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**From Rights to Responsibilities:
Engendering Citizenship through a National Civic
Education Programme**

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In January 2008, a group of twelve gathered around a conference table. Soberly, a little hesitantly at first, but gradually becoming more animated as the discussion warmed up, they began to share with each other the personal journeys they had travelled in the last few weeks. It had been a painful coming to terms with a disturbing new reality that had changed in subtle, yet powerful ways personal and professional interactions that had once seemed so simple. Just a few weeks earlier, when the organisation they worked for had closed its doors and suspended operations for the end of the year break, there had been the camaraderie of shared laughter and excited speculation as to what the end of the year would bring. Now, they took stock of the consequences of political upheaval that had completely transformed a nation, bringing it to the brink of outright civil war, and leaving thousands with lives that would never be the same again.

In the weeks that followed Kenya's electoral crisis,¹ this scene would be repeated again and again. This office however had a bigger stake than the many others did in the corporate, civil society or state sectors whose commitment to de-briefing was a necessary step in facilitating the return of an environment conducive to the resumption of business as usual. For these at Uraia, Kenya's National Civic Education Programme (NCEP), the crisis had hastened a process of soul-searching as to the extent towards which the emphasis on associating citizenship with inalienable "rights" had been successful in inculcating in Kenya growing maturity in the relationship between the state and those it served. Uraia's motto: "Because Kenyans have rights" "*Kwa kuwa Wakenya wana haki*" had been echoed in the rallying cry of protesters who took to the streets after the announcement of the bitterly disputed presidential results. In the run-up to the elections, Uraia had indeed begun to place joint emphasis on the responsibilities of citizenship, with a proposed change to the motto of the organisation: "Because Kenyans have rights **and responsibilities**" - "*Kwa kuwa Wakenya wana haki na wajibu.*" However, the new phase of the civic education campaign placing responsibilities on the same level as rights had been scheduled to really roll out after the 2007 general elections; in hind-sight, one wondered what effect it might have had had it been introduced earlier.

¹ For several weeks, following the announcement of widely disputed election results on 30 December 2007 after a hotly contested general election, Kenya was devastated. Violence rocked many parts of the country, leading to the death of over a thousand people, injuries, the destruction of property worth millions of shillings and the severe disruption of the rhythms of life. Hosts of people were displaced from their homes, in some cases permanently. For thousands more, life changed irrevocably, sometimes as the result of physical violence, more often, from the psychological. This de-brief was held while the physical violence was still a major factor, both in reality and as potential in several parts of the country. One of the participant of this de-brief had in fact just reported back to work the day before, after being unable to travel back to Nairobi for over a fortnight after the office had been scheduled to re-open.

The staff at Uraia came from diverse backgrounds, representing the array of different religious, ethnic, educational, class, gender, regional, political and other identities in the make-up of the Kenyan nation. The conversation that January day put different perspectives of the Kenyan crisis on the table, reflecting in personal and communal narratives how people from all over the country had responded in diverse ways to the divisive politics that had become an inferno during and immediately after the election. The discussion highlighted the role of civic education in shaping people's understandings of their own personal actions during the crisis as well as those of communities with which they were personally familiar with. Theories that had long been discussed and even shaped in the building in which they now gathered had been tested in the fiery cauldron of life, and the aftermath had left both the bewildering taste of bitter disappointment, frustration and anger, and tendrils of satisfaction and inspiration investing the everyday tasks of their jobs with deeper meaning.

Present at this session as an external facilitator, the sharing of experiences catalysed my own sense of urgency in reflecting on Uraia's work as the nation's foremost civic education provider. My interest as a performance scholar in understanding the processes of meaning-making within the public sphere focuses on methodologies such as the use of endogenous performance forms like story-telling in engaging and influencing discourses in the public sphere. Initially, I was primarily interested in Uraia's use of the arts in civic education and the impact of popular media and arts personalities in civic education campaigns.² However, as I continue to interact with the staff and members of its Programme Steering Committee, I am struck by the soul-searching within the organisation as to the extent to which civic education (or the lack or form thereof) has contributed or influenced in some way the unfolding events.³

This paper engages some of the issues emerging out of exhaustive discussions in this period, including some of the pressing questions raised as part of a process of strategic planning that followed in early 2008. A review of the history of civic education in the country recounted in relation to the continuing story of the search for a truly participatory people-based democracy

² Uraia has funded, for example, a musical by Eric Wainaina, one of Kenya's most popular musicians and a television talk show featuring media personality Louis Otieno, both of which address the programmes themes.

³ I am grateful to all the different organs of Uraia, including members of the Financial Management Agent and Public Steering Committee who have been of help to me in my research. I want however to particularly thank the following programme staff who have each, in their own way, made this research a pleasure, and whose passion for what they do changed the focus of this paper and made the questions pursued herein a responsibility I had no option but to take on: Abubakar Zein, Wanjiru Kago, Nur Awadh, Kimani wa Wanjiru, Masiga Asunza, Peter Ngoze, Elijohn Gitau, Samson Mwondi, Regina Kageliza and Joyce Wango.

provides the backdrop for an account of the emergence of Uraia as the premier facilitator of civic education in the country. An assessment of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses leads to an engagement of the most pressing issues Uraia must address in the next phase of its existence, if it is to increase its effectiveness and cement its credibility as Kenya's National Civic Education programme. In conclusion, the paper uses Uraia as a model for strategizing towards civic education as a national strategy for creating a civic competent citizenry, able and willing with civil society and government in moving towards the creation and sustenance of stable nation-states.

Civic Education

Civic education can be defined as a form of socialisation which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and general awareness which citizens need to play their role effectively in the affairs of their society" (CEDMAC et al 280). In its simplest form, it consists of both a process and product. As a process, it is the acquisition of the requisite knowledge and the skills enabling an individual to play her or his role as a citizen responsibly and effectively. As a product, it consists of the sum total of information, knowledge, skills and virtues any citizen should possess in order to meaningfully participate in the society (K-DOP 38). The provision of civic education should therefore include not only the communication or accumulation of facts a citizen needs to know so as to fulfil her or his civic obligations and enjoy her or his rights, it should also be influential in engaging and/or moulding the attitudes, perceptions, orientation, self-belief and understanding with which such a citizen engages the society in which she or he lives.⁴

In this paper, citizenship will refer to the legal identity of belonging to a particular nation-state.⁵ One might contrast the term "citizen"--what in Kiswahili is known as "*raia*", with the term "*indigene*"--"*mwananchi*" (literally "offspring of the soil") in Kiswahili. Although these two terms are sometimes used inter-changeably, citizenship (*uraia*) is a legal status that a state can take away or bestow. While one can gain or lose the rights of citizenship through a formal bureaucratic process, "once born *mwananchi*, always *mwananchi*" – a fact that is increasingly

⁴I thank Zein Abubakar, the Programme Manager of Uraia for this definition, and for his help writing this paper.

⁵ Who qualifies for citizenship is a whole other debate, which, regretfully, must be left for another time.

salient in the Kenyan public sphere, as Kenyans living abroad who have since lost or been stripped of the rights of citizenship continue to claim and perform themselves as Kenyan in a number of ways.⁶ The latter is a psychological identity that is associated with the (birth)right of belonging to a particular community, nation or nation-state, and is a personal choice that defies state definition.

Said Adejumobi argues that citizenship is a social pact constituted by the dual elements of reciprocity and exchange between the individual citizen and the state, in which the citizen's rights and privileges of citizenship are guaranteed by the state in exchange for her or his obligations, loyalty and commitment (154). Civic education can be considered as the process (and product) of inculcating citizenry and state with their understanding of this social covenant; it is a conversation between the two ensuring both sides are fully cognisant, and serve to monitor and keep the other accountable to fulfilling its legal obligations to the other.

Civic Education in Kenya: A Background

Models of civic education existed in the diverse socio-political systems that the imposition of British colonialism overturned or interfered with in constructing the new political entity that became the proto-type of the nation-state known as Kenya. The current models of civic education in Kenya have tended to borrow heavily from frameworks conceptualised in the context of contemporary struggles for liberal democracy under-girded by Western values, strategies and methodologies. However, there is a growing acknowledgement of indigenous

⁶ Since Kenya does not allow dual citizenship for example, any Kenyan who becomes the citizen of any country automatically loses her legal status as a Kenyan. Many Kenyans who have migrated for economic reasons have changed citizenship to facilitate their lives and work in the countries of domicile. Several continue to identify as Kenyan, regardless of their citizenship. One example that highlights the duality of this identity and the enduring resilience of the status of *mwananchi* is the case of athlete Leonard Mucheru / Mushir Salem Jawher stripped of his Bahraini citizenship in January 2007. Mucheru, originally Kenyan, acquired Bahraini citizenship for professional reasons, becoming a national hero in that country after he won a silver medal for it in the 2006 Asian Games. However, while still a citizen of Bahrain, he used his Kenyan passport to enter Israel and the Tiberias Marathon, becoming famous when his win (as Mushir Jawher) made him the first athlete from the Middle East to win a major road race in Israel. The Bahraini government revoked his citizenship once word got out, angrily chastising him for running in Israel. In the meantime, he had travelled back "home" to Kenya, where he ran into further trouble. Kenyan immigration authorities responded to the press reports of his woes by seeking him out as an illegal alien, insisting he had broken the law by continuing to use his Kenyan passport after losing his Kenyan citizenship by default on "becoming" Bahraini. He in turn claimed he had not realised he was legally giving up his Kenyan identity on agreeing to take on Bahraini citizenship. Ultimately, Kenya accepted the hapless Mucheru back as a citizen "on compassionate grounds" when Bahrain completely refused to take him back, despite the fact that he had been a national hero. This case illustrates the competing understandings of citizenship and national identity, the rights and responsibilities accruing to these identities and the resultant implications thereof.

paradigms and increasing appreciation of what they offer contemporary practice and theory.⁷ This paper will focus on civic education in Kenya, and will therefore leave that discussion to another opportunity, since Kenya did not begin to come into existence until the imposition of colonial rule.

Although the indigenous systems of individual socio-political formation did not immediately cease with the raising of the British flag, the relationship between the people and the state changed to reflect the political reality and changed circumstances of the social contract between state and those it presided over. In the colonial era, inhabitants of Kenya were categorised into two groups; those who were citizens of the British Empire, and the others, who were in the majority, but as mere subjects of the Empire had no rights of citizenship as far as the state was concerned.⁸ Therefore, discussion of civic education with regard to the process of creating Kenyan citizens begins in earnest with the legal transition from colony to first an independent country within the British Commonwealth in 1963, and, a year later, to a fully independent republic.

In the first three decades after the attainment of the legal status of independence in Kenya, civic education was the province of the state and took the form largely of propaganda. It was less about creating a citizen who was ready to engage the state as an individual fully conscious of and committed to exercising the rights and responsibilities articulated in the constitution, and more about the maintenance of a political status quo, through the provision of propaganda that urged Kenyans to re-elect the regime in power. Civic education was therefore conceptualised in terms of political rights, and carefully monitored by the political elite to minimise the provision of any knowledge or skills that would encourage any opposition to the state. The latter mobilised its resources in a process of indoctrination, geared towards the creation of a loyal and obedient citizen; obedience was rewarded by promises - not always kept - of peace, stability and prosperity. Alternative views or perspectives that challenged the official interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of citizenship were cast as anti-development, divisive and foreign in

⁷ African civic educators have begun to harmonise approaches from outside the continent with those indigenous to it. Areas of attention include to the variety of forums (both formal and structured, and informal and seemingly arbitrary), the kinds of methodologies (in particular the use of oral literature and other forms of orature) the content of the curricula and the conceptual under-girding of civic education frameworks. See Clement Okafor's exploration of oral poetry as a medium of moral and civic education in African communities for an example of indigenous African approaches to civic education.

⁸ See Mahmood Mamdani's illuminating exploration of this distinction, Citizen and Subject.

origin. The school curriculum included civics as a non-examinable subject in upper primary, reinforced by the weekly recitation of the loyalty pledge and singing of the national anthem in all schools within the state system; however, discussion of alternatives to the status quo were not only not tolerated in educational institutions outside the university, they were in general, simply, unimaginable.⁹ Citizenship was officially equated with loyalty to the ruling party and its president who was also the head of state. Indeed, the story of political opposition in the country can be told from the perspective of those who attempted to provide civic education to their fellow citizens challenging the state's interpretation of its contract with its citizens.

Where this occurred successfully, it was generally disguised or defined as something else, such as artistic happenings or community development exercises.¹⁰ Those who openly attempted to mobilise communities to identify, appreciate, articulate, understand, engage, interpret or exercise citizen rights in a manner that challenged state interpretations of the same were labelled *wachochezi* (agitators), condemned as traitors and cast as a threat to the nation. Classified as sedition, their literature was *marufuku* (banned), disseminated secretly to only the select few who dared risk imprisonment, and sometimes paid the ultimate price, for mere possession, or allegation of possession, of it.¹¹

The decade of the nineties was significant for the transition to multi-party politics after close to quarter a century of single party politics. The widening of the political space to provide for pluralistic politics also engendered the return of overt civic education within the public sphere. Civil society was particularly invested in initiatives advocating for increased

⁹No one I have talked to seems to recall reciting the national pledge outside secondary school. Few Kenyans who have been out of school for over five years can even remember it without effort.

¹⁰ Perhaps the most famous of these initiatives was the Kamiriithu Community Cultural and Educational Centre's (KCCEC) adult literacy and community development initiatives led by Njeeri wa Amoni. These developed into the famous theatre collaborations between University of Nairobi scholars (some of whom were members of the Kamiriithu community themselves), in which KCCEC members extended their exploration of Kenyan society through an artistic process that cast the independent era as the continuation of British imperialism in a new guise. The state's response to the apparent effectiveness of the exercise was to close down KCCEC, raze down the physical premises used to undertake what amounted to a massive civic education campaign reaching thousands of Kenyans, and ban the group's activities, charging that these campaigns were distracting people from "development". In their place, the state set up a village polytechnic.

¹¹The first Kenyan jailed for sedition was university scholar Abdilatif Abdallah whose imprisonment for penning the simple pamphlet, *Kenya Twendapi?* in 1969 was the beginning of the long years in detention and imprisonment spent by a distinguished list of political activists. Sometimes, the state's paranoia became comical, as in the celebrated incident when an assistant minister demanded the arrest of Karl Marx for sedition.

accountability of the state to the citizen. It was perhaps inevitable that its first priority in this period would be voter education since this was seen as essential to changing the terms of citizen engagement with the state. Civic education was therefore understood as voter education, geared at mobilising support for alternatives to the political status quo.¹² The euphoria of the first multi-party elections in 1992 however soon gave way to some sober realisation that pluralism on the political scene would not translate automatically into the kind of change so many craved for - motivating a serious engagement with the fundamentals of civic education that had been somewhat ignored in the rush towards the general election itself.

In 1994, a group of organisations meeting to discuss their experiences in providing civic education in the country identified several issues that needed immediate attention such as the re-conceptualisation of civic education within the new dispensation as well as the provision of training and appropriate materials.¹³ In agreeing on the need for a common curriculum, these organisations agreed to identify areas of interest that would provide the foundation for common units, and then collaborate to carry out a training needs assessment, before working out a framework that would lead to a joint handbook that civic education providers could use across the board (League 3).

The single issue of the return to multi-party politics dominated the debate in the public sphere in the period preceding the meeting.¹⁴ When this failed to deliver the expectations of

¹² Most of the material focused on informing citizens on the right (way) to vote, and encouraging them to do so without allowing themselves to be intimidated either to refrain from doing so or to vote for a particular candidate or party. This was especially important as the nation had been a *de facto* or *de jure* single party state for over 25 years at this point and an entire generation of voters had grown up knowing the ruling party, in the popularised phrase, as *mama na baba* (father and mother). Sometimes, even civic education material betrayed the unconscious association with the ruling party as the dominant player, with visual posters often reproducing images of a family, with the father depicted as representing KANU, a telling statement in a largely patriarchal society.

¹³ Held under the auspices of the Institute of Education in Democracy, the workshop produced a report Towards a Common Civic Education Curriculum that also recorded political, institutional, personal, intellectual and material barriers that had hitherto prevented productive cooperation between non-governmental organisations providing civic education in Kenya.

¹⁴ The literature survey of civic education materials in the country carried out following the Institute of Education in Democracy workshop identified the following thematic areas as dominant in civic education: political elections, legal issues, legal issues with a focus on women's rights; the constitution; democracy, democratisation and governance (Legal 4). It can be argued that each of these issues, although not only as their sole focus, directly engaged the issue of expanded democracy, expressed in this era as the struggle for the benefits of multi-party democracy. For example, while civic education on gender emphasised the rights of women in many spheres, there was a special focus on the disenfranchisement of women in the political realm and the general marginalisation of women in leadership in the public sphere which organisations such as the League of Kenya Women Voters (who published the subsequent curriculum) specifically addressed. The League of Kenyan Women Voters specifically works to expand the democratic

those opposed to the political and socio-economic status quo, the impetus then swung to the question of constitutional reform. These two issues provided the rallying platforms for the evolution of a new kind of civic education in Kenya that broadened its interests to include the hot-button issues that had become the most popular discussion items in the constitutional reform movement. By the time the 1997 general election came round, civic education in Kenya had not only become an essential part of the programmes of the majority of civic society organisations working in Kenya, there was also significant momentum towards collaboration in its provision, through regular networking and the compilation of common training and curricula materials.

The results of the 1997 presidential elections were also disappointing to those who had hoped to see regime change. It was clear that very significant gains had been made in terms of expanding the democratic space to allow for the circulation of alternative political agendas. However, it was equally plain that the state had been effective in limiting the efficacy of the efforts of civic educators seeking to facilitate the ability of Kenyans to make informed choices with regard to the exercise of their political rights.¹⁵ Thus, the general elections paved the way for a new phase in the provision of civic education in Kenya: a concerted effort to not only suggest, but actually harmonise, the efforts of non-state players offering civic education to Kenyans through the adoption and use of a common curriculum and agenda, and the effective deployment of resources to cover the entire nation.

By the beginning of the new millennium, Daraja (Kiswahili for 'bridge'), a loose coalition of civil society activists investing heavily in civic education as a way forward had emerged. The individuals and organisations that came together as Daraja saw themselves as the bridge between civil society and political activists on one hand, and the public on the other. In other words, there was a marriage of convenience between the two groups leading the charge for socio-political change who realised such an alliance was necessary to facilitate the critical mass necessary for either to achieve their objective, which they agreed to be the influencing of public understanding

space for women as participants in Kenyan politics and public affairs through the electoral system as both voters and leaders.

¹⁵ See Making Informed Choices. This became the name for the first handbook of civic education jointly prepared by the most influential organisations working in it at the time. Published in 2001 after an exhaustive, consultative process involving members of the coalition of civil society organisations (CSO) this was part of the seminal set of training materials (handbook, trainers' manual and curriculum) developed for use all over the country by a wide variety of CSO. This handbook was part of the seminal set of training materials (handbook, trainers' manual and curriculum) developed for use all over the country under the first phase of NCEP.

and discourses on fundamental rights. Both sides agreed on the essential role of civic education in the expansion of multi-party liberal democracy.

Meanwhile, another coalition was forming; this time made up of influential members of the donor community comprising some of the principal North American and European countries already investing in civic education in the country. They decided to adopt a unified approach through the creation of a donor basket fund to which Kenyan organisations could apply for funding for civic education. To simplify the disbursement of funds, this coalition further proposed the creation of an umbrella organisation formally bringing together civic education providers into partnership with the basket fund partners around the common agenda of expanding the democratic space. Thus was born the National Civic Education Programme (NCEP), initially conceptualised as a two-year project whose mandate was to promote general awareness of democratic principles, good governance and constitutionalism while contributing to the consolidation of a mature political culture through the provision of civic education (K-DOP 41).

The National Civic Education Programme

NCEP was established in 2000 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) bringing into formal partnership representatives of Kenyan civil society on one hand and those of the foreign donor community on the other. In recognition of the sensitive nature of the political environment, the Heads of the diplomatic Missions (HoM) of the foreign countries involved in the basket fund were in control of the direct management of the programme, providing political oversight and taking responsibility for programme management and partnerships.¹⁶ A supporting Donor Steering Committee (DSC) was set up to provide technical output with the hands-on day-to-day management of the programme being contracted out to a Financial Management Agent (FMA) and a Technical Assistance Team (TAT). The actual implementation of the programme's activities was entrusted to four consortia, which managed the 69 civil service organisations (CSO) working on the ground. These consortia were the Civic Education for Marginalised Communities (CEDMAC), the Constitution and Reform Education Consortia (CRE-CO), the

¹⁶ The donor committee comprised the governments of Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom as well as the following donor agencies: the Austrian Development Agency, the United Nations Development Fund, the United States Agency for International Development and the European Commission.

Ecumenical Civic Education Programme (ECEP) and the Gender Consortium.¹⁷ There was also a group of a few CSO not directly identifying with any of the four consortia.

In the short time before the 2002 general elections, the NCEP program was able to carry out about 60,000 civic education activities in all eight provinces of the country. In six of the provinces, it exceeded the number of projected audience members, sometimes by as much as double. In the other two, it reached over 70% of the pre-program estimates (K-DOP 43). It was estimated that the program reached 16-17% of all Kenyans in all (Finkel et al vi). Two other civic education programmes were also significant in complementing NCEP's efforts. Through the Electoral Commission of Kenya, the Kenyan state launched a massive voter education campaign that specifically focused on the issue of election malpractices. The Engendering of the Political and Electoral Processes Programme, another civic education programme, brought together a coalition of CSO interested in creating an enabling environment for female participation as candidates in the elections.¹⁸ These three civic education campaigns were fairly effective in influencing the election culture in 2002, and established the idea of a programme of civic education heavily based on a language of political rights as the norm.

The 2002 elections were widely celebrated as evidence that the many years of civic education had finally paid off, as Kenya for the first time witnessed significant regime change when the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union, which had ruled uninterrupted since independence, was finally ushered into opposition. The Kenya Domestic Observation Programme (K-DOP)¹⁹ noted the important contribution civic education had made in its report, stating, "The

¹⁷ CEDMAC brings together CSO working with historically marginalised and minority communities, including people with disabilities, non-agrarian rural communities such as pastoralists and forest-dwellers, ethnic minorities, and the urban poor. (For convenience, I am conflating CSO [civil society organisations] and CBO [community based organisations] where these are engaged in this kind of work.) CSO working under CRE-CO prioritise governance and human rights issues. ECEP coordinates civic education for two of the most influential Christian church networks, the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Kenya Episcopal Conference. The Gender Consortium used to facilitate CSO whose primary concern centred on gender issues.

¹⁸Because of the specific focus on women as candidates, although this also addressed the issue of encouraging female voters to participate freely in the elections without fear or intimidation, it was implemented in less than half of the 210 constituencies. Priority was given to those that had female candidates in the running for parliamentary seats.

¹⁹K-DOP, a coalition of religious organisations (Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, the National Council of the Churches in Kenya, the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims and the Hindu Council of Kenya) and non-governmental organisations (Media Institute and IED) with the Kenyan chapter of Transparency International as an ex-officio member came into existence in six months before the election. K-DOP's grassroots team of 19,000 poll watchers, 42 constituency observers and organisers and 64 regional observers followed the election procedures all over the country from the parties' nominations to the counting and announcement of results.

people of Kenya indeed spoke with one voice; found the courage and unity of purpose to speak forcefully through the ballot box. The civic education programmes, the consultations of CKRC and a new resolve of the people made the elections the turning point of Kenyan politics” (K-DOP, 9). Recognising that civic education transcended beyond voter education to influence the manner in which citizens exercise all political rights (38), the K-DOP report however urged the new Kenyan government to embrace civic education as a continuous process (49). After all, many of the most influential members of the new Cabinet and Parliament had come out of civil society and been instrumental in designing, influencing and carrying out civic education in the past.²⁰ One might have thought that given its increased understanding and appreciation of civic education, the state would, at the very least, consolidate its own civic education efforts under an umbrella body, such as it did when it created an official counterpart to the Kenyan Human Rights Commission. However, it was here that the two factions of the local civic education alliance, the political opposition and civil society activists, parted ways. The politicians, now in charge of the government, seemed to assume that the urgency and importance of civic education was now a thing of the past, while the civic society activists were keen to identify and explore the larger role that civic education could and should play in the new dispensation. Although the profile of civic education improved within state institutions following the change in government, there was no effort by the state to coordinate a national civic education programme such as NCEP. It became clear that the continuation of a single initiative coordinating and overseeing multi-faceted civic education on a national scale would have to continue, at least in the immediate, outside the direct intervention of the state.

In hindsight, what would later come to be known as NCEP’s first phase (referred to as NCEP-I) was successful in achieving its objectives with regard to the facilitation of the establishment and consolidation of a democratic culture through civic education focusing on citizen rights. In an assessment of the programme conducted in 2003, it was found that the efforts of NCEP had counted significantly in influencing the public sphere during the crucial period leading to the general election (Finkel et al 94). Although there were some challenges that NCEP had struggled to overcome, important foundational work had been done in the first two

²⁰For example, cabinet ministers Kiraitu Murungi and Martha Karua who both have overseen the powerful Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Some have indeed argued that it is precisely because these government officials are so very aware of the power of civic education that they have not made any effort to engage this possibility seriously, lest it ends up causing their own government more grief.

years of the program's existence, convincing both the DC and the CSO partners that NCEP's work should not end with the elections. In the run-up to the election, civic education had been defined as the provision of non-partisan information enabling citizens to understand the relationships amongst them, and between them and their government, with four broad areas of intervention were identified as essential: Nationhood and Nation-building, State, Democracy and Democratisation; Constitutions, Constitutionalism and Constitution-making; and finally, the Practice of Governance (Making v).

With a new government in power, it was felt that the programme needed to be reviewed and re-structured both to deal with management issues that had arisen in the first phase and to take account the new political environment and the emerging priorities such as the re-energised push towards comprehensive constitutional reform. The re-structuring saw the HoM step down from formal management of the programme and the DSC become a Donor Committee (DC) taking on both programme oversight and financial control. Programme management was now given over to the newly created Programme Steering Committee (PSC), which gave the Consortia some say alongside the DC on that aspect, while the TAT and FMA continued to support the programme. Of the original consortia, three, CEDMAC, CRE-CO and ECEP, were retained in the programme, and a new one, the National Muslim Civic Education Consortium (NAMCEC), brought on board.²¹ One significant change was the re-branding of the programme, which acquired a new name, Uraia (Kiswahili for Citizenship), partly in response to criticism of the apparent lack of local ownership of the program.²² The chosen major themes of the programme for the second phase were Nation-building, Democratisation, Good governance, Constitutionalism, and Human Rights. The second phase of NCEP, now better known as Uraia, thus came into being in 2005.²³

²¹ NAMCEC brought together the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims, the Kenya Council of Imams and Ulamaa, the North Eastern Muslim Women's Initiative and the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance. Gender became one of the crosscutting themes for Uraia, hence it was felt that there was no longer a need for a separate Gender Consortium.

²² A 2002 SIDA report on aid in Kenya was particularly scathing on what it referred to as 'donorship' of NCEP. The TAT report on the period argues that the high visibility of the donors in the first phase of the programme was necessary as a measure of political protection, given the hostility of the KANU regime to civic education. The Framework Report guiding the re-structuring process indeed stated that while the CSO might have felt somewhat bypassed in terms of ownership of the programme, there was significant public ownership at the community level (IntermediaNCG 6, 7).

²³ The two terms are used inter-changeably. For the purpose of this paper, I will use "Uraia" to refer to the institution itself, and NCEP II to refer to the programme, especially when differentiating between the first and second phases. Those working with Uraia / NCEP II insist that it is a programme, not an institution or organisation. I am using

Designed as a three-year programme, NCEP-II was divided into two parts. The first, beginning in September 2005, had as its main objective the preparation of the country for the 2007 general elections. This phase also did not concentrate exclusively on the provision of voter education; and in fact went further than NCEP-I in performing elections as only part of a wider project of democratisation. NCEP-II also engaged the question of state accountability to the citizenry. There was a change in methodology, which moved from being primarily message delivery to creating forums where citizens could collectively discuss issues related to the themes and come up with their own understanding. There was also a new emphasis on advocacy on certain issues such as gender equality and the rights of marginalised peoples and communities, avoided in NCEP-I when there had been concern that a rights-based approach might attract criticism of partisanship. 43 CSO were involved in NCEP-II, covering all 210 constituencies in the country. Complementing the face-to-face activities the CSO implemented was a comprehensive new media strategy coordinated by through a new Programme Management Unit (PMU), put together in 2007 following further re-structuring of the programme

At the same time, Uraia moved on to begin to put into place a strategy for institutionalisation, moving out of the small offices of the TAT into its own office space (Uraia House) and acquiring a dedicated Kenyan staff, led by a programme manager, Abubakar Zein Abubakar, who came on board mid-2007. The PSC was also reconstituted to make it the main policy organ of Uraia. These two steps were significant in continuing the transition from “donorship” to local ownership of the program, even though the DC retained its influential role with control of the finances, and the right to veto PSC decisions through a simple denial of funding.

The first phase of NCEP II was therefore a busy period in terms of the institutionalisation of the programme, as well as changes affecting its activities. This phase ended with the general elections in 2007, making way for the second phase, which had been conceptualised as a period of capacity building, taking on board the experiences of NCEP I and the first phase of NCEP II in preparation for NCEP-III. The violence that rocked the country following the disputed results of the presidential election however interrupted the projected calendar. Not only did this delay the strategic planning process that Uraia was scheduled to enter into at the beginning of the year, it

the term institution in the secondary sense proposed by the Merriam Webster dictionary of “a group of persons formally joined together for some common interest... an institution devoted to studying social problems and proposing solutions for them” which in my opinion describes Uraia perfectly. See <http://mw1.m-w.com/thesaurus/institution>

also raised fundamental questions that clearly needed to be taken into account in the planning of the third phase of the project. As the Uraia staff who gathered around the conference table during the post-poll debrief cited earlier pointed out in their deliberations, the strategic importance of civic education as a crucial component of nation-building had perhaps never before, in Kenya's post-colonial era history, been more apparent than at that time.

As the country settled into an uneasy calm following the first two turbulent months in 2008, Uraia re-commenced its process of strategic planning, which involved re-examining its mandate even as it re-formulated its objectives within the new understandings created by its experience and that of the Kenyan nation.²⁴ The strategic planning process provided an opportunity for the organisation to re-visit its history and the original premises on which it was founded. Participants underwent a lengthy and exhaustive process of review, which provided the foundation for an equally demanding engagement with different understandings of the organisation's mission, vision, values and objectives.

As a programme, NCEP had emerged out of the heady context of the run-up to an historic election. In the urgency of the moment, emphasis was placed on creating a framework allowing the harmonisation of civic education provision and a rationale and framework to allow the efficient disbursement of donor funds. It was clear that Uraia had made significant strides towards achieving the goals it set out at its launch, including the nurturing and strengthening of Kenya's democratic culture and the facilitating of public engagement with concepts of good governance. Evidence seems to support the thesis that Uraia has been a fundamental catalyst in the increased public participation in democratic processes such as voting, grassroots accountability mechanisms for communal resources such as the Constituency Development Fund.²⁵ It had set new standards in the facilitation of the most comprehensive (in terms of geographical and social reach) civic education programme in Kenya, articulating itself as a

²⁴I attended many of the events, especially in the initial stages of the strategic planning process. I am grateful to Uraia for inviting me as a participant observer to these sessions, the other participants for their contributions, and F. Wanjiku Maina, the strategic planner in particular, for the insights in this paper, and especially in this section.

²⁵The Constituency Development Fund was instituted as a way of fairly disbursing funds throughout the nation. A local committee constituted by the local Member of Parliament manages the annual allocation given by the state to each constituency. This committee is responsible for identifying and overseeing project. One of the civic education projects jointly carried out in constituencies in Coast Province by two CSO facilitates civic competency by working with communities in creating understanding of the process through which CDF committees in their constituencies are selected, and in setting up and facilitating the monitoring of the selection, management and evaluation of the projects by its intended beneficiaries.

national civic education programme, with grassroots organisations working in every district and constituency in the country, including with communities who receive very little direct state resources. It had overseen the harmonisation of diverse civic education curricula into a broad framework with supporting resources that participating organisations and communities were able to adapt to their specific contexts and needs.²⁶ The diversity of its curricula and programmes had proven effective in engaging the different priorities of both the CSO and the communities with whom they work. Rather than rely on one methodology or medium for working, Uraia had encouraged the emergence of a plethora of pedagogical approaches, with each implementing partner having the freedom to engage the material using the appropriate approach given its own strengths, the context of its work, and the content of the material. This has encouraged the inclusion of indigenous content and methodology in the curriculum, the development of endogenous methods and material easily adaptable to a variety of diverse contexts, and a deepening of citizen participation in the generation, use and evaluation of materials and methodologies. In turn, this has resulted in a greater sense of ownership of the programme in those communities participating in it. Uraia has also begun to challenge civic educators to move beyond the mere provision of information to the creation of civic competent citizens.²⁷ The problems of management that had dogged the first phase seemed to have either been ironed out with the establishment of a secretariat, or were under review. As a result, the implementing partners (the consortia and donor committee) expressed satisfaction with the programme, committing themselves to taking Uraia into a new phase.²⁸

On the other hand, the review also brought to light the significant challenges facing Uraia in its next phase. The process of institutionalisation in the second phase was complicated by the fact that Uraia has no independent legal identity or status, since it was constituted as a joint programme of a coalition of the willing. This had led in turn to a programmatic tradition of short-term planning, allowing the partners the option of bailing out should they so chose after phases

²⁶This consists of a resource file that is a kind of trainer's manual with facilitation guidelines, curriculum, background readings, a set of handouts and tool-kit with useful ideas and strategies for facilitators. The file is designed in such a way that facilitators can add or delete material easily when necessary. Although the CSO all contract to use the curriculum provided in the resource file in their activities, each can adapt the materials to the context and intent of use.

²⁷ Civic competent citizens are not only informed about their options, but are also able to use that information in enforcing their rights or carrying out their responsibilities.

²⁸At the time of writing, Uraia was preparing to undertake a systematic evaluation and base-line study throughout the nation in preparation for the third phase of the programme. I have relied here on the internal review undertaken in preparation for the 2007 Strategic Planning process.

lasting only a few years. Indeed, in the planning periods preceding the implementation of both NCEP-I and NCEP-II, little attention had been paid to the formulation and articulation of long-term mission, vision or values. Uraia's dependency on a closed pool of donors for its funding continued to translate into "donorship" despite the efforts that had been made to change this. Although on paper the structure of the organisation and role of each component of the organisation - the PSC, DC, Secretariat, consortia and CSO - seemed clear, in practice, there was still some lack of clarity that sometimes affected programme activities.

Some of its challenges have less to do with the programme and more to do with its partners. For example, although the format of the training materials allowed a lot of freedom in adaptation to particular context, the uneven skill, competency and capacity levels among the implementers made impossible any attempt to standardise the output of the implementing partners.²⁹ Despite Uraia's attempts to reach as many people as possible in as much of the nation as possible, poor mapping of the country in initial stages and the reliance on CSO as implementing partners for most of the programmes had meant that resource allocation had not always matched the need on the ground. As a result, some critical communities had been left out entirely when it comes to the provision of civic education. There were, for example, very few CSO engagements with middle- and upper-class urban dwellers, first because these fell out of the profiles that the participating CSO worked with, and secondly, because they were assumed to be civic competent, and therefore not critical targets for comprehensive programmes.³⁰

From Rights to Responsibilities

Uraia is currently entering into a transitional period in preparation for the commencement of NCEP-III. This makes the present moment an optimum time for Kenyans of all walks of life to not only participate in the designing of the next phase of the programme, but more importantly, to grapple with the fundamental questions underlying its very existence.

²⁹It was noted by programme reviewers, for example, that while all CSO implementing the Uraia curriculum on the ground are supposed to pay equal attention to all the units in the curriculum, in most cases, they emphasised the material that specifically interested them, or for which they had specific skills or training. The initial reviews suggested that the theme that most providers placed least emphasis on in the run-up to both the 2002 and 2007 general elections was Nationhood and National Identity. Yet, in hindsight, this was perhaps where the greatest emphasis was needed.

³⁰The evidence has since indicated otherwise. The participation of wealthy and middle-class, Kenyans in funding ethnic militia blamed for the worst of the post-2007 poll violence, for example, is a matter of public record. Even those consortia engaging religious communities, whose outreach potential reaches every social class and practically every socio-cultural group tended to focus their energies on those in their constituencies they regarded as most marginal(ised).

Three of the pressing challenges facing Uraia stem from an analysis of some of the summation above of its most salient strengths and weaknesses. First, there is the issue of its definition - exactly what it is, what it would like to be, and what it should be. Secondly, there is the issue of its relationship with its key stake-holders: the state, the donor community, the CSO who are its implementing partners and, last but not least, the citizens of Kenya who it has defined as its most important constituency. Thirdly, there is the question of sustainability. These three issues are by no means separate, and will be discussed below in relation to each other.

As things currently stand, Uraia has no legal identity or standing, and is entirely dependent on the goodwill of its partners for not only its day-to-day functioning, but also its continued existence. It exists by virtue of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), the current one of which will expire in 2009. The first question that needs asking with regard to the question of definition is whether this is the optimum mode of existence for a national programme of any kind, and especially one as politically sensitive as a civic education programme.

The memoranda of understanding that have so far determined the very existence of the programme have engaged two parties: the two groups that came together to form NCEP-I--members of civil society, in particular the CSO involved in its implementation and the DC funding it. The evolving relationship between these two parties has been a major influence on the changing nature of the programme, with the former acquiring more influence in the crucial decisions affecting the direction of the program. Nevertheless, the question that must still be asked is what would happen if these partners were to be unable to agree on the direction, structure or another fundamental issue thus jeopardising the very existence of Uraia. Even if this would lead to a re-negotiation of the terms of reference for the MOU, the cost and consequences in times of lost time, expanded effort and delayed programming will be substantial. There is always the danger that should either of these collective of partners pull out of the agreement, Uraia would simply cease to be. At the moment, it has been taken for granted that individual partners, on both the part of the DC and the CSO could make the decision not to participate in NCEP-III, but that the present consensus the programme should go on, means there will be adequate quorum to assure the continuation of the work. It might be prudent to question that certainty of that assumption.

Perhaps the place to begin in thinking about the issue of identity is to re-visit the reasons a programme was deemed the best way to proceed at the outset of the project, exploring the

possibilities offered by the changed environment that exists today in Kenya, and the context that the programme has created for itself and in the nation. What might other alternatives - making Uraia a trust, a CSO, a state commission, a limited company etc - do in terms of enabling the programme to function differently? What are the consequences of clinging to the status quo? How does Uraia as a programme fit into the evolution of Kenya that is presently taking place? Before any quick decision is made to keep or change its present status, Uraia must explore the different options that will help it fulfil its stated mandate while maintaining its current profile as a non-partisan, non-profit-making, national civic education initiative.

The question of identity is interwoven with the next: that of ownership. The present situation where Uraia's activities are entirely dependent on donor funding and approval needs revisiting. As noted above, although the PSC is technically responsible for all policy decisions, and is the one that approves programme activities and projects, the DC holds a deciding veto on all Uraia activities, since it can refuse to authorise any expenditure that it does not agree with. This effectively means that Uraia is held hostage to the DC's goodwill. This is particularly of concern because the members of the DC are all foreign governments and aid agencies.³¹ At the moment, although Uraia would like to see itself as a Kenyan programme, whose stakeholders are primarily Kenyan citizens, and which serves the interests of Kenyans exclusively, my conclusion is that this, in fact, is not the case.

Willy Mutunga's exploration of the politics of donor funding with regard to projects of democratisation is relevant here. In his analysis of the protracted process of constitutional review in Kenya, Mutunga explores the difficulties and politics of identifying independent funding that cannot be easily compromised by a hostile state, but that does not also compromise internal priorities for external agendas (35, 61, 64, 74). As noted above, in the initial stages of its establishment, the CSO leadership that came into partnership with the donor community thought it was important to protect the programme from any possibility of undue political influence. The fact that it was a diverse group of donors contributing to the basket fund, and not a single or a handful of donors whose interests might dominate the programme's priorities, was seen as an additional check against the possibility of abuse. However, as Mutunga notes, apart from

³¹Lara Pearson offers this sober reminder: "There is nothing straightforward, however, about this apparent benevolence. [For example] according to the USAID website, 'US foreign assistance has always had the twofold purpose of furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of the citizens of the developing world' (112). Note which of these two priorities comes first.

instances when donor might seek to influence local players towards particular agendas, there is also the more subtle danger that local priorities might be down-graded or ignored simply because they do not fit in with a donor agenda, or might be seen as being particularly sensitive for foreigners to be seen as engaging. In fact, in the run-up to the 2007 elections, Uraia's media project had to exercise particular caution in terms of the kind of messages it was directly associated with, as the DC was extremely sensitive to guarding its image of non-partisanship, given the possibility of being accused of influencing the outcome of what promised to be a very close election.³²

Issa Shivji's scathing analysis of donor-dependent development facilitated on the ground by African non-governmental organisations suggests it is possible for the latter to play the role of catalysts of change rather than catechists of aid and charity. However, this can only happen in an environment of honest self-analysis and critical examination of the philosophical and political premises under-girding the programme activities, partnerships and commitments (171). The challenge facing Uraia is that of clarifying these fundamentals, both in terms of choosing and working with its civil society partners and in relation to its own ambiguous status that makes it part of civil society even as it is technically not a distinct CSO itself.

On the question of partnerships, not only does Uraia need to re-think its relationship to the DC, and the CSO it deals with, it also has to engage two other vitally important partners. These, the state and the rest of Kenyan society beyond its implementing partners, have tended to be sidelined in past discussions on programme structure and direction, even though they have received some form of acknowledgement. Yet they are both critical in determining the future direction of the institution.

Uraia's relationship with the state remains inchoate. The Kenyan government did not participate in the establishment of the founding or subsequent MoU. The coalition that formed the programme in 2000 did not involve the regime of the time in the project due to the latter's apparent hostility to the agenda of change the partners supported. However, even after the new government, including many who had been active participants in civic education activities came to power, there has been still no direct involvement of the state in formulating, implementing,

³²Uraia's media project is a new initiative run directly by the organisation in conjunction with several media houses. Uraia's media programmes and advertisements ceased a fortnight before the elections. Its implementing partners were however able to continue with their usual activities, even using Uraia funding as usual as the responsibility for those could be placed at the door of individual CSO.

monitoring, evaluating or participating in any official way in the only initiative functioning as a national civic education programme. True, there have been individual state officials who have participated as individuals or as representatives of the government in supporting, facilitating and even attending particular events and activities taking place through the civic education programmes mounted by the implementing partners. However, the Kenyan government is still not an official partner of the programme.

There has been some disappointment in civil society circles at the government's loud silence on the possibility of a state-funded, state directed, state-supported programme of civic education. There had been some expectation there would be eagerness on the part of the government to form a commission charged with the conceptualisation, and implementation of a state civic education programme. This could have been done by taking over Uraia when the new government came into power, or by forming a parallel body in much the same way it established the Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHRC) as a state body, to complement the work of the non-governmental Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC). There is some suspicion that the present government, having witnessed first-hand the potency of civic education when it comes to transforming the state, would rather not encourage too strong a national programme of civic education. There could be substance in this argument, given the new emphasis on the creation of a civic competent citizenry committed to holding the state accountable with regard to the fulfilment of its responsibilities.³³ It is also true that many Kenyans are still suspicious of state-provided civic education, which they view as state propaganda, as a result of years of intellectual abuse when the state dictated what people should think, and when state organs were only used to affirm the status quo. Many Uraia stakeholders have therefore been wary of too close an association with the state.

³³ There are those within government who feel that the state body has not been successful in transcending the "CSO mentality" with which many of its officials, especially its founding chair, Maina Kiai. One of its officials told me in a private discussion that other government departments tend to view KNHRC unnecessarily combative. It has not developed a good working relationship with critical departments like the police. Certainly, the KNHRC has held the government accountable on politically sensitive issues of human rights abuses, publicizing allegations that some insiders feel ought to have first been dealt with through internal channels. During the early months of 2008, there were those, both within government and outside it, who charged KNHRC with partisanship with regard to the post-election chaos, complicating the visits of its personnel to key sites such as some of the hastily erected camps for internally displaced persons.

My conversations with staff and members of the Uraia PSC, as well as with other members of civil society reveal different opinions as to whether or not Uraia should become a state institution. While some feel this is the logical conclusion to its evolution, others are more ambivalent, citing the difficulties that KNHRC has had in carrying out its agenda in an environment where some organs of the state are still slow to change after decades of authoritarianism.

I argue, however, the state cannot be ignored or pushed to the periphery of a national programme of civic education whose primary purpose is to create an informed and civic competent citizenry that will partner with the government in realising its goals. It must be encouraged, even pressurised, to play a central role in the provision of civic education as part of its contract with its citizenry. The challenge for Uraia, I believe, is to begin to explore what this role entails and how it practically functions in relation to the other programme partners. Certainly, it would be ludicrous for the Kenyan state to join the current format as just another financier of the program, entering into negotiations on the civic education of its own citizens on the same platform as foreign governments and aid agencies. Nor could it join the PSC as an ordinary member, with its contributions subject to DC approval and veto. Would it then be necessary to create a special function, perhaps of oversight for the state, restoring the oversight provided by the HoM in NCEP-I? What would that entail, and what would it mean? There is also the possibility that the state takes over totally the programme. Here too, questions abound. Should the state take it over, is it prepared to provide for the funding of the institution, or to find ways to ensure that the programme does not suffer from a lack of the resources that it needs? To what extent would it dictate the vision, programme objectives, content, methodology, priorities, etc of the programme?

On the other hand, there must also be clear understanding of the implications and consequences for the nation of the state's continued failure to participate in the principal programme of civic education formulation, coordination and provision in the county. In fact, I argue that to do so constitutes a violation of its obligations to its citizens for which it must be called into account. In facilitating the state's ability to get away with this neglect of its duties through its taking on of this responsibility, Uraia runs the risk of defeating its own objective of creating a civic competent citizenry. The question it must answer then is whether its existence actually makes it an enabler of the state's bad behaviour, and how it can facilitate a reversal where the government responsibly takes on the challenge of the civic education of its people.

In order to do this, Uraia has to ensure there is a critical mass of citizens who are ready and willing to engage the state in joint ownership and stewardship of the nation's programme of civic education. These citizens may come from, but should not be devoted to, the interests of CSO working in civic education provision. Their role is to safeguard the interests of the Kenyan people, not of the CSO who might have particular interests to protect or project. To some extent,

this process of opening out Uraia to the oversight and influence of this wider constituency of Kenyans has already begun. The current PSC has representatives who are drawn from the wider civil society and who are not merely there to safeguard the interests of particular CSO. The improvement of monitoring and evaluation of NCEP-II activities, and the re-design of the curriculum and the methodologies of engagement has also facilitated public involvement as more than just consumers of Uraia's activities. This is perhaps the most substantive indicator of the emergence of the civic competent citizens that the institution envisions. This involvement of citizens as the decision-makers in all aspects of the process of making civic education available to the Kenyan people must be encouraged, and investment made into the cultivation of a resource base of competent individuals to act in this regard.

Finally, Uraia needs to deal with the question of sustainability. The current arrangement is clearly far from ideal. It prevents long-term planning, and is predicated on the sustainability of donor interest. The question that needs to be asked is simple: if the donors pull out of the programme, would there still be a need for civic education in Kenya? If the CSO no longer find it financially viable to continue with the programme, or if their priorities shift from civic education to something else, how would the nation continue its efforts to nurture an informed citizenry? It is no longer an option to think of civic education as a privilege made available pending donor funding, or as an election strategy. Rather, it must become the process of generating the Kenya of the future.

In 2008, a wave of secondary school strikes characterised by numerous cases of arson rocked Kenya's educational system. Characterised by numerous cases of arson, these resulted in thousands of boarding school students being sent home before the scheduled end of term, in some cases, before mid-year examinations had taken place. Predictably, this engendered soul-searching in all levels of society, from the Minister of Education, who banned cell phones in schools and music systems in school buses, to parents, many of whom called for the return of corporal punishment to schools. In almost all cases, the students of these schools complained of authoritarian administration in the schools and a relationship between the student body and administration evocative of the draconian model of the Kenyan state in the politically oppressive decades of the seventies and eighties.³⁴ One cannot help wondering if the values espoused in the

³⁴Each case should be treated on its own individual basis. There is a range of reasons for the student actions, each school having its own set of grievances. There is also no doubt that some of the strikes were copycat. However, it seems probable the national experience following the disputed presidential results that saw defiant and violent protest by

Uraia would not be usefully disseminated through a programme that used contexts such as schools as a place to train the civic competent citizens of the future.³⁵ This puts the spotlight on the current model of civic education supported by Uraia, which has emphasised adult education, arguing its purpose to be an engagement of citizens, which in Kenya translates to adults over the age of eighteen years. Sustainability must not only be examined from the point of view of long-term vision emerging out of institutional planning, it also needs to take into account the responsibility of preparing both future as well as current citizens for the rights and responsibilities of the social contract between state and themselves. In this question, as with the last, one wonders to what extent indigenous models of civic education might not provide a framework benefiting re-conceptualisations of the current Uraia programmes.

The goal of engendering a community of active citizens, to use the phrase Michael Neocosmos employs in describing the core of willing and able agents intervening in society as appropriate to bring into being the truly emancipatory African society (45), is achievable as long as Uraia takes seriously these three issues. Despite the challenges it still faces, Uraia has been successful in putting onto the table the issue of citizenship as a contract between individuals and groups of individuals and the state, and in bringing into focus the twin pillars of rights and responsibilities that are essential for both parties. The questions raised here notwithstanding, it remains a continental model for establishing a foundation for the emergence of a truly emancipatory political project that extends beyond questions of regime change to the imagining into being of a new socio-political landscape.

Conclusion

Said Adejumobi's articulation of citizenship as a social pact between citizen and state positions civic education as critical to the nurture of what Claude Ake refers to as genuine democracy that goes beyond liberal democracy (10). It is not merely, as many have tended to view it, a series of messages urging citizens to behave themselves ("don't throw litter around"),

disappointed voters who insisted they had no option to address their sense of grievance at being "robbed" of their rights affirmed the students. Many of them argued that their strikes months later were just reaction to injustice and disenfranchisement in their own contexts.

³⁵ Some schools have extra-curriculum activities and clubs engaging with these very issues. What I am arguing here for is a more comprehensive introduction of programmes training students in areas of governance such as some schools practice through school parliaments facilitating student participation in their own governance. These often are systems linking rights and privileges to responsibilities and obligation, where all members of a school community make the commitment to creating and sustaining a safe, secure and productive environment to the benefit of all.

pay taxes and vote every five years for their preferred candidate. Civic education is the means through which a community of citizens participates consciously in own its growth to civic competency, which includes the ability and willingness to engage the state and hold it accountable to the fulfilment of its obligations to the nation that it serves. From the point of view of the state, it is a responsibility owed to the citizen, the channel through the latter is prepared to fulfil its own part of the covenant of citizenship.

I suggest that it is a mark of the evolution of a nation towards genuine democracy when no one agent, not even the state, views civic education as propaganda or a weapon to be used against opponents, but rather appreciates it as an essential, and de-politicised, part of the social contract between citizen and state. It is a further testimony of a nation's maturity when its government partners with its citizens to facilitate the practice of social democracy through a process of education. While partnerships with external bodies or non governmental agencies in the provision of civic education are not inherently problematic, a situation where the state abandons the fundamentals of civic education to chance, hoping or trusting that others will step in and adequately and appropriately fill in the gap must be discouraged as untenable in the long run.

The situation of abnormal normalcy, to extend Kalundi Serumaga's characterisation of Kenya (82), where no one questions the situation where the African state has abandoned its responsibility to the future by its lack of leadership and engagement in the engendering of a civic competent society, must end. The state needs to assume full responsibility for the provision of civic education--to accept that civic education is not a privilege but rather every citizen's right--and work to gain the confidence of the people that it is indeed capable of nurturing its citizenry to the benefit of the nation, and not of a particular regime. In other words, the nurturing of a civic competent citizenry ought to be one of the priorities that a state is held accountable for, just as it is expected to provide for the education of its young people.³⁶ This does not mean that all the other stakeholders must necessarily be pushed out to make room for the state, rather that the state must take it as its responsibility to ensure that all its citizens and potential citizens have adequate opportunity to be facilitated in their relationship with each other and with the nation. I am arguing therefore that while the Uraia model might be useful as a point of beginning through

³⁶ Indeed, the Kenyan government has begun in the last few months to re-visit this question. However, its newfound enthusiasm seems to be directly linked to the post-2007 poll violence, and it is questionable to what extent it is merely about ensuring that peace - or at least the semblance of peace - is restored in the nation.

which a comprehensive programme of civic education may be launched on a national scale, ultimately, such a programme must be an essential feature of a government's agenda.

I began with a reminder of the grim realities accompanying theoretical discussions on citizenship. In an environment where political violence has reiterated the importance of the social contract of citizenship, Adejumobi's articulation of the relationship between peace, security and stability in Africa and this national covenant of belonging is an eloquent testimony to the importance of comprehensive civic education. States hoping to achieve these conditions by offering a thin package of quickly discarded factual information through slogans and political rallies where "trouble-makers" are harangued and condemned will find that this is far from enough. The same is likely to apply to governments that abandon the responsibilities of civic education provision to others.

Uraia, Kenya's National Civic Education Programme demonstrates one model through which African states can evolve a national programme of civic education. Despite its limitations and the challenges it faces, it offers a way forward in conceptualising civic education as a national process essential to the project of imagining true democracy into being.

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