

# Kapini sets ball rolling

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UNTIL last year, some three villages situated 24 kilometres north of Lusaka were unknown agricultural communities.

Now, however, they stand to be among the best-known villages in the country as a stimulating project gains momentum.

Following the decision of one international research, training and demonstration group, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) to set up a community development scheme in Zambia, the three villages, Kapini, Mulowa and Malekano in the Katuba area, were selected to be the site.

Since the project got off the ground last February, the villages are no longer exactly what they used to be.

Once, there was no road network in the villages. There are roads now complete with street names.

At one time, too, obtaining mealie meal was a tough proposition; the nearest grinding mill was kilometres away. In the village today, a grinding mill operates.

In addition, a neat classroom block comprising three classrooms and two store-rooms has just been completed and there is reason to believe this is only the beginning.

What has become known as the Kapini Human Development Project (KHDP) is a comprehensive effort at community development on the lines suggested by the residents it aims at expanding the village's economic base.

This is to be done by increasing agricultural yields, maximising land usage, extending local industry, training residents in skills and methods of development and more.

All these represent the stated desires of the people of Kapini.

Ultimately, the aim is to create a self-reliant village community capable of meeting the challenges of modern life. Kapini is to be a model and hopefully a catalyst for rural change.

In one sense, the project is the ICA's baby. For the past three years, the institute, whose main concern is the human factor in development, has been training people concerned with community development in the country.

The enthusiasm generated by these courses led to a suggestion for the establishment of a community development project in Zambia.

## Settled

The institute was agreeable. This was to be its first such project in this country although, of course, it has similar projects in Kenya, India and other parts of the world.

In the consultations with Government departments that followed, the three villages in Kabwe Rural district were settled upon.

They are not peculiar. Like most rural communities, most of the 1,100 residents live in scattered mud brick houses. Although some reportedly work in Lusaka, most live by farming small plots of maize and vegetables.

It is believed that Kapini has been inhabited for at least 100 years.

The villages, however, have one advantage. They are situated only about three kilometres West of the Great North Road. This easy accessibility and proximity to Lusaka were persuasive factors in selecting the villages.

The decisive factor, however, was the clear economic and social need in the villages.

The site having been decided upon, the project was ready to start. There was no plan, it had to be drawn up from the aspirations of the residents. A meeting of the residents and project consultants was consequently called in the village. That was last February.

Honoured by the selection of their community, the residents were enthusiastic about the meeting.

For two weeks, 40 of them battled to save the bridge which is the only entrance to the area. Others constructed the "tent village" which was to house some participants. During the week-long meeting, the village women provided the food.

## Attended

When the meeting opened, more than 700 people attended among them 173 consultants from within and outside Zambia. This meeting which opened on February 26 1978, marked the beginning of the project.

It was a planning session which looked at some aspects to arrive at the plan.

They were: The residents' aspirations; their dreams, hopes and fears. The second aspect was to look at the reasons for the non-realisation of these aspirations.

It then had to draw up the practical proposals, work out the tactics for the project and finally draw up the actual projects to be undertaken in the village.

During the first part of the meeting, it was discovered that the farmers among the people of Kapini were interested in expanding crop production, putting more land under cultivation and crop diversification.

They wanted water for livestock and irrigation. They desired better cattle care and breeding and expansion into new small livestock ventures.

Women dreamed of a centre for learning domestic arts and new creativity in cooking and sewing. An important hope was for a formal school from nursery ages through primary school with trained teachers and new buildings in the village.

They said they would like to build a community centre to include a meeting hall, library and were interested in housing development.

## Eager

The new homes they wanted would be low cost but include plumbing and other comfort features of urban housing. They were eager for community-wide recreation programmes, especially sports events.

A comprehensive health system with preventive, curative and educational components was required. The desire for a year-round supply of safe water was clearly stated.

Finally, it transpired that what the people of Kapini wanted were the living conditions and basic services now available in urban areas.

The second task was to look at the reasons for the non-realisation of these progressive dreams. The first one turned out to be that villagers lacked skills training opportunities.

Training opportunities in improved crop production, small businesses and local industries were not enough. The necessity of devoting all efforts to subsistence farming and the distance and cost of travel to training schools made it virtually impossible for residents to acquire skills and there are few qualified teachers in the village.

It was further found out that bloodline allegiance and family-focused lives militated against the group action required for a livelihood above subsistence level.

Further, the present decision-making structures and organisational forms were inadequate in the face of modern complexities. The residents are blocked by the insufficient local and outside funding.

The insufficiency of local funds resulted in a shortage of capital for farming or business improvement.

Other constraints were incomplete implementation of community decisions, sporadic delivery of basic services, under-developed use of agricultural resources and so forth.

From this data, the meeting now sat down to make the proposals necessary for the people to realise their aspirations. These were put under three broad categories: Economic growth, physical environment and social life proposals.

The expansion of agriculture and use of modern methods of crop and livestock production are dominant in the economic growth proposals. There was also a proposal to produce both locally useable goods and commodities for "export" through co-operative effort as well as one for business development in the village.

Four major proposals emerged regarding physical environment improvement: A health system, access to larger health facilities, up-grading of local sanitation practices and provision of electricity and a safe water supply.

The social life proposals called for the creation of a model village. Provision of model housing, educational buildings for all age groups and a community organisation and leadership training establishment were part of the proposals.

The next move was to work out how to realise these proposals. Thirty-one were arrived at. Among them are, creating authentic celebrative events, providing essential health services, up-grading basic nutrition practices and so forth.

These were further combined to make up the actual schemes known in the project jargon as "actuating programmes," to be carried out in the village. The result was 16 programmes:

Six related to economic self-sufficiency. Three of these are concerned with local commerce and the remainder with physical construction.

The three dealing with commerce include the establishment of a commercial development agency, an industries park and the small business complex.

### Concerned

Those related to physical construction include the public utilities project, the model village and village service corps.

There are four programmes concerned with the expansion of agriculture in the village.

The call for a land irrigation network, model farms, the livestock expansion scheme and the food processing industries.

The third group of six programmes relates to social self-reliance in the village. Three of these deal with functional training and three with social vitality.

The first group of social programmes include the practical skills institute, the Kapini model schools and the continuing education academy.

The second group, dealing with social vitality, includes the comprehensive health service, the community cultural centre and the village engagements association.

These are the actual programmes which make up the Kapini Human Development Project. They call for a high degree of organisation among the villagers.

The three villages have consequently been divided into five sections known as stakes. Each has a leader of its choice.

### Forwarded

Review of the work done, decisions and recommendations are made every Monday during meetings of the various stake leaders and representatives from the six guilds in the village.

The recommendations are forwarded to the village council which meets every Tuesday. It is made up of the three headmen, stake leaders and representatives of the guilds.

Its main function is the planning of work for the week and solving any problems.

Friday morning is devoted to work on community projects. In the afternoon, there are classes for each stake at which various skills are taught.

Every three months, the whole community comes together in a meeting to celebrate three months' success and look at the future.

The project is still in its infancy. But already, a number of tangible results have been realised. There is a pre-school with an intake of 194 children. The girls have yellow dresses for uniform and they can be seen running enthusiastically to class.

A clinic has started operating which has saved mothers especially, the trouble of travelling to Mungule clinic several kilometres away.

A small farm training centre has been established to train farmers in modern methods of farming. There is a community orchard with banana, orange trees, etc. A thriving piggery has about 25 pigs which will be ready for sale soon.

### Cleared

In addition, eight hectares of a demonstration farm have been cleared and are now under cultivation while 40 hectares more are still being cleared. A dam has been constructed on the Mwembeshi stream.

Every homestead has a well for drinking water. The wells are regularly checked and treated by specially trained health workers within the community. There is a postal box and mail is forwarded everyday.

There is a temporary community hall, a shop and a better bridge has been constructed. The first part of a primary school, three classrooms, have been completed. The remaining block also of three is at foundation level as is the health centre proper.

in the newly-delineated industrial park a grinding mill operates. There are plans to attract more industries to the village. The farmers association gives out loans which last season were re-paid in maize bags.

There is also a bank, known as Savings and Credit Corporation (SACO) and it is said that residents are encouraged to "soak" their money into SACO.

### Trained

An under-five primary health care programme is underway. Young village men and women trained as health care-takers are running the programme. It consists of tips on pre and ante natal care, nutrition education, inoculation, health visits etc.

There are also five midwives per stake. Every Thursday, there is a programme of baby weighing and health demonstration classes are held.

For the literate, there is weekly one page newspaper printed in both English and Lenje, the local vernacular. It is known as Kapini calling.

The project has a staff of ten, six Zambians and four international workers. All the ten are volunteers with the institute of cultural affairs. They live in one whitewashed hostel block which also serves as an office and clinic.

The project director is a local man who lives in one of the three villages.

### Generated

Funding for the project at this stage is mainly through voluntary contributions from the business community and some governments notably that of the United States.

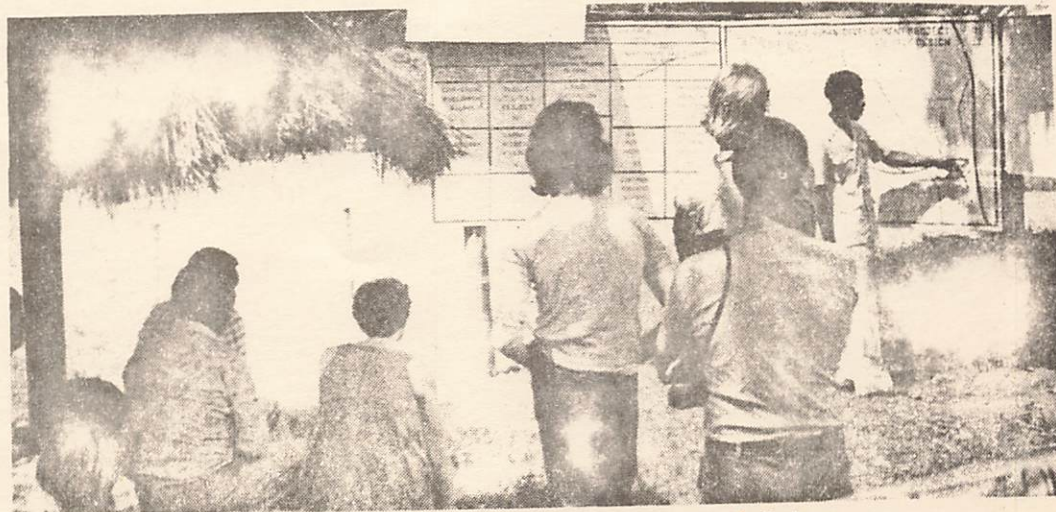
The institute also subsidises wherever possible. Eventually, however, most of the funds will have to be generated by the village ventures to be undertaken.

Asked to comment on the project headman Kapini said: "It is proving beneficial to us. We had to travel many kilometres to the grinding mill, now we have our own... they are helping us build a school... and there is bank, what we make we can now save."

The project will span a period of four years. With



● SOME of the pigs at the piggery at Kapini.



● A VOLUNTEER explains what the Kapini project is all about.

hardly a year gone since it was started, this is probably not the correct time to pass judgment on it.

Suffice to note that it has

several realities features and may provide some answers to the urgent issue of village development.

Zambia needs village

development to reduce the rural/urban migration which threatens the country with famine and urban overcrowding.