise. For example, they establish good gardens, they make natural medicines, they make new devices such as solar driers, they start a small business, they start healing people in the community, they even develop courage to influence people who abuse their power or position. More importantly, *do they start to do good things that even you as the trainer had never thought of?*

Now, please, think hard, give me your best possible answers to these questions!

Enjoy your work, and enjoy your trainees,

Keith Lindsey