



Young &  
Emerging  
Leaders  
Project

# YELP REUNION SEMINAR

Kigali, 08 - 09 October 2021

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# The Urgency of Harambee

Harambee means “all pull together” and was assimilated into Swahili from Hindi by Indian laborers who used the phrase “har har Ambey” or “hail Ambey,” an exhortation to Amba, the Hindu Goddess. The phrase was often used when performing difficult tasks that required more than one person to be involved, such as lifting heavy loads.

With the effects from the pandemic guaranteed to affect how we live and work, recovery will depend on how quickly we collectively work together in addressing the structural and personal challenges in the process of rebuilding

our economies to ensure inclusive social systems.

Young and Emerging Leaders Project (YELP) Fellowship alumni in Rwanda hosted the third and final 2021 YELP reunion seminar focused on strengthening a collaborative leadership culture within the Institute network and beyond at Park Inn by Radisson, Kigali from 8th – 9th October.

Fiona Kamikazi (YELP Class of 2018), Fiona Mbabazi (YELP Class of 2017), Isaac Rugamba (YELP Class of 2017), and Nelson Gashagaza (YELP Class of 2018) led preparations and execution of the seminar.

From this seminar, Fellows explored different opportunities for collaboration in their professional pursuits, and how to build partnerships that offer opportunities and solutions to wider society.



***“The practice of collective response is crucial when confronting individual and collective challenges or pursuing innovative and effective systems to transform society.”***

# Pulling Together



**Awel Uwihanganye,**  
Founder, LEO Africa  
Institute



*“Lessons from the seminar will make it clear how we can come together and collaborate to make the Young and Emerging Leaders Project Fellowship more successful”*

*Awel Uwihanganye,  
Founder, LEO Africa Institute*



*(L – R) LEO Africa Institute Deputy Director Kwezi Tabaro, YELP Class of 2018 Fellows Fiona Kamikazi and Rayner Mugyezi*

From this seminar, we learn lessons on the urgency of Harambee, collectively working together, and building a collaborative culture not only within the LEO Africa Institute Network but also in society in general. Lessons from the reflections and conversations will

help the thinking and planning processes of making the Young and Emerging Leaders Project Fellowship an independent fellowship - within the LEO Africa Institute network - run and managed by Fellows.

# Harambee through Giving



**William Babigumira,**  
Member of Faculty, LEO  
Africa Institute

Giving involves tapping into the common energies that we possess as human beings both professionally and personally to contribute whatever little we have towards a specific cause. Giving can be classified into three aspects, with the first one being personal giving which is about giving generously.

Contrary to popular opinion, generous giving does not mean having or giving so much. We are givers because of personal sacrifice drawn from empathy and dignity. Being empathetic about yourself and the

people around you enable you discharge your leadership duties in a more meaningful and purposeful way.

The second form of giving is institutional giving, which entails giving purposely. It involves creating platforms with clear goals and impact and cultivating networks with like-minded partners. We then deploy fundraising tools relevant to enabling this platform to be a vessel of receiving and giving to others.

Communal giving in the societies we work

and live in is the final form of giving. Our collaborative capacities and competencies enable us to position ourselves to collaborate with other institutions and serve the needs of our communities.



*“Harambee to us is the coming together of three Africans (Awel Uwihanganye, Magnus Mchunguzi, and Richard Mugisha) to build the LEO Africa Institute that now has fellows in eight countries and over 250 associates across the African continent”*

*Kwezi Tabaro,  
Deputy Director, LEO Africa Institute*



*Class of 2019 YELP Fellow Pierre Ndayisenga makes a point during the seminar*



# See no stranger



**Fiona Mbabazi,**  
Member of the Board of  
Directors, LÉO Africa  
Institute, YELP Fellow  
Class of 2017

In the poem See No Stranger, Valerie Kaur provokes us to think of our biases and stereotypes that sometimes cause conflict and tragedy. We all have such biases, the question is how do we build consciousness to notice these biases, and dare to confront them - in minimizing damage one can cause, especially if in a position of leadership?



*YELP Class of 2017 Fellow Fiona Mbabazi moderates a session*

Being a leader in a space where seeing strangers guides us to reaching fair conclusions, we should protect ourselves from the negative effects of the work but still have room to "see strangers".

Class of 2017 YELP Fellow Raymond Mujuni insists that hearing everyone's story can

have a detrimental effect on you as a person. You should have a community of people you deeply care about and others you relate to as acquaintances.

We must see people for who they are. This requires a certain level of vulnerability and intentionality.

Sometimes we are quick to think that people are either good or bad but, there is so much more in-between. We need to be conscious of that even when we disagree with them on a range of issues. This requires us to step away from our self-righteousness and be humble and vulnerable enough to see people for who they are. It changes how we interact with each other and means we shall show up for each other even after disagreements. This represents Harambee.



*"We must go on to appreciate how people think and the experiences in their lives that have shaped who they are now if we are to think about building community."*

*Twasiima P. Bigirwa,  
Faculty Member, LÉO Africa  
Institute*

# Honesty



YELP Class of 2018 Fellow Rayner Mugyezi moderates a session on honesty.



**Rayner Mugyezi,**  
YELP Fellow Class of 2018

Most times people have considered vulnerability an ulterior concept; that you must be vulnerable with the community. Some people however find themselves only capable of being truly vulnerable with themselves and not with anyone else.

Umutesi Sekaziga adds that when we allow vulnerability (honesty) we extend grace to others and ourselves. When we make statements like I am sorry, I am wrong, I see you, and I see myself in you, it grows community and comes with repairing, learning, and

leading authentically.

Love too, in its fullness, can only be found in being fully vulnerable and in acceptance of truths of yourself and others. That sort of love is a thing made of magic; it frees. And freedom is the highest form of living.

Honesty disempowers all forms of attack and grows us beyond what we could ever think. Leaders would do well to practice honesty/vulnerability. May we aspire to it.



*“We need to balance mental health and emotional intelligence, especially when it comes to aspects of things that sit close within our hearts”*

*Elizabeth Mwambulukutu,  
YELP Fellow Class of 2019*















# What we can learn from the concept of Harambee for leadership in our times



**Lucy Mbabazi,**  
Chair Emeritus - Board of  
Directors, LEO Africa  
Institute



**Isaac Rugamba,**  
YELP Fellow Class of 2017

The charge for a new generation of leaders is why Lucy Mbabazi has remained committed to the LEO Africa Institute for the last ten years. When asked by YELP Class of 2017 fellow Isaac Rugamba on how to redress corruption, Lucy Mbabazi asserted that corruption in government and other institutions is a mere reflection of society. “The only way to weed out corruption is by us individuals choosing not to be corrupt and coming together to call out and correct the corruption that we see,” she said.

In recent years, we have seen a deterioration in the quality of education

on the continent. We have also seen investment in education deuterating and lack of skilled teachers. With this, we are at risk of losing a generation of learners. However, Lucy Mbabazi is positive that we have an opportunity to make sure that the risk doesn’t happen by investing more in education and the necessary tools to help learners catch up with a combination of life skills and school knowledge.

We have also witnessed Harambee manifest itself in many ways, especially during COVID-19. African countries have come together to recover from the adversities of the

pandemic. We need to pull together even more as the rich and powerful collective that we are to be useful to our people and in so doing, be useful to the rest of the world. On using family planning to achieve economic development, Lucy Mbabazi finds it important to equip people with the tools to empower themselves to make the right choices so that they don’t have children who are a burden to their families and countries.



*“If we pull together as family or community, we can push forward and overcome the challenges of the day and build a better future for generations to come. The power of Harambee starts with us, and I hope ten years from now, we will be seeing the impact and results of having started pulling together”*  
Lucy Mbabazi,  
Chair Emeritus - Board of  
Directors, LEO Africa  
Institute



Lucy Mbabazi, Chair Emeritus - Board of Directors, Léo Africa Institute during the seminar



# Is Africa really Rising? Achieving collective actions on growing opportunities in Africa



**Richard Mugisha,**  
Managing Partner, Trust  
Law Chambers



**Twasiima P. Bigirwa,**  
Faculty Member, LEO  
Africa Institute



*Lucy Mbabazi, Chair Emeritus - Board of Directors, LEO Africa Institute during the seminar*

When we are dissatisfied with our leaders at the national level, the tendency is for many of us, especially young people, to get engaged in a blame game where we see everyone doing wrong apart from ourselves. That is a dangerous place to be because each of us has got a role to play. The responsibility to lead is one that we all cannot avoid in making a difference. We need to identify problems in society so that we can not only gain from them financially but also make a difference.

Blaming those in political leadership and thinking that all problems will be addressed by them doesn't help much. Much as most of us may not have a say in how political developments happen, we do have spheres of influence that we can begin from. The aggregate of

this will address the leadership crisis on the African continent.

There are historical injustices that have been occasioned on our societies but we have to figure out how to move on. Part of that is in taking a deeper look at the form leadership in our nations has taken. In most countries, the African elites inherited colonial states which were designed to exploit Africans, and all they have done is simply carry on in the same spirit. The one thing we must destroy as a colonial legacy is the quality of our states; they must be strong, accountable, and vibrant enough to foster inclusive growth and social mobility.

YELP Class of 2019 Fellow Athan Tashobya reckons the African continent hardly has a story of its own. Some of the values that we base on to

describe events in our countries are themselves values that aren't African, making it necessary to have stories that are relevant to us because we are using a benchmark that is alien to Africa and revolving around it to write our stories. Athan goes on to challenge us to think very critically about the quality of the society that we want to live in. We should also question ourselves in terms of what can be done to get to the society we want to live in both for ourselves and future generations.



*"We are young people who are exposed to many things that we see globally and we tend to think that is where we should be, forgetting the context of our communities and countries"*

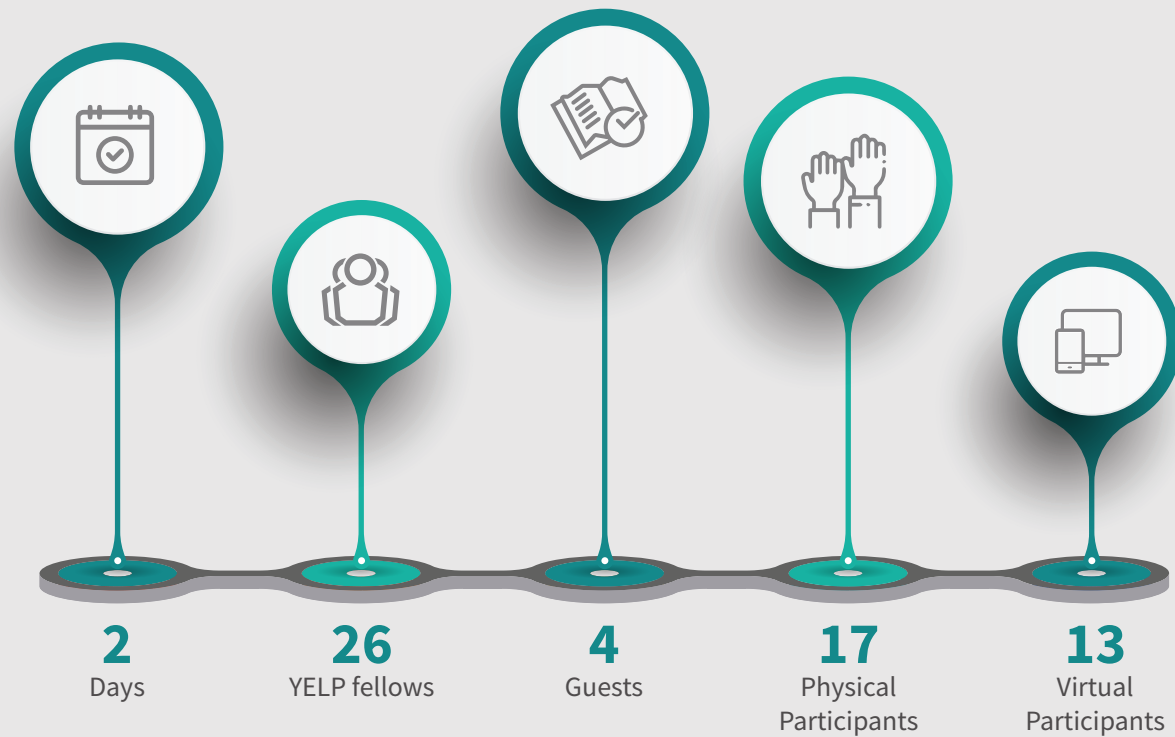
Athan Tashobya,  
YELP Fellow Class of 2019

Handwork, integrity, and humility are some of the values that help us succeed in our endeavors to work together. We also need to move from rhetoric to action because when we are doers, we build credibility and this will help us solve some of our challenges and build trust. Regular engagements are important because they accelerate the requisite chemistry between people and provides a breeding ground for cooperation.

"There is never going to be a downside to coming together to address common issues. The propensity to corporate is natural especially when people are faced with a common threat. We need to collectively identify our common threat and focus on it." Richard Mugisha, Managing Partner, Trust Law Chambers



## YELP Reunion seminar in numbers



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