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A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF
APPROACHES TO RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

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Using Kenya as a case study, progressive dimensions of rural development are briefly discussed. The authors are pointed out in the "directed change" approach to rural development and in the integrated, multi-dimensional approach. The criteria for a development strategy are presented which should help planners understand and effectively deal with the realities of the situation of rural development. Lastly, development from below in Kenya is reviewed through a case study on the Kenyan self-help movement and the impact of the current rural development efforts -- the Special Rural Development Programme and the District Planning Strategy.

JUNE, 1974

Views expressed in this paper are those of the authors. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Institute for Development Studies or of the University of Nairobi.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Philip M. Mbithi and Carolyn Barnes

ABSTRACT

Using Kenya as a case study, pragmatic dimensions of rural change are briefly discussed. Weaknesses are pointed out in the "directed change" approach to rural development and in the integrated, multi-dimensional approach. The criteria for a development from below strategy are presented which should help planners understand and effectively deal with the realities of the dynamism of rural development. Lastly, development from below in Kenya is reviewed through case study analysis of the Harambee self-help movement and an assessment of two current rural development efforts -- the Special Rural Development Programme and the district planning strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Kenya's rural development problems can only be adequately understood within a historical framework. At the time of independence the new nation inherited a commercial agricultural sector of large-scale European farmers and a policy, as stated in the Swynnerton Plan, of extending cash crop farming to "progressive Africans" in the higher potential areas. This resulted in a highly inequitable concentration of research, extension, input subsidies, credit and infrastructure development and created extreme regional imbalances in development and income imbalances between different regions and between progressive and average farmers. The extension service emphasised assistance where a high return to invested capital was assured and operated on the assumption that the creation of modern large-scale commercial enterprises would not only stimulate exports and increase foreign exchange reserves but would also provide a demonstration of progressive farming methods which would be taken up by other farmers. This did not occur, of course, and the problem of uneven rural development inherited at independence remained unsolved.

Briefly, the main problems faced today by rural development planners in Kenya are:

- (a) Low rural incomes, especially in the small-scale peasant sector;
- (b) Urban unemployment, where the modern sector can only absorb about 25 per cent of the annual growth in the labour force and most of the rest must be absorbed in rural areas;
- (c) Rural welfare problems, such as disease, ignorance, lack of access to opportunity and lack of simple amenities;
- (d) Locally initiated development efforts, which tend to go contrary to national priorities and tend to emphasise welfare rather than economic criteria; and
- (e) Inadequate rural development administration, especially for coordinating local plans and implementation schedules.

A general understanding of the dynamics of rural development would help government planners address themselves more successfully to these problems, but so far valid generalisations have largely been lacking. In the words of one Minister of Planning, "the international specialist is willing to give us prescriptions about rural development planning after six days' stay in our country, while the local policy

oriented researcher becomes more tentative the more empirical research he undertakes".

One valid generalisation which can be made is that planning has tended to take place at the national level and decisions passed down to the local level. As a result, planning has tended to consider national needs, priorities and constraints, but has failed to take into account the diverse needs and resources of local areas. Programmes planned in this way have frequently achieved only minor successes or have failed completely. In contrast to this, programmes which have been planned from below, using local initiative and local resources to meet local needs, have benefited from more reliable community support and have achieved some remarkable successes. Clearly, rural development must be supported both by the national government and by the rural communities in cooperation with each other, and an approach to development planning which achieves this type of cooperation will be described in this paper.

UNITS OF RURAL CHANGE

The complex nature of rural society and the variety of social units which can become targets or instruments of change are all too often ignored by national and regional planners. Planners tend to consider each rural community as a homogeneous unit characterised by its geographic situation and natural resources: for example, rural development for the nomadic Turkana who live in a harsh, dry environment would be different from development in the Trans-Nzoia high potential farming region. However, different types of people, affiliated simultaneously to various social groupings, may live within the same geographic area, each unit having its own special needs and resource endowments.

A recent survey of Kenya's rural areas (9) showed that Kenya's total rural population is about 1.7 million households, or about 10.2 million people, and accounts for about 90 per cent of the total national population. The following economic units were identified:

- (1) The small-scale farm sector, or "peasant farms", accounting for about 1.2 million households, or about 70 per cent of the total rural population. Of these households, about 225,000 are considered "progressive", having an income over £110 a year and rising. At the other extreme, some 620,000 small holdings generate less than £60 a year;

- (2) Pastoral and nomadic households accounting for about 220,000, or 12 per cent of the total rural population. Their economic activities centre around livestock, and most of the communities move seasonally from one place to another;
- (3) A landless rural squatter population of over 204,000 persons. ^{12,00%} A large portion of these are traditional squatters who lost their land during the colonial period;
- (4) Large-scale farms and estates, including cattle ranches, coffee, tea and sisal estates and specialised farms. There are approximately 1,540 of these occupying about 500,000 hectares of land; and
- (5) Non-farm, small-scale rural enterprises numbering about 51,000. The most numerous of these are retail outlets for food, drinks and tobacco, small-scale commercial businesses, and crafts and handicrafts such as repair works, carving and building. Over 75 per cent of these enterprises are owned by farmers.

This list, focussing on farm households, neglects many important social units which are present in rural areas. In a recent study, Watt (21) found that rural communities are a tremendously influential unit in the countryside. He found in East Africa that 48 per cent of farmers' working time is spent on non-farm activities. Where village communal activities are reinforced by tradition and politics, farm labour and capital (material) are frequently subject to expropriation by the community. Mbithi (15) and Brokensha and Nellis (4) studied the very important role of government and private change agents in the rural areas. They found that programmes were poorly organised, limited in relevant ideas and information, uncoordinated and competitive. In addition, the change agents were untrained in communicating ideas and used a paternalistic, authoritarian approach to rural people. The important role of communities and of change agents needs to be taken into account for a full understanding of rural development.

The most essential units to be considered in planning for rural development are:

- (a) Farm and pastoral households. The entire household must be taken into consideration because the household head does not necessarily make all of the decisions. Rather the locus of decision making varies according to the context and nature of the decision;

- (b) The progressive farms, including large-scale commercial farms which are operated more as business firms;
- (c) Rural communities, which exercise powerful sanctions concerning attitudes, behaviour and resource commitments;
- (d) Units planning and administering change; and
- (e) Rural non-farm enterprises, ranging from very small non-formal enterprises to modern large-scale agro-businesses.

THE DIRECTED APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The essence of the traditional approach to rural development is that the impetus for development programmes has come from central government. Planning and implementation have been carried out by government with the aim of increasing rural incomes, rural welfare and employment opportunities. This paternalistic attitude towards rural development has been called the interventionist or directed approach, and it is outlined in Figure One.

The failure of many rural development programmes has been attributed to the inadequacy of the assumptions on which the directed approach is based. For example, it has been assumed that all spheres of rural activity are subject to simplistic analysis and manipulation, and consequently little attempt has been made to collect information which would lead to a fuller understanding of the lives and activities of rural people. People living in the countryside are lumped together as passive recipients of change programmes, although careful observation leads to the conclusion that they are in fact uniquely attuned to their environment and the mastering of the environment has been the essence of their long-term survival. Heyer (5) and Schultz (20) have argued that in fact decision making on the farm is often more efficient than a computerised system devised by planners, especially with respect to maximising peculiar local resource endowments.

In addition to underestimating the capabilities of rural persons, planners following the directed approach tend to grossly underestimate the complexity of rural activities which are not divided into the neat categories of government ministries. A farmer sees his farm not only as an economic production unit but also in broader terms as the absolute personalisation of his and his family's life. He must interpret the messages of the community development officer on communal work, the messages of the agricultural officer on the amount and types of fertiliser

to buy, of the administrator on his arrears in taxes, of the medical officer on signs of malnutrition in his children; and at the same time he takes part in community functions, attends every funeral for a respectable period of at least two days, protects his house against witchcraft and dramatises his masculinity and independence by observing the appropriate taboos and rituals.

It has further been assumed that the cultural and economic system represented by the planner and his agents is quite different from and superior to that of the rural target group, so that effective communication between the two groups has been extremely limited. Development plans which have been conceived without adequate information on local conditions and which have been communicated to local people in an incomplete and confusing manner have had little chance of success. Examples are numerous of local people sabotaging the implementation of such plans: avoiding family planning clinics because the programme was seen as an attempt to castrate men who would eventually be conscripted for military service, refusing to allow land to be used for agricultural demonstrations because they felt government would take over the land once it was developed, and disrupting road construction because they thought roads were being built for government patrols to catch stock raiders. A further aspect of the inadequacy of communication between change agent and rural target group is that the change agents have tended to communicate best and therefore to help most farmers who are already the wealthiest and most sophisticated, the most progressive farmers.¹ Further, the reception which the information from a change agent receives depends heavily on the cumulative successes or failures of past messages.²

A third assumption of the directed approach to development planning is that there exists a well-documented, proven direction and means of change along which the client system must be directed. The number of development projects in any country which have failed in the past indicates that this easy, well-understood path to development does not exist.

THE INTEGRATED, MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

The integrated, multidimensional approach to rural development represents a modification of the directed approach recognising the need for coordination of programmes and the indivisible and complex nature of the development process. A summary of this approach is given in Figure Two. The typical manifestation of this approach is the package programme

1. Roling and Ascroft have shown that extension advice reaches only the 10 per cent most progressive farmers in the most progressive districts. See 3 and 17.

2. See 4, for the impact of past programmes on the reception of new livestock projects in Mberé.

Rural community, peasant households seen to be underdeveloped - low incomes, high mortality rate, poor standard of living

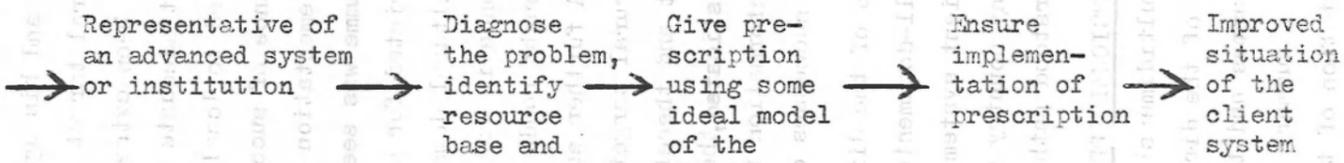


Figure 1: The Directed Approach to Rural Development

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involving the cooperation of all government planning and implementation units. However, priorities are still set from above and may not correspond to local needs and circumstances.

Because this approach emphasises sectoral integration within the government change machinery as an end in itself, the problems of inadequate local level data and poor communication with local people are still not addressed. When local information is sought or communication initiated, it tends to be through local interest groups, especially progressive farmers, traders and the rural elite, rather than through consultation with more representative members of rural society.

DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW

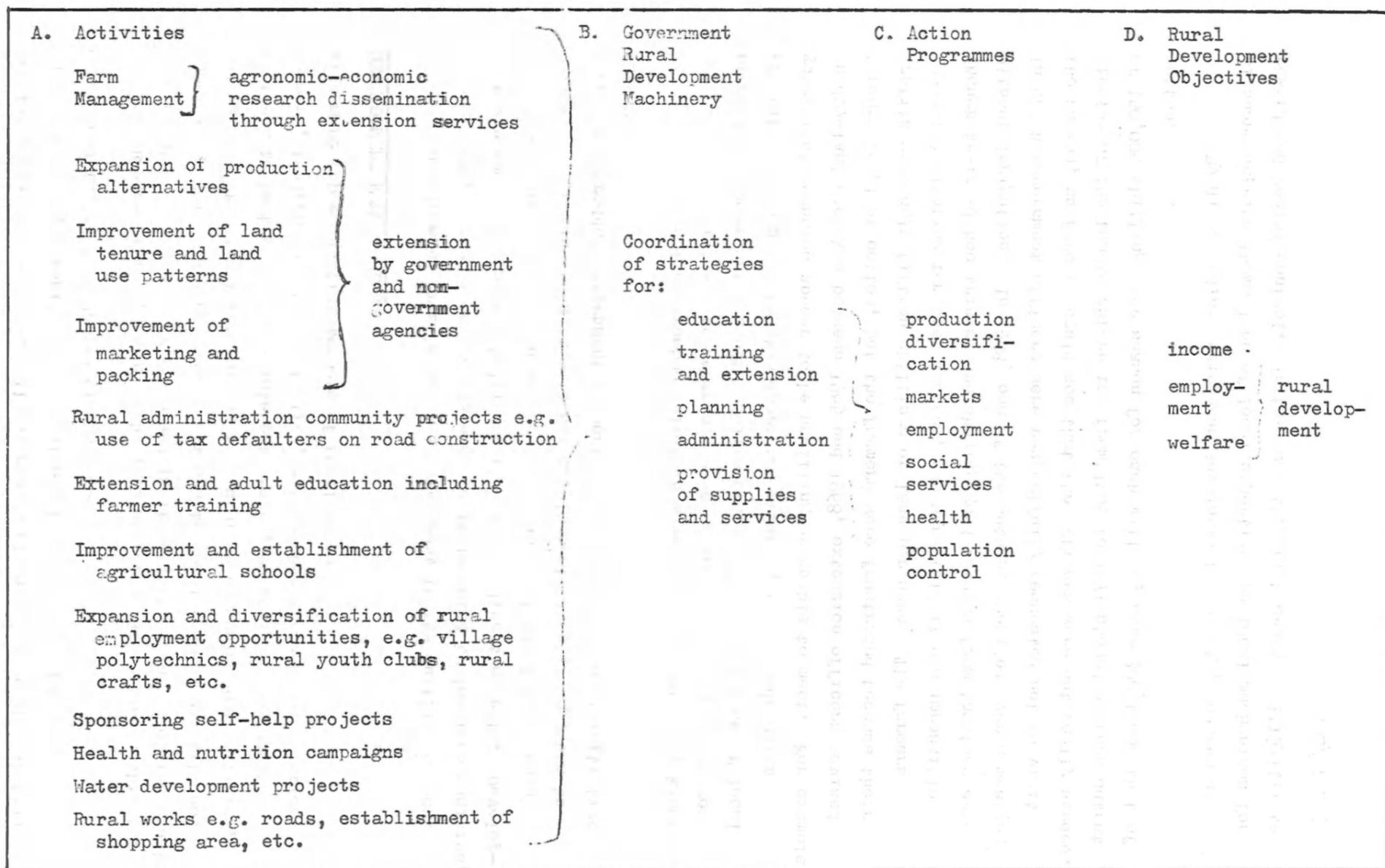
Development from below is a complement to the multidimensional approach where programmes are planned and implemented by local communities, with government assuming a helping rather than a directing role. Development from below can be based on the large number of local development activities occurring outside national development plans if ways can be found to introduce government support without stifling local initiative. (See 2.)

In Kenya the Harambee self-help movement at the village, kinship and even district level represents a case of runaway peasants where goals planned by government are often deliberately ignored in favour of local priorities. This occurs when there are pressing local needs which government agencies appear to be unwilling or unable to meet. For example in dry-land Machakos between 1965 and 1968, extension officers advised farmers to plant cotton, but the farmers were frustrated because their profits were only fifteen shillings or less per acre. The farmers suggested planting tomatoes instead, but were told it was impossible though their ad hoc trials were showing good returns from tomatoes even without irrigation. In 1968, one of the authors presided over a meeting in which government officers were respectfully requested not to visit the region, as farmers could see that the officers were not really needed. Studies of the tomato enterprise from 1969 to 1971 showed a gross output of 150,000 shillings per season for each village, over 300 times that of cotton.

By disregarding indigenous development capacity, government planners deprive themselves of local expertise and local mechanisms for reward and social control. In this way they risk creating illegitimate

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Figure 2: The Integrated, Multi-dimensional Approach



Source : 16.

institutions which exacerbate the alienation of local people from government agencies. Yet if government planners follow the development from below approach, local and government development efforts can be made to support and complement each other rather than coming into conflict. In many cases local initiative and ideas exist, but government assistance is needed in the implementation process, or a government change agent may generate ideas and suggest alternatives for decisions which will be made by the local community.

A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW

As a complement to the multidimensional approach to rural development planning and implementation, the process of development from below should incorporate the following dimensions:

- (a) Greater local level data generation;
- (b) Local level participation in planning and implementation;
- (c) Training for local involvement;
- (d) More efficient dissemination of information;
- (e) Increased coordination of activities; and
- (f) More attention to the question of equity.

In elaborating these dimensions, it becomes clear that they relate to and enhance each other.

Generation of Greater Local Level Data

Increased collection of data at the local level, if properly organised, can greatly facilitate effective planning and evaluation. Ideally, full information on local conditions should provide the basis for any rational planning, but in fact planning directed from outside usually occurs without adequate data. Thus development plans tend to neglect the special characteristics of a particular area, such as unique resource endowments, and fail to take into account the diversity of physical, economic and social conditions.

Data for development planning can be collected in part through greater local involvement in the pre-planning stages. It must be stressed that the whole community should be involved, not just the politicians, school teachers, businessmen and chiefs who form the local elite, since their interests tend not to coincide with those of the larger community. In addition, research can be conducted on such issues as the local people's felt needs and their assessment of resource constraints, as well as on technical questions such as soil types and crop potentials. Obviously, all information previously collected for a given area should be brought

together to help in local level planning, although this may involve a great deal of effort gathering data scattered around various government and non-government offices.

Local Participation

The involvement of local residents and low-level indigenous government staff in the planning and implementation of development projects does occur in Kenya, as shown by the numerous self-help projects outside normal government machinery. However, local participation should also be incorporated in government-sponsored development programmes.

Development plans are likely to be inappropriate and ineffectual when devised by an outside change agent who is all too often ignorant of local perceptions, felt needs and resource constraints. Furthermore, the outside change agent is likely to be so different from the local people in such terms as ethnic affiliation and socio-economic status that they will not be receptive to his advice. Even though a few more progressive members of the rural target group might be willing to adopt a recommendation, the process of diffusion to the rest of the group may be very slow or may not occur at all. Finally, when development is directed from above, the outside agent always provides the impetus for change. Instead, local involvement in planning and implementation makes it more likely that the plan will account for local needs and constraints, that it will be accepted by a wide majority of persons, and that local initiative will be encouraged.

Local involvement in the planning process could be achieved in several different ways. The already existing formal structure could be used which extends down to the village level and up to the largest organisational unit, such as the district. The kinship system could be used: all villagers could take part in an initial general meeting, but at subsequent meetings delegates could represent their families' opinions. On the other hand, representatives of local interest groups could take part in the planning process, for example people who have organised around a certain issue such as school committees or indigenous age-sex work groups or kinship groups. These would represent both modern and traditional groups in an attempt to tap the widest possible diversity of sub-units in a rural community.

Through a series of discussions, ideas for projects and strategies for carrying them out would be voiced. This process should aim at bringing forth alternative projects to choose from, working out criteria for

selecting between alternatives, and applying these criteria systematically in the selection process. At some point technical experts might have to assess the feasibility of different alternatives, and their recommendations would be presented to the people. Once consensus is reached, the chances for a project to be successfully completed would be greatly enhanced.

The local people should also be involved in the implementation process. In this way local resources such as leadership and labour may be used which would otherwise be inaccessible. Feedback from the local community will indicate whether a project is running smoothly, and the local people may eventually have the responsibility for maintaining the project themselves. From this process they will gain greater self-reliance. In addition, less energy will be wasted in fighting against projects and cleavages will be avoided in the community between supporters and non-supporters. Furthermore, by involving all members of the community in the implementation process, the relatively deprived community members can be helped to gain greater access to opportunities.

Training for Local Level Involvement

The local community, possibly through a system of representation, will need some training to become effectively involved in development planning and implementation. They will need to become familiar with national development policy and with national constraints, especially financial ones. They must also be convinced of the importance of representing the views of their groups, rather than merely voicing their own personal opinions, and the importance of staying with a decision once it is made.

Field and district level officers will also need training for their roles in implementing development from below. For example, they should be thoroughly versed in national priorities and constraints, and they should be able to explain these to local persons. They should be familiar with simple techniques of financial, social and economic appraisal for choosing between alternative development projects, and they should be shown how to stimulate greater initiative from their lower level staff and the local community in planning and implementation. They must learn to instill in the community an attitude of greater self-reliance. In addition to these skills, the lower level field staff, who would have the primary responsibility for consulting with the local community and providing feedback to government agencies, would need to learn how to stimulate discussion through which people could identify their wants and needs. They should

be able to help the local people coordinate the different components of their development needs and arrange them in order of priority since resources are limited.

More Efficient Dissemination of Information

All participants in the development planning and implementation process need the appropriate technical and scientific information to be effective. In fact, the very basis of socio-economic development may be viewed as the increased utilisation of scientific knowledge, whether in agriculture, industry, health, education or other areas.

When development is directed from above, the information disseminated to local people is usually inappropriate and inadequate. In addition, potentially useful information generated by researchers is often not even conveyed to policy makers and change agents largely because it is written in language only intelligible to experts.

In Kenya this problem has been the subject of serious study (See 5 and 8.), and proposals are being made to improve the national dissemination system. Figure Three represents a structural model of a dissemination system designed for Kenya. This system could assume the function of an information service, collecting and storing information and passing it on at request. Potentially useful information could also be presented to the public by means of the mass media. Perhaps most important, specific information could be disseminated in support of rural development projects. For example, a programme to promote better nutrition could be supported by handouts, films and posters to be used by schools, discussion groups and training sessions. These functions of a national dissemination system can all be built into the local level planning and implementation process.

Increased Coordination of Activities

When rural development is directed from outside the local community, the problem of coordinating the activities of the various change agencies becomes acute. When development occurs from below, local needs and conditions make a natural focus for all development activities. The needs of a rural community are not divided into departments, and if a development programme is to be focussed clearly on local conditions and needs then the activities of all agencies must be fully coordinated.

In a horizontal sense, the activities of different change agencies must be coordinated both on the national and on the local

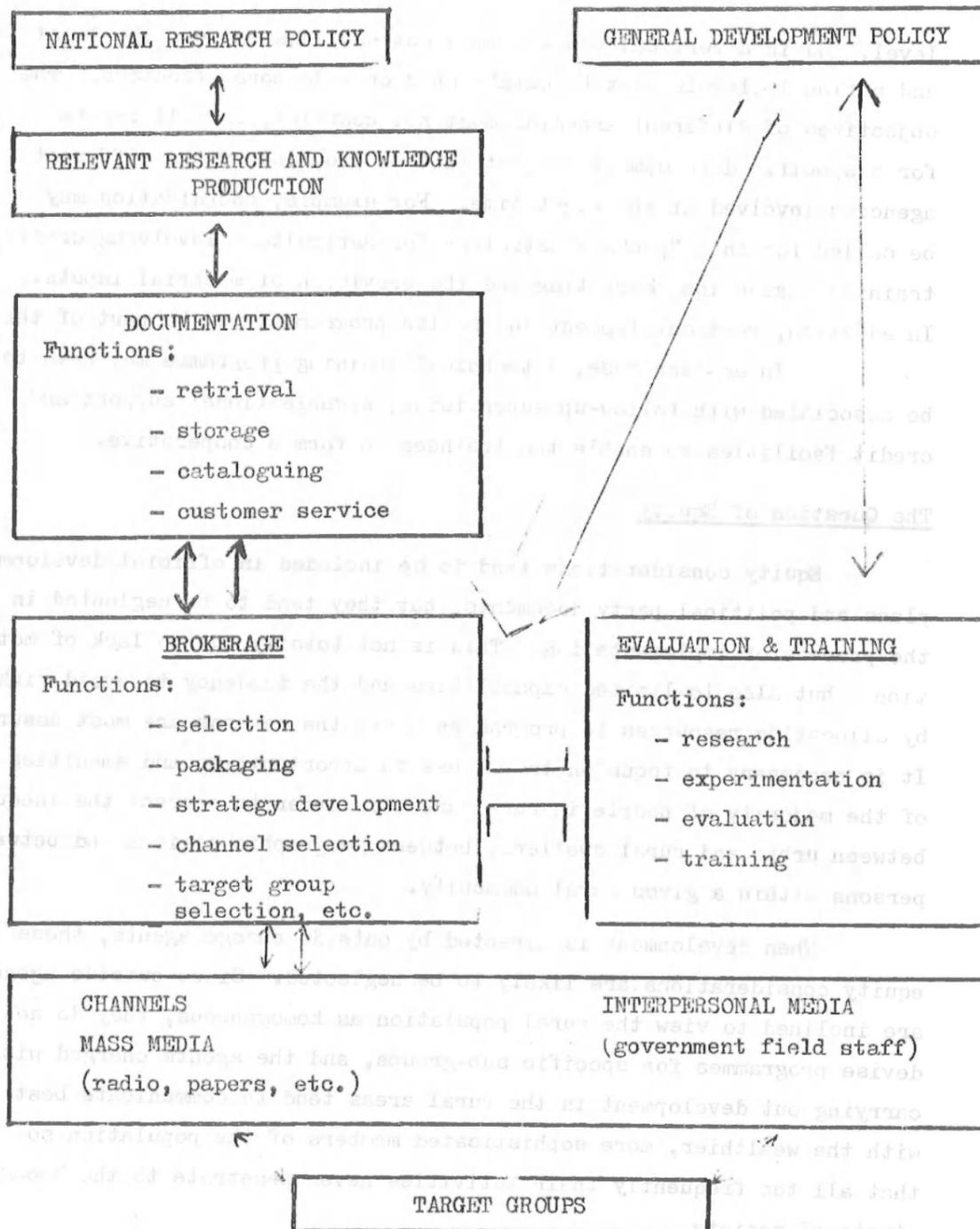


Figure 3: Structural Model for a Knowledge Dissemination System in Kenya

Source: 18.

level, and in a vertical sense communication links between the local and national levels must be established or made more effective. The objectives of different agencies must not conflict, and all inputs for a specific development project must be provided by the different agencies involved at the right time. For example, coordination may be called for in a "package" strategy for agriculture involving credit, training, extension, marketing and the provision of material inputs. In addition, road development and health programmes may be part of the strategy. In another case, a technical training programme may have to be associated with follow-up supervision, organisational support and credit facilities to enable the trainees to form a cooperative.

The Question of Equity

Equity considerations tend to be included in official development plans and political party documents, but they tend to be neglected in the process of implementation. This is not totally due to lack of motivation, but also to limited capabilities and the tendency to avoid risks by allocating resources to programmes where the returns are most assured. It is necessary to focus on the access to opportunities and amenities of the majority of people in rural areas in order to correct the inequities between urban and rural dwellers, between geographic regions and between persons within a given rural community.

When development is directed by outside change agents, these equity considerations are likely to be neglected. Since outside agencies are inclined to view the rural population as homogeneous, they do not devise programmes for specific sub-groups, and the agents charged with carrying out development in the rural areas tend to communicate best with the wealthier, more sophisticated members of the population so that all too frequently their activities never penetrate to the broader strata of society.

If the majority of rural people can be involved in the planning and implementation of development projects, it follows that these projects will benefit a larger portion of the society. Furthermore, those persons who have been neglected in the past can be identified and programmes devised especially for them. It is possible, for example, for Farmers Training Courses to be tailored for the less progressive farmers, for extension agents to provide information to

rural women on crop husbandry techniques, or for the restrictive regulations which inhibit the growth of informal small-scale businesses to be revised.

ATTEMPTS AT DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW: CASE STUDIES FROM KENYA

Introduction

Development from below has been widely practised in Kenya since independence in the form of Harambee self-help projects which have flourished with little or no government intervention. This movement will be briefly described.

In the late 1960s government began planning a programme to accelerate rural development and to make planning and implementation machinery more effective by increasing coordination and transferring decision-making to the local level. This programme was launched in selected areas in 1971 as the Special Rural Development Programme. Currently, plans are being formulated for a district planning exercise throughout the country to give more responsibility for decision-making and coordination to the district level. These two government programmes will be described in terms of our criteria for development from below to learn the degree to which government is actually moving away from directed planning.

The Harambee Phenomenon

The Harambee self-help movement in Kenya has provided thousands of instances of development projects planned and carried out at the local level. The movement has been characterised by local identification of needs, mobilisation of resources and implementation.

In 1967 alone, over 3,600 community facilities were completed, 119 piped water supplies were installed, 410 wells and protected springs built and 1,659 fish ponds built and stocked. Local people's contributions to these projects, in terms of labour, cash and materials, amounted to approximately K& 2 million. (11) By 1972, local contributions to self-help projects had risen to K& 2.7 million, and a further K&0.4 million had come from other sources, such as central and local government and outside donors. In that year, 8,851 projects were being undertaken, of which 1,800 were completed and 1,057 were abandoned by the end of the year. Completed projects included 351 primary schools, 262 teachers' houses, 214 nursery schools, 242 cattle dips and crushes

and 68 water supply projects. From 1967 to 1972, contributions to self-help projects from local people and central and local government came to K£ 14,757, 662. (10)

The great number of these projects, conceived and carried out outside government development programmes, has presented planners with something of a dilemma. In a study of self-help groups in Kisii District, for example, Holmquist observed that local groups disregarded and even rejected official programmes. (7) He found that local people would build maternity clinics even when government was opposed because the supply of nurses and doctors was insufficient; they would build schools and run them even when government refused to guarantee them teachers.

By 1970, the declared government objective was to support and even accelerate the momentum of Harambee projects (11), but before that government assistance was quite limited. In 1967, 94 per cent of all Harambee contributions had been made by local people, and government had assisted in supplying only 6 per cent of the capital, but in the 1970-74 Plan it was estimated that government spending on self-help projects would be around K£ 1,408,000.

Many economists have viewed government support of Harambee activities as the best way to encourage domestic saving and investment and to exercise some direction over the planning and coordination of these activities. Specific concerns raised by the Harambee phenomenon have been the very high degree of autonomy of self-help groups, the potential for manipulation of these groups by some leaders for personal political ends, the waste of resources in poor project selection, and the over-subscription to this movement by the poorest and most marginal rural groups.

Local administration officials have been given the task of coordinating Harambee project selection and support within specific administrative units. Steps have been taken to include Harambee projects in district development committees' plans, and the government is employing more community development assistants, so that each assistant should be responsible for less than 200 self-help projects in a limited geographic area.

However, recent studies have revealed a new problem. Direct government intervention in self-help projects seems to discourage local participation in some areas. The latest debate is on how to manipulate

the movement without reducing the commitment of the local people.

The Special Rural Development Programme

The Special Rural Development Programme is a government programme designed to experiment with strategies for accelerating rural development in a variety of areas representing diverse geographic conditions in Kenya. Areas were selected where economic activities centre around livestock production, tree crop farming, dry land farming and high potential farming, with the intention of working out programmes which are replicable on a national scale.

Planning mechanisms were to be tested which will increase the utilisation of local resources and the involvement of local people in all stages of development. In addition, means were to be tested to improve development administration and coordinate government machinery both horizontally and vertically.

The objectives of the programme are no different from those of most rural development activities: to increase rural productivity, to increase rural employment opportunities and to increase rural incomes and hence raise the standard of living. While agricultural productivity was stressed, other experimental projects such as rural industries and housing were also to be carried out. These objectives were to be carried out within the existing government machinery, using existing staff and financial resources as much as possible but seeking external assistance for experiments, innovations, training and equipment. Thorough monitoring and evaluation were to be carried out, particularly to ensure the programme's widespread replicability. After the programme had been set out in the 1970-74 Development Plan, it was also realised that research would be an essential component.

During 1972 a team from the Institute for Development Studies evaluated the Special Rural Development Programme (1) and pointed out the need to clarify programme objectives and distinguish between long-term and short-term goals and between general and specific project aims in terms that would be understood by government officials and local people. It was found that proper strategy design and effective evaluation depended on clear, and whenever possible measurable, statements of objectives.

Although one of the primary objectives of the programme was to increase local involvement in development projects, it was found in 1972 that the actual involvement of the local people had been almost

negligible in most places. The most widespread effort to achieve local involvement was to inform people in each SRDP area through large, impressive barazas (meetings) of the development of infra-structures and increases in income and employment which the programme would bring them. This misguided publicity only served to raise expectations unrealistically. Furthermore, directives came from the central government requiring comprehensive plans to be formulated within an unrealistically short period which did not allow time for encouraging and organising local participation. In areas with expatriate planning teams, even district officers showed very little initiative.

However, in the Migori-Kuria SRDP area a hierarchy of local development committees which had been dormant for several years had been revitalised. Traditional village committees of respected older men make suggestions for projects to the locational development committee, which is made up of one representative from each village elected at sublocation barazas. The locational committee investigates suggestions from the villagers and works out a local scheme of priorities. Special committees are in charge of implementation, usually with the help of a chief or sub-chief. In addition, the SRDP Project Committee in Migori-Kuria have institutionalised the process of local consultation by having different local representatives attend their meetings, depending on the topic to be discussed. Evidently, the prospect of obtaining government funds has actually stimulated local participation.⁽²⁾

Greater local participation in planning has also occurred in the women's group programme which operates in each SRDP area. The women in each area decide on their own projects based on their needs. For example, the women in one area may decide to concentrate on nutrition and vegetable gardening, while others may focus on handicraft projects. Leaders chosen by the women receive training and learn how to obtain information needed by their groups. The women's programme may well show the way in which local initiative can be assisted and encouraged by government to meet local needs.³

3. The authors are grateful to Mrs. Keli of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Social Services for information on the women's group programme.

Training programmes have been emphasised, but very few are geared toward local participation in planning. Leadership seminars held in each SRDP area tend merely to inform participants of forthcoming and ongoing projects, thus involving them in the implementation rather than the planning stage. Adult literacy classes also give information which will facilitate involvement only in the implementation stage. The women's group programme stands out among the few which train local people for participation in planning.

Just as the Special Rural Development Programme has generally failed to generate a great deal of local level participation with the exceptions noted, so also the problem of creating greater equity within each rural area has been generally neglected. An exception has been the Tetu Extension Project where an experimental package programme has been devised for less progressive farmers. (See 1 and 19.) In the Tetu Project area and another area, experiments have been conducted with small-scale farmer credit, and in a third project area labour intensive road construction methods are being tested which may open up jobs for unskilled, uneducated or landless people living in rural areas.

The goal of improving government coordination was addressed by appointing a special officer for each project area designated as the area coordinator. The area coordinators have suffered from a lack of administrative authority, but they have been able to oversee the programmes in their areas more or less effectively on the strength of their personalities. A system of periodic reports and management committee meetings, which bring together all relevant officers to discuss aspects of the programme, have also served to increase coordination.

Evaluation was originally intended to be carried out by full-time area evaluators, but after one year this approach was discontinued because evaluation carried out by a multi-disciplinary centrally based team proved to be more effective. While evaluation procedures have been built into the programme machinery, the importance of outside evaluation has also been recognised.

In the initial planning stages of the Special Rural Development Programme research which had already been done on the relevant areas was collected. Gaps in existing information have subsequently been filled by further research. More research has been carried out in areas where expatriate planning teams have been stationed, and in general SRDP areas have been the focal point of several studies. It has been maintained by

some that research has concentrated on these areas at the expense of other parts of the country, but this alleged imbalance will be justified if the results of research and experimentation can be replicated on a nationwide basis.

District Development Planning

According to the 1974-78 Development Plan, planning should increasingly occur at the district level. To this end, most programmes put forward in the Plan have been disaggregated to the district level. In addition to carrying out projects set forth in the Plan, district development committees will be able to initiate new projects using revenue available to them from a special district development grant: between 1973/74 and 1977/78 a total of K£ 4,165,000 has been allocated, averaging K£ 25,000 per year for each district. In addition, special funds beyond this may be made available for large-scale projects. Thus although project identification is primarily provided by central government, the strategy for phasing, timing and site location is left to district level planners, and they will initiate further projects based on local needs. Furthermore, according to the 1974-78 Plan, "gradually, the entire planning mechanism will become based on district programmes". (14)

Greater equity and local participation are among the primary objectives of the new emphasis on district level planning. Central government planning is criticised for tending to ignore the economic and geographic diversity of different parts of the country, and it is hoped to "encourage and foster a more even distribution of development in different areas of the country by allowing programmes and resources to be provided for them to be determined on the basis of a specific, local assessment of problems, resources and productive potential". (13) Furthermore, district level planning aims at "willing and active participation of local communities in the planning and implementation of development programmes". (14, Vol. I, p. 111) Training is to be provided to local leaders and officials to help them participate in planning more effectively.

To help achieve more equitable development among regions, existing programmes are to be identified on maps showing the siting of infrastructure, direct production and social service activities. Through this exercise, areas of over-concentration and those neglected will become visible, and measures can be devised to rectify geographic imbalance. However, it is not yet clear how neglected groups within

each area will be identified or how plans will be devised specifically for them. For example, if it is found that a specific area needs a cash crop, it is not certain whether the crop will be introduced to the poorer small farmers or merely to the wealthier, more progressive farmers as has been done in the past. Hopefully the proposed training of district level officers will include ideas on how to identify projects which will promote equity at the local level, and increased local participation in the planning process may also result in projects which benefit a wider segment of the population than has often been the case in the past.

In addition to meeting the primary goals of equity and local participation, district level planning, using a modified form of the reporting system developed in the Special Rural Development Programme, should facilitate better coordination of government programmes. According to this reporting system, the phasing, timing and provision of all necessary inputs are specified at the planning stage, and this will be monitored during the implementation process through the existing committee structures. This process will also encourage the collection of all relevant local-level data. Finally, a district development officer will be posted to each district with responsibility for coordinating planning and implementation.

CONCLUSION

Development planning in the past has emphasised industrial growth rates which are tied to increases in the gross national product and growth of foreign exchange reserves. Yet Kenya's high rate of economic growth has not automatically assured other important aspects of development, such as employment, income distribution and welfare. The recent emphasis on these other aspects of development is inevitably connected with an emphasis on development in rural areas where most of the needier people live.

It has been realised that rural development can be accelerated if local communities are able to participate more fully, but in practise the coordination of local and national development efforts has been difficult to achieve. Planning at the national level has been impeded by a lack of information concerning local conditions, and now attempts are being made to remedy this situation by government sponsored research, experimentation and prototype testing. Poor communication between national planners and local communities is still a problem. In fact their points of view are quite different in many respects, such as perceptions of goals and constraints, short and long-term priorities, proper control of development resources and planning techniques. For a start, technical planning

language needs to be translated into terms which local people and officials will understand.

The difficulties of including local people in development planning must be weighed against the tremendous national savings which can be generated by reducing the failure rate of development programmes. Local level participation in planning reduces the time and costs of implementation, the cost of extension services and the costs of resistance to government programmes imposed from outside. If the social distance can be lessened between national planners and local communities, this may reduce the cost of feedback mechanisms and expensive dissemination machinery. Perhaps most important, with the participation of local people in development planning, it is more likely that programme will be devised which will reach the poorer members of society.

The valuable contribution of local communities to the development process has been emphasised in this paper. However, the role of central government, which provides much of the financial, administrative and technical resources, is also extremely important. A policy for the proper balancing of local and national contributions will be achieved when the purposes of development from below are sufficiently clarified.

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