OUR STORY

Tribeless Youth is a youth initiative established in 2016 with a view to promote peaceful coexistence among the youth in Kenya. The organization uses ART, online and offline platforms, to demystify the ideologies of “my tribe, my people” with a view of galvanizing unity among Kenya’s youthful generation. Tribeless youth is anchored on the constitution and calls for all stakeholders to observe and uphold all the national values spelt in the supreme law of the land, which is the 2010 constitution of Kenya.

Our mission is to catalyze the generation of change makers; a powerful youthful generation that overcomes stereotypes used by politicians, and tribal lords to perpetuate hatred and chaos. We operate under four main principles of

1. Good Governance
2. Social Justice
3. Transparency & Accountability
4. Inclusion

Through our online platforms, Tribeless Youth has been working with social media influencers to drive conversations on what it means to belong. This includes belonging to an ethnic community that makes up the wider Kenyan society, as we know it. The aim of the online conversations was intended to challenge the wider view that the problem with the Kenyan situation is the tribes, while in reality, the problems lie in disenfranchisement of youth, who are largely seen as political tools intended to propel a few people to power, while the rest of the youth remain unrepresented.
You will never find justice in a country where criminals make all the rules. The government continues to ignore police brutality cases that shoot up with the curfew regulations and turns a blind eye to the current corruption embezzlement cases in the Ministry of Health dubbed Covid19 funds and PPE. The president refuses to address the issue yet does not delay urging citizens to stay at home, sanitize and/or wash hands regularly without further wonder where the citizens are to get water for hand washing leave alone soap, and their livelihoods in the homes that they are supposed to stay. Food is an issue as one needs to be on a given 'list' otherwise they are bound to starve “safely” at home, the elderly are also left to fend for themselves as the Older Persons-Grants has become a thing of the past.

Religion has also created a toll on citizens where churches that are supposed to provide spiritual hope and support to believers have become ‘partakers’ of corruption. Church elders have now turned to the worshippers for financial support since the start of the pandemic since politicians ceased making their ever so generous ‘donations’ to the churches. They give believers false beliefs and threats upon giving offerings, tithes and seeds alias “toa mbegu” to receive God's blessings or otherwise receiving God's wrath respectively. Till and Paybill numbers have replaced the weekly messages of hope. ‘Support this’, ‘Contribute to that’ are the new normal in places of worship who now air their spiritual messages on social media pages. Although there are some churches that offer food and donations to the vulnerable highly affected by the pandemic, most citizens are still left to starve hopelessly abandoned by the society and their government. The closure of churches following the social distancing mitigation measure against the corona virus by WHO may have protected the Lord's sheep from being preyed on in the coated form of corruption in the places of worship.

Families are left homeless and unsafe as the government continues to demolish houses and through police, beat them up for not obeying orders on curfew regulations. Where does the line lie? How is a peaceful demonstration by activists a greater wrong than theft of billions of shillings meant to help the vulnerable cope with the effects of the global pandemic? Culprits are mocking the society upon being questioned of the funds claiming that they cannot take responsibility of the allegations as they “fear of their lives”, and the government clearly condoning the actions, they go ahead to arrest activist's demonstration against the theft of the funds. They remain unbothered about their actions as they know that this too, just like the NHIF, NYS and the Mega-Dams scandals among others, is shall be overlooked with delinquents getting away with a mere slap on the wrists.

Born out of handshake, the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) was masked with the aim of ending ethnic antagonism in the country. Since the launch of the report last year, politicians and leaders are yet to review the proposed report as it has not been made public by the executive government. Instead, they are pressured into signing it blindly for approval. The Jubilee party leader and the leader of opposition have teamed up to steal from Kenyans through this initiative. It is used to cover up fraud and corruption in the political structure of the country as the ‘new’ constitution: this explains why the Opposition party leader suddenly stopped calling out the ruling party for corruption and misappropriation of resources after a private meeting in the statehouse followed by a public agreement action alias the handshake. The BBI report is used by the prominent to expand the executive structure in their favors and impose leaders on wananchi come the next general elections. Which makes one wonder on the sudden change of heart of the opposition leader who has been eyeing the presidential seat for give or take 13 years in counting.
A binding agreement sealed by the Handshake has left the country with no one to call out the injustices and corruption cases in the ruling party. What was once a force to fear, the opposition party led by Baba is now a part of the problem characterized by hypocrisy and pretense for selfish personal gains. He was once quoted saying “as a country, we will have to decide whether we would rather let corruption continue for the sake of peace, or fight corruption no matter the consequences”, and now has no comment whatsoever on current corruption cases. Raila and his party have come out to fight off the graft claims claiming that an audit is first required before fingers are pointed, instead is condemning the media for reporting the theft of the public resources at KEMSA. A government without opposition will have the economy crushing as already witnessed as there is no one to stop or hold the leaders accountable for injustices and corruption.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to ravage the socio-economic lives of people around the world. While it is said that tough times often bring the best out of people, this has not been the case. The pandemic has unfortunately made people get more mean, more selfish and with minimal compassion. Institutions such as churches that were known to offer comfort and support to members of the society have withdrawn this. The affluent in the society caring only about themselves and their ability to adopt and withstand the new normal, paying little and less consideration to the vulnerable – they that have had their livelihoods and means of income come to a standstill. Thus, there are land owners chasing away tenants from their residential houses for failure of paying rent while others are seen removing the doors and roofings to the rented houses. This leaves the vulnerable homeless n fearful as the dusk brings the brutal police with it who forcefully enforce the curfew regulations by the government.
Sonia Virdee: The Gift that keeps on Giving

Few days ago, we braved the numbing morning weather and set out to talk to a lady whose extraordinary work we’ve been hounding on social media platforms. Upon arrival at her family home in South B, we were welcomed by a rather fierce growl from “Simba”, their 7 year old Rottweiler. But the nervousness of the dog growl was quickly washed away by a smile and a cheerful welcome from Sonia Virdee into their home.

Sonia was living and working in the UK. She had flown home briefly to spend some quality time with her family, before the Covid-19 pandemic struck. The crisis had caught the entire world by surprise, and so was our ill prepared Kenyan government. Having flown in from a foreign country and tested negative for the Covid-19 virus, Sonia was still forced into a quarantine facility in one of Nairobi’s high-end hotels within the city. To guarantee her family safety, she purchased blankets and “Maasai shukas” to keep the homeless families warm at night.

Walking around the streets and slums of Nairobi, Sonia was dismayed by the state of difficulty that the pandemic had heaped on mankind. The inhumane demolitions of homes of people during this economic crisis were a toll order, but she was determined. Sonia with the help of other volunteers set up a kitchen at the Sikh temple in South C to prepare hot meals for the afflicted families, children, and the elderly and people Living with Disabilities. Sonia, her friends and family worked tirelessly day and night to ensure that no one slept on an empty stomach. With the few monetary donations received, they purchased blankets and “Maasai shukas” to keep the homeless families warm at night.

But her acts of kindness rubbed the wrong shoulders. One day, as she traversed deep into the slums of Kariobangi, to distribute food and clothing, hired goons descended upon her and her taxi driver. At gunpoint she was told to leave Kariobangi and never come back. At some point, a machete was brandished across her face, slightly cutting her upper lip. Sonia left Kariobangi with head held high and with renewed inspiration, she decided to do more. Nothing was going to stop her from achieving the goals she had set out.

With gas on the pedal, Sonia, her family and friends have expanded their food-cooking venture. On a day-to-day basis, they make sure that someone starving across the city has a hot plate of food and a warm blanket.

Street families who’ve often been ignored by society have been beneficiaries of Sonia’s acts of kindness. Smiles on their faces tell it all.

Sanitary towels from supporters of the cause have come in handy to help girls and women who cannot afford them. The family has also mobilized friends from the medical field to carry out medical check ups and provide medicine to families that cannot afford medical care during this time.

“it’s been a refreshing experience so far”, says Sonia, who at this time is running late for training and a meeting with other well-wishers.

As we wrap up our conversation with Sonia, her mother, a beautiful, jovial middle-aged lady walks in with a tray of hot coffee and cocoa. As she places the tray down on the coffee table, she asks us to keep Sonia in our prayers and thoughts. Sonia, the gift that keeps on giving and a mother of a 10 year old daughter has stage 3 cancer, another disastrous monster that has threatened and ravaged mankind for decades. Silence engulfs the atmosphere, but we promise to keep Sonia in our prayers and thoughts as she fights the battle. Amidst, the silence, Sonia passionately tells us, “No one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone.” We embrace as we exit their home and promise to see each other again.

Food and monetary donations streamed in from well-wishers and she tasked herself to strategize on how well she could lift the lives of other Kenyans.

Her first stop was a visit to Kariobangi slums, where a number of the slum residents had been rendered homeless by the demolitions carried out by Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, in a bid to reclaim the land where more than 5,000 families have been living since 2008.

Sonia Virdee
Tribeless Youth is a young people led initiative based in Nakuru County, established with the goal of promoting democratic values and peaceful coexistence among the youth in Kenya. Our initiative seeks to demistify the ideologies of ‘my tribe, my people’ in order to enhance unity amongst Kenya’s younger generation and turn them into change makers. It is an initiative that wants to oversee the mental shift away from a tribal-based politics. Our young team hopes to stimulate elections where leaders are chosen based on their capabilities and policies, rather than their tribes.