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SELF-HELP AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

By

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ABSTRACT

One of the main emphases of the Special Rural Development Programme in Kenya was supposed to be the involvement of local communities in economic development efforts. Self-help activity in the past has been strongly pre-occupied with projects which absorb, rather than produce resources. In this paper the six S.R.D.P. areas are examined in terms of the intensity of so-called 'economic' or 'economy developing' self-help activity versus the 'social/domestic' or 'welfare' variety, and a comparison is made with selected non-S.R.D.P. areas. It is found that the preponderance of 'welfare' projects is as strong or stronger in the S.R.D.P. areas as elsewhere. Various means for promoting self-help along more economically productive lines are then discussed, along with the existing approaches and structures, and some alternatives are suggested.

SELF-HELP AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA<sup>1</sup>INTRODUCTION

The Special Rural Development Programme (S.R.D.P.) in Kenya was established with the intention of finding ways to improve the effectiveness of programmes designed to raise rural living standards. Descriptions and evaluations of the Programme are available from a variety of sources (e.g. 4; 13; 14; 17) and there is no need to give a detailed account here of the S.R.D.P. as a whole. The Programme is supposed to operate on the principles of experimentation, replicability and the maximum use of existing resources. As pointed out in the first I.D.S. evaluation of the S.R.D.P. (4), a fourth principle, that of research and evaluation, is implicit in the first three, if they are to be put in practice. Briefly, experimentation refers to the need to test the feasibility and effectiveness of novel development strategies in comparison with usual approaches. Thus, to start a livestock development project in an area is not in itself experimental, but to do so with credit arrangements or extension techniques different from those which normally apply, and to follow up the effects of such innovation, can be deemed experimental. Replicability simply means that S.R.D.P. projects, although initiated in only a few relatively small 'pilot' areas, should be carried out with a view towards their potential for duplication in other suitable parts of the country. Therefore, a project which depends on highly specialised -- and hence not readily available on a large scale -- technical expertise would not be replicable (unless only the experimental aspect requires this expertise). On the other hand, a project whose requirements, in terms of labour, capital equipment and so on, would easily be available elsewhere would be appropriate in terms of its replicability. The third principle, making maximum use of existing resources, is really an extension of the replicability principle, highlighting as it does the importance of using what is readily available and avoiding excessive dependence upon external technical or material assistance. As stated in the 1970-1974 Development Plan, the Programme "is to utilise existing resources of staff and finance as far as possible, and to seek external assistance to support what will, in effect, be a large scale self-help effort". (7, p.177)

One of the most important points of emphasis in the original S.R.D.P.

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1. The authors would like to thank Mr. Dallas Browne, a member of the I.D.S. research team for the recent S.R.D.P. evaluation exercise (5), for his assistance during the early stages of this paper's preparation. We also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of I.D.S. research assistants Ms. Lydia Njoroge, Mr. Samuel Gachugi and Mr. King'ori Thega in collecting information on self-help projects from Department of Social Services records. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. E.V. Winans for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of the report.

objectives was that of local involvement. The Programme was supposed to establish procedures and techniques for self-generating development, a term which implies "the development of a capacity for self-determinism, self-reliance, and self-directed promotion of growth and development". (4, pp 13-14) The encouragement of "active participation in the planning and execution of S.R.D.P." was also stated as one of the original Programme objectives. (4, p.12)

The involvement of local communities in development activities was a firmly established practice in Kenya before the advent of the S.R.D.P., since it is the essence of the country's flourishing harambee, or self-help movement. Self-help, on the face of it, had a lot to offer the S.R.D.P. in terms of harnessing local energy to bring about improved standards of living. A brief review of the nature and scope of harambee activity readily bears this out.

The considerable contribution to capital formation which has been made since independence by harambee projects undertaken in local communities throughout the country has been widely noted. Prosser reports "at a very conservative estimate" that capital formation through self-help rose from Kf0.6 million in 1964 to Kf1.93 million in 1967. (20; also see 24) By 1973 the figure was Kf4.3 million. (11, p.4) An analysis of project types shows that certain kinds of self-help activity are substantially more popular with local communities than others. In particular, the data show the preponderance of what have been termed 'welfare' or 'social/domestic', as opposed to 'economy developing' projects. The 'social/domestic' category includes such projects as primary and secondary schools, day-care centres, churches, health centres, dispensaries, community halls, youth clubs, kitchens and latrines. 'Economy developing' projects are, for example, piped water supplies, dams, roads, bridges, culverts, cattle dips, bush clearing and tree planting. The available statistics reveal that primary and secondary school projects have a long lead over the other types. Between 1967 and 1972 it is reckoned that various communities in the country contributed about Kf7,314,966 towards such projects. In contrast, agriculturally oriented projects -- which include irrigation, cattle dips, bush clearing, tree planting and a number of other activities -- have only been valued at Kf1,709,089 during the same period. (10)

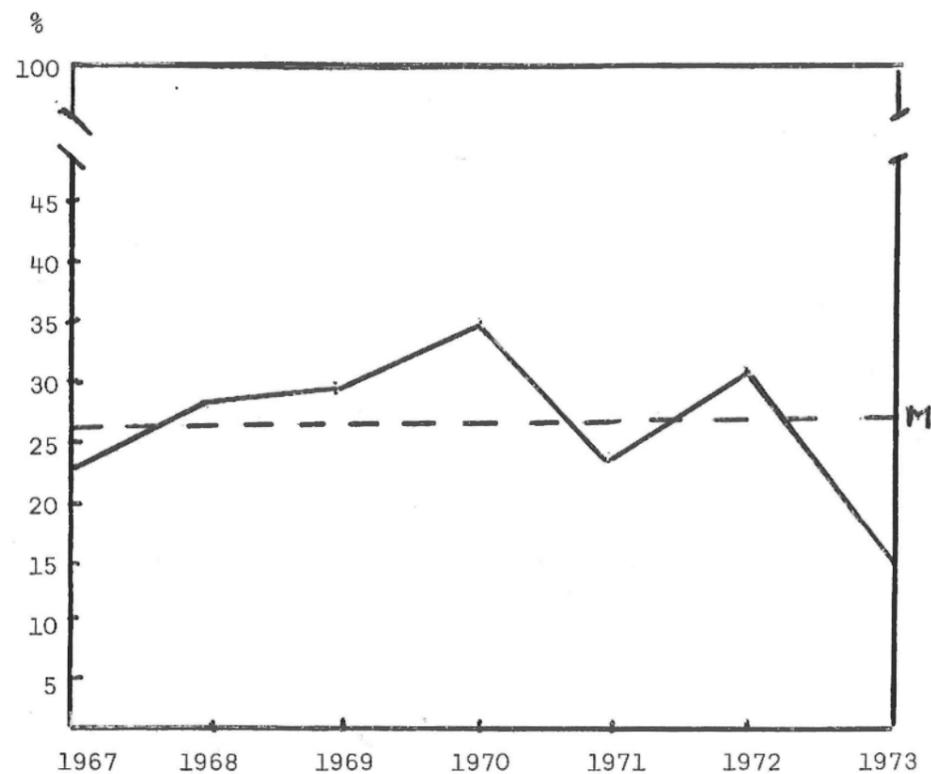
Table 1 and Figure 1 provide an indication of the imbalance between the 'social/domestic' and 'economy developing' categories by showing the proportion of all "people's contributions" which was devoted to the 'economy developing' projects for the period 1967 to 1973. The percentages have been derived from self-help expenditure statistics published by the Department of Social Services. (11)

Table 1. Rate of people's expenditure on economy developing projects, 1967-1973.

<u>Year</u>	<u>E%</u>
1967	22.8
1968	26.9
1969	27.2
1970	34.1
1971	22.8
1972	28.6
1973	15.9

Mean % = 25.5

Note: E% = percentage of total people's contributions going to economy developing projects.

Figure 1. Rate of people's expenditure on economy developing projects, 1967-1973.

What is significant about these statistics is that they demonstrate a real dilemma for the planners. Local communities are quite obviously capable of assuming a substantial burden of the developmental task. Whilst an impressive degree of local initiative has been shown, however, it has largely been channelled towards the provision of services which generally absorb, rather

than produce, resources.<sup>2</sup> As was pointed out in the 1970-74 Plan, this state of affairs is not tenable in the long run:-

The balanced development of any area requires that the resources invested generate further resources in a self-sustaining process. Heavy investment in educational, health and social facilities can produce people with more productive potential. But unless the investment is balanced by projects which steadily increase agricultural and commercial productivity, the social investments cannot be sustained and growth may actually be retarded due to commitment of funds without return for long periods. (7, p.171)

It is for this reason that emphasis has been placed on the need for government control and co-ordination of such activities. (7, p.19) On the other hand, if the government implements measures designed to ensure that projects are not undertaken for which resources are not available and/or to encourage the 'economy developing' type of project, this might very well jeopardise the momentum of the harambee movement, discouraging local initiative by forcing it to operate within prescribed terms. The problem is one of attempting to re-align the substance of self-help activity along more productive paths without

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2. In a sense, this is a problem only for the planners. The distinction between economy 'developing' and 'welfare' projects is clearly a matter of perspective. Colebatch has rightly pointed out that for people of the rural areas, provision of education for their children is not a question of 'welfare' but of economic opportunity. In the absence of academic, certificate-oriented education, children would have no chance to secure good wage employment; the fact that with such education the chances are still slight is beside the point. It is not realistic to expect parents to change their attitudes towards providing educational facilities -- of a formal, exam-centred as distinct from a 'rural-centred' type -- so long as the current pattern of income distribution in the country prevails. The commitment to academic education, Colebatch writes,

stems primarily from the actual distribution of income in Kenya today: so long as it is far more rewarding to be a wage- or salary-earner than a small farmer, parents will insist on an education that prepares their children for the former rather than the latter. They know that the chances of any one child succeeding in this competition are small, but the rewards are so great that perseverance is deemed worthwhile. The only people with 'unreal expectations' are those who imagine that parents will opt out of this competition simply to make life easier for the planners. (1, pp. 115-116)

sacrificing the willingness with which it is carried out.<sup>3</sup>

Coming back to the S.R.D.P., it is clear that the pilot areas could have been used as testing grounds where ways might have been sought to bring about this desired redirection. As Almy and Mbithi pointed out in the 1972 I.P.S. evaluation of the Programme:-

Maximizing local involvement in SRDP should aim at three objectives: (1) success of the SRDP projects, whatever they may be, through maximum useful local assistance and information; (2) integration of the local self-help efforts with the national goals, without killing local incentive and enthusiasm; and (3) training of local leaders and their groups in improved methods of planning to produce continuing integrated development consistent with the constraints of local resources. (4, p.63)

Although the issue of more productive self-help activities was raised in the original survey of fourteen rural areas in Kenya (six of which became 'first phase' S.R.D.P. areas) carried out in 1968 (see 2, pp. 38-39), it seems to have received very little attention in the planning and implementation of the Programme.<sup>4</sup> In August 1973, a letter was sent from the Department of Social

3. It has been asserted that coercion plays a large part in self-help activities in any case: people are not the willing participants which the rhetoric suggests, and most contributions are extracted by coercion by local chiefs and their assistants. (e.g. see 19, p.27) It is doubtless that forced collections do take place, and that the self-help movement would never have gained its present size without the active role played by the provincial administration in mobilising local communities (despite the fact that the terms 'self-help' and 'movement' imply local initiative as distinct from pressure from above). The ever increasing involvement of government officials in self-help collections, moreover, means that the contributions become increasingly obligatory -- "they come to assume the character of an informal tax". (1, p.99) However, the vigour of the harambee movement cannot be accounted for solely, or even primarily, in terms of coercive tactics adopted by officials. Such an explanation ignores the development of self-help as a political mechanism which links local communities to the centre and provides access to the centre's resources. As Colebatch and others have observed, harambee activity is conducted less in a spirit of aggressive self-reliance, through which local communities assert their ability to develop without recourse to the resources of outside agencies, than it is with the motive of obtaining government facilities by pre-emption: "the implication of self-help in service provision is not that it offers an alternative that is quite distinct from government-run service, but that it provides a framework for service in which the addition of government resources is always a possibility". (1, p.91) The growing involvement of government personnel in self-help activity and the collection of contributions for projects can be understood as a product of the established character of self-help activity, rather than the other way around. Government officials themselves have increasingly responded to self-help with a pre-emptive strategy. (1, pp. 102-103)

4. The lack of sufficient attention from the very outset to the whole question of local involvement in the S.R.D.P. has been pointed out by Mbithi (14) and Mutiso (17).

Services headquarters in Nairobi to all Assistant Community Development Officers (ACDOs) stationed in S.R.D.P. areas directing that more emphasis be placed on "economy-producing projects like poultry groups etc.", showing that there was at least some concern for this issue, although by that time the Programme was already in its third year. One indication of neglect is the reporting and monitoring system put into operation in the S.R.D.P. areas to provide yearly data on the status of community development activities. As will be discussed later, this system was very poorly designed in terms of providing relevant information on the course and content of self-help projects.

We now turn to a review of the state of self-help activity within the S.R.D.P. areas. On the basis of information collected, it is apparent that S.R.D.P. self-help operates no differently from self-help in the rest of the country, with its marked bias towards the 'social/domestic' sector. Taken as a whole, the self-help experience in the S.R.D.P., far from providing new ideas or models for dealing with the shortcomings of the harambee movement, has been a disappointment. Indeed, one might even go so far as to say that self-help activities within the S.R.D.P. areas have been novel only in the sense of being less productive than elsewhere.

#### S.R.D.P. SELF-HELP

Data have been gathered from Department of Social Services (DSS) files on the quantity and quality of self-help activity in a cross-section of S.R.D.P. and non-S.R.D.P. areas. Before presenting these data, certain qualifications ought to be made. First, the collection of data in the field left a lot to be desired. A major constraint is that the Community Development Assistants (CDAs), the DSS's "people on the spot", cannot cover all projects in their areas adequately.<sup>5</sup> This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of them have received little or no professional training. Secondly, the possibility that Community Development personnel at field level may sometimes offer inflated estimates of the value and progress of self-help projects in their areas cannot be ignored, since the incidence of self-help might sometimes be construed as a measure of their own value and effectiveness. Thirdly, the self-help groups themselves keep rather haphazard records. The reliability of receipt books, which all groups are supposed to keep, is questionable. Allegations of corruption abound, though they are admittedly often unsubstantiated. Fourthly,

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5. For a discussion of CDAs and their working conditions, see the UNICEF publication on this subject. (21)

the files in the central registry of self-help projects at the DSS are extremely disorganised, a fact which makes the task of analysis considerably more difficult and, if the proper information simply cannot be located, less reliable. Finally, some locations in the country have no CDA to collect data. Hence, reporting tends to be irregular and for some parts of the country little or no data are available.

Nevertheless, general comparisons between areas can be made if it is accepted that there is no reason a priori to suppose the tendency towards error is significantly greater in some areas than in others (assuming, of course, that it is known that community development personnel are operating in the areas in question and or that data have been collected in a standard way). This means that although the absolute figures may not be precise, fairly reliable comparisons between various districts can nevertheless be made. The data presented are based on 64 locations, of which 32 are in S.R.D.P. areas and 32 are not. The locations are drawn from the following districts: Nyeri, West Pokot, South Nyanza, Kakamega, Kwale, Embu and Kitui. In selecting areas we tried where possible to match the respective S.R.D.P. areas with adjoining non-S.R.D.P. areas having similar features in terms of population densities, agricultural potential and overall development. For these locations we have used the quarterly reports for 1973 and 1974 available in the central registry of the Department of Social Services.<sup>6</sup> The overall results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Self-help activity in 64 locations, 1973-1974.

<u>S.R.D.P. Locations (32)</u>		<u>Non-S.R.D.P. Locations (32)</u>	
Economy developing projects	Social/domestic projects	Economy developing projects	Social/domestic projects
Ksh 423,369/- (13%)	Ksh 2,789,217/- (87%)	Ksh 743,466/- (28%)	Ksh 1,914,415/- (72%)

Note: The figures in shillings are totals for "people's contributions". These include both cash and labour contributions. The latter is calculated as a cash equivalent. All figures are rounded.

According to Table 2, in the S.R.D.P. locations 87 per cent of all contributions went towards social/domestic projects.<sup>7</sup> From the point of view of redirection

6. Except for the 1973 data from Migori which was obtained from the "Supplementary Report of the 1973 Annual Report", DSS, Migori S.R.D.P., January 1974.

7. Compare this to the figures cited by Mbithi and Rasmusson in their paper "The Structure of Grassroots Harambee Within the Context of National Planning". (16, p.11) In their survey of 65 sub-locations across the country, it was found that only 24 per cent of self-help projects were of the economically oriented type. However, investment volume statistics are not given for these projects.

in favour of economy developing projects, this table shows that S.R.D.P. locations have performed no better -- worse in fact -- than similar non-S.R.D.P. locations.

More specific comparisons will clarify this point further. Two types of areas were used for this comparison: low to medium potential areas with population densities at around 20 to 50 per square kilometre, and high potential heavily populated areas where densities tend to be over 300 per square kilometre.<sup>8</sup> Taking the lower potential areas first, all four of the Mbere (Embu District) S.R.D.P. locations -- Evurori, Mavuria, Mbeti and Nthawa -- come under this category. For comparison, we have chosen similar locations in neighbouring Kitui District: Endui, Ikanga, Matinyani, Migwani and Mivukoni.

Table 3. Population densities of nine locations in Mbere and Kitui.

Mbere (S.R.D.P.)		Kitui (non-S.R.D.P.)	
Location	Pop. density per sq. km.	Location	Pop. density per sq. km.
Mavuria	28	Endui	17
Mbeti	67	Ikanga	24
Nthawa	30	Matinyani	83
Evurori	40	Migwani	38
		Mivukoni	10
Mean:	41	Mean:	37

In 1973, the Kitui locations in fact had substantially more 'economy developing' self-help projects than those in Mbere. In the Kitui locations the results show a 47:53 ratio of economic to social projects, whereas in Mbere the ratio is 22:78. More research would be needed to reach precise conclusions, but it seems that a combination of administrative and political leadership and a tradition of successful harambee activities has produced the balance of different types of projects in Kitui. Mbere, on the other hand, has lacked this leadership and tradition. Cattle dips, which are one type of self-help project connected with economic development, have been encouraged under S.R.D.P. auspices, but with limited results. In the last half of 1973, for example, neither Mbeti nor Mavuria

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8. These figures have been derived from the 1969 Census (6).

locations contributed anything towards agricultural or livestock projects. Perhaps more disturbing in an area where lack of water is a major problem,<sup>9</sup> only Ksh 953/- was raised from all four locations in 1973 towards water projects. By contrast, in the Kitui locations Ksh 137,000/- was raised for this purpose during the same period. The conclusion seems warranted that the S.R.D.P. has not had a positive influence upon self-help activities in Mbere. In comparison with the Kitui locations, its impact even appears negative.

Two divisions of Nyeri District, Tetu (S.R.D.P.) and Mathira, were chosen in order to view the situation in a high potential, densely populated area. Nyeri District, incidentally, has consistently been one of the leading districts in terms of self-help activity since independence (24): in 1973, it led all other districts in terms of people's contributions for self-help projects.<sup>10</sup>

Table 4. Population densities in nine locations of Nyeri District.

Tetu (S.R.D.P.)		Mathira (non-S.R.D.P.)	
Location	Pop. density per sq. km.	Location	Pop. density per sq. km.
Aguthi	381	Iriani	315
Muhoya's	370	Konyu	349
Tetu North	381	Kirimukuyu	377
Thegenge	422	Magutu	393
		Ruguru	308
Mean	388	Mean	380

The incidence of the two different types of self-help projects is similar to that already described in Mbere and Kitui. Tetu -- the S.R.D.P. area -- has a substantially greater concentration of social, rather than economic, projects than Mathira. In Tetu the ratio of economic to social projects is 10:90, whereas in Mathira it is 35:65. The data show that, whereas in Tetu harambee activity still is primarily oriented towards educational, health centre and social hall projects, in Mathira water and agricultural projects

9. See D. Hunt, *Resource Use in a Medium Potential Area: the Mbere Rural Economy*, (3).

10. According to a speech by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services. Reproduced in UNICEF. (21, Annex 1)

have made up a substantially greater proportion of all projects. In Kirimukuyu Location in 1974, for example, there were a total of 21 water projects for which, during the second quarter of 1974, Ksh 114,180/- was raised. At the same time Magutu (also in Mathira) had 16 water projects, having raised Kshs 21,770/- during the same quarter. The other locations in the division displayed similar tendencies. By contrast, none of the four Tetu locations had more than seven water projects (Aguthi had seven, Muhoya's five, Thegenge two and Tetu North none). The comparison of agricultural projects is similar. Aguthi Location, for example, is recorded as having no agricultural projects during the whole of 1973 (1974 saw some improvement), Muhoya's had one in that year, Thegenge two, and Tetu North four -- a total of seven. In Tetu North, the most successful location, Ksh 7,994/- is recorded as having been contributed to agricultural projects in 1973. Turning to Mathira, a total of eighteen agricultural projects are recorded for that year and total contributions were Ksh 44,180/-. The least successful location in Mathira, Kirimukuyu, still managed to contribute over Ksh 3,800/-.

In fine, whether it is Mberere which is arid, unsuitable for most cultivation and unable to support a large population (3), or Tetu on the slopes of Mt. Kenya where a wide variety of economic activity is possible (e.g. coffee, tea, vegetables) and a dense population can be maintained, the failure of the S.R.D.P. to correct the imbalance between economically and socially directed forms of self-help is noticeable.

In the other S.R.D.P. areas, it has not been possible to make comprehensive comparisons with similar non-S.R.D.P. areas due to insufficient data. However, the overall lack of emphasis on economy developing projects is obvious. Table 5 gives a breakdown by area of proportions of local harambee contributions towards economic projects, based on those quarterly reports available for 1973 and 1974.

Judging from Table 5, West Pokot is the only real exception to the general pattern which has been described. Here in 1973, 36 per cent of all local contributions apparently went towards economy developing projects. However, subsequent examination of local records and interviews with West Pokot DSS personnel have revealed that the reporting was faulty.<sup>11</sup> "People's contributions" of over Kshs 50,000/- were reported for water projects in Kapenguria Division during 1973, but Kshs 44,000/- of this amount represents

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11. Interviews by Reynolds, March 1976.

Table 5. Rate of people's expenditure on economy developing projects in the S.R.D.P. areas.

S.R.D.P. AREA	Quarters for which data available:	1973		1974	
			E%	Quarters for which data available:	E%
Kapenguria (West Pokot)	--all-- <sup>a</sup>		36%	2nd & 4th	17%
Kwale	--all--		4%	1st & 2nd	less than 1%
Mbere (Embu)	--all--		22%	nil	--
Migori (S. Nyanza)	--all--		17%	1st & 2nd <sup>c</sup>	22%
Tetu (Nyeri)	--all--		10%	2nd	18%
Vihiga/Hamisi (Kakamega)	--all-- <sup>h</sup>		5%	1st, 2nd & 3rd <sup>d</sup>	2%

<sup>a</sup>Except 2nd and 3rd Qtr. data lacking for Kipkomo and Riwa locations, and 4th Qtr. for Riwa and Sook.

<sup>b</sup>Only 4th Qtr. data available for Nyang'ori location.

<sup>c</sup>But no 2nd Qtr. data for 5 of the S.R.D.P. locations: Bukira, Bugumbe, Bwirege, M/Kadem and Nyambassi.

<sup>d</sup>Except nothing whatever for Nyang'ori.

Note: E% = percentage of total people's contributions going to economy developing projects.

the value of two water pumps donated by UNICEF and mistakenly included in this category. If the UNICEF contributions had been properly reported as "assistance from other donors", the proportion of "people's contributions" for economy developing projects during the year would have been around 24 per cent. But in any case, so far as we have determined, the S.R.D.P. - a programme intended to promote economic development through local involvement - has made a very poor showing in regard to self-help. In fact, the evidence which has been presented suggests that substantially less of the self-help activity has been aimed at economic development in S.R.D.P. areas than in similar non-S.R.D.P. areas.

In past studies of self-help in Kenya several reasons have been adduced for the national tendency to favour less productive social/domestic

projects. First of all, the gross imbalance between investments in the social/ domestic and economic categories reflects the intense commitment of local communities to the education sector. Mbithi and Rasmusson have noted that nearly half of the total harambee contributions in the country since the mid-sixties has been channelled to educational facilities. (16) As mentioned previously, local people do not view the provision of education for their children in terms of a welfare service but rather as economic opportunity. (See footnote 2) In addition, projects such as primary schools or dispensaries are often simply easier to organise than projects such as water supply systems, which may require far more planning, co-ordination, and initial capital investment, as well as longer construction periods. (cf. 2, p.39) Such complexities would not be especially appealing to aspiring self-help leaders, particularly if the political objectives inherent in self-help activity could be readily achieved through a more modest project. Finally, it is possible that some forms of self-help, such as road construction, are not favoured by local communities because of associations with experience during the colonial era, when forced labour for such projects was a common occurrence. (2, pp.35-36; also 24)

When S.R.D.P. areas are compared with non-S.R.D.P. areas, however, the extent of the imbalance between the two types of self-help activity in ~~some of the~~ S.R.D.P. areas suggests that additional influences are at work. This matter needs to be more carefully investigated, but a possible explanation for the very poor showing in S.R.D.P. areas is that local residents came to assume that the central government and foreign donor agencies would by and large look after investment for technical projects, in agricultural development and rural works, thereby enabling the residents themselves to concentrate their self-help resources on other types of investment. The fact that local people regard the S.R.D.P. as primarily concerned with development in what planners call the economic sector was revealed in interviews conducted with women's group leaders and members of self-help project committees in late 1974 and early 1975. (see 23) It was found that knowledge of the S.R.D.P. was generally quite limited, and there was a tendency for respondents to say that the Programme involved such projects as roads, maize loans, cattle dips and water schemes. Comments such as "The S.R.D.P. brought us this water project", or "I know about the S.R.D.P. because of the roads" were frequently encountered. Moreover, many people seemed unaware of any involvement of the DSS in the Programme, although they were very much aware of the Department's role in self-help activity. "Self-help" is listed as one S.R.D.P. project in all six areas, but in practice local self-help activities seem to be treated as separate from the Programme.

PROMOTION OF ECONOMY DEVELOPING SELF-HELP PROJECTS

The need for promoting more economy developing self-help activity has been discussed in earlier writings. As already indicated, it is mentioned explicitly in both the 1968 survey of rural areas (2) and the 1970-1974 Development Plan (7). The issue is raised elsewhere as well. (see 14, 15) The discussion in these documents seems to suggest a number of overlapping remedial measures, viz., improved planning and co-ordination of projects; improved leadership (this, it is usually assumed, can be accomplished through training); greater awareness of the nature of the problem amongst those concerned with development administration; and improved communication through local-level channels and between the local and national levels. Particular stress was laid on measures to increase the effectiveness of local participation in the 1972 S.R.D.P. evaluation carried out by I.D.S. (4). Although the recommendations were aimed at S.R.D.P. areas, they are relevant to the general task of creating a 'grass-roots development structure' throughout the country in order to promote balanced development without sacrificing local willingness to participate in self-help activities. It is clear that the bulk of this task lies ahead. Up to now, the suggested remedies have not been effectively implemented.

As far as planning and co-ordination are concerned, special bodies have been set up with a view towards securing local involvement and ensuring that the projects selected for priority treatment are those which will most benefit the communities concerned. First, there are the District Development Committees (DDCs) which include district-level heads of departments, MPs, and a few other local leaders.<sup>12</sup> As stated in the 1974-78 Development Plan, the district is to serve as the basic unit of development planning and implementation, and the DDC is charged with the responsibility of formulating and administering district plans. (see 8, pp.111-113) The DDC can exercise control over self-help activities in two principal ways: (1) it can advise its chairman, the District Commissioner, whether or not to approve a self-help group's application for a license to collect funds (In other words, before any group can start fund-raising it must obtain the approval of the DDC.), and (2) it can decide which projects should be given 'pump-priming' support from the central government by allocating District Development Grants to selected development projects (including self-help projects), subject to the guidance of the Provincial Development Committees.

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12. Before it was combined with the DDC, which was at first exclusively composed of civil servants, the District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) was designated to represent local interests. The DDAC was a sub-committee of the DDC.

The second body set up to carry out planning and co-ordination is the Community Development Committee (CDC). In 1963 the ministry then responsible for self-help, Labour and Social Services, produced a document entitled "A National Policy of Community Development" (12) which gives a great deal of attention to the need to establish a pyramidal structure of CDCs throughout the country. The intention was to form CDCs "at all levels of administration", i.e. provincial, district, divisional, locational and sub-locational. The purpose of these committees was:-

to assist communities in assessing their needs and resources and to assist with the planning and extension of local self-help schemes. When local resources are insufficient to meet expressed community needs, the village or local community development committee will detail the assistance requirement in terms of skilled labour or materials not available locally and submit an application for assistance to the county C.D. committee. (12, p.4)<sup>13</sup>

Since the establishment of the District Development Committees the CDCs have become sub-committees of the DDCs. As the CDCs are supposed to include amongst their members elected representatives of the local communities in addition to government officials (especially Community Development staff), they provide the main opportunity for local participation in the planning and co-ordinating process. In terms of influencing the character of self-help activities, the local CDCs meet to decide which projects ought to be granted authority to commence operations and which should be given priority for government support and special assistance (e.g. from the CARE organisation). Their recommendations are passed on to higher level committees. Every year funding in the form of small self-help grants is made available through the Ministry of Housing and Social Services to the districts for disbursement to approved projects. These Social Services grants are distinct from and much smaller than the funds self-help projects may receive through the District Development Grants.

In our assessment, the DDCs have not been especially effective so far - neither in gaining meaningful local involvement in development planning and co-ordination, nor in redirecting self-help activity toward more productive sectors. It is true that attempts are now being made to use central government assistance to harambee activity to promote economy developing projects. This is mainly done through the DDCs by selective allocation of the District Development Grants. The change in the government

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13. The County Community Development Committee became the District Community Development Committee in 1969.

attitude toward the harambee movement is reflected in Table 6 and the accompanying graph. Between 1970 and 1973 government contributions to self-help projects have favoured the economy developing type more heavily than have the contributions of local people. This implies a government policy shift during the period from one of passively matching people's self-help priorities to the active promotion of the economy developing type of project.

While the DDCs have been using the District Development Grant to gain influence over the self-help movement, it will require more than this to re-orient the priorities of the movement and still keep it viable. It is in this respect that the performance of the DDCs breaks down: fiscal measures must be complemented by other measures in order to foster the partnership of the central government and the local people for development, and these other measures are lacking for the most part. In many cases, DDC meetings are few and far between, and when they do take place agendas tend to be very long and time limited. Meetings may take place just once a year, so that the development issues and decisions in a district for a whole year are squeezed into a single committee meeting. These sessions -- long as they may seem to the individual participants, who may be obliged to sit through them without a break -- can hardly be judged adequate for the business at hand. Major decisions regarding project priorities cannot be given due consideration in these circumstances, nor is there opportunity for full discussion of development problems and the airing of local opinion. In short, crucial issues may receive only cursory attention.

Further problems arise concerning membership in the District Development Committees. Most members are government officers, and very often they have not been in the area long enough to effectively participate in local development planning and implementation. They may be expected to participate in important deliberations without really being familiar with local circumstances. Rapid turnover of government officers in any given area due to transfers can frustrate the officers' attempts to acquire knowledge of local conditions, or may even dampen their willingness to make such attempts. On the other hand, those who do have an intimate knowledge of local circumstances, for example MPs and local government representatives may not be particularly active members of the DDCs. The way in which DDC meetings are scheduled, the hurried nature of the proceedings, and the fact that DDCs have been more advisory than real decision-making bodies when it

Table 6. Rate of expenditure on economy developing projects by local people and central government, 1967-1973.

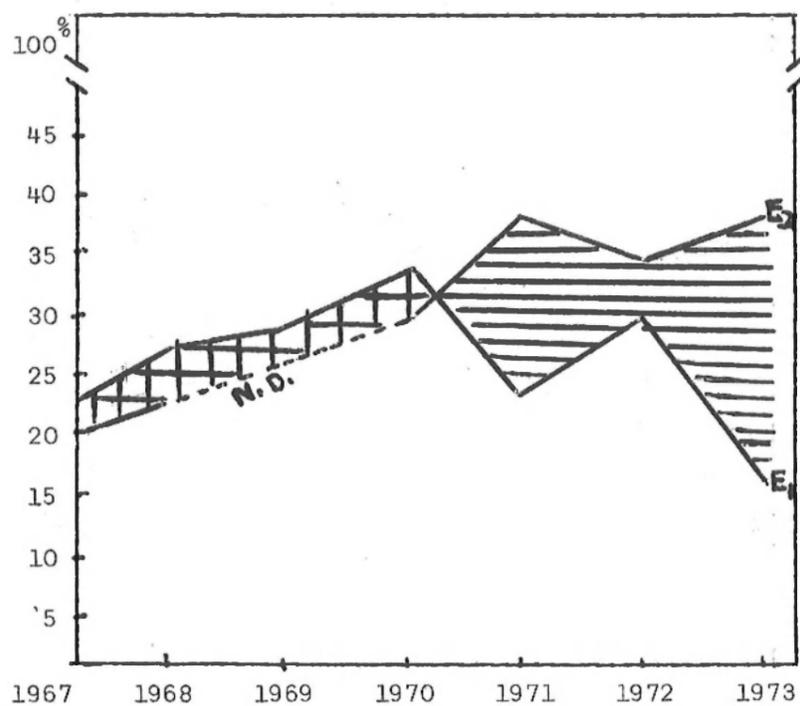
	E <sub>1</sub> %	E <sub>2</sub> %
1967	22.8	20.0
1968	26.9	22.7
1969	27.2	N.D.
1970	34.1	23.1
1971	22.8	37.2
1972	28.6	34.7
1973	15.9	37.1
Mean	25.5	30.0

Notes: E<sub>1</sub> % = percentage of total people's contributions going to economy developing projects.

E<sub>2</sub> % = percentage of total central government contributions going to economy developing projects.

Source: Figures derived from self-help expenditure statistics published by the Department of Social Services. (11) No data available for 1969 government contributions.

Figure 2. Rate of expenditure on economy developing projects by local people and central government, 1967-1973.



Notes: E<sub>1</sub> = people's contributions  
 E<sub>2</sub> = central government contributions  
 N.D. = no data

comes to financial matters - all these factors have discouraged the active participation of local members in the past.<sup>14</sup>

In the S.R.D.P. areas Project Committees have also been set up as part of the planning and implementation structure. The membership of the Project Committees approximately parallels at divisional level that of the DDCs. These committees do not appear to have made a very great impact on self-help in the S.R.D.P. areas, although in certain cases (e.g. the Migori roads programme and cattle dips in Vihiga) they have made an active contribution. On the whole, the weaknesses of the Project Committees are similar to those of the DDCs. Participation has been poor and the fact that they have tended to be little more than advisory in nature has made their proceedings somewhat ritualistic.<sup>15</sup>

The older system of Community Development Committees also appears to be functioning rather poorly. The CDC structure below the district level is frequently inadequately developed. Indeed, in many locations these committees seem to be non-existent; and in many others, their existence is purely notional in that they actually amount to nothing more than a list of names on paper.

More detailed investigations have been made in two of the S.R.D.P. districts. A study of the situation in Kwale (22) concluded that of the nineteen locational CDCs in the district, only seven could be described as 'active'. Of the others, ten could be said to be 'functional' and two locations were 'dormant'. 'Active' committees fulfill the following conditions:-

- meet at least quarterly, with an average attendance of over 75%;
- perform those **functions** required of them by the national C.D. policy, e.g. assisting in planning and executing local development projects, channelling Government financial and material assistance to self-help projects, assisting in the administration of Government Relief funds for destitutes and helping in the organisation of adult education programmes. (22)

'Functioning' committees are those which only partially fulfill these conditions. The 'dormant' locations are those in which CDCs are completely inactive or non-existent. In these instances, self-help is confined to the individual project committees and no overall locational planning body is in operation.

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14. Also see Oyugi (18, pp.5-7) for an account of the weaknesses of the DDCs and the former DDACs.

15. For a fuller discussion of the Project Committees, refer to the 1975 I.D.S. evaluation of the S.R.D.P. (5)

Of the seven 'active' committees, two are in the S.R.D.P. area (there are four locations in Kwale S.R.D.P. altogether). In the other two S.R.D.P. locations, the committees are not strong. In one of these, Mwereni, the fact that the area is very large and thinly populated makes it difficult for members to be brought together regularly. In the other, Msambweni, the locational level seems to have been by-passed: the only real representation of self-help leaders is at the divisional level.

In a more recent study of locational CDCs in West Pokot,<sup>16</sup> it was found that out of a total of sixteen locations only one had an 'active' committee according to the above criteria. There were seven 'functional' committees in the district and eight 'dormant' committees. In the five S.R.D.P. locations of Kapenguria Division, four committees were 'functional' and one location was 'dormant'. However, the criteria used in the Kwale study may not be suitable in evaluating the situation in West Pokot, since the guidelines for locational CDCs do not seem to have been promulgated there. The only procedure which community development personnel and CDC members seem to follow is to try to meet at least once a year to send recommendations for projects to receive government or special assistance to the annual divisional and district CDC meetings. Not surprisingly, therefore, CDC meetings are sometimes minimal, last-minute, ad hoc affairs. The existence of locational committees in West Pokot seems largely dependent on the posting of Community Development Assistants. Where a CDA is present, at least some CDC activity is reported, but in locations without CDAs the committees are not operating. The one S.R.D.P. location reported as 'dormant' has had CDAs and a sporadically functioning CDC in the past, but there has been a rapid turnover of CDAs due to resignations. As for the non-S.R.D.P. areas of the district, Kara-Pokot Division, comprising four very large locations, is served by just one CDA who divides his time between the two locations closest to divisional headquarters. Sigor Division, with seven locations, is served again by just one CDA who mainly operates in two of the more accessible locations. There is at least some self-help activity in each of the West Pokot locations, but as in the case of Kwale, those locations without functioning CDCs have committees only at the individual project level. It is noticeable that West Pokot chiefs have by and large not been active in instigating or sustaining development committees in the absence of CDAs. Large geographical area, sparse and mobile populations and difficult communications are all additional factors which have hindered the formation and operation of CDCs in the 'dormant' locations of the district.

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16. Fieldwork by Reynolds, March 1976.

The other four S.R.D.P. areas have not been looked at in the same depth, but there seems little to suggest that Kwale and Kapenguria are unique in lacking systems of well-established, active Community Development Committees. For instance, the situation is probably more acute in Mbere than in either Kwale or Kapenguria: only one committee (in Evurori Location) seems to be operating in the intended way. In Mavuria Location, only two meetings of the CDC are recorded since 1969, and on one of these occasions attendance was so poor that it was impossible to elect the committee's officials. For the other locations, Nthawa and Mbeti, no committees exist at all. This situation is partly a consequence of the lack of active self-help leadership in Mbere, but is also due to the fact that the CDAs, chiefs and other officials at the local level have little idea of how these committees ought to operate. By contrast, the success of Evurori is attributable to the lively interest taken by one of the CDAs there and the active involvement of the M.P. for the area, Mr. Kamwithi Munyi.

In two of the other S.R.D.P. areas, Vihiga and Migori, the Community Development Committees are weak, but 'development committees' exist in some locations and seem to be doing a useful job in looking at the overall development of their areas, an exercise which includes consideration of self-help activities. These committees were started at the beginning of the S.R.D.P. and now appear well established. But the initiative for their formation seems to have come from the provincial administration, a fact which may have been crucial to their success since it is obvious that a major problem is to secure the appropriate degree of administrative 'push', especially from the chiefs, in order to get such bodies as these fully active. It is certainly obvious that in areas where officers of the provincial administration take little interest the Community Development Committees tend to be weak. There appears to be a sound case for restructuring both the District Development Committees and the Community Development Committees by combining elements of both into a new structure,<sup>17</sup> the administration of which would be the joint responsibility of the provincial administration, the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Department of Social Services. The case rests on a number of considerations.

First of all, there seems to be a good deal of ambiguity concerning the functions of the two existing committee systems. As mentioned above, the Community Development Committees are supposed to be sub-committees of the District Development Committees with a special interest in self-help

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17. An amalgamation of the two types was also proposed in Heyer et al. (2, pp.28-29) Also see this source for a discussion of CDC and DDC problems.

activities. Their role in the harambee movement and in community involvement has been particularly emphasised in past Annual Reports of the DSS, and the 1970-1974 Plan spoke of them as agencies which ensure "consultation and participation by both private citizens and Government" in development activities. (7, p.170) But operating as they do in the shadow of the DDCs, the CDCs have found their role increasingly uncertain. Indeed, the latest Plan, whilst paying a great deal of attention to the functions of the DDCs, says nothing at all concerning the CDCs. What is developing in practice is a trend toward DDC domination of planning and funding of the significant economic self-help projects, whereas CDC activity remains confined to the smaller-scale 'social' type projects. Since the CDCs are the primary medium of community representation, therefore, the people's involvement in development is increasingly restricted to the social sector -- a state of affairs which is not conducive to changing the focus of harambee activity at the grass-roots level. The point about the representative quality of the CDCs has been raised before as an argument against curtailing the influence of these committees in development decision-making (2, p.27; and 9, pp.5-6). The point is a legitimate one insofar as the CDCs actually are representative of local community opinion. It must be recognised, though, that CDCs are not always the elected bodies they are made out to be, because 'election' proceedings at the locational level and below are sometimes nothing more than a group of officials and prominent people agreeing between themselves about the composition of the committee. Still, it is indisputable that the CDCs are more representative bodies than the DDCs; and it is this representative quality which should be brought together with the authority currently being vested in the District Development Committees. For clearly the DDCs are coming to be regarded as the locus of all significant decision-making on development at the local level, and if this authority is not coupled with more adequate representation of local interests (not just local elite interests), it is difficult to see how a genuine grass-roots development structure will emerge, or in what way local people themselves will become more committed to economically oriented self-help activities.

Secondly, a DDC-CDC hybrid structure could improve overall committee operation. As stated before, the present DDCs sometimes find their proceedings choked - too much business must be conducted in a very short time. The situation would be improved if there were district-level committees directly served by lower-level committees, an arrangement which would supercede the present indirect and ambiguous link-up between the DDC and CDC systems. In the hybrid structure, important preliminary debate and

decision-making could occur within committees at the sub-locational, locational and divisional levels respectively, so that when the district-level committees meet the airing of local opinion would already substantially be accomplished. Final discussion, debate and decision-making would take place in light of the recommendations of the lower committees. Committee membership would be based on the hierarchical pattern the CDC system is supposed to follow, viz., each lower-level committee sends elected representatives to the committee at the next higher level.

Thirdly, the Department of Social Services now has major staffing problems at the locational level, a situation which has obviously retarded the activity of the Community Development Committees. The new approach would in no way diminish the role of the CDAs or other community development personnel: they would continue to organise committee activities and serve as committee secretaries at the various levels where possible, just as is done now with the CDCs. The difference would be that the existence and functioning of committees, particularly at the locational level, would not be so dependent upon DSS officials alone. The provincial administration, already active in District Development Committees, could assume a greater responsibility for encouraging development committees, especially in those areas where DSS staffing is weak. Since it has now largely been relieved of its tax-collecting function, there is more scope for the provincial administration to forge for itself a more positively developmental role.

The creation of a new development committee structure which combines the present District Development Committees and Community Development Committees will not in and of itself overcome all the problems now experienced by the older committees. Other steps are necessary. For one thing, committee meetings should take place at reasonable intervals so that there will be no need to deal with an inordinate amount of accumulated business in any one sitting. Also, timely notification of committee meetings would provide members with an opportunity to prepare themselves adequately for deliberations, and do away with some of the rush and superficiality that sometimes characterises these affairs.<sup>18</sup> In addition, government officers at the divisional and district levels need to participate more fully in development activities. One method which has been suggested in the past (e.g. 2, pp.23-24) would be

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18. With the posting of the new District Development Officers, which is now in progress, there should be a substantial improvement in the handling of such administrative matters. One part of the DDO's job is to serve as secretary to the DDC. For a review of possible problems which DDOs might face, based on the experiences of Area Co-ordinators in the S.R.D.P., see Oyugi's "Decentralisation for Integrated Rural Development: Some Lessons from Kenya".(18)

to curtail the frequency of transfers, thereby reducing the rate of personnel turnover and increasing the likelihood that government officers will be able to acquire familiarity with local circumstances. The establishment of 'development libraries' in each district, made up of materials pertaining to district development experiences and prospects (e.g. development committee meeting minutes, DSS reports on harambee activity, research papers, etc.) might be another way to help officers become familiar with local conditions.

The 1972 I.D.S. evaluation of the S.R.D.P. also emphasised the need to train self-help leaders if they are to play a more effective role in rural development. (4, Appendix G) Training self-help leaders in the S.R.D.P. areas has mostly been limited to the training of women's group leaders as part of the Women's Programme.<sup>19</sup> Very little seems to have been done to train the majority of self-help leaders -- those concerned with projects such as schools, health centres, etc. Of the leaders interviewed in Kwale as part of a Community Development Committee survey, only about ten per cent had received any training and often even this had only indirect relevance to self-help. (22, p.11) For example, seminars on 'rural development' may touch on self-help but do not usually focus on the subject. In Mbere a leadership survey indicated that in a random sample of 39 male self-help leaders, 14 had attended training courses at the training centre in Embu, but of these 14, only 6 had attended courses of direct relevance to self-help activities.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, seminars on 'self-help' may actually devote more time to general rural development issues. This is what happened in the case of the one self-help committee members' course which was held in West Pokot in 1971 according to DSS records there. Funds have been allocated to S.R.D.P. areas for training: in 1974, each area was allocated Kshs 2,000/- for this purpose (this is in addition to the allocations made for the Women's Programme). However, when interviewed in December 1974, most of the Assistant Community Development Officers posted in the S.R.D.P. areas told us that 'lack of funds' was a major problem in running training courses. Although the sum allocated may have been small, in some areas even this money was not used and was returned to the Treasury. Failure to use these funds has been attributed by the ACDOs to a variety of factors: lack of staff, lack of a suitable building and delays in getting approval from Nairobi. It is difficult, however, to escape the conclusion that part of the problem has been

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19. See Chapter 15 of the second I.D.S. S.R.D.P. evaluation (5), or I.D.S. Occasional Paper No. 13 (23).

20. Fieldwork by Wallis, 1974.

too little initiative in making the most of what is available. The fact that some areas do not have training centres should not preclude training courses: after all, school buildings are vacant for three months of the year. Lack of community development staff is in some areas a considerable problem, but it should not be impossible to secure the services of staff from other ministries (e.g. Agriculture) which have a strong interest in self-help projects.

The creation of new, 'upgraded' training centres in Embu and Matuga (Kwale) provides an excellent opportunity for carrying out training much more energetically and effectively. These centres are meant to have a full-time staff who will undertake the 'core' of the training work with assistance from others, such as officers of various departments, clergymen, etc. It would be extremely useful if the full-time teaching staff could also conduct research in the field to help them design their training programme in the light of local needs. In this way, training could become a more effective tool for improved performance in self-help activities. It is clear that little has been done to train local self-help leaders as part of the S.R.D.P., and this only reinforces the argument that self-help has been a largely neglected aspect of the Programme.

It is worthwhile noting a few other neglected aspects of self-help in the S.R.D.P. First, there is the question of research. It is noticeable that the research officer in the Department of Social Services has played a very limited role in the S.R.D.P. generally, and that an improvement in the Department's research capability is needed. This gap has not been as critical for the Women's Programme and the Functional Literacy Programme because it has been filled for the most part by experts provided by international agencies. However, other on-going self-help activities have not benefited from this sort of assistance. Very little information on self-help has been gathered or assembled in a useful form by the DSS for the S.R.D.P. areas. At the beginning of the Programme a reporting and monitoring system for community development activities was implemented, but it was not structured in such a way as to generate much useful data. Statistics on self-help project expenditures were not disaggregated to reveal proportions for different types of project. Only the varieties of projects were listed, not the resources actually devoted to each of them. The existence of CDCs was noted, but nothing was recorded on how they were actually functioning. In short, one could glean a little information about the breadth of self-help activity in S.R.D.P. areas, but none whatsoever about its depth or quality.

Although of limited usefulness, even this information appears to be no longer available: the reporting system seems not to have been maintained for the past few years.

A second point which ought to be made is that urban-based ethnic associations might have been given a fuller role in the Programme. For example, the New Mbere Union has about 400 members and caters for some of the interests of Mbere people living and working away from the district, mostly in Nairobi and Mombasa. The officials of the union are anxious to play a positive role in the development of the Mbere area, and one significant way in which they try to do this is by supporting self-help projects.<sup>21</sup> However, the officials have never been informed or consulted about the S.R.D.P. in any way. Most of the S.R.D.P. areas have similar urban-based bodies (West Pokot being the one exception). S.R.D.P. could have been a valuable vehicle for experimenting with ways in which such bodies could be more usefully involved in rural development.

#### CONCLUSION

S.R.D.P. started out with something of a fanfare about the importance of 'local participation'. As is so often the case, the gap between the rhetoric and reality has been wide. An obvious way of securing meaningful local participation would seem to be through incorporating self-help activities into the Programme. While in all six areas 'self-help' is listed as an S.R.D.P. project, self-help projects have on the whole failed to conform to the S.R.D.P. principles which have been described. This is all the more surprising in view of the obvious desire of the planners to see more self-help activity in the area of economic development, and less centered on 'social development' projects which usually involve heavy recurrent expenditure that cannot generally be raised by the local communities themselves. The S.R.D.P. provided a valuable opportunity for seeing how this desired redirection might be brought about. The evidence presented in this paper suggests that this opportunity was not taken up.

Although the S.R.D.P. experience with self-help provided few solutions, an examination of the Programme at least shows that it has yielded some important lessons. We have stressed that in order to promote a significant shift toward self-help activities with an economic development orientation, a number of complementary measures warrant consideration. Some of these are not suggested for the first time here, but have

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21. Interviews by Wallis, April 1975.

been noted in earlier writings. There is a great need to revamp the mechanisms for local participation in planning and implementation at the district level and below. Neither the District Development Committees nor the Community Development Committees currently in operation, taken by themselves or together, are working very satisfactorily to foster genuine local participation. We have suggested that the creation of a DDC-CDC hybrid structure would be a more effective approach. In addition, there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of development committee operations -- whatever the form these committees have -- through such measures as the scheduling of meetings at shorter intervals and with enough advance notice (so that committee members will have adequate time to prepare for them), and the curtailment of frequent transfers of officers (so that they will have more time to learn about local conditions in the areas where they are posted). Along with these measures, a stronger commitment to training local leaders could have a very great pay-off in the long run. The research capability and local-level staff of the DSS need to be substantially augmented as well. If the 'spirit of harambee' is to be sustained and at the same time become a more productive force in the future, it seems critical that such steps be taken.

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