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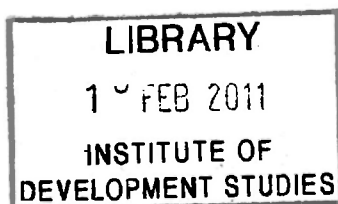
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~~TRAINING PROBLEMS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT~~

A PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH

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I.D.S. Working  
Paper No. 121

TRAINING PROBLEMS IN COMMUNITY-DEVELOPMENT  
A PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH

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Abstract

The I.D.S. SRDP evaluation concludes that not enough attention has yet been paid to the promotion and guidance of participation in self-help activities. In particular, it was felt that more effort was required for "training" leaders for these activities.

This research proposal takes its cue from this perspective. It is concerned with evaluating what is at present being done in the field of training at different levels, probably with special reference to the Community development assistants, Chiefs and local project committee leaders.

It is hypothesised that there are a number of constraints upon CD training. Five main ones are suggested:-

- a) the tendency for bureaucratic organisations to encourage conformity, rather than innovativeness;
- b) the difficulty of establishing and maintaining cooperation between different agencies who are involved in CD in the field;
- c) the likelihood that the Chiefs, who play an important role in CD, may not be oriented to the participatory ideas which theoretically guide the 'harambee' movement;
- d) the lack of clear objectives which can guide field officers involved in CD training;
- e) the difficulty of establishing harmonious relationships between CD and actors within the political system.

The research will be mainly carried out in SRDP areas (although non-SRDP areas may provide useful comparative data). A Questionnaire will be administered, but more importance is attached to the in-depth interview and participant-observation.

TRAINING PROBLEMS IN COMMUNITY-DEVELOPMENT:  
PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH

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This research proposal isolates a particular aspect of the large and important problem of the "harambee" movement. The Government is involved in the movement in a number of ways - it allocates resources, provides technical help etc. My concern here is to assess its role in performing what I propose to call the "training function". In using the term "training" I do not wish it to be thought that my interest is solely bound up with the very formal notion of the "institute". The net will necessarily be cast much more widely than that and an analysis of the relationship between local leaders and administrators will have to be made in order to assess the performance of this function. Administrators attempt, by a variety of methods, to persuade local leaders of the "correctness" of their policies (I do not, of course, assume these policies to be "correct"). The task is to discover (a) what these various methods are, and (b) assess their effectiveness.

The learning theory which has evolved principally in the U.S.A. is of only limited heuristic value for this study. This body of theory appears to assume "ceteris paribus" and proceed from there. In the U.S.A. this assumption is almost certainly not justified, and nor is it in the Kenyan context either. It is, of course, useful to know that we should break down what is to be learnt into learnable units or that we should avoid too dramatic a clash with the trainee's prior experiences.<sup>1</sup> But there are certain questions which seem to be logically prior to these. How do we decide what is to be learnt? Who decides? Who actually does the training? What kinds of prejudices or personal preferences are the participants likely to bring to bear on the process? To what extent is the whole process bound up with important political considerations? I assume that "all things are not equal", and wish to analyse how the process of training for community development in Kenya inter-acts with these various other processes.

The IDS SRDP evaluation report expresses dissatisfaction with the direction in which CD is currently evolving. To quote, "the general conclusion of this evaluation is that local involvement in planning and implementation has been virtually absent" and "little attention has been devoted to the creation of strategies to achieve involvement in the past, and in the absence of pressure from the centre,

area teams have tended to ignore the objective".<sup>2</sup> The report goes on to recommend that a much more vigorous approach be adopted by Government, and identifies "training" as one of the central requirements for improved performance.

The Wamalwa report says virtually nothing about CD training. The nearest it comes to doing so is in its comments on the training of Chiefs, who are, of course, closely bound up with the community-development/movement. The Department of Community Development Reports are also rather disappointing.<sup>3</sup> First, there has been no report since 1967. Secondly, the reports we have are so uncritical. A huge list of courses held is offered, but there is no real attempt at evaluation. From these reports, one could come away with the impression that the CD department has only two problems: shortage of staff and shortage of funds to meet recurrent expenditure. It seems very likely that matters are substantially more complex than that. In 1967, 4,728 people participated in a wide variety of courses in 21 District Training Centres throughout Kenya. Did these courses all fulfil their objectives? Were there clear objectives in the first place? To what extent did the various social characteristics of trainers and trainees determine the outcome of these courses? Further, even more difficult questions arise when one comes to look at the way in which the training function is performed informally (e.g. through the CD Baraza, or through mass-media).

There are obviously a number of different levels of training for CD which can be looked at. There is the training given to CDOs, CDAs and Chiefs to start with - in other words, the problem of "training the trainers". Then one can go on to see what sort of training is provided for local leaders (Chairmen, Secretaries etc.). It may not be possible to cover fully all of these levels of training. Advice would be especially welcome on this point.

Whilst it is doubtful if any useful purpose will be performed by offering a tight hypothesis at this stage, I think that it should at least be possible to offer a working hypothesis to provide a guide to enquiry. First, one assumes that CD is a field in which relationships are as often conflicting as they are harmonious. Also, I think it likely that a substantial number of constraints constitute an obstacle to making CD a more effective field of administrative activity. Further, these constraints may be shown to have far-reaching consequences for

the performance of the "training function". As a guide to enquiry, I now want to suggest what some of the more significant constraints are. I am very aware that not all these suggestions will prove to hold water, and also that this listing is not all-inclusive.

a) There are certain tendencies, perhaps inherent, which govern the behaviour of bureaucratic organisations. There is a vast literature on this subject, which it would be otiose to go into here. But we know that bureaucracy tends to produce conformity or even ritualism.<sup>4</sup> It is obvious that such tendencies ill-suit such a phenomenon as CD, which appears to involve innovation and spontaneity. If the Government "side" of CD can be demonstrated to be "bureaucratic", involving, for example, a rigid adherence to "rules" regardless of the consequences, then we can be fairly sure that we have uncovered a constraint of some importance. "Goal displacement" has often be noted as a characteristic of bureaucracy. Can this be shown to have taken place in Kenya with respect to the Community-development department?

b) Related quite closely to point a) is the problem of departmentalism. Bureaucratic rigidity can lead to an excessive concern with issues of demarcation to such an extent as to reduce greatly the capacity of the system to produce anything which can at all meaningfully be termed "output". The community-development Division is in a particularly awkward situation here. By the very nature of harambee, it is likely to be brought into conflict with other agencies. To illustrate, the building of cattle-dips involves not only the CDO and his staff; it also involves the Veterinary Department and should involve (but does not necessarily do so) the Ministry of Works. A situation like this sows the seeds for conflict. From my point of view, it is the danger of conflicting directives which needs attention. To give an example from my own experience: a district CDO encourages a local community to save in order to buy Grade Cattle. Two weeks earlier the DAO had visited the same community and warned them that Grade Cattle were unlikely to thrive in that particular ecological zone of the district. He advised them to concentrate on improving the quality of indigenous breeds instead. It is important to know if such conflicting directives are being issued, and to follow this up by seeing what sorts of implications there may be for behaviour in the local community. In the example cited above, the local response was, quite understandably, inaction. Faced with a situation of uncertainty the safest response appeared to be "do nothing". Is this a common situation in rural Kenya?

It seems that training for community-development is closely bound up with the complex issue of inter-departmental coordination. The case which was referred to above revealed an almost total lack of coordination between departments; one has the feeling that the machinery for coordination needs, at least, some servicing - and perhaps a radical overhaul. But this case should not be over-stated. Over-coordination is possible, i.e. the stage is reached where so much attention is paid to coordination that very little actually happens as far as rural development is concerned; a perfectly coordinated system would be one in which nothing ever happened.

c) The Chiefs play an important role in the community-development movement. The work done by Nyangira suggests that their contribution has not been altogether positive.<sup>5</sup> Priority has been attached to the twin concerns of tax-collection and the maintenance of law and order. It would appear that where the Chiefs are involved in the self-help movement the work they do is somewhat authoritarian in nature, e.g. the confiscation of the livestock of peasants who refuse to contribute at fund-raising barazas. This sort of approach seems clearly to run counter to the participatory component of the Harambee ideal. It seems, therefore, that enquiry might usefully be directed towards discovering what sort of orientation to his job the Chief is given. This would mean looking both at induction training and training which is given "on the job". Also, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that the abolition of G.P.T. will give the Chief more time to spend in dealing with developmental matters. This makes it even more imperative that attention be given to the way in which the Chief fulfils this role. At the moment, it appears that the Chief's interventions into self-help are far from being those of the "encourager" so beloved in the Community-development literature.<sup>6</sup> In fact the opposite style of role-performance, that of coercion, seems to prevail. The implications of this (if it is so) for the whole community development movement require analysis.

d) The administrator may not have a clear idea in his own mind about what the objectives of his job are. This is really the "unclear objectives" problem which is receiving increasing attention from students of development administration.<sup>7</sup> Faced with this situation, it is understandable that the administrator retreats from any positive commitment;

ritualism (which involves goal-displacement) takes over. This problem does not only originate from the inherent characteristics of bureaucracy. Even if we accept that it is possible to find a working definition of "development", it is still necessary to decide what kind of administrative activity is appropriate for its achievement. Further, one must specify the kind of training which is suited to administrative requirements. None of this is easy. Most of the "development administration" literature is overwhelmingly unhelpful when it comes to the quest for solutions.<sup>8</sup> We have been told, for example, that "development administration" has some connection with the notion of "creativity", but little idea has been given as to how this rather nebulous quality can become a concrete component of administrative activity. Also, on a more specific level, do we have adequate job-descriptions from which suitable training programmes can be evolved? The literature on personnel management offers plenty of cases of employees being given very "good" training for jobs which turned out not to exist. The training which was given had been based on false, or misleading, job-descriptions. The lesson is that any kind of administrative activity, training or anything else, is better carried out when there are clear objectives in view. A lack of clarity at this stage may lead to a considerable wastage of resources; training becomes dysfunctional. The answer may lie in a variant of the "management by objectives" strategy which seems to have achieved some success in the western countries. Chambers and Hyden have attempted to show its utility in Kenyan conditions.<sup>9</sup> The idea was also taken up in the Ndegwa Report.<sup>10</sup> MBO might have some utility for community-development, but this is bound to be limited because of the difficulty of establishing tangible objectives. But if it is possible to establish meaningful training objectives then it might be useful to see how effective such a programme is. At this stage, it can readily be seen that the objectives problem is a substantial one for the whole Kenyan bureaucracy. Enquiry may usefully be directed towards both a further understanding of the problem and towards the design of methods of achieving improvement.

e) Anyone with even a distant acquaintance with Kenya's political system cannot fail to notice the important part played by CD in this system. This means that an analysis of any aspect of CD must be undertaken with a full awareness of the likelihood of political factors looming large. There are a number of angles from which such political factors may be viewed.



First, there is the question of the clash between politician and administrator - what is sometimes referred to (usually by administrators) as the "political interference" problem. This is a complex issue, and it is not necessary to go into a great deal of detail here. But there are a few points which should be made. First, clashes may stem from conflicting values, which introduces an ideological component into the analysis. But alternatively (and more probably) conflict will arise over more immediate objectives - the administrator's idea of what constitutes "rational" behaviour conflicting with the politician's aim of either obtaining or retaining power. The building of an harambee school may thus become a focal point for administrator-politician conflict. In connection with the immediate problem which I hope to deal with in the course of this research, the sort of situation one expects to see occurring is CDOs trying to encourage one set of ideas about harambee in local communities, and the politician trying to fulfil his own objectives by advocating something rather different. A further political point which should be made is that conflict can occur because of the existence of conflicting versions of what constitutes "rational" activity. It has already been noted that politician and administrator may disagree about what is and what is not "rational". But, further to this, peasants (who are not here conceived as a blanket category) may all have their own versions of "rationality" arising out of the particular situations they find themselves in. Now, if this is the situation "training" confronts a major obstacle. In terms of learning theory it will mean that there is a significant clash between the peasant's prior experience and the new responses which he is required to make. The solution is not necessarily to assume that the administrator is right and help him find ways of persuading these conservative, "fatalistic" peasants of the fact. It may be necessary to take another step altogether, and question the validity of the administrator's own assumptions. In other words, the subject-matter of training may require revision.

Then there is the problem of the degree of involvement (or its opposite) of KANU in the process which is being studied here. From prior knowledge, one is inclined to assume that KANU has a very low degree of involvement indeed. Total non-involvement, perhaps? This vacuum is likely to have consequences for the system in all sorts of ways. Given that CD is a political phenomenon, and combining this fact with the non-involvement of KANU, one expects to see a particular style of politics (parochial?) as

a result. Further, this being so one can then look more directly at the consequences of this for the object of study. "Political education" is an important function. The absence of a strong party performing this function may have far-reaching consequences for CD.

A final "political" point which might be worth examining is that it is possible for administrators to be "captured" by local populations with whom they are working". Obviously this situation will conflict with the possibility I suggested earlier - namely, that bureaucracy becomes so bogged down in its own routine that it loses any kind of flexibility. The point really is that there are two conflicting forces at work - the task for the researcher is to see how this conflict works itself out in the field. "Capture" would involve the administrator sacrificing his departmental viewpoint which is, at least in theory, bound up with such considerations as the "national interest" and the "plan". Instead, he will tend to become an advocate, or even a "broker", on behalf of the local community. The danger of this happening is apparently one of the reasons for the relatively rapid rate of transfers within the Kenyan bureaucracy - which, of course, raises other problems.

So far in this paper my concern has been to show a number of difficulties which are likely to affect the performance of the "training function" in the Kenya country side. I wish to turn now to some more strictly procedural matters.

First, I should make it clear that the constraints which have listed above constitute a guide to enquiry, or areas of investigation. I am aware that they are not particularly inclusive; in the course of fieldwork other problem areas are likely to come to light. Also, I realise that the listed constraints are, in many cases, very general in nature. My proposal is to start off by looking at training as a process but with the expectation that these constraints will be encountered. Interviews with participants in the CD process will be structured around such considerations as those which have been listed.

#### Research Methodology

The questionnaire research method may not be very effective for this kind of project. By the very nature of the subject, a great deal of "probing" must be done if any real understanding is to emerge. A

questionnaire could be useful for the collection of basic data about local CD leaders, CDAs etc. but the enquiry must necessarily go into much more depth than that. The open-ended interview and participant-observation will play a more important part. Many of the interviews will quite deliberately be very loosely structured; a great deal will depend upon the circumstances in which the interviews take place. "Participant observation" is perhaps a somewhat pretentious way of saying that one will sit around and observe what is happening. Incidentally, a problem here is that the expectations of the local community about the role of the researcher may be well wide of the mark. For example, he may be thought to have stronger serikali connections than is actually the case. In assessing behaviour in the local community this factor must be taken into account. In a sense, of course, misunderstanding of this kind can be useful - since one of the objectives of this research is to examine the relationships between Government and people in rural Kenya.

The idea behind this study stems out of work already done by IDS - and, in particular, from the SRDP evaluation to which reference has already been made. In that evaluation CD was identified as a major problem - and within CD "training" was thought to be an issue of some significance. A further justification is that data from this study may link up with some of the other work now in progress on the 'harambee' movement.

#### Areas of Study

Probably 3 or 4 areas will be used to provide case-study material - these areas may be within SRDP<sup>12</sup>. Also, it will be necessary to carry out interviews in Nairobi (divisional HQ and K.I.A) and Maseno (where a lot of CDA training is done).

FOOTNOTES

1. E. Schein, Organisational Psychology (Prentice Hall, New Jersey 1965), pp 34-35.
2. IDS SRDP Evaluation Report, p 51.
3. Dept. of Community Development and Social Services Annual Reports 1966 and 1967 (Government Printer, Nairobi). The department has since been "demoted" to the status of "division".
4. R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Free Press: New York, 1957) pp 195-206.
5. See Nicholas Nyangira, "Chiefs' Barazas as agents of Administrative and Political penetration", IDS Staff Paper- No.80 (July 1970) and "The Role of Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs in Administration in Vihiga," IDS Staff Paper No.68 (April, 1970).
6. See Biddle and Biddle, The Community Development process (Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1965).
7. See, for instance the paper by Colin Leys in the Hyden, Jackson and Okumu reader, Development Administration: the Kenya Experience (OUP: Nairobi, 1971).
8. The best review of this literature is to be found in B. Schaffer, "Deadlock in Development Administration" in Colin Leys (ed.), Politics and Change in Developing Countries (Cambridge: UP, 1969).
9. The reporting system evolved by Robert Chambers for use in the Ministry of Agriculture and in district planning seems to be a qualified success. See also Goran Hyden, "Social Structure, Bureaucracy and Development Administration in Kenya," The African Review, (Vol.1, no.3, January, 1972).
10. Report of the Commission of Inquiry (Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission) - 1971, Ch.X.
11. The term "Capture" comes from Herbert Kaufman's important study, The Forest Ranger (Johns Hopkins: Baltimore, 1967), pp 75-80. A good example from the Kenyan experience is of the colonial D.C. for a Masai district who led a delegation to the Governor, and began his address with the words "We Masai....."
12. It might in fact be useful to look both at SRDP and non-SRDP areas. An awkward problem within SRDP is that the area Coordinator may be undertaking a lot of work normally undertaken by the regular CD administrators. Data from non-SRDP areas may help throw some fresh light on the contribution which is being made by the area coordinator.