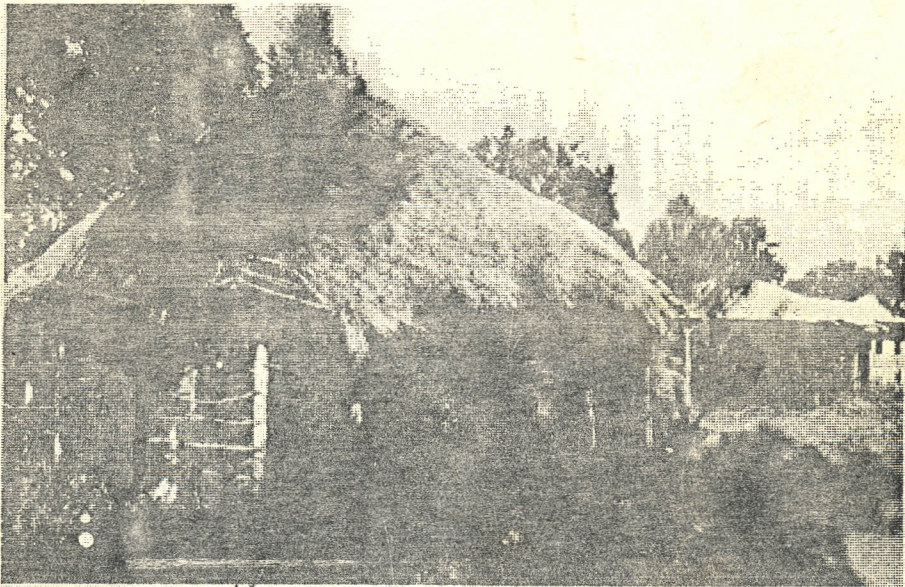


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# IMPROVED HOUSING TECHNOLOGIES IN WESTERN KENYA

Transfer of

## Appropriate Building Materials and Services to Rural Communities



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## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Initiation of the Project

The Kenya Government is totally committed to the provision of the equal education opportunities to all her citizens. Indeed, the government has correctly observed that:

'In the development of human resources the Government considers primary school education not only as having the highest returns to the nation in all economic and cultural aspects but also a basic human right that should be provided to all Kenyans' [GoK, 1989:216].?

The Government's commitment is amply demonstrated by the lion's share of the total national budget that has continued to be allocated to the Ministry of Education. This share rose from 10% in 1964/65 to 20% in 1985/86. By 1987, over 35% of the total public sector recurrent budget was taken up by education alone.

is 10/20%  
lion's share

The 'community' has since colonial times played different key roles in the provision of education. The role of the community in the promotion of education has grown overtime. The community/private spending on education is estimated to contribute 25%, 70% and 50% for primary, secondary and higher education respectively [ibid:213].?

When both the public and private sectors' are considered their combined allocation to education accounts for between 10 and 15% of the GDP.

At the primary school level, Government's contribution mainly covers the training and payment of the teachers' salaries, provision of school equipment, text books, stationery and regular inspection of school facilities. The local community, through the School Parents' and

Teachers' Association on the other hand is expected to provide on 'harambee' basis the necessary school buildings including classrooms, administrative blocks, teachers' houses, etc. All these are in line with cost sharing concept.

The task of providing school buildings is indeed a challenging one given the desire by the majority of rural communities to building permanent structures. The high cost of erecting school buildings using conventional building materials and techniques and the sheer large numbers of the required buildings in light of high population growth rate, inhibit the national implementation of school building programmes at a rate that is commensurate with the 'need'.

The use of conventional 'modern' mainly factory-made building materials and techniques in residential and in other school buildings renders the resultant buildings durable but well above the affordability ranges for the majority of the Kenyans [ Plate No 1]. At the other scale, the buildings where 'rural' traditional materials and techniques are utilized, generally tend to be affordable to the majority of the people. However, the main drawbacks of these relatively cheap materials and techniques include their susceptibility to damage by weather elements and insect attack - thereby necessitating regular and increased maintenance and repair works. Such buildings are often regarded as non-durable and structurally inferior [plate no 2].

Generally speaking most of the school buildings in rural Kenya are built from traditional materials and depict very low physical and environmental standards [see plate no 2 typical school buildings]. Hence the overwhelming problem is one of quality rather than quantity. However, in both Bunyala and Mbita areas, both quantitative and qualitative housing problems were vividly evident [see plate no, 2 & 3]

There was both total lack of teachers' houses and/or extremely low quality houses inappropriately located behind unsanitary shops within local shopping or market centres [plate 4]. Most of the teachers were thus either travelling long distances to their respective schools or were renting sub-standard accommodation nearby.