

Race against time



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Morgan 1 Victoria Morgan CGW4U Ms. Bondy January 10, 2011 Race Against Time Part A: General Overview: The book, Race Against Time by Stephen Lewis is compiled with five heart-quenching and eye-opening lectures. Each chapter held an important topic but they all were related by the continued inefficiency of the United Nations assistance, the lack of compliant funding from developed countries, as well as the endless potential that Africa is unable to clench.

For decades the United Nations has been working to achieve a better peace for the global community by improving international law and security, economic development, social progress, and human rights. The organization is equipped with a variety of groups that have a specific focus, such as the Economic and Social Council, World Food Programme (WFP), and several more. Lewis proposes that the high status and admirable mandate of the UN is merely an illusion, with translucent promises and barely prompted goals. In the year 2000, the UN came up with The Millennium Development Goals all to be achieved by the year 2015.

Lewis touches upon the following in regards to Africa; halve poverty and hunger, provide universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce by two thirds the child mortality rate, reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate, and halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, the complete accomplishment of these goals is at risk. Stephan Lewis believes that the people running these important organizations do not succeed in their position; they are entitled to an Morgan 2 immense amount of power in order to make a difference but they haven't be able to conquer some vital issues.

The leaders and members all have the correct mindset and an inevitable desire to help but their imprint on societies hasn't been as great or supportive as it should. The UN has immunity throughout the world and they are accepted and welcomed everywhere. Lewis argues that they have many brilliant ideas but the plans are scarcely as efficient as expected because they sometimes choose the wrong people to produce them as well as the distraction of other issues that are dubbed more important, like finances and economies.

In a way, they have fallen short because the potential and supremacy they hold is capable of so much more. Furthermore, the shortcomings of The United Nations are not the only roadblock in the way of Africa's development. Foreign aid from developed countries, mainly the members of the G8 summit is tremendously crucial to impoverished countries such as Africa. In 1968, each one of these richer countries had promised to give 0.7% of their own Gross National Income; to this date not one member has been entirely faithful.

Without substantial aid, these countries are kept under a glass ceiling - they can only progress so far. Considering the world to be a somewhat moral and ethical place, it is an obligation to keep fellow countries entirely sustained. Many countries donate very little in comparison to their pledge, the US offers about three billion a year when it should be at about eight. The lack of foreign aid could be understood if the donors weren't raking in tens of billions more than Africa; the real sadness emerges from the fact that the increase of foreign aid or even obligating the initial 0.7% would not devastate any developed country. Every one of the countries is advanced economically

and socially enough to offer up the help required of them and to understand that it isn't a burden to assist the needy. Lewis refers to Japan, a wealthy country who contributed only 17.7% of its foreign aid to Africa in 2002/2003, Morgan 3 the lowest of all the industrialized countries. Also, Lewis is suspicious that the only reason the funds were even provided for Africa that year was simply because Japan wanted a seat on the Security Council and required the votes of the African bloc.

It's difficult for Lewis to look at the Western World, with its abundance of money, technology, medical assistance, education, food, and so much more only to compare it to Africa and its limitations or lack of all of those necessities. The fortunate and prosperous countries of the world should be willing and increasingly generous in regards to their foreign aid in hopes that the countries they are assisting will develop and become independent. It should be an aspiration of every member of the G8 summit to see an economic progression, a political enhancement, and a social improvement in the continent of Africa.

For countless reasons drenched in thoughtlessness, greed, and apathy, the developed nations of the globe have been unable to hold the bar of success when foreign aid is examined. Consequently, with the inefficiency of the United Nations, the lack of foreign aid, and also the conditions set by institutions such as The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Africa as a whole has been restricted. A major time of destruction for Africa was when they were beginning to have a difficult time repaying loans and interests; strict conditions were set by the two institutions.

The conditions involved; devaluing currency, reducing government expenditure, privatize government companies, and raising interests as well as taxes while keeping wages low. Lewis firmly believes if each of these outside factors had not made mistakes, Africa would be on its way towards development. If given the chance, the continent could have and would have contributed to the success of the world. Every person, given the encouragement and opportunity, is able to create and provide well-being for their countries. Lewis feels that Africa has been dealt Morgan 4 hand from a rigged deck of cards, one that would determine no chance of succeeding. Africa is physically equipped with resources and durable land that may have ensured a steady economy, and socially it is filled with hardworking and appreciative people - especially women, if only they could be seen through an equal eye. Continually, it is blessed with millions of children that are intelligent and eager to learn, children that may have triggered the genius in them if they had been given the chance at an education. With proper education, the spread of desolating diseases such as ids could have been prevented. If debt hadn't consumed the continent, they would have been able to prosper and fully sustain its population with the most efficient medical care and latest technology. Lewis persistently points out the unfortunate HIV/AIDS epidemic and how it has virtually murdered so many parents and infected their children. Just having the disease diminishes the potential of life. Lewis is infatuated with Africa and has its best interest in mind because he soundly recognizes what the continent is capable of if it is provided with the proper opportunities to revolt.

Chapter III: Education: An Avalanche of Studies, Little Studying This chapter focuses on the importance of children and youth attaining education, even if it's only primary. Education at any stance, level, or quantity is better than no education at all. Carol Bellamy, the head of UNICEF stated that, “ children must be able to turn to schools as places of learning, inclusion, stability, and life-saving information about HIV/AIDS. ”(Lewis 74) The world keeps between 105 – 120 million children out of school, including 44 million in Africa.

The problem is that school fees are standing highly in the way, many children come from families that live on much less than a dollar a day and are unable to feed their kids much less educate them. These children in poverty are needed to work and support their families, and in Morgan 5 some cases they may be the acting parent because their real ones may have been snatched by the harsh grip of aids. Universal education has been an issue for decades, and little success can be seen. When UNICEF president proposed the idea of abolishing school fees, Lewis felt that this may be a start to very efficient movement.

But sadly, when Carol Bellamy returned to her office in New York, no further plan to instigate what she had proposed had been produced. Lewis believes that perhaps one of her bosses scorned the idea because it affected so many other areas, “ it was felt... that some countries might be offended by the initiative on school fees; her imaginative education division was paralyzed by the thought of school overcrowding and the availability of teachers if large numbers of children descended on the schools; her financial strategists felt that the resources ere not in place to provide compensatory funding to governments that took the abolition plunge... The idea was dropped. (Lewis

77) This quote highlights the shortcomings of a major organization that has the power and efficiency to intervene and make a difference but decides not to. Every reason against Carol Bellamy's proposal was fixable in its own way, but the idea was still dropped because it wasn't pushed far enough, if members had rioted or created an organization to revolt the decision, perhaps 2010 would have been a midpoint year for complete Universal Education.

Furthermore, UNICEF was not the only problem; even schools in Africa who did abolish their registration fee were creating hidden costs such as uniforms and utensils. Once again these fees were roadblocks for any child in extreme poverty. UNICEF was quick to suggest talking to African Leaders and beginning an organization named, " The Global Movement for Children. " Lewis states that institutions like the IMF and The World Bank are directly the cause of school fees from the start, it was a part of their conditionality.

Once again, if Morgan 6 real difference should be composed; Africa needs financial aid. Donor countries provide such little funding for the country because they are blurred by numbers, zeros, and decimal places rather than the reason for the amount of money required. Lewis puts countries into two categories " supplicants and benefactors, on the flawed assumption that somehow the benefactors care about education... There is a financing gap of 5.5 billion a year. (Lewis 103) Once again the reluctance of providing practical funding for these countries shines a self-centered light on the developed world. It is known that education is the salvation of struggling societies, the knowledge creates a chance to beat poverty, better parenting, greater opportunity, and a line to economic growth. The Reduction Strategy

Papers confer that, “ the possibility of free primary education only on those developing countries with harmonious donor relations; and it’s so focused obsessively on dollars as to miss the prospect of creating a school system...”(Lewis 105). This quote shows the fact that these countries will have to rely on donors for a little while, and without proper support, their improved school systems will never be in full affect. Moreover, this chapter in relation with the thesis expresses the waste of potential for the countries children and people. Education creates so many opportunities for these children; a chance to break the cycle of poverty. With such eagerness and willingness to work, it is an absolute crime to forbid them.

It should be the world’s moral duty to cater to these crucial needs and provide the proper funding for education. Lewis has travelled through Africa and met with children who desire nothing more than to be in school – “ the children wanted it, wanted it more than anything else. ”(Lewis 78)

Continually, the youth of Africa are completely enthused by education and they respect its importance. They do not allow hardships to get into the way of their knowledge and ability to learn and Lewis specifically wrote, “ I remember thinking to Morgan 7 yself how wonderful it was, in the midst of the chaos of the pandemic, to have access to education, to have young minds with the opportunity to grapple with so many difficult issues, with matters of life and death. ” (Lewis 72) If truly given the chance, the young people of Africa can subside the hardships of their country and truly drive it into progression. Proof of success dealing with the abolishment of school fees has been given by the country of Tanzania, “ when it abolished fees in 2001, the numbers went up 100 percent, from 1. million to 3 million. ” (Lewis

90). Surely the direct success emerging from such a tangible and simple law would influence the rest of the world as well as Africa to yearn for free Universal Education. Chapter V: Solutions: A Gallery of Alternatives in Good Faith 5) The G8 summit will have to confront the fall in revenue for the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria 4) Create a true and formidable international agency on behalf of women as part of the multilateral UN system 3) Developed countries will have to replenish the Global Fund to provide food 2) Completely and permanently abolish school fees 1) The Jubilee Coalition should be expanded and completely cancel African Debt The problem in reality for every issue in Africa is their lack of funds and excessive interest payments that puts them into a great devastation. These countries try to come up with the money by cutting back on social programs such as education and health which threatens the lives of their people. They will never be able to develop into a country in which economy is stable enough to maintain regular payments.

Removing these would ease up on the pressure for the country and would help its people attain a beneficial lifestyle. The diminishing of these debts would allow the country to focus on other issues such as education, food production, health, and technology rather than trying to scrape up the money to make the interest payments. Morgan 8 Part B: This collection of intellectual and exhilarating lectures, *Race Against Time*, by Stephen Lewis is a book written with an immense amount of passion.

He shows complete attention, knowledge, and frustration when discussing matters such as, gender equality, education for children, the combat of AIDS/HIV, the cancellation of debts, and the surreal oppression that is put on

<https://assignbuster.com/race-against-time/>

much of Africa's population. Lewis's writing is striking; his methods so radical - the lectures are daring in a sort. He is painfully honest with every shortcoming he has encountered including actual names of people who may have failed in their actions or speeches while trying to create an impressionable change.

He praises and scrutinizes a variety of individuals, from international leaders, to UN member, UNICEF leaders and members, members of the Secretariat and from any other place. Lewis is confident in pointing out the wrong and suggesting what can be done to correct the situations. The absolute strength of this book is the detailed, accurate and first-hand examples that Lewis is able to share with such an engulfing passion. He is not only a man of strong opinions but one who can completely and utterly provide facts and stories that would create the ultimate proof of righteousness.

His stories are devastating, eye-opening, and heart warming and for his loyalty to the continent of Africa, I personally believe that he is qualified to write and speak the words in this book. He is not a man who visited the continent once and had an overwhelming experience, instead he is a man who remained devote to the continent not only by visiting but by preaching and working towards its improvement. His drive is motivated by his belief that success is on its way for Africa, but only if the world is ready to help.

Morgan 9

The only inadequacy I was able to depict about the book was the excessive use of acronyms and the introduction and explanation of all the meetings and summons that were held in a variety of years. Although these two

factors were helpful in conveying the purpose and effectiveness in the book, at times it was hard to follow. A solution to overcoming this shortcoming for readers would be to take more time reading it and analyzing it. Ideally, the reader should have full focus and attention when reading the words because it requires thought process and knowledge to grasp all the ideas that Lewis proposes and informs us about.

Overall, Race Against Time, can be classified as a book with knowledge and purpose leaking out of every page. Not a sentence can be named dull, dreary, or senseless. People everywhere should be educated on every issue touched upon in these lectures. The concerns are legitimate and moving because they are destroying Africa. In regards to AIDS/HIV, children are losing their parents because of the disease and will soon lose themselves. They are forced to take on roles that don't fit their age frame and are obliged to accept the harsh reality of life, death, and disease.

Stephen Lewis succeeded in informing us thoroughly of the faulty issues in the continent of Africa and at the same time provided beneficial and realistic solutions to combat each and every one. He has written a possible plan for success, and his solutions should be used to provide development in every area for Africa. Lewis offers us a thrilling sense of reality that truly sways any moral person to agree and feel the frustration he encounters daily. This book is inspiring and hopefully it will live to its potential and change the conditions of an impoverished continent. Morgan 10 Work Cited • Lewis, Stephen. A Race Against Time, 2005.