

# Weekly Activism Debates

## 1) Fight against corruption in the agriculture sector (film projection)

The fight of activist Bernard Njonga and the NGO in alleged corruption in the agriculture sector, embezzlement of buses for farmers groups through the creation of fake ones, leading to a crisis in the corn market.

1. Will the farmers win the fight?
2. Why were the victim farmers not organized by themselves?
3. Is exposing a problem equals to solving it?
4. Compare this with the fight against corruption in takeover of foreign importers on frozen chicken.
5. Who is more to blame – donors or corrupt officials?

Presented by Ofir

## 2) Music is the weapon – can music create a change? (film projection on Fela Kuti)

Fela Kuti the late musician had danced in his underwear calling Nigeria's dictators liars and thieves. Singing in Pidgin English to be understood by the common man, he railed against Christianity, injustice and tyranny. Fela was jailed and beaten again and again for screaming at those who'd ruled Nigeria by the butt of a gun and often the barrel. And he'd lost his seventy-eight year old mother doing so after government soldiers stormed his house and threw her out a window. They set fire to Fela's compound and cracked his skull. Fela sang of the funeral procession, of setting his mother's coffin down in front of Dodan Barracks, where the president lived, so that Obasanjo would have to bury her, himself. Social Activism through music Fela (the musician or artist) uses music to portray the injustice, corruption and rotten system of Nigeria government through the military regimes and others.

1. Has Fela changed reality in Nigeria?
2. How is music different than other mediums in bringing about a change?
3. Why did the government not kill Fela, what protected him?
4. Is a suit and tie less African than underwear?
5. Does Christianity mean abandoning tradition?

Presented by Ofir

## 3) Protest Art – how effective in the society?

Activism on art – Culture in general, painting, drawing and photography in particular are used as tools for peaceful demonstration to decry the ills of the society so as to attract the interest of the public and the leaders in order to find solutions to correct them. The drawings and paintings are impacted with meaningful message related to some

malpractices in the society such as war, violation of human rights, discrimination, corruption... the presentation is illustrated by some examples of protest art and culture jamming such as the Susan Crile's work on the war in Irak and Banksy on graffiti art.

1. Can art and culture be recognized as form activism?
2. Is activism on art effective in Africa and in Cameroon in particular?
3. How can protest art and culture jamming be developed on Cameroon?

Presented by Alain - LAGA Head of Legal Unit.

#### **4) The passing away of President Omar Bongo: Are Africa's Dinosaur Presidents racing towards extinction?**

We are experiencing a shift from one era of post colonial African leaders leaving power through death to a new and troublesome one. They have withstood the wind of change of the early 90s; they are getting over 70s and death is catching up with them. What are they now doing, re-inventing or re-incarnating themselves? They are trying to beat death. How is that possible? With the typical examples of Omar Bongo of Gabon and Eyadema of Togo, the presentation shows how sons of these 30-years-and-above serving Presidents or dinosaurs are contesting and "winning" elections. Troublesome indeed?

1. Is there a power-cult problem in Africa?
2. Is there anything the people can do or any they just pawns in a game of chess played by the corrupt and undemocratic political elite?
3. What does this mean to Africa's future?
4. Is this still godfatherism?

Eric Tah – LAGA Media Department

#### **5) Newspeak and development – can language be a means of control?**

The film 1984 is screened to understand the term and the idea that a dictatorship be maintained without necessary the use of power. Manipulation of language can be used as a tool of oppression. A presentation later explains Newspeak in a modern context and the examples of the use of newspeak in Cameroon and in the development world.

1. Is there need to change meaning of words?
2. Why should word meanings considered a dangerous tool to bring about a change?
3. Are politicians not using newspeak to cover their lies?

Anna Egbe – Linguist – LAGA Media department.

#### **6) Amendment of the law on the creation, organization et functioning of ELECAM –**

The law of ELECAM was modified by an amendment on March 25th, 2010. While the defenders of the revision find it convenient and necessary for free and transparent

elections for Cameroon, opponents considers it as a legitimization of the electoral manipulations by the opposite camp. The presentation presents the arguments of both parties, and presents the opportunities which the reform offers to both the party in the power and the parties of opposition, without forgetting sections of the law that affects the civil society.

1. Who justifies the sidelining of the civil society in the pre-electoral dialogues?
2. Can the opposition really win elections in Cameroon with this law?
3. Is the government already trembling?

Serge Banyimbe – LAGA Media Department.

### **7) GRASP – Gorilla struggle for existence**

The film -The Gorilla King is screened to understand the reproduction, growth and survival of gorillas in the mountain. It shows how the gorillas live together in small groups, their daily activities and leadership. The idea behind the film is to portray the importance attached to gorilla and more reason why they should be protected. Titus the hero in film takes us through a generation of gorillas living in close harmony until the moment he has to bequeath his authority to a young and stronger rival.

1. Are man's action not going to wipe gorillas in Africa?
2. What must have become of Titus?
3. How did the outbreak of the war around area where the gorillas live affect them?

Presenter Ian – GRASP.

### **9) International meetings – Biodiversity**

The presentation on this topic is to share some experiences in international advocacy in wildlife conservation and sustainable management which is considered necessary to combat cross-border illegal wildlife trade. International negotiations on this issue must break new ground and find innovative and radical solutions for governments can not solve problems on their own, civil society, NGOs and citizens have a part to play.

Vincent Mfonfu – LAGA Media Head

### **10) Une verite qui derange – Global warming**

The documentary film – the inconvenient truth presents the gloom picture of how we have tampered with earth and is global warming has set in. Al Gore presents the scientific facts about what we are doing wrong, carbon emissions etc. The facts he presents are clear, our world is heating up and so, because of our actions. He predicts what we will be expecting and makes a strong argument for a change in the politics in a world where science is manipulated by greed. The inconvenient truth is screened to understand the notion of climate change and its repercussions if urgent need is not taken. The idea

behind the film is a call for the world to take measures on the importance of protecting the world Ecosystem.

1. Is global warming actually the cause of man's actions or is it not just a cyclic phenomenon
2. Are politicians doing the right thing
3. Is money controlling politicians or politicians controlling the money?

### **11) Darwin's nightmare**

Social decadence, hardship is the situation found in most Africa society Tanzania not being an exemption. The film depicts the socio-economic situation of the area of fishing in Tanzania where unemployment, prostitution, theft and misery is the order of the day. Huge class difference is depicted in this film with rich unscrupulous fish exploiters pillaging the resources for themselves. On the other hand the poor; derelict and heavily ill lay close to the rubbish of the fish industry on the right side and on the left side are the rich in solid concrete built mansions. It wipes up sympathy for abject poverty and demonstrates the ridiculous in some of our ruling elite. Anyone interested in helping the poor will really see why their interest is wholly justified.

1. Are our governments making the right choices?
2. What upsets one most in the film? The filthiness, the poverty, the breakdown of social networks, what?
3. What are the dangers of introducing foreign species in an ecosystem?

### **12) Presidential Elections in Nigeria: The Events and the Politics**

The presentation describes the events that happened before, during and after the elections while highlighting areas which are very wanting in African "democracies". It focuses on those electoral irregularities and fraud that cogently led to the violence in one and post election protestations in the other. At the same time, it takes a look at the politicking in the making of African presidents. You will understand while perusing the presentation that the mere religious divide in Nigeria may be a strong dissuasive factor for such national political violence as in Kenya and that the Kenyan elections turned violent because of not only a mere tribe divide but also and vitally because the opposition stood firm and strong to take back its victory from the hands of political thieves and zombies.

1. Do you actually think Mwai Kibaki won any elections?
2. Why are elections always so problematic in African, why all the irregularities?
3. Why is political godfatherisms dangerous for nascent democracies?

Eric Tah – LAGA Media Department

### **13) Sharkwater – Marine enforcement**

The film is a struggle of an individual, Rob Stewart to establish a law to govern marine species like sharks and whales. This film shows the struggle of Rob Stewart together with activist Paul Watson to put an end to the massacred of marine population from Costa-Rica through Guatemala. Paul Watson in his struggle uses violence to attack corrupt governments in complicity with marine traffickers who trade illegally in the Asiatic ocean to endanger marine species.

1. Is violence the ultimate resort to enforce the wildlife law?
2. What difference can one make between the activism work of Paul Watson and that of LAGA?

Presented by Eric Kaba Tah

#### **14) Genocide and ethnic cleansing prevention in Cameroon – A fight for Cameroon's unity**

The presentation of this paper is aimed at drawing the attention of the audience to a future probable genocide in Cameroon, if Cameroonians don't change their attitude to the idea of ethnic superiority. The idea of belonging to an ethnic group considered as superior or looking down on other ethnic group has a spirit of division which if not prevented can lead to civil war and probably a genocide.

1. When people in Cameroon say to the others "allez chez vous" meaning "go back to your areas of origin".
2. What has become of the balance appointment policy when we know that a vast majority of SDOs in the country come from the Centre-Sud axis?
3. What preventive measures have the government put in place?

Afanyi – AC Coordinator

#### **15) PALF report – Difficulties in replication efforts in Congo**

Between Sept 2006 and March 2009 Josias Sipehouo of LAGA went on mission to the Republic of Congo with a major objective, the putting in place of the PALF project on wildlife law enforcement. During that period, in a country where security and the functioning of the institutions are major concerns because these institutions are still recovering from civil war, he comes up against threats. He has to face these threats and fight corruption after the arrests of traffickers through regular jail visits. Despite all the adversity, the results were forthcoming and for illustration a trafficker in chimpanzee was sentenced to 12 months in prison and to pay as fines and damages the sum of 1.1 million FRS.

1. Why did the project not go beyond Brazzaville?
2. What comparison can you make between Cameroon and Congo since the two countries have experienced similar enforcement projects?
3. What actions did you take when someone was irregularly released from jail?

Josias – LAGA Legal Department.

### **16) Sunset in Beijing: the Ladies Summit**

With all the lofty promises made to better the woman's plight during the huge and much trumpeted convention, this presentation takes us down memory lane to look at where and when it all began. Where it started, how it evolved and what declarations were made. It critically examines these declarations against a backdrop of some telling statistics of the woman's mediocre plight. What progress has been made? Not much anyway, or in some instances we see a backward movement to even lesser freedoms for women.

1. What is the percentage of women in Cameroon's parliament?
2. Is it only women who are supposed to fight for women's rights, where are the men or what are the men doing individual to help the women out?
3. What explains the huge illiteracy rate in some countries in Africa?
4. Is it not just normal that women and men can not be equal?

Eric Tah – LAGA Media Department

### **17) Internet fraud – wildlife law enforcement**

The presentation of internet fraud is to create awareness among many officials in the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and other partners for the fact that it is another form of wildlife violation even though the wildlife products rarely in most cases do not exist. The goal of such exposé is also to show how various Departments within the organization intervene before, during and after internet wildlife trafficker is arrested. It exposes those who tarnish the image of Cameroon abroad; a notion that is on the increase whereby Cameroon is labeled as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and from where a lot of fraudsters originate perpetuating the "419" phenomenon imported from Nigeria. There are laws against this phenomenon but the application is non-existent because of fraud and complicity of those charged directly or indirectly to fight this type of fraud.

1. To what extent can this Internet wildlife fraud negatively affect the image of Cameroon if nothing is done about it?
2. Given the challenges involved to track and arrest the offenders, how can international collaboration contribute in eradicating this type of fraud?
3. How can the fight against Internet wildlife fraud contribute to the general fight against corruption?

Sone Nkoke – Head of Investigation Department

### **18) Sarafina – South Africa Apartheid**

Sarafina is a movie about apartheid in South Africa. It depicts the courage of one woman, to stand up to racial segregation that existed in that country. She successfully defies her hierarchy and sets in motion protests against racial South Africa. However freedom came after a lot of struggle, lots of killing and resistance from the black activism groups. Apartheid crumbled under the pressure of activism and other forces.

1. Use of violence for change, right or wrong?
2. Sarafina proves her bravery by re-interpreting her content notes during her courses in class, should teachers use such influence their students
3. The use networks in effective uprisings and protests?

### **19) Assessment of international solidarity in Haiti earthquake**

A presentation on how the international reacted during and after the earthquake in Haiti. All the forms of aid (financial, medical, material, human) that was given by components of the international community that is Governments, NGOs, international organizations, for-profit organizations and private persons, as well as the reasons for such assistance were presented and analyzed in quantity and in quality.

1. Aid given to Haiti is it just affective or really effective?
2. What comment can be made of Africa's aid in general and Cameroon's aid in particular to Haiti
3. Can the international community put in place a specific convention on international aid for catastrophes?
4. Has the Aid Cameroon provided finally got to the right destination?
5. Is the amount of aid granted from Africa sufficient or not?

Alain Bernard – LAGA Legal department.

### **20) Trade in small arms (deadly trade)**

The presentation shows how small and light arms are being trafficked in Africa and to raise awareness due to the devastating effects of this trade on humans, the environment, the economy and the political and social destabilization in Africa. This trade has been going on for long and is ranked the second richest trade after drugs and wildlife trade. S Some questions:

1. What is an illegal arm?
2. Why are all the treaties signed not yielding fruits?
3. Is it that those who sign these treaties are those involved in this trade?
4. Can the trade in small and light arms trade be stopped?
5. Is killing one person less evil than killing 100?

Arrey Emmanuel Enow – Management Department.

### **21) Books that changed the world.**

"When people think of things that change the world, they tend to think of extraordinary events: the assassination of leaders; the invasion of countries; the havoc wreaked by natural disasters. All extremely dramatic, but there is something less attention-grabbing but just as powerful - books.", Lord Bragg

1. Who actually changed the world? The books or people who wrote the books?
2. Had these books changed Cameroon?
3. Can books change the way of Cameroon?
4. Which type of books can change Cameroon?
5. Why are there not many Cameroonian books that have contributed to change the world?
6. Why did these individuals write to change the world?

Arrey Emmanuel Enow – management assistant.

## **22) Gandhi – Indian liberator!**

The film Gandhi portrays the commitment of a single man who stood for the freedom of his people in his country. His intellectual schemes and resistant to non allied policy gained independence for his people through peaceful and non-violent actions. This film typifies the fact that an ordinary, simple man can bring change. All it takes is commitment and believe in your course. Gandhi's reputation cuts through generation and will forever be of interests to all schools of activism: violent or not.

1. Violence vs. Non violence: should all protests be non-violent? Sarafina the South African film portrays violent protests but both protests were successful.
2. Is he the only true liberator?
3. Must one be poor before being able to make a change?

## **23) Che Guevera**

This guerilla war specialist and freedom fighter, Che Geuevara, launches a freedom path with Fidel Castro by crossing over, in a rickety boat, to Cuba, far off his homeland of Argentina, to help Fidel Castro fight and topple Batista's dictatorship. They instill still and good morals in their fighters and confidently marched to success in Havana, the Cuban capital. They carried out the only successful socialist revolution in the Americas. The movie illustrates what it takes to use military force to outdo a dictatorship.

1. Should foreigners take part in liberation struggles?
2. Should liberation fighters take part in pillaging or are they any morals in war?
3. Should freedom be achieved through wars?

## **24) Outfoxed - Journalism war**

The film is an exposition of the manipulation of information by the big media cartels through broadcast for hidden political agenda. In order to foster the Republican Party the Murdoch media empire feeds the public with lies, bias news and reporting. The film itself is very activist, unveiling the masquerade behind the Murdoroch Empire for all to see. This calls to question the ethics of the profession.

1. Should someone be allowed to control so much media control in a democracy?

2. What is wrong with today's broadcast journalism, does the profession has any ethics or has the morals changed
3. What is proper broadcast and what is not?

### **25) Mc Libel**

This film exposes what the most powerful corporation like Mc Donald in the world is doing. A small campaigning group of activist formed to coordinate protest against pollution and dirt caused by the Mc Donald Corporation. They accuse the Mc Donald companies of endangering the health of the people, cheating and causing heart disease, deceiving customer and destroying rain forest. In fact the film is an expository of the fight of a small group against the mighty Mc Donald.

4. Are corporations human?
5. Can activism actually change anything, is it not mere shouting without any real bite
6. Who is to blame, the consumer who is not vigilant or the corporations

### **26) Ted - Spiritual emptiness and Culture and Language**

The significant of life which is not religious issues but facing life issues per se. what is the purpose of living? For money? The world view is betting your life on something and carrying on with the thing. Money is not everything about life but what we have as vision to do to develop the world and the well being of people in the world. Good life is not the issue of looking good, feeling good, but doing well to people.

Rick Warren explores his own religious values which he uses as the basis for doing good to the public at large. He thinks his religion forms the basis for which he seeks the good and to do good in the society, for the benefit of the others. His activism is seeking to respect his religious values which tell him what to do in the society which is invariably good and this can make a change in the lives of members of the society.

Wade Davis presents the importance and cultural values of ethnic groups in the world that promote development and change in the world at large. A lost of a culture will mean loosing the heritage of a group of people. Wades Davis calls for the preservation of culture or tradition because each culture is governed by a wisdom expressed through its language which gives meaning to the world.

This opens the debate between tradition and modernity.

1. If religion (his Christianity) has values, as Warren argues, that forms the basis of his action is this not against Davis who argues for the importance of tradition. Is tradition not set against modernity? Old traditional systems against the modern Christian religion for example?
2. How will things be if the world could have just one language?

### **27) Failure of development in Africa**

The presentation tries to analyze all the buzz words of the development myth that each Cameroonian hears on radio everyday - like Millennium Development Goals or Human Development Index. It tries to take any citizen, and supposed beneficiary of development through a journey of understanding and evaluating these vague terms, demystifying what many consider undereducated to understand. The presentation shows that sub-Saharan Africa is moving backwards in every single indicator, while the technocrats writing the reports try to downplay the grave picture with beautiful words. It coins the term counter-development for the situation of sub-Saharan Africa

1. Why would Donor's report have the interest of deceiving us?
2. What are the contributing factors for the public's lack of knowledge or disinformation?
3. Why has the data analyzed in the presentation not appear in Cameroon's media?
4. What are the causes for this counter-development?
5. Can Cameroon be considered as a developing country?

Ofir Drori Management Department

### **28) Failure of Development in Africa –part II – causes**

The presentation starts from the conclusion of part I on counter-development and now explores the reasons for the failure of aid in Africa. It reviews different researches correlating effectiveness of aid with different factors – from civil strife, to regions, to HIV and more. No correlation is found whatsoever. In fact research showed there is no correlation at all between level of aid to development. Other research shows direct correlation between corruption index and ineffectiveness of development aid. It explores different examples of measuring how much is embezzled before arriving to the beneficiaries – as one classic research of measuring corruption in the micro level shows – more than 87%.

1. Can corruption be combated?
2. Is corruption more a fault of donors or an African government?
3. What contributed to this situation?

Ofir Drori Management Department

### **29) The Revision of the Constitution (Constitutional change) – Is it democracy ?**

The constitution is defined as the supreme law of the state and it describes the functioning modalities of institutions. To revise the constitution is thus not a simple act and it should be democratic. The presentation shows how revising the constitution should not be a common and simple phenomenon that follows circumstances and opportunities so as not to risk devaluing it.

With rising prices for food, Africa is undergoing serious inflation and economic problems which is a result of the politics. This presentation shows how heads of states in sub-Saharan Africa use constitutional change to stay in power till death while forgetting that a

statesman has some important qualities: knowing how to conquer power, knowing how to rule and when to leave.

This presentation essentially shows the flexibility of constitutions in Cameroon in particular and Africa in general and the maneuvers used by those who change the constitution for their interests.

1. Could African countries not operate without a constitution that, anyway, is something imported as they operated before without any constitutions?
2. Is a monarchical system not the convenient option for Africa taking into consideration that African presidents want to stay in power for life.
3. Is Africa ready for western democratic style of government?
4. Is the political, economic and intellectual elite not taking advantage of the ignorance of the masses to block political change?

Nyah Aime – Legal Department

### **30) The financial and economic crisis, threat or opportunity for developing countries, the case of Cameroon**

Taking some lessons from Chinese wisdom that says a difficulty may be an occasion to progress in another way we thought it helpful to review this crisis on weak economies and we also asked questions on how this could be an opportunity for Cameroon.

In general the presentation discusses some areas affected by the crisis.

Capital flux problems, fragile production systems, slowing down of exports and falling budget revenues. Despite these dark negative effects of the crisis, the Cameroonian economy should see this as a chance for conscience examination by the political authorities for the hauling of the fundamentals of the economy for an eventual growth. The government will thus have to boost economic growth

1. Can we reconcile economic growth and conservation of the environment?
2. Can we equitably distribute fruits from economic growth?
3. Africa or the rest of the world who was hit hardest and were African politicians up to the task?

Rollin Matike – Legal Department