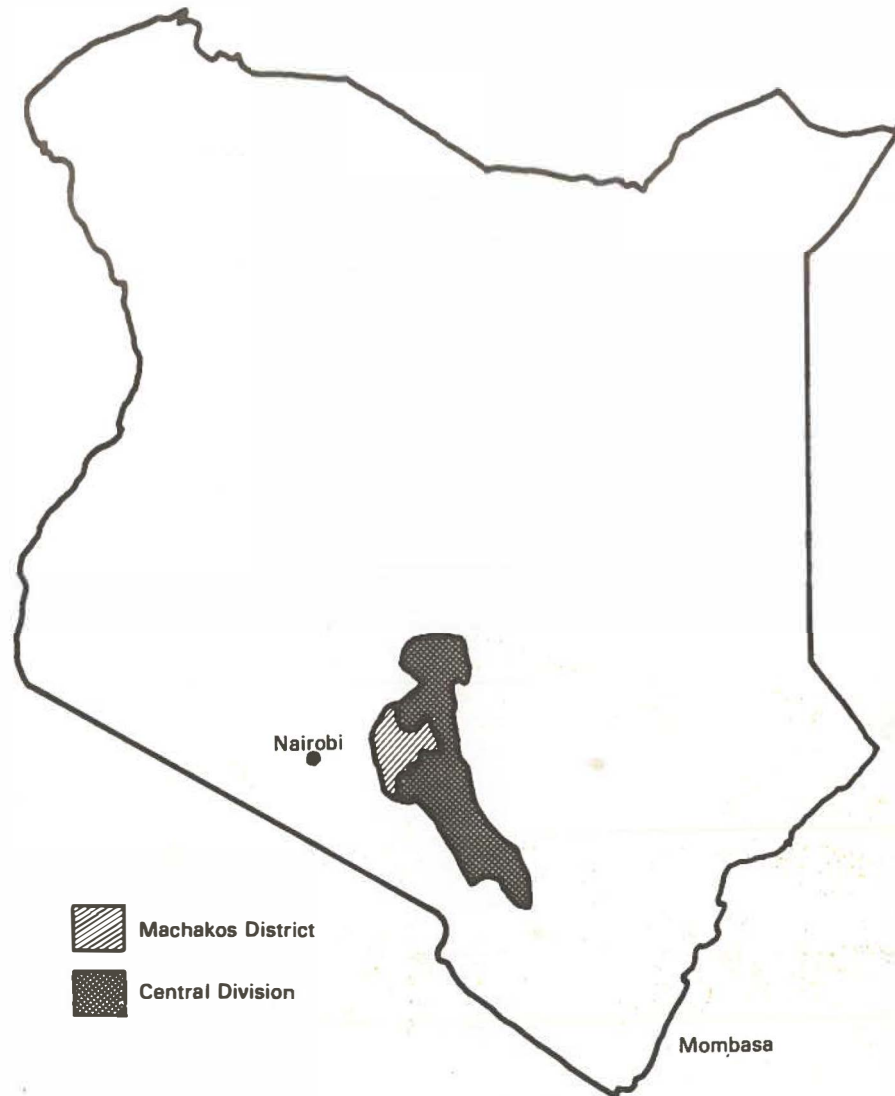


DEVELOPMENT BY THE PEOPLE



Central Division, Machakos District —
the site of the ICA's first
rural project in Kenya.



Development by the People:

A Case Study of the Work of the Institute of
Cultural Affairs in Central Division, Machakos
District, Kenya.

by Waithira Gikonyo

November, 1982.

INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have witnessed both successes and failures in the development of poor countries. Most national statistics, such as per capita income, literacy rates, and infant mortality have improved during this time. But these successes are often tempered by several problems. First, national statistics often reflect improvements among the most visible and accessible elements of society, particularly those in urban areas and those who live along all weather roads. All too often, the life of the majority of people who live in less accessible areas has improved very little. Secondly, many projects which have raised living standards have also engendered dependencies of rural peoples on government assistance. The dependencies range from obvious ones, such as those arising out of food hand-outs, to more subtle ones, where local leaders refuse to believe that they can accomplish anything without government assistance. A third and related problem is that development policies planned from above often have ignored the felt needs of the "policy endurers." Many development projects have failed because they required participation from a local population which had no say in their planning and initiation.

All of these problems have become more acute during the present world recession. As both government and donor resources shrink, the funds to extend the localized successes to less accessible areas disappear. Neither the governments nor the donors can afford to support the dependencies they have created. Neither can they afford to waste scarce resources on projects which do not have the support of the local people. Many observers have concluded that if development is to continue, rural people will have to be involved in the planning and implementation of their own development projects. While much has been written about this need, very little has been done. The work of the Institute of Cultural Affairs is one attempt to put these words into action.

The Institute of Culture Affairs (ICA) is an independent not-for-profit organization that concerns itself with the human factor in world development. In Kenya and worldwide, the ICA has

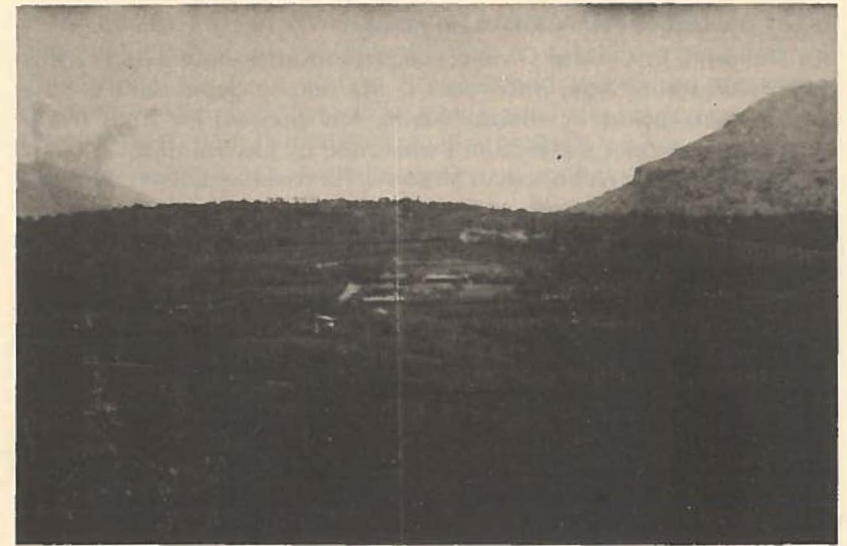
devoted itself to the critical task of orienting development planning, decision making, and project implementation to the local level. Toward this end, it has articulated a model of development which finds expression in its work. ICA village projects:

- 1) are designed and decided upon by local villagers, not imposed by external authority or outside "experts."
- 2) emphasize meeting basic needs through small-scale village projects, not undertaking large projects such as the building of roads, dams, and bridges.
- 3) are dependent primarily on locally available materials, labor, and motivation, not on an influx of aid or the stimulus of personal financial gain.
- 4) are comprehensive in dealing with local issues, not focused on a single issue.
- 5) are replicable from one village to another, not focused within a single geographical area.

There is today a sense of urgency about the task of meeting basic human needs — food, shelter, health, education. Slogans such as "health for all by the year 2000" are expressions of this urgency. The ICA contends that if these slogans are to be taken seriously, development efforts must be directed toward re-awakening the spirit of community and capturing human motivation at the village level.

THE WORK OF THE ICA

In Kenya, the ICA has initiated projects in twenty-one districts in what it terms the "90% population belt", that section of the country in which 90% of the people reside. The first project was started in 1975 in Kawangware, on the western outskirts of Nairobi. Over the past seven years, local people together with the public and private sectors, have made great strides in developing their community. Some of the programmes in Kawangware have included the building and staffing of a clinic and development of a comprehensive health programme, the establishment of nursery and primary schools for local children and the beginning of adult literacy classes.



View of Kamweleni village from across the hills.

In 1978, the Institute extended methods used in the Kawangware project to its first rural project in Kenya, the Kamweleni Human Development Project, in Kamweleni village, Central Division, Machakos District. After two years, the project was expanded to include the other four villages in the surrounding sub-location, and a short time later, all six sub-locations that make up Muputi Location (thirty-four villages, twenty-five thousand people) were participating in their own development planning. In June, 1981, a Divisional expansion system was started, building on the momentum generated in Muputi Location. This process was completed in June 1982, extending methods to all six locations in Central Division (two hundred and two villages, one hundred and eighty thousand people).

The following case study describes this development process in Machakos District. It details the ways in which the ICA has initiated its models of development and enabled local villagers in the Central Division of Machakos District to assume a more responsible and active relationship to their future.

KAMWELANI HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The work in Central Division began in Kamweleni village. It is an agricultural village with most of its people dependent on the crops grown (primarily maize, beans, and greens) for their livelihood, but these crops are often threatened by low rainfall. Though it is bordered by a river and two streams, Kamweleni does not have a year round water source and lack of water is a major problem. Women often have to travel long distances to get water from a dam at another village. Most families have no cash income, but those that do earn from 120 to 600 Kenyan shillings per month (approximately 12 to 60 dollars U.S.) Most of the employable males have gone to Nairobi for work, leaving a large percentage of women, youth, and elders in the community.

Kamweleni village was chosen as the site for the first Human Development Project in consultation with both villagers and government officials. It was one of the least developed villages in the location with few resources and was fairly isolated due to the poor condition of its only road.

VILLAGE CONSULTATION

The project in Kamweleni began with a five day village consultation, held in February 1978. This was a time for villagers to meet together to set goals and make plans for their implementation. It provided a chance first for villagers to express their needs, to articulate the visions or dreams they had for their community. Next, the villagers sought to identify the obstacles that hindered the achievement of those needs. Finally, the assembled community worked to develop practical proposals. The ICA states that the key to developing practical proposals is the emphasis on the removal of obstacles rather than just the statement of needs or desires. More realistic planning can take place when people seriously confront those obstacles which block their progress. The proposals generated in Kamweleni were more "down to earth" objectives than the dreams or visions articulated earlier. Examples of their practical proposals were nursery school education and improved communication systems. From the proposals, specific events for implementation were suggested. For the above proposals, events included beginning a Kamweleni nursery school and opening the road, respectively. These events were prioritized and scheduled across a two year period. Finally, "implementaries", the day by day, specific actions necessary to get the first tasks done, were determined and scheduled on a timeline covering the coming three months.

This consultation or planning process is at the heart of the ICA methodology and is considered to be the starting point for the

implementation of a comprehensive Human Development Project. The end product of the consultation is a realistic timeline and organized set of plans stating the goals and anticipated activities of the community. But more than simply producing a comprehensive development plan, the consultation expresses the new decision of community members to work together as a demonstration project.



The village consultation provided a chance for villagers to articulate the dreams they had for their community.

VILLAGE STRUCTURES

Very often, village based development efforts are hampered by the lack of clearly defined structures and channels within the village for decision making and implementation. Establishing village structures can provide a more tangible way for villagers to work together to carry out their plans. The ICA has evolved a way of organizing the village and a process for doing this, which takes place during the five day consultation.

The villagers contribute information about the make-up of their village, natural boundaries, open land, landmarks, clusters of households and other geographical and demographic features. Then they draw a map of their village, dividing it into five geographical sections which are called stakes. Each stake has from twenty to thirty families. It falls below the government's lowest administrative unit, but is the ICA's primary unit of organization and is the point at which village planning begins.

Underlying the use of stakes as the basic unit for village organization is the ICA's belief that in the scattered residences of rural areas in which non-geographical family, clan, and religious ties predominate, the concept of "village" is weak. Thus there is little structure for, or practice of, village co-operative activity. By establishing geographical neighborhood stakes, the village has a way to involve and care for all members. No area of the village, person, or group of people is left out.

Each stake chooses a leader and works to pull together its ideas for community activities. Once a month, all the stakes meet together in a community assembly to decide collectively on plans for the village as a whole and to monitor progress on their two year timeline of activities.

In addition to the formation of stakes, village-wide "guilds" or work teams are also established during the consultation. These working groups are organized by common trade, task or profession. Guilds are formed in areas such as health, agriculture, and education with responsibility for carrying out the tasks identified during the consultation planning process.

IMPLEMENTATION

One of the basic tenets of the ICA's work is that development must rely on local skills, local resources, and local labor. When people become involved in deciding upon and planning the future of their village, they also begin to shoulder the responsibility for seeing the work through. In order to carry out proposed tasks, workdays are held for the stakes, guilds, and the village as a whole. Work might include clearing pathways, building a nursery school, or planting trees.

In Kamweleni village, one of the most dramatic accomplishments was the opening of the road linking Kamweleni with the Machakos-Kitui road to the north and the Mbooni road to the south. The villagers built a concrete drift across the Ikiwe River and then petitioned the government to upgrade and maintain the road. The Kamweleni road is now the main route used by public transport and other vehicles travelling from Machakos to Mbooni. The opening of the road sparked a whole set of new enterprises. Kamweleni now has three "dukas" (stores), and a tea shop under construction. Without the drift across the river, the opening of the road, and the resultant increase of "traffic" through the village, it is unlikely that these businesses would have been started. The wonder of Kamweleni is that it went from being a non-village, just a scattering of farms, to a village with a road, school, stores and a welcome sign: Kamweleni: Place of Plenty.



After villagers built a concrete drift across the Ikiwe River, the road was opened and Kamweleni village became more accessible to the outside world.

PROJECT REPLICATION

After almost two years of the Kamweleni pilot laboratory work, it was thought that sufficient data and experience were at hand and sufficient numbers of staff trained, to begin the process of replication; the expansion from the initial demonstration project to the surrounding villages.

One test of the effectiveness of a development strategy is whether or not it can be transferred from a single village project to a cluster of villages across a wider geography. The ICA believes that it is possible for this to happen and that it will demand less start up work and less supervision over the long run. The initial demonstration project, in this case Kamweleni, was a catalyst for beginning projects in nearby villages.

The first replication experiment began in 1980 with the four villages around Kamweleni, which together with Kamweleni comprise Muputi Sub-location (A sub-location is the lowest

government administrative unit. In Central Division, Machakos District, the average sub-location population is three to four thousand). A five day consultation, similar to the one first held in Kamweleni village, was held for the entire sub-location. Over one hundred representatives from the five villages attended. The outcome was a practical development plan in the form of a two year timeline for each village and one for the sub-location as a whole. This gave every village responsibility for its own development and also pulled together all five villages into one united thrust for development activities. Many villagers remarked that this was the first time they had ever had a chance to work together as a sub-location, and talk through what they could accomplish together.

Shortly after the Muputi Sub-location Cluster Project was established, the ICA moved to start up sub-location projects in the remaining sub-locations of Muputi Location. Each project was initiated in much the same fashion as the Muputi project with the important exception that these sub-locations did not start with the base of a village Human Development Project in their sub-locations.

After all the six sub-location projects had been established, the next step in the replication process was to pull together all six sub-locations (thirty-four villages) into a Location Cluster Project. A Location Cluster Consultation was held in the second week of June,



The old and the new — All the 34 villages in Muputi Location decided to build new nursery schools as one of their location wide projects.

1981, with a quota of three people per village project attending. It was held at the Kamweleni Training Center and was approached with a celebrative mood by all the villagers. They anticipated the excitement of the completion of a years work of moving from a single village project, through the establishment of sub-location projects, to the climax of linking all the villages of the location together in common development goals.

During the location consultation, villagers were asked what role they wanted the ICA to play in future development efforts. Three needs which villagers felt the ICA could meet were expressed: 1) providing someone for villagers to talk with about problems, needs, and achievements; 2) assisting in reaching out to other villages nearby in development efforts; and 3) providing training opportunities. These responses spurred the ICA to move into a new phase, shifting their focus from single village projects to multi-village cluster projects. In Muputi, this meant a jump from one to thirty-four villages.

With this new focus, the operations of the Kamweleni staff inevitably had to change. Their role went from being residents in the village project working with the stakes to being mobile "circuiters" with a regular monthly visitation schedule to all villages in the location. Villages with no resident staff now had someone with whom to discuss their problems, plans, and ongoing activities.

CIRCUIT SCHEDULES

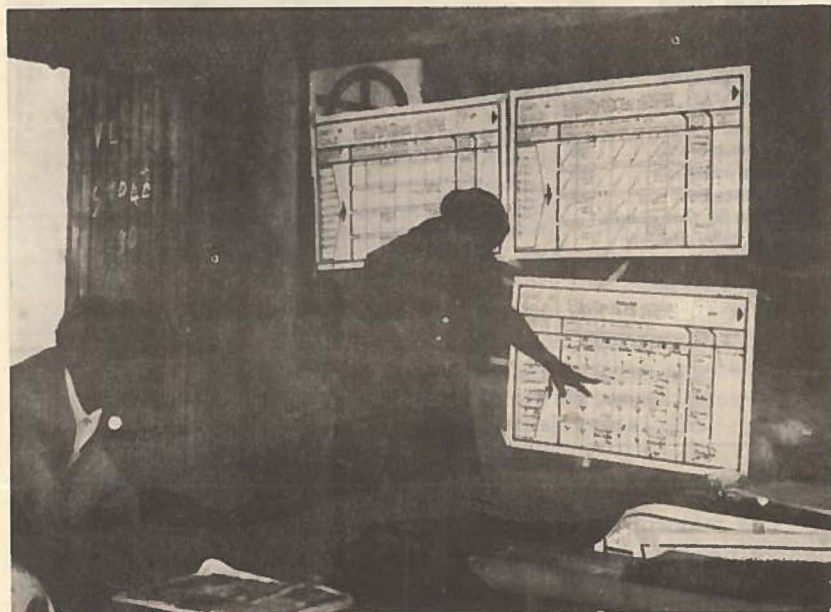
Each village in the Muputi Location Cluster Project has a two day circuit meeting once each month. The first day they share insights they have gained, evaluate the previous months activities, and work through issues that face their development. The second day the community meets in three forms: each stake meets to begin the planning, next the Community Assembly pulls these plans together into a common village consensus, and finally the guilds meet to prepare plans for implementation and schedule them on a timeline. Some time is also set aside during this day for the villagers to begin actual work on one of the projects which has been included on their timeline.

Each sub-location in the project also has a two day circuit once a month which includes activities similar to those in the village circuit. One difference is a sub-location leaders' meeting in which reports of the village and sub-loction guild activities, and sub-location events are heard.

process in their own villages. In response to requests by villagers for more training for this critical role, the ICA has designed a week long, residential training course for the stake and guild leaders. During the course, leaders' skills in developing community organization are enhanced and practical methods for leading meetings, building consensus and creating and implementing development timelines are taught. For most of the participants, the VLI is the first time they have led a group meeting, and is the time when they really begin to think of themselves as village leaders.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

The ICA has focused on the organizational design of villages, sub-locations, and locations that would allow them to operate on their own. A village has to picture how everything it wants to do is planned for by the village, paid for by the village, and carried out by the village. The government and NGO's may be able to help, but no project should be planned without first determining whether or not the villagers are willing to invest the time, money, and effort to see it through. The ICA has identified two particular areas, health and agriculture, in which it has initiated special programmes to meet the demand from the villages.



For most villagers the Village Leaders Institute is the first time they have led a group meeting.



The Health Care-takers in Muputi location directed the drive to dig latrines.

HEALTH

The Health Programme was one example of a very low cost, low capital way to address one of the basic needs of the project villages — community health improvement.

Each village chose five representatives, one from each stake, who participated in a Health Training Course. The course, which was held in each sub-location, emphasized preventive health care, and covered topics such as sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, family planning, common diseases, and first aid. At the end, the participants assumed the voluntary role of Village Health Care-takers. Their functions included home to home visitation in their stakes and sharing health lessons with their neighbors, keeping records of births, deaths, and health problems in their stakes, referring people to the local clinic when necessary, and initiating village health campaigns. In Muputi Location, there was a great emphasis on sanitation improvement. The Health Care-takers directed the drive to dig latrines, compost pits, and build dish racks. They also took part in food demonstrations and underwent training in intensive vegetable production for nutrition improvement.

AGRICULTURE

In agriculture, the ICA has sought to link the needs of local farmers to existing government programmes.

In June 1981, a three day Farmer's Conference was held with two farmers from every village in the location attending. During the conference, the farmers gave reports on the agricultural activities in each of their villages and discussed the obstacles and problems blocking agricultural improvement. Before discussing possible solutions, the farmers heard from government agricultural officers, co-operative officers and others, who presented possible programmes for the future. The farmers then discussed these programmes and worked through proposal and implementation steps. They decided to participate in the Ministry of Agriculture's training programme. They organized themselves by stakes and six hundred farmers attended the training. The year before, only one hundred farmers had participated.

In Iveti Location (one of the locations in the Division expansion system), the farmers have mobilized themselves by stakes for a competition to see which could do the most terracing for soil conservation.

In Muputi Location, there has been an attempt to coordinate sub-location farmers' guild meetings with visits by government agricultural extension workers. So far, this has met with limited success, but efforts to regularize guild meetings and coordinate with the government agricultural workers are continuing.

The ICA has also made use of volunteer help to initiate tree nurseries in each stake, and to teach intensive vegetable production.

SPECIAL WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

From July to November, 1981, a series of meetings especially for women was held in all the sub-locations across Muputi Location. This Women's Advancement Module, as it was called, was designed with several aims: to provide women with more information about decisions made in their sub-location consultations, to figure out ways in which the women in particular could assist in carrying out the tasks decided upon in these consultations, and to give women the opportunity to initiate some of their own programmes, with a special emphasis on the formation and registration of women's groups.

During the three day programme, the new roles that women have to play in development were stressed and the women attending became aware of the importance of their participation in developing

their villages. They visited the Katumani Agricultural Research Station, and met with their district and divisional officers. The projects they decided to initiate were demonstration gardens and literacy classes. They also worked with the District Public Health Officer to schedule classes on home management. As a result of the women's programme at least one new women's group in each sub-location was formed, their officers trained, and their group registered with the Community Development Office.



The Women's Advancement Module encouraged women to initiate their own projects.

STAFF

In order to fully understand how the ICA has operated in Machakos District, it is important to look at the make-up, background, training and development of the staff members who provide the support system to the village projects.

Early on, the ICA decided to develop a core staff of Kenyan volunteers, people from rural villages, who would be able to work effectively in the village setting because they could understand its problems and relate more intimately to its hopes and aspirations. For this reason, the ICA asks that from each village where a Human Development Project is started, at least ten members volunteer themselves to work in other ICA projects across Kenya.

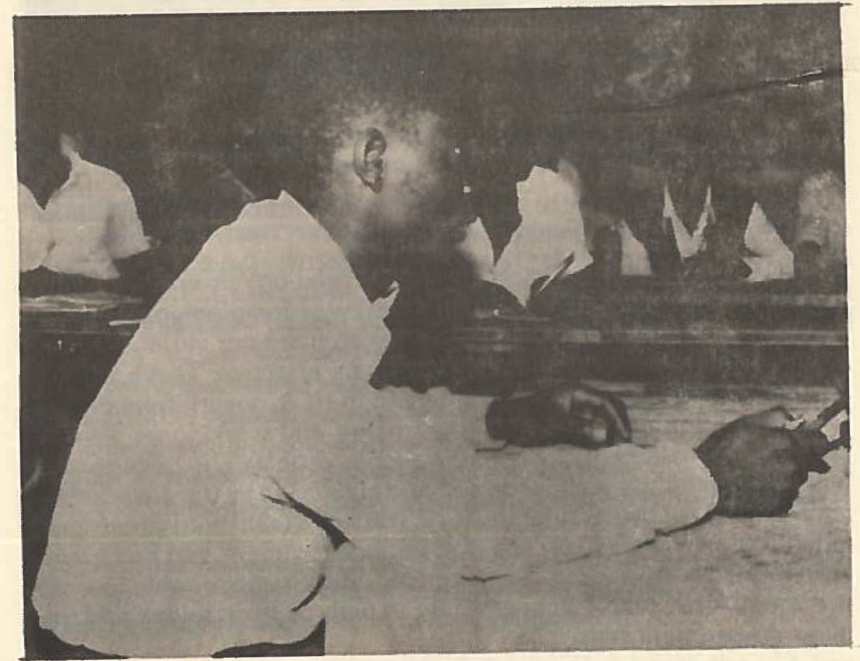
Most of these volunteers are young people from eighteen to twenty-four who have completed their primary school education. Many have attended some secondary school, but for various reasons, perhaps foremost lack of school fees (secondary education in Kenya is not free), they have had to leave secondary school before completion. There are many reasons for volunteering. For some, the ICA offers the opportunity to serve their country through participating in rural development efforts. For others, the ICA is the answer to unemployment. It offers them work and financial remuneration, a small per diem or stipend. The task the ICA faces, the training and development of these young people from various economic, educational and cultural backgrounds, with various motivations for volunteering, is a challenging one.

The training of staff begins with a six week long Human Development Training Institute (HDTI) which is held at the Kamweleni Training Centre. The course has several objectives. First, it trains participants to identify the needs of different types of communities. Second, it teaches ways to address these needs with available local resources, government assistance, and technical wisdom from other projects. And third, it fosters leadership by training participants in methods with which they can involve the whole community in development planning and activities. The HDTI does not train participants to be "experts". Rather it seeks to instill in them an awareness of the role they can play as catalysts for development in the villages where they live and work.

After completing the HDTI, volunteers commit themselves for an initial period of two years and are assigned to work in one of the ICA's village projects. Their duties are wide ranging and include such things as visiting village leaders, announcing and facilitating meetings, keeping track of timelines and village accomplishments, visiting government officials, and participating shoulder to shoulder with village members in local workdays. The work is difficult, both physically and mentally, and the struggle of staff members, particularly newer ones, is expressed in their concerns with physical overwork and the social isolation that occurs when they move into a new situation with unfamiliar tribal customs, food and climate. For most, the HDTI and subsequent assignment to a village project are the first times they have been away from home and the close ties to parents, relatives and friends. Adjustment can be difficult. But the support of older staff members in the projects, "on the job" training and the role of service and leadership into which they are thrust, help staff members to gain confidence. Most begin to see themselves in a new way. They accept the hardships and recognize their ability to work with older village leaders, solve problems, and make a

difference in the development of their nation. As one staff member has put it, "Our rewards are many and most of them will come from future generations. We are running our country for ourselves and future generations and this gives me more motivation and happiness than any monthly salary."

Currently, the ICA has two hundred and seventy Kenyan staff members, sixty-four of whom have completed their first two years and have decided to continue in their work with the ICA. In addition to these Kenyan volunteers, there are thirty extra-national staff members, who come from a variety of countries including Canada, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, the United States, and Zambia. Their major role is to provide training and back-up support in project planning and coordination, fund raising, and financial management. One of the challenges facing the ICA is the process of phasing Kenyan staff into the roles now played by extra-nationals. Preparation for these roles includes working side by side with extra-nationals in key positions and transferring to other countries where they gain confidence and leadership experience. Currently, there are six Kenyans assigned to ICA projects outside Kenya.



A staff trainee at the Human Development Training Institute.

LINKING PLANNING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Another area of need that has become apparent is the coordination between villagers' plans and the government's work. To address this need, the ICA designed a three day planning session for all the Location Officers. In the planning session for Muputi Location, the government officers from different Ministries, together with the Location Chief and Sub-location Assistant Chiefs (both government administrative positions for their respective areas) built their own coordinated plan for the location. They looked at the village plans while making their own and tried to mesh the two so that government officials and villagers would move together toward their goals. The government officers meet every three months to check signals, confer on special programmes, and discuss what parts of their plan have been accomplished.

The government officials involved in these planning sessions have been impressed with the work of the ICA in their villages and the District as a whole. The ICA's ability to bring people together to make use of government programmes was acknowledged in interviews conducted during the Muputi Location Officers planning session in November, 1981. When asked how the ICA's work assisted them, government officials responded:

"in indentifying community health problems and giving aid in solving such problems." — *Public Health Inspector*

"in making admininstration easier — people see planning as impörtant." — *Chief, Muputi Location*

"in helping people to work together and introducing new ideas." — *Community Development Officer.*

The government officials rated their relationship with the ICA as good and felt that work done by ICA staff was complementary to their own day to day work. They did, however, point our various ways in which they felt the ICA could become more effective. These included strengthening the association between the ICA, government officials and government sponsored programmes and working as a tool to bring the government closer to the people, especially in helping to get village initiated projects accepted and supported by the government. One official suggested that the ICA "work as a team with government agencies so villagers can see that both government and Kamweleni (ICA) staff are involved in development." Another expressed the need for the ICA to "teach villagers how to plan by themselves and then seek government help."



Staff members work should to shoulder with villagers in local workdays.

CONCLUSION

In the past year, two major evaluations of the ICA's work have been carried out.* These evaluations, comments, such as those coming from the Muputi Location officers, and its own internal assessments have helped the ICA to pinpoint problems areas and concerns. Some of these include: the expectations of villagers who have become used to "hand-outs" and are disappointed when massive material inputs are not forthcoming from the ICA, the difficulty of coordinating programs with both government and more traditional development agencies, the need to develop a more reliable method of documenting village accomplishments, the internal issues of staff training, duties, living conditions, and responsibility for decision making, and the articulation of its changing role in moving from setting up "demonstration projects" to what it terms massive mobilization or "awakenment" of rural people.

These concerns point to the difficulty of the task the ICA has undertaken, that of fostering community based development initiated and sustained by broad local participation. But this type of

development will be the key to addressing the tremendous needs of less developed countries in health, education, and agriculture. When villages are organized and the will and motivation of their people harnessed, villagers themselves will find the ways to feed their children, build their roads, educate their families, and save their land.

It will be a vast enterprise to fully tap the potential and wisdom of the 80% of the population in less developed countries who live in the rural areas. The ICA has made strides in this direction. It has learned a great deal about the dynamics of village development and continues to seek creative ways to enable villagers to utilize their power and resources.

* Evaluations were completed in 1982 by the Ford Foundation in Kenya and Swedish Cooperative Centre, both ICA funding sources.



It will be a vast enterprise to fully tap the potential and wisdom of rural villagers.



Kamweleni Song

Kamweleni kuseo, kuseo	<i>Kamweleni is fine, fine</i>
Nimendete aeni	<i>They like visitors</i>
Kwiasyai athangau	<i>The parents are hard-working</i>
Kwisyana ndanu	<i>The children are happy</i>
Nilulwaka sukulu	<i>We have built a school</i>
Namalelu melami	<i>And roads with tarmac</i>
Nakiwukya niveleki	<i>And water will flow in taps</i>
Kamweleni kuseo, kuseo	<i>Kamweleni is fine, fine</i>

Written by Kamweleni Villagers.

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