

PD-AAJ-190

SN 185

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Travel to Kenya by Charlotte Neumann, M.D., M.P.H.  
November 9 - 22, 1981

Project No. 931-1309

Trip Report

Trip to Kenya on November 9 - November 22, 1981

Dr. Irwin Hornstein representing USAID Office of Nutrition, Washington

Dr. Charlotte G. Neumann, UCLA, Principal Investigator

Purpose of Trip

1. To discuss with USAID mission certain questions and reservations about the nutrition CRSP.\*
2. To work with the Kenya mission to obtain concurrence for the proposed project.
3. Identify a research work site.

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\*CRSP - Collaborative Research <sup>Support</sup> ~~Scientific~~ Program.

The discussions included staffing, personnel needs, training possibilities for Kenyan staff and the potential research site. Meetings were held with the USAID Kenya mission, the Ministry of Health, the University of Nairobi Medical School, and other relevant groups such as the Nutrition Unit and Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and the Medical Research Institute.

Another reason for the trip was to start meeting with the collaborators in Kenya to delineate areas of interest and the proposed content of research. Also discussions were started on the budget, administrative and logistic arrangements.

Dr. Irwin Hornstein's presence was excellent as he served as the "AID to AID" person and was most experienced in negotiating in a statesman-like manner. Dr. Neumann represented a broad knowledge of the context and working facilities in Kenya and technical aspects of the proposed research.

### Tasks Accomplished

#### I. USAID/Kenya Mission

Concurrence from USAID mission was obtained with a positive reaction from the new health officer, Dr. Rose Britanak; the assistant mission director, Mr. Costello; the program officer, Dr. Roy Greely; the liaison officer with Private Voluntary Agencies; and a social scientist, Dr. Auma-Osolo. It was made clear by USAID that they wished to be kept informed of project activities and to cooperate in areas of mutual interest. For example, USAID/Kenya would welcome any nutritional information and data obtained in a semi-arid area.

A suggestion for a part-time CRSP Coordinator was made now that there are to be three CRSPs operating in Kenya. It was felt that each should contribute toward a part-time CRSP Coordinator in the Kenya AID mission to handle all CRSP travel clearances, etc.

## II. Ministry of Health

Positive support by the Ministry of Health was most apparent. Drs. Kanani, the Deputy Director of Medical Services, an extremely busy person who is in charge of nutrition, family planning, rural health, maternal and child health spent several hours meeting with us. The government of Kenya has now embarked on a new five-year plan in which nutrition plays an eminent role. Also, the Ministry is hoping to organize a nutrition research unit in the Medical Research Institute and the Nutrition CRSP might be helpful in this regard.

Others in the Ministry of Health concerned with nutrition are Dr. Sehmi who does nutrient composition studies of Kenya foods, Mrs. Ngui is the Chief Nutritionist for the Ministry of Health and was able to tell us about the activities of the nutrition field staff working in the potential study area and Dr. Mueke, Acting Head of Nutrition, who was out of the country.

## III. Meetings at the University of Nairobi School of Medicine

The Dean, who is also the Chairman of Obstetrics, Dr. Matti was very supportive and welcoming of the project. Although he himself was too busy to participate, he plans to send one or two postgraduate obstetricians who are finishing their training to help in the research effort in the area of reproduction. Dr. Matti himself is director of a WHO funded project on pregnancy outcome.

Dr. James Kagia, the Chairman of the Department of Community Health will be the Co-principal investigator of the nutrition project. and will represent the Kenyan team. He had organized several meetings among faculty in the medical school who had expressed interest in working on this project, as well as representatives from the Central Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of

Finance and Economic Planning. Dr. Kagia also is interested in immune function in relation to nutrition and in morbidity patterns, particularly in chronic illness morbidity among rural populations.

Representing the Department of Pediatrics was Professor Nimrod Bwibo, the Chairman, who is interested in lactation studies and the effect of nutrition on lactation as well as Drs. Kinoti and Dr. Memi both of whom are interested in growth and development, cognitive function, and morbidity patterns among children. The Immunology Department was represented by the chief technical officer, Mrs. Kin Yanjui, as Dr. Bowrey was out of the country and could not attend. She brought a list of studies and equipment needed and offered that the Immunology Department would have sufficient laboratory facilities and equipment to carry out the immunologic studies with additional personnel and supplies.

Dr. Thairu, the former Dean of the Medical School and now one of the Associate Directors of the new Kenya Medical Research Institute will be working on this project in the area of work capacity and physiology and neurophysiologic development. He is also Chairman of the Physiology Department. He produced a specific list of studies and seems very knowledgeable in this area.

#### IV. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)

Meetings were held with Mr. Omoro and the Director of Surveys on two occasions. The CBS has a well trained group of survey and nutritional assessment workers and has also conducted nationwide integrated rural surveys which can furnish data on the potential study area. CBS is about to launch a third anthropometric survey on a nationwide basis. They also have excellent

statisticians, programming and a large capacity IBM computer. However, CBS does not wish to be used merely as a computer facility. They would only want to be involved if they could play a meaningful role. They would be most willing, however, to share any of their data with us particularly about the proposed study site. The problem is that CBS is extremely overloaded and heavily committed and could not guarantee to meet any specific project time table. However, Mr. Omoro and the director of CBS are reading the proposal at present, to consider where and how they might be involved. The Office of Nutrition and of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning Unit were represented by Mr. Wasonga who heads up a new Nutrition Coordinating Unit. They are very interested in having access to any data on nutrition for planning purposes as well as policy formation. Although they were rather nonspecific on how they would work with our group, they did express an interest in being given information in an ongoing fashion. They themselves feel the need to train their own data collectors in matters of nutrition and would like help with training workers for nutritional assessment.

#### V. Computer Capabilities

There is a well-equipped, well-staffed, large capacity computer facility on the science campus at Chiromo, University of Nairobi. The Director is Dr. Scott. They are currently involved with a large WHO-funded pregnancy outcome study. The facility is now in the process of enlarging its computer capacity with a second byte. The only drawback is that the computer is an ICL British computer. However, we were assured that the tapes were compatible with IBM and that there are many programs available which can be translated for IBM use. SPSS is used extensively.

## VI. Medical Research Institute

The Medical Research Institute, formerly associated with the Netherlands is now becoming part of the Ministry of Health. Dr. A.A. Jansen, a Nutritionist is respected and well-liked by the Kenyans and will probably stay on if the Kenyan and Dutch governments give him permission to do so. The Ministry of Health as well as the Department of Community Medicine are interested in having him stay on to teach and continue research. He expressed interest in either direct involvement with or at least consultation with the nutrition research project. He felt that he would be available part-time to help with the training for the preliminary survey as well as general consultation. He identified Kenyan staff that he had trained that could help with food-intake training.

The Medical Research Institute also has the capability of performing a number of biochemical nutrient analyses of blood, breastmilk and urine. They are interested in setting up trace metal analytic procedures. Supplemental reagents and personnel would be required.

## VII. Socio-Economic-Agricultural Aspects of the Project

A meeting was held with Dr. Claudia Carr, Associate Professor of Ecology at U.C. Berkeley. Dr. Carr has had years of experience in rural and pastoral Kenya and is a very experienced field worker and social scientist. She will head up the component that was formerly worked up by Dr. David Leonard. Dr. Leonard, because of his present work commitments, is not able to be involved with this project any further. Dr. Carr's interests are in the area of ecology, as well as problem-solving, coping behaviors and risk-management on a household and community level in dealing with the problem of food shortages and agriculture. Dr. Carr would be prepared to do field work and

direct this segment of the work. She has had collaborative experience with Dr. Nkinwengi of the Institute of Developmental Studies (IDS) in the University of Nairobi and would involve IDS in a counterpart arrangement.

#### VIII. Work Capacity Studies

En route from Nairobi to California, a stop was made overnight in Rome to consult with Dr. Anna Ferra-Luzzi at the National Institute of Nutrition. Dr. Ferra-Luzzi was involved in drafting the work-capacity segment of the original proposal. Dr. Ferra-Luzzi said she would be available for technical conferences as well as short periods of work in the field to help set-up, direct and supervise any of the studies. Also she was most willing to share her expertise in rural field work of which she has had extensive experience in New Guinea.

#### IX. Research Site Selection

Both the Ministry of Health and School of Medicine feel that Embu District would be a suitable research site.

Dr. Kanani arranged for a one-day site visit to Embu District, starting from the Kiraromo Rural Health Training Center. The Health Center's Clinical Officer and Public Health Technician (Sanitarian) spent four hours with us touring the area which was extremely helpful, including a household and market visit.

Embu District is about two hours away from Nairobi on a main road. There is a low-land semi-arid area which borders on Kitui District, where there are periodic rain shortages as well as more fertile wet highlands area on the Mt. Kenya slopes where coffee is grown. The positive aspects of this area are: 1) it is the site of a rural health training center which could serve as

a field base to work out of; 2) there is very little in the way of nutrition research going on in the area. The only other known projects that have been going on are two anthropologic studies, one by Dr. Hugerut of Northwestern University and another by Dr. Brokenshaw, University of Santa Barbara. The only other study planned would take place 30 miles north of Embu in Meru District in the Mt. Kenya Diocese. This would be an administrative study of the primary health center network run by the Diocese. Also, USAID/Kenya was pleased with the area because it borders on their potential future study area of Kitui and data obtained in this semi-arid area would be of value to the AID project. In the Embu District, there is abundant opportunity for hiring O-level graduates of the local high schools.

The staples of the semi-arid area are millet and sorghum. Although these are good protein sources, the area does suffer from periodic rain failure and food shortages. In the highland areas where coffee is grown, the coffee and other crops are sold in the market and malnutrition tends to result from lack of food being left for the family.

X. Training Expectations by the Kenyans and the USAID Mission (see appendix for a more detailed description)

There would be training of field staff in the field setting. For more senior staff there would be training by virtue of counterpart working arrangements. Two senior Kenyans per year could come to the University of California at UCLA or Berkeley for three months for intensive training in relevant areas of their choice. The area of greatest need identified by Dr. Kagia was in the area of statistics and data management, mainly in discriminate factor analysis, multivariate analysis, and programming etc. Other expectations include the supervision and guidance of Kenyan doctoral

postgraduate and master level students from the University of Nairobi in the field. Also, the University of California counterparts would be expected to give occasional lectures and seminars as called for by the Kenyan colleagues at the University of Nairobi School of Medicine a main campus. Likewise visiting Kenyans to UC would also be invited to give lectures or seminars.

#### XI. Briefing of UC Berkeley Team Members and Management Staff

A meeting was held with Dr. G. Beaton, Dr. D. Calloway, Dr. Dorothy Cattle and Dr. Eric Carter on November 24, 1981 at U.C. Berkeley. It was proposed that in late February, Drs. Neumann, Cattle and Carter will go to Kenya for the purpose of orienting Dr. Cattle and Carter to the institutions, people, personnel in the medical school, Ministry of Health, Computer Facilities, CBS, Ministry of Planning, IDS and USAID/Kenya mission. In collaboration and cooperation with the Kenyan group a definite site in the Embu District would be selected for the preliminary study. The group will establish a field base, and recruiting and training of staff will begin. Drs. Cattle and Carter are expected to remain for the duration of the project. Dr. Neumann will remain only two weeks, to return in June for the summer months to participate in field activities. Dr. Zerfas will go to Kenya from late March to June to be primarily involved with anthropometry training. The expectation is that a preliminary survey will be carried out during the spring so that the information can be used for planning purposes for the definitive phase of the study for which a proposal and budget must be presented in the early summer of 1982. Active recruitment is starting for a U.C. Team Field Coordinator. If a suitable person is not found, an interim appointment of an Acting Coordinator will be made.

Formal agreements between collaborating universities (Universities of California and Nairobi); memoranda of understanding for all collaborators, official approvals and Kenya government exemptions from duty on imported research equipment and supplies, tax and work permit exemptions for U.C. team members must be obtained before work can actually begin.

Tentative Kenyan Counterpart and Supporting Staff

Kenyan Personnel

Area of Interest

University of Nairobi

Principal Investigator

Dr. James Kagia  
Department of Community Health

Overall Kenyan Director  
Mortality and Morbidity Immune Function

Co-Investigators

Department of Pediatrics

Dr. Nimrod Bwibo

Nutrition and Lactation

Dr. S. Kinoti

Food Intake  
Nutritional Status

Dr. Memi

Growth and Development  
Cognitive Function

Department of Physiology

Dr. Thairu

Neurophysiologic Development  
and Work Capacity

Department of Immunology

Dr. Bowrey  
Mrs. Kinyanjui

Immunology

Department of Chiromo-Science Campus

Dr. Scott  
Chiromo Campus

Computer Facilities  
Data Analysis

IDS

Dr. Nkinwengi

Economic, Agricultural, Sociologic  
Studies

Ministry of Health and Medical Research Institute

Dr. A.A. Jansen

Nutritional Status  
Food Intake

Dr. Turkei

Infectious Disease  
Virology

Mrs. Ngui  
Dr. Sehmi

Department of Nutrition - Consultation  
Food Composition

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

Central Bureau of Statistics

Mr. Omoro

Nutrition Survey  
Computer Analysis  
Training

Nutrition Unit

Mr. Wasonga

Nutrition  
Planning and Policy

Support for Kenya Trip

- 1) USAID - Nutrition CRSP Management Entity, U.C. Berkeley
- 2) Committee International Studies, UCLA  
Dr. James Coleman
- 3) Institute for International Studies, U.C. Berkeley  
Dr. Carl Rosberg