

A few post-Seattle '07 thoughts from Dale Otto
25 September 2007

1) If possible, have Vincent Khapoya write post-conference thoughts, suggestions, questions . . . I think this would be more interesting and useful than having him give a summary of his main presentation, largely because he has taken an interest in TEAA.

2) Atlanta '09 sounds very good, and I hope it happens. If it does, my program suggestions for consideration are:

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- Have more time for participant discussion, and include an appropriate process for capturing significant and/or relevant thoughts.

- Consider having a 'call for presentations' to TEAA members. A possible format would be two or three concurrent 30-minute presentations + discussion. Each presentation would be substantive (e.g. a topic concerning contemporary or historical sub-Saharan Africa/East Africa, such as "Curricula, Relevancy, and the Current State of (Kenyan) Secondary Education," or "The East African Union: A

Then-to-now Review," "Problems in (East) African Political Leadership: Corruption," a topic in Human Evolution, "Race, Skin Color and Identity," "What are the Requirements for Democracy in Any Country?" etc.) I think that there are very interesting and possibly relevant sessions our members could provide. 'Twould be nice to do this before we all get to old to articulate.

I don't think these should or could replace a featured speaker or two, but with enough lead time, these 'mini-presentations' could also relate to the content of a featured speaker..

- The Saturday morning panel presentation by TEAA leaders was very informative. Please include this again, but allow for discussion and include an appropriate process for capturing important questions and ideas.
- Have a conference evaluation & feedback process.
- Prepare a Conference Report document for all TEAA members.

3) Unless Ponce de Leon left soon-to-be-discovered directions to the Fountain of Youth, TEAA is an organization on borrowed time. What do we want to persist beyond ourselves? If anything, what sort of endowment and structure would be workable and acceptable? Or what other organization would use our 'endowment' for the purposes we want and with as little cost to the "TEAA endowed action fund" as possible? Perhaps this could be a website conversation..

4) Here is a bit more concerning my thoughts about accountability, possible paternalism, etc. First, Brooks,

thanks much for sending me the e-mails between Ed, Henry and Okunya. I have no doubt that TEAA grant funds are fully accounted for by the recipients. In fact, it is this that I am concerned about.

If we reverse the donor/receiver context, we can imagine a wealthy E. African organization like TEAA giving funds to impoverished schools in America. Selected American schools would be invited to apply for grants, and funding decisions would be made in E. Africa. The money would come, and the receiver would account for every shilling/dollar received. Decisions about need, gender balance, regional balance, etc., would be made in E. Africa; E. African visitors from the organization would come to visit, and would be genuinely but carefully hosted. Without having some accountability managed by and within the American/receiver side, would we experience any sense of trust? Would we become better at managing the given money if a local, transparent committee or board managed the accountability – and the wealthy E. African organization only ‘macro-managed’?

I had an interesting exchange with Rick, the ACCES representative. He described at great length how ACCES tracks every bit of donated money – and how the sole role of the Kakamega-area recipients is to spend precisely according to grant terms and submit complete receipts to his office. There apparently is no local accountability and authority, and so local capacity-building for these attributes would seem to be absent. I asked him if there was any plan for him to ‘work himself out of the job’ of overseeing the

smallest details of fund expenditures and results; he was startled at the question and said “NO, never.”

I wonder if this isn't a form of 'neo-paternalism,' whereby donor organizations continue to treat the recipients as tacitly untrustworthy. Without entrusting (some) accountability to a local group whose members represent both TEAA and fund-receiving schools, how will such attributes as transparency, honesty, faithful adherence to the stated purpose of a grant (or to any other aspect of public/political E. African life) be nurtured?

A balanced paradigm may look something like

Authority

Resources

Responsibility

Accountability

Imagine that I drew lines connecting Authority, Responsibility and Accountability.

- Responsibility and Accountability, without Authority, create dependence;
- Resources without Authority creates dependence;
- Authority-only creates Control only, devoid of responsibility (for larger questions than how grant

funds are spent -- how corruption, misuse of funds, 'receiver fatigue' can be ameliorated, etc.)

A balanced arrangement provides all three, and resources are tied to Responsibility and Accountability.

I don't know if any of this helps. Maybe we could find out if TEAA gave, say, \$30,000 to a trustworthy, reliable, honest E. African committee and told them to set up a process to find and give it in grants to American schools which are struggling with the "No Child Left Behind" requirements..

Dale