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A REPORT ON INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES IN KENYA

For The Center For Women In Development, S.E.C.I.D.

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INTRODUCTION

Lying across the equator on the eastern seaboard of Africa, Kenya covers approximately 225,000 square miles. Its neighbors include Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, and Ethiopia and Somalia on the north. Within this area, Kenya is divided into parts--highlands with mild climates, broad savannahs and bleak deserts. Kenya's geography is further complicated by networks of geological faults and a massive rift valley which runs from north to south. As suggested earlier, the altitude largely governs the climate and the land above 5,000 feet has very mild temperatures with seasonal variations in rainfall.

Agriculture is a primary part of Kenya's economy, generating over 30 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. The major cash crops include coffee, rice, tea, cotton, pyrethrum, sugar cane, maize and sisal. Among these crops, maize has long been extremely important, being a staple food for the populace. Agriculture, it is noted, is the source of employment for the largest segment of the working population. (Min. of Information and Broadcasting, 1981, p. 24)

People working on subsistence farms, transporting produce to market and selling products are common sights. Involvement in agriculture is evident, especially women's involvement. Women tilling the soil with short-handled hoes, weeding subsistence plots and harvesting crops are observable facets of rural life whether one is near Nairobi or in the Vihiga division (where material included in this report was gathered) of Western Province 230 miles away. (For a map of Kenya, please turn to page 28).

In the late spring and early summer of 1982,* the author spent seven weeks in Kenya as a participant in the Overseas Internship Program, originated and sponsored by the Center for Women in Development, South-East Consortium for International Development. The following report is an outgrowth of this very positive experience.

There were five primary objectives of the internship:

1. To describe women's views of the agricultural activities in which they are engaged;
2. To describe how women perform agricultural activities;
3. To identify information and knowledge which would improve those tasks;
4. To describe women's groups and how they assist their members; and
5. To identify the kinds of training, information and knowledge beyond agriculture which would improve the overall quality of life for women and their families.

This report includes material on each of the primary objectives of the internship. By observing women engaged in a variety of agricultural activities, it was possible to describe their tasks in a number of ways--in writing and in slides. A combination of observation, informal interviews and group discussion led to gathering information--information about agricultural practice which could lead to its improvement and to improvements in the quality of life for Kenyan women. The content of this report reflects the kind help and support of the Center for Women in Development, the friendship of Kenyans brought to the U.S. by S.E.C.I.D., and the help and advice of Kenyans in Nairobi and in Western Province.

* 19 May to 4 July 1982

To accomplish the objectives of the internship, the Center for Women in Development recommended that the author be affiliated with an ongoing S.E.C.I.D. project where local contacts had already been established. For this reason, the intern was linked to a small solar dryer project already being implemented in a densely populated, rural area of Western Kenya. This gave one the opportunity to meet local residents who worked directly with women's groups.

An important facet of the internship has been working with and learning from local women's groups--activities which yielded new knowledge. For instance, previous accounts from the field indicated that there were only twenty (20) women's groups in Vihiga Division--a figure that now appears to be much too low. Moreover, visits to ten specific groups in Vihiga and Kakamega, and meeting with representatives of twenty-six others, has led to gathering information about agriculture and about group activities, organization, and goals--information which may prove useful to those who design and plan projects seeking to improve the quality of life for Kenyans.

VIHIGA

Vihiga, a division in Western Province, is a hilly plateau bordered on the south by a boulder strewn line of ridges, perhaps five hundred to eight hundred feet higher than the rest of the hills. Just beyond the south edge of these ridges is an escarpment and a moderate grade down into the basin of Lake Victoria, a thousand feet below.

The plateau is tilted, highest just north of the ridges, and it gradually

sinks over twenty miles to the north. The lowest point occurs just below Kakamega, headquarters for Western Province, which stands on a hill higher than any of those on the plateau. Hence, from Kakamega the entire area of Vihiga is spread out below with the southern boundary ridges on the horizon twenty miles away.

The tilted plateau is covered with rolling hills, cut by a few rivers. Periodically there are outcroppings of rock. More commonly than these are boulders, isolated or in small groups with some of them ranging in size up to fifteen feet in diameter. The soil is largely red clay which contrasts with the light tan boulders, thus suggesting separate geological origins.

At this time of the year (June), the long rainy season had made the plateau and its farms green. Some of the maize is five to six feet tall and it is beginning to tassel. To look at them, the green hills are somewhat misleading. Shambas or farms are bordered with tall, thin hedges and a few trees and bushes. The combination of these things along with the maize tends to screen the houses from view. While they don't look it, the hills are alive with people. People are everywhere. As one official explained, "In this district there are 579 persons per square kilometer and the average woman has eight children. Consequently, the farms are very small—often 2 acres or less."(Foster, 1982)

TYPICAL RESIDENTS AND SHAMBAS

Women in Vihiga are subsistence farmers. As one informant stated, "Women are the agricultural producers."(Foster, 1982) As subsistence farmers, they attempt to raise the bulk of the food stuffs for their families.

Shambas or farms are divided into smaller plots with the larger of these being devoted to maize. The maize itself is often interspersed with beans and, on occasion, bananas. Other plots may be devoted to other vegetables—common ones being kale, cabbage, cow peas and tomatoes. The largest shambas include areas where cash crops are grown. Tea seems to be a favorite though coffee can be seen.

Chickens, goats and cows are popular farm animals. The chickens are kept for eggs which many people eat boiled. On special occasions chickens are given as gifts to important visitors or to their children. Also, chicken is served to guests. The goats, according to local residents, are used more for meat than for milk. It also seems likely that the number of animals belonging to a family is directly related to the wealth of the family.

The wealth of families may also be seen in the construction of houses. Those people with the most resources tend to have concrete block houses with concrete floors. Interior walls and the floors have often been painted while some or parts of the exteriors may not be. "Iron roofs"* are the ones of choice and they are usually to be found upon such homes. Glass windows are used, and on the inside of the window frames are heavy wire screens for keeping people from breaking in. Another type of dwelling is the metal roofed, wooden frame house, the walls of which have been covered with a thick plaster of mud and cow dung. This combination gives the walls a brown, stucco appearance. Some windows may have shutters, closed and secured at night.

* Galvanized metal roofs.

Those people who have fewer resources, live in dwellings which are somewhat smaller. The walls are like the preceding ones, a wooden lattice plastered with cow dung and mud. These straw, thatched roofed homes are commonly associated with a traditional, circular design. (See Page 31)

Near each home are a number of outbuildings. The larger shambas have more of these than do the smaller ones. Outbuildings seem to be devoted to maize storage, to space for farm animals (especially at night) and to serve as latrines. Construction in most cases resembles the mud and dung plastered dwellings.

Everyone wears clothing except for an occasional very small child. Manufactured clothing in Kenya is expensive and generally of low quality. Men wear pants and shirts while women wear dresses. Slacks are never worn by country women as this attire is associated with prostitutes. Hair is worn short and women generally cover their heads with scarfs. Younger women seem to wear scarfs less often and some of them plait their hair. Shoes follow the pattern of manufactured clothing (expensive and not very well made). Many women wear none and neither do the children.

OBSERVATIONS: A WOMAN'S DAY

The day for most women and their families begins at sunrise. The wooden shutters which were closed at night are pushed open to let in the first rays of the morning sun. Family members arise and begin the day's activities. Women have the primary responsibility for feeding and taking care of the children and the home.

Throughout the day, a woman usually has responsibility for preparing all the meals; securing from her own shamba, the market or other source the food needed for meals, maintaining the shamba (crops and animals) and bringing home fuel (wood or other materials) and water. (See appendix A for a more detailed account of observations of a woman's day.)

From this description, it is easy to understand the importance of women in Kenya. Eighty-eight percent of the country's women live in rural areas where they make a major contribution to the nation's economy. Most of the country's food production and agricultural activities are in the hands of women. Over 60 percent of rural households are headed by women. It normally falls to these women to meet the basic needs of their families.(Nation, 1 June, 1982, p. 19) Similar observations were made in Vihiga. As an agricultural officer explained, "Women are responsible for planting, harvesting and preserving food. They are important. Their activities are essential." (Foster, 1982)

WOMEN'S GROUPS

Women also work cooperatively on the local and on the national levels to improve life for themselves and for their families. Recent government figures indicate that there are over 10,000 women's groups in Kenya, and the contribution that women have made is acknowledged. (The Nation, 1 June 1982, p.19) After visiting groups in Vihiga and Kakamega, it is possible to describe some of their cooperative activities. Agriculture is one in which most groups were engaged.

AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Several groups cooperatively farmed a shamba owned by the group while others regularly assisted individual members with their own, privately owned plots. Group agricultural activities included tilling the soil, purchasing seed, planting, weeding, harvesting, processing (i.e. sun drying beans) and marketing. In addition, some groups raise poultry and rabbits.

The term "agriculture" is somewhat misleading. Actually, horticulture or gardening more appropriately describes the small plots and the manual labor of women. Such a distinction should imply that weeding, in the district, was accomplished with short handled hoes or jembes rather than with cultivators and tractors.

On the shambas visited, the primary food crop was maize. With the exception of several demonstration plots and one very remarkable shamba, much of the maize had not been fertilized with either natural or chemical fertilizers. One agricultural technical assistant expressed the belief that "less than half of the women use fertilizers," and one could speculate based on observation that its use was far more limited than the assistant's statement would imply.

Control of insect pests seemed even more limited. As another technical assistant explained, "Very few people spray for such things as stalk borers, a pest effecting maize." (Foster, 1982) "When people other than agricultural agents use sprays, it is when they already have a major problem. By that time, the damage has already been done."(Foster, 1982) On the agricultural demonstration plots visited, DDT was named as the chemical used. And

in spite of this usage, damage from pests was still evident.

Crop rotation did not appear to be very common, perhaps curtailed by a traditional preference for maize, the scarcity of land, and by limited knowledge. An absence of rotation and other agricultural knowledge could have led to the runoffs and soil erosion seen after every rain. And as one might have expected, erosion along the edges of fields was occasionally evident.

Such statements should not imply that local agricultural agents have neglected their duties. Their job seems to be a very large one, hampered by a shortage or resources. For instance, during much of the stay in Western Province, there was no gasoline to transport local agricultural agents out into the field.

While the preceding description highlights common agricultural practices, there are those who do apply knowledge about crop diversification, natural fertilizers and crop rotation. One very remarkable group south of Kakamega had applied all these concepts upon their shamba, attempting to grow food for a more balanced diet and to end "kwashiorkor among our little children." A member of this group provided a brief, written description of how their group began, its current aims and some of its problems:

> Short History: A few of us started a long time ago but recently we were advised to register our group with the Ministry of Social Services and to also affiliate with the Maendaleo Ya Wanawake organization. This we did on 6-8-1981.
>
> Aim: (a) To get rid of kwashiorkor among our children.
> (b) Make handicrafts for selling.

Approach: (a) Grow vegetables and fruits like carrots, cabbages, tomatoes, onions, peppers, pawpaws, avocados, pineapples, passion fruits, bananas.

(b) Grow fodder grass for (milk) cows, such as nappier, Guatemala, seteria, etc.

(c) Chickens for eggs and meat.

(d) Rabbits for meat.

Problems: In order to succeed we must have a place to meet and to take our produce to sell. This is then our major problem as well as having no money.

HANDICRAFTS

Women's groups are normally envolved in handicrafts, often engaging in two or three separate crafts. For instance, one group may stress pottery, another items made from banana fiber and yet another, knitted and crocheted handwork. The variety of handicrafts made by the groups in this area include: banana fiber rings, banana fiber handbags, knitted sweaters, knitted placemats, embroidered chair covers and table cloths, crocheted shawls, pottery (fish pots, meat pots, and flower pots), baskets and rope made from sisal. Several groups had access to a sewing machine and one was awarded a contract for making school uniforms.

A group emphasizing the making and marketing of banana fiber rings gave the following account of its beginnings, activities and problems:

The group started in 1979 and was registered with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services in 1979. Members: eighty-one (81).

Activities:
1. Making banana fiber rings.
2. Sewing dresses, tablecloths and knitting sweaters by hand.
3. Farming.
4. Poultry keeping.
5. Cookery
6. Home Economics

Problems: 1. Knitting--lack of materials.
2. Farming--lack of materials (seeds, fertilizer).

A comment about the group's activities was added by a local resident, "There is someone in Nairobi who comes and gets them (banana fiber rings). She makes arrangements for them to be transported and sold in the U.S." (Foster, 1982) In addition to the sale of banana fiber rings, this group has other sources of income. The same resident continued, "They buy maize flour, wheat flour, cow peas and dried beans in bulk and sell it here in a small shop. That way they can make some profit."(Foster, 1982). Many groups, however, do not have buyers from Nairobi and access to foreign markets. Still other groups lack the financial resources to buy items in bulk for resale at a profit.

ASSISTANCE AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Groups are known to assist members during emergencies and deaths, and one of the groups visited had actually been organized for this purpose.

One form of assistance is financial. Group funds are often used to pay children's school fees. Primary education is officially free but there are fund drives which parents are expected to contribute to and school fees are charged for secondary schools.

Group money and labor have been offered for the construction of nursery schools. At one place visited, an elementary school, a group had managed to begin its nursery by digging its foundation and having the concrete foundation poured.

The group organized for emergency assistance described their activities:

> This group was born in September 1981. The first aim was to help one another during hard times of funerals or during emergency cases such as if one's house caught fire. Contributions were made to help in those cases. This continued for about seven months. When the number of members increased, we decided to register with the government (Ministry of Culture and Social Services.) Official name was then given. The entry fee for members is 5 shillings ($.50) plus 10 shillings ($1.00) monthly contribution. The group has 58 members.
>
> Aims:
> 1. To give each other loans in case of problems.
> 2. To make handicraft items for our home use and also for sale.
> 3. To keep poultry.
> 4. Bee Keeping.
> 5. Farming.
> 6. Building a local maternity ward for mothers.
>
> Financial Position
>
> The main source of our income is member's contributions of 10 shillings monthly. Selling of our handicrafts and sale of farm produce.
>
> Affiliation
>
> Our group is affiliated with Maendaleo Ya Wanawake.
>
> Conclusion
>
> We feel that if we can be assisted we can achieve our aims. Harambee.

MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP

Generally, the entire groups meet weekly while smaller subgroups may gather several times during the week. During these smaller get-to-gethers, members may assist each other with farming, making handicrafts or with other tasks. Membership of entire groups can range from as few as ten to over two hundred members. Officers, usually a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, are common. Additional officers, such as a Vice Chairperson or Assistant Treasurer, can be found in the larger groups. It seems that women and only women hold these positions. Yet, men are not excluded

from participating or becoming members. A local pastor* and KANU** representative were members of one group while another group had eight male members. Often the local Chief, the Assistant Chief and village elders were present at group meetings. There are other examples of men participating. For instance, a local farmer whose children were no longer at home to help him farm had loaned part of his land to a woman's group. The women farmed the land and can have the produce grown. This older man is referred to as the "group advisor". According to him, he is not a group officer.

REGISTRATION AND AFFILIATION

According to a local community development officer, groups are encouraged to register with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services and to open a bank account. They may also choose to affiliate with one of the national women's organizations such as Maendaleo Ya Wanawake, the largest women's organization in Kenya. In spite of affiliation and newly opened bank accounts, there are obstacles which keep groups from contributing more to these accounts.

OBSTACLES

During group visits and in meetings with representatives, members shared not only aims and accomplishments but also obstacles which the groups face. There are barriers which stand in the way of income generating activities and in the ability to cooperatively assist each other. The following is a summary of obstacles most frequently cited by group members.

*Religion plays an important role in the groups visited. Each meeting started and ended with a prayer for the group and its visitors.

** Kenya African National Union, Kenya's only political party.

Capital:

> Many women's groups try to pool their resources so that the entire group could gain access to a sewing machine, for instance. It could take very long to come up with the money. Groups become discouraged with this.(Foster, 1982)

Marketing:

> Transportation is a problem. We grow many things but we have no way to market them. (Foster, 1982)

> Groups can produce fine handicrafts. The problem is selling them. Sometimes the women will take something, handbags for instance, to market. In a day's time, they might sell only one of them. It gets discouraging. (Foster, 1982)

Resources and Materials:

> Mothers find it difficult to give even two shillings to buy seeds. They could buy sugar or something needed by the family with those shillings.(Foster, 1982)

> We need materials for handicrafts, such things as yarn, cloth and thread. (Foster, 1982)

AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION

Agriculture was viewed by many women as a way to overcome some of these obstacles. Speaking for herself and for other group members, a local woman expressed a common theme heard at numerous group gatherings. "We like our agricultural work and working in our shambas. We want to learn how to plant different crops and how to improve our agricultural practice." (Foster, 1982) She added, "We think that if we can improve our agricultural practices, then we can increase our income and thus improve the quality of life for our families."(Foster, 1982)

A women's organizer and leader, active in organizing Kenyan women since the 1940's, reinforced the need for argicultural learning. "Many people don't realize that they could make more money if they planted crops other than

maize, We teach people about natural fertilizers and how to make compost but still too many people don't know this. They don't practice crop rotation which means that the yields decline and the soil is becoming depleted."(Foster, 1982)

DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE/ INFORMATION: OTHER AREAS

Many Kenyan school children stop attending school. A high dropout rate results from examinations and from an inability to pay school fees. Consequently, many young people leave school and go to urban areas where they often stay with family. Once in the cities they look for work, but many fail in their search. The unemployed, as one mother explained, "come to feel like they can do nothing."(Foster, 1982) At the same time, those young people who are idle in the rural areas worry their families. "We would like to know what we could do to help them. We want to help these young people to lead constructive lives."(Foster, 1982) Consequently, some women discussed a need for vocational training facilities in rural areas. Others wanted to know how they could interest their youth in agriculture. Many expressed a willingness and a desire to work with and for their youth.

Young people, children were the topics of other concerns. According to recent figures, ten percent of the Kenyan population is physically disabled.(The Standard, 16 June, 1982) Visiting numerous, small rural communities, it was apparent that few educational programs exist for the handicapped. Yet the need is great. In one small village it was estimated that there were seventy-eight disabled people. "Those that we

know of are dependent upon others. Most of them, especially the children, are at home all day and night."(Foster, 1982) Women in two groups expressed a desire to learn about disabilities and how to constructively work with the disabled.

GROUPS: SOME OBSERVATIONS

The visits to women's groups permitted the collection of basic data about each group--the year it was formed, its current membership, and the activities in which they are engaged. The visits also revealed additional characteristics about women's groups in Western Province--the presence of visible, elected leaders, uniforms, and meeting halls. By turning to pages 29 and 30, the reader may find information on each of these topics. The oldest group, for instance, was formed in 1969 and the newest in 1981, with the majority of the groups only existing for the last couple of years. Membership varied from as few as 32 members in a recently formed group to 202 in an older one.

While the data reveals variability between groups, there appears to be patterns within it. For instance, the largest group has a meeting hall for its members and for the storage of its products. This large concrete block building housed 1,000's of banana fiber rings which were being produced and collected together for an order. The order, itself, had been placed by a representative of a German firm which planned to use the rings in holiday decorations. This same women's group, besides having an external, though unpredictable market for its products, had used it funds to engage in a baking business--a business requiring a very large wood or charcoal fired oven. Money had also been used to

make uniforms for the active members of the group. On the other hand, many of the small, newly formed women's groups don't have orders for products; and consequently, they don't have the meeting halls or businesses like the bakery or the uniforms.

Using the variables named--such things as uniforms, meeting halls, and external orders. It is possible to hypothesize the exsistence of four types of women's groups--a "successful" type, a "moderately" successful type, a "less successful" type and a "proprietary" type:

TYPE A: Successful

Elected group officers are visible. Meeting halls exist and are used for meetings, for cooking, and for product and produce storage. The group engages in many ventures, and for some of them there is an access to an external market. Members have uniforms.

TYPE B: Moderately Successful

Elected group officers are visible. No meeting halls yet exist but there are plans for building one. The group engages in many ventures, and for some of them there is access to external markets. Members may have uniforms.

TYPE C: Less Successful

Elected group officers are visible. No group meeting hall exists and none are planned. The group engages in many ventures but there is no access to external markets. No uniforms.

TYPE D: Proprietary

Elected group officers are not visible. A non-elected leader discusses price of items made or grown and number of current orders. There are no meeting halls and the group products are stored in the leader's home. The group engages in a few ventures (i.e. five varieties of baskets in interlocking sizes) and for this venture there is an external market. No uniforms.

Another important factor may be found in the "other" category on the activity page summary. Examining page 30 it is readily apparent that many groups make very similar or even the same products. Many produce baskets, pottery, banana fiber rings and cloth (knitted, crocheted) items. Yet, those groups considered to be "successful" or "moderately" successful" were involved in bread making, the resale of commodities, and sewing and selling of school uniforms. In these areas there is little or no competition from other women's groups. It seems likely that the duplication, groups making and selling the same items, may lead to lower market value which effects both individual and group income. Those endeavors which are not widely duplicated could positively effect group and individual income. When an "other" enterprize is coupled with access to external markets, the chances of the group being "successful" are even greater. (If this argument is true, as the data seems to indicate, it could very useful for the Kenyan women groups to diversify their activities, choosing ones where there is much less competition.)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The women and their groups can not remain unnoticed. The women are the

farmers, the producers and the providers in Western Kenya. They come together and through cooperation assist, and help each other. This associational activity is the foundation of self-help.

Learning is a vital part of mutual assistance. It has an important role within the context of the group. As one local resident explained, "If someone sees that another member is having trouble learning how to do something, they will stop and teach the person. They teach each other."(Foster, 1982) This applies to many topics, especially agricultural ones. (Staudt, 1975, p. 82)

Women's groups, consequently, are primary centers for learning--knowledge that could be applied to agricultural practice and other improvements. Those who plan projects and institute programs need to be aware of these local organizations and their potential for learning and teaching others. Going further, planners and policy makers are encouraged to learn about these local organizations, to listen to women and to plan cooperatively with them. The role of women's groups, and their importance both socially and economically, must not be overlooked.

SUGGESTED FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Agricultural production in Vihiga is seasonal, dependent upon two separate rainy seasons. Consequently, the range and the volume of fruit and vegetables varies widely throughout the year. In times of drought, people subsist upon an imbalanced diet of maize and meat, which becomes expensive. At other times, quantities of fruit, particularly bananas and pawpaw, and vegetables spoil due to an absence of means of preserving them.

Most rural homes don't possess electricity and most of the few families that do have electricity can not afford to purchase freezers and refrigerators. And at the same time, canning procedures pose still other difficulties. Firewood is quite scarse and charcoal is being priced beyond the reach of many families. The problem of fuel alone precludes the utilization of many canning techniques.

A practical alternative is solar drying. According to most accounts, "solar energy...is the most abundant energy resource in Kenya."(Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1981, p. 39) Further, open-air solar drying has been used by cultural groups in Western Kenya--primarily upon beans.* The combination of long periods of sunlight and the utilization of some dried products suggests that it may be possible to teach women's groups in Vihiga how to dry a much larger range of fruit and vegetables.

Visits to women's groups suggests a sequence of activities somewhat different from those already implemented by SECID's Solar Dryer Project:

* Traditionally, all grains such as maize and millet were dried. They were solar dried on rocks, earth or mats. Cassava was also dried like the grains and mixed with millet for Ugali

STEPS IN A REVISED SOLAR DRYER PROJECT

Step 1. Group Visits

Visit local women's groups to access the range and volume of fruit and vegetables grown by the group and its members. Some groups grow very few things other than maize and have little need for a dryer. Other groups grow many things and have very real needs.

Group visits can permit the observation of agricultural practices and techniques. Crop rotation, compost, and reduced planting of maize would indicate the borrowing of new techniques. The recognition of those positively predisposed towards innovations suggests groups to be invited to participate in the project.

Group visits can permit the observation of leadership within groups. Leadership could enhance legitimization of innovations and it suggests who should be specifically invited to the solar dryer seminars.

Group visits permit the establishment of rapport with the groups. Personal relationships are valued among peoples in Western Province.

Step 2. Group Selection

Information collected during the group visits should permit the project staff to identify groups who need dryers, who are predisposed to innovate and who possess leadership. These are the groups who should be invited to participate further.

Step 3. Awareness Seminar

An awareness seminar should show participants a wide range of vegetables and fruits (fresh, dried and packaged.) On a tray arranged so that people can touch them, the following could be displayed--fresh vegetable or fruit, dried vegetable or fruit, and vegetable or fruit packaged in air tight containers.

An awareness seminar should also give explanations of why foods spoil based upon the presence of water, moisture.

Participants should then be shown a constructed solar dryer and how it is actually used.

An awareness seminar should include a demonstration of how

fresh food is prepared for drying.

Dried food should then be reconstituted and used in several ways. The participants should also have the opportunity to sample some of these recipes.

An awareness seminar should include a discussion on how drying can preserve vegetables and fruit which is wasted during the rainy seasons. Priority should be placed upon the establishment of a more balanced diet for families during the drier part of the year.

At the end of this seminar, those who express an interest are invited to attend the next seminar, a construction seminar.

Step. 4. Construction Seminar

Several solar dryers should be set up and during the seminar vegetables and fruit are dried in them. Dry what is abundant and what people like to eat.

Participants with instruction build a simplified model of a solar dryer. Arrangements should be made to transport the constructed dryers to local communities. Some groups may be quite isolated and it is important to get the innovations to where they can be used.

Step. 5. Field Visits

To see what kinds of problems participants are having with their dryers, it is necessary to visit them.

Step. 6. Involve other Groups.

Transport interested women from other groups, those who have not participated in the seminars, to see what the participant groups are doing with the dryers. The visitors from these non-participating groups have the opportunity to see innovator's shambas, to see what is being grown and to see how the dryers are being used.

Step. 7 Local Groups Teach Others.

Original participants who are interested can be brought together to teach a new group of women who wish to learn about the use of solar energy and solar dryers. "Women teaching women."

Additional Points

Time is needed prior to the beginning of the seminars to do the fieldwork. The group visits would require three or four weeks of lead time--time to get to know members, to learn who the group leaders are, and to observe the range of vegetables and fruit grown.

The seminars and the other activities need to be coordinated with the local growing season.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES II: A Study of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake

Women's groups in Kenya are recognized as playing an important role in the development of the country. It is not by accident that Kenya's President has endorsed the activities of women's groups since taking office in 1978. "We in Kenya have been able to transform many parts of our rural areas primarily because our women have been directly involved in the various aspects of our economic, social and political life." (The Nation, 1 June 1982, p. 19)

While women's groups are encouraged and sanctioned by the government, and most groups are registered with the Ministry of Culture and Social Service, they are not simplistic creations of the government. Women's groups in Kenya predate the current regime by decades, striking a responsive note among women in many communities. Fieldworkers in Kisumu believed that ninety-nine (99) groups are active there. And on one occasion, I personally saw thirty-three representatives of seventeen of them. In much the same way, other workers have noted the presence of ninety-five (95) groups in Vihiga.

As previously noted, women's groups are engaged in a variety of activities--agriculture, handicrafts, and marketing. Most groups select their own leaders in a democratic fashion. In addition, the majority of rural women live alone with their families while many of their husbands stay in the cities away from them. Thus, the groups serve a sociological and a psychological function by providing assistance and support for individuals, families and for communities.

While most groups are registered with the government, many are also affiliated with several national, women's organizations. Maendaleo Ya Wanawake, which means in Swahili "women's progress", is the largest of these. According to recent figures, over five thousand (5,000) groups are affiliated with Maendaleo and it has an individual membership of 100,000 persons. (Maendaleo 1981, p.2) This organization, consequently, represents a sizable number of Kenyan women.

Few articles in professional journals have described Maendaleo (see Norgaard's Kenya in the Social Sciences. Kenya Literature Bureau, 1981) At the same time, the official, brief histories of Maendaleo's origins are, according to one of its former presidents, misleading. For example, the following account is given of the beginnings of the organization in one of its own publications. "Back in 1952 when Maendaleo was born, freedom fighters were struggling and dying for Kenya's independence."(Maendaleo, 1982, p. 11)

Yet according to a past national president, the roots of Maendaleo were established much earlier:

> We started in 1946. Some of us noticed that there were many women in their communities who did not have enough to eat and whose families did not have adequate clothing and shelter. So we began to do something about it. We were teachers and we knew we could teach these women how to take care of their families and their homes. In two years time , we were able to organize a lot of women in this part of Kenya (Western Frovince)." (Foster, 1982)

Since few articles describe the origins of Maendaleo, a wholistic study of its origins and growth may prove beneficial. Women, though citizens of different countries, do face similar situations, ones demanding unity, organization, and a sense of purpose. Learning about the development and organization of Maendaleo should be helpful to women outside of Kenya. A wholistic study of women's groups and Maendaleo could include a number of parts:

1. A more accurate account of Maendaleo's origins--how it began.
2. A description of how Maendaleo has changed through time--how it has evolved.
3. Examples of women cooperating in local groups under the Maendaleo umbrella--how groups cooperate.
4. Lessons to be learned from the origins and development of Maendaleo.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES III: Instruction about the Handicapped.

As noted earlier, current government estimates indicate that 10 percent of the Kenyan population is physically disabled. Even in one small western Kenyan community local residents believe that there are seventy-eight disabled persons. Since the average number of children per family in that area is eight, almost every family would include a disabled person. Moreover, women in two women's groups expressed concern for their handicapped children and frustration at not knowing how to help them.

Centers for the handicapped do exist where residents are taught skills such as gardening, raising poultry, printing, carpentry and leatherwork. As a center employee explained, "We want them to know that they can learn to do many things. They do not always have to be dependent." (Foster, 1982). While the centers provide these opportunities, waiting lists are long. With so many handicapped citizens, the few centers can not possibly accommodate even the majority of those in need of such services.

The most common pattern in rural communities, according to local sources, is that handicapped children remain at home, being left almost totally idle. With few exceptions, the handicapped remain dependent on others--very much like those in the United States or in Europe in the last century.

There is, however, great potential for improvement. With assistance women could learn more about physical disabilities and how to help their children. The following is a brief outline of a project which could benefit handicapped children and their families:

Project for Handicapped Children

Step I. Survey

Survey several rural areas to determine the actual number of handicapped residents, the nature of their handicaps and their ages.

Step II. Home Visits.

Conduct home visits to learn how the children are actually being treated. The visits should provide an opportunity to establish a personal relationship with the handicapped child and with other family members.

Step. III. Design an Instructional Package.

Design a sequence of learning activities which show and teach people about handicaps in general, the causes of physical disabilities found in the region and the capabilities of the handicapped. This could be done with the assistance of

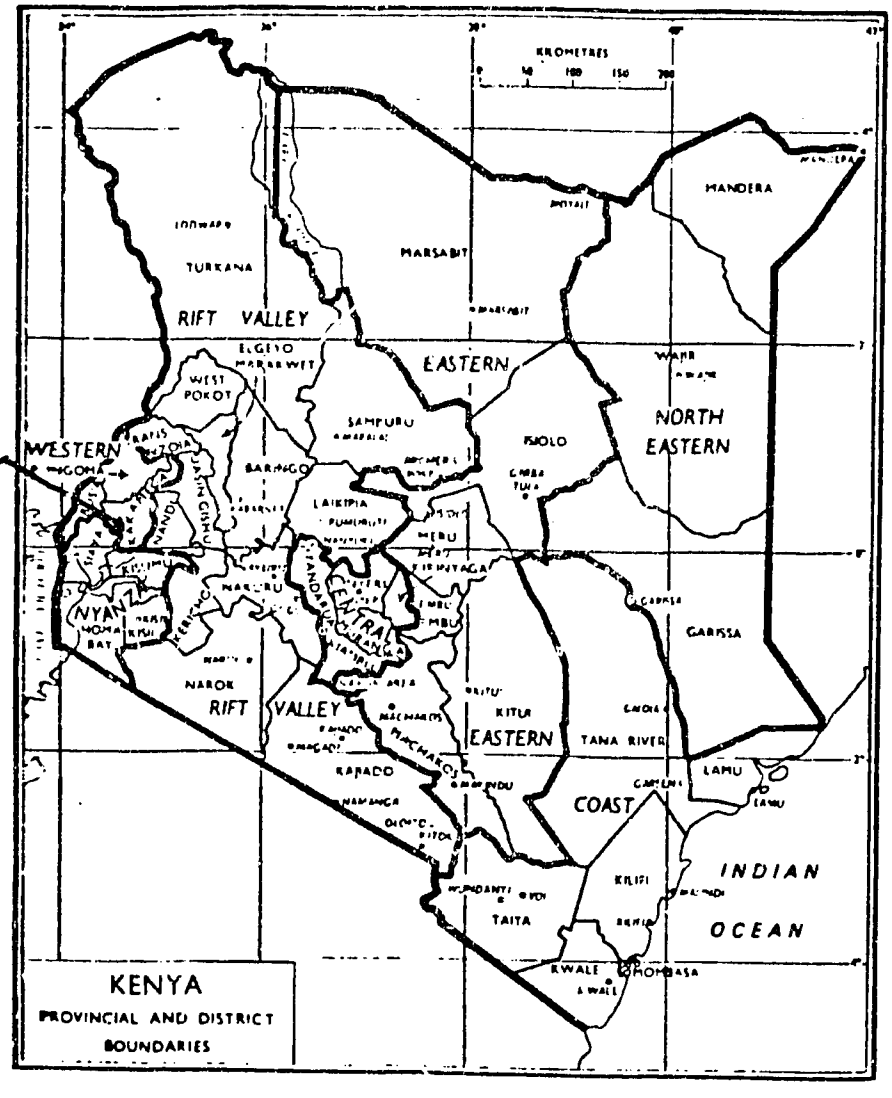
personnel at the local center for the handicapped.

Step IV. Interaction with Skilled, Handicapped Individuals.

In group discussion give women, the mothers of handicapped youth, a chance to talk with handicapped individuals--individuals who have been able to constructively cope with their disabilities. Through such a process it is likely that the women may revise their expectations of their own handicapped.

KENYA

Vihiga Division



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From: Kenya: A Land of Contrasts . Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Nairobi: 1981.

DATA SUMMARY--TEN WOMEN'S GROUPS

GROUP	STARTING DATE	CURRENT MEMBERSHIP	ELECTED LEADERS	UNIFORMS	MEETING HALL	MARKETING-- EXTERNAL ORDERS
A.	1973	202	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B.	1980	32	Yes	No	No	No
C.	1981	180	Yes	No	No	No
D.	1979	81	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
E.	1969	120	No	No	No	Yes
F.	1980	45	Yes	Yes	*	**
G.	1978	70	Yes	No	No	No
H.	1980	40	Yes	No	No	No
I.	1981	58	Yes	Yes	No	No
J.	1981	50	Yes	Yes	No	No

* Under construction.
** Local orders

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES--TEN WOMEN'S GROUPS

GROUP	HANDICRAFTS					AGRICULTURE	OTHER
	Pottery	Baskets	B. Fiber Rings	B. Fiber Mats	Cloth		
A.			Yes	Yes			Bread Making
B.	Yes				Yes	Yes	
C.	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
D.			Yes		Yes	Yes	Resale of Commodities
E.		Yes					
F.			Yes		Yes	Yes	School Uniforms
G.	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
H.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
I.	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bee Keeping
J.	Yes			Yes		Yes	Tree Farming Rabbits

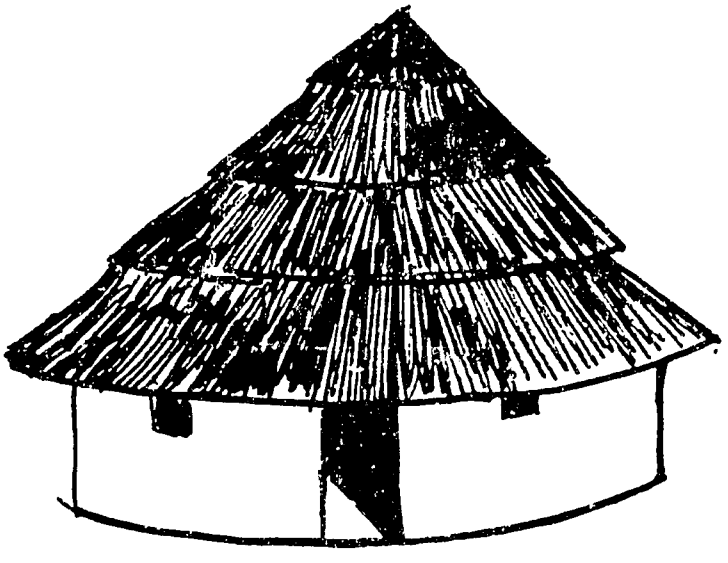

FIGURE I

APPENDIX A

OBSERVATIONS OF A WOMAN'S DAY

The following description is an account of weekday for a local family:

6:30 AM The woman lights the fire for cooking breakfast. Most families cook with wood or charcoal over open fires. The pots rest on three stones placed in the ground surrounding the fire.

6:45 AM Two sons went to the shamba, picking fresh maize and bananas which were boiled for breakfast. There are four children residing in the home, two sons, ages sixteen and fourteen, and two daughters, ages eight and six.

7:00 AM All of the children were dressed for school. While the table was prepared for breakfast, all the children washed their hands. Breakfast consisted of hot tea with milk, boiled green bananas and boiled "green" maize. After breakfast, dishes were washed and the children walked to school which began at 7:00.

7:30 AM
4:00 PM Working in the shamba and the home continued. The daily activities vary depending on the season. During the main growing season, the woman does many of the following things:

Weeding the shamba.

Harvesting ripened maize, beans and other produce.

Turning soil with a jembe or short handled hoe.

Taking the cattle from their quarters in the house and tying them outside to graze.

Cleaning the small stall where they spent the night.

Collecting cow dung and mixing it with mud to be used later-smearing it on the interior or exterior walls of the home.

Preparing the harvested produce so that it can later be cooked.

Going to another woman's shamba where several women have gathered to make handicrafts (i.e. banana fiber rings, knitted items, pottery, banana fiber handbags)

Collecting bean plants and putting them on a threshing floor where later they can be beaten with wooden sticks, shaking loose the small beans. These beans are then left to finish drying in the sun.

Walking up to several miles to fetch the daily water supply.

Going to the local market to purchase milk and other items needed by the family yet not available on the shamba.

Locating firewood or charcoal and bringing it to the home.

Taking care of all of the children who are not yet in school.

4:00 PM Beginning to prepare for afternoon tea and the evening meal, a fire was lit. Water was boiled and kale greens collected earlier were separated for the rough, inedible stems. They had been collected and placed in a basket which had been covered on the inside with a thin layer of cow dung and mud. Such layers in baskets prevent corn flour and other items from sifting through the baskets.

4:30 PM Soon a fish pot was filled with water and placed upon the fire. Strips of wood, 3 to 4 feet long were used, and as part of the wood burned at one end, the remaining strip was slowly fed into the fire. This process also controlled the amount of heat produced by the fire. The woman adjusted the firewood and stirred the contents of the rapidly heating pot.

5:30 PM A table was prepared in the largest of the four rooms in which the family lives. All members came to the table where after prayer tea, bread, and maize were served. The family usually eats a light breakfast, afternoon tea (snack) and supper.

6:00 PM After tea, the woman drew water from one of the heated pots and put it in a flat pan. She then took her youngest child, 6 years of age, into the front room of the house. There with the pan of water she bathed the girl, washing her hair and finally the dress the daughter had worn that day. The dress was then hung on a short rope in the main room in the home. In this room there were six wooden chairs, two wooden tables, a kerosene lamp, a battery operated radio, a small wooden cabinet and a number of framed pictures hanging on the wall, close to the ceiling.

6:30 PM The woman returned to the shamba to pick more kale greens for the evening meal. She also put the fish she had purchased at the market into the fish pot.

7:00 PM After the fish had been cooked, it was removed from the fire and the top of the pot was covered. Another pot was filled with water in preparation for the making of Ugali. When the water boiled, finely ground white corn meal was stirred in with a flat wooden spoon about two feet long. Turning the mixture and stirring it rapidly and mashing it to remove lumps, the woman pronounced it ready. It had the consistency of solidified cream of wheat. The entire process lasted about twenty minutes.

7:30 PM Dinner was placed on the table. After a prayer, all the family members ate Ugali and fish.* (Talapia from Lake Victoria). Small tin bowls were given to each member and all ate with their hands. Hand washing preceded the meal and it was also done when everyone had finished eating.

8:00 PM The charcoal from the fires was placed in a hibachi type cooker and brought inside the house. Another cooker which used kerosene, a jiko, was also lit. A pan of water was placed upon each one of these stoves. The woman took some powdered soap and added it to the pan with the hotest water. In this pan the dishes were washed and in the other pan they were rinsed. After rinsing, the dishes were returned to the table to dry. By this time the windows were closed, and the only light within the house came from two kerosene lamps, one had a chimney and the other was a small tin lamp.

9:00 PM After washing the dishes and cooking pots, the family listened to the radio--the Voice of Kenya and stations on the short wave band.

9:30 PM The woman took a Bible out of a wooden cabinet and told the children that she wanted to read some scripture. She has eight children, the two oldest daughters are married. Her husband is deceased, killed four years ago in an automobile accident. The oldest son, about 16 years of age, is soon to be posted as a teacher and the next son has not passed the secondary school exam. If the family could afford it, he could go to school for another year and take the exam again. Since such a course of action is not financially possible, this 14 year old remains out of school with little hope of employment or further education. Primary education is free but beyond that level there are school fees to be paid for each child attending school. Two other children, a boy and a girl were at boarding school--ones that are not costly and are common in the educational system. The youngest girls were at home. One was studying to pass the primary school exam. While her mother read the bible, she studied her school books by the flickering kerosene lamp. The youngest child, a girl 6 years of age, is too young to go to school and remained with her mother during the day.

9:45 PM The woman asked her two sons who were listening to the radio and the next to the youngest girl to read a passage of scripture outloud. Each one read, and the mother did the final reading. She then asked all family members to pray. The day ended with her prayer.

10:00 PM The two boys went to their small rooms--big enough for only a small bed. The woman and the two daughters went to the second largest room in the house. Pulling an open cardboard box from under the bed (a wooden frame on legs with a straw mattress), they took out nightgowns, changed clothes, hung their clothes on a line strung in the room and got into bed, covering themselves with an army blanket.

Material Relevant to Report

The following sources have been used in preparation of this report.

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