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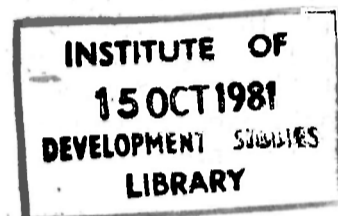
RESERVE (832)

DECENTRALIZATION FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
SOME LESSONS FROM KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Decentralization for rural development has become a movement of some kind. This paper attempts to assess the experience of Kenya in this field. In doing that the paper focuses on,
(i) The District development Committees.
(ii) The Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) organization
(iii) District Planning Strategy.
Several conclusions both positive and negative are arrived at after some detailed analyses.

DECENTRALIZATION FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
SOME LESSONS FROM KENYA.

INTRODUCTION

Decentralization for national and local development has become a movement of some kind. A lot has been written and said about it in the last fifteen years. The proponents of decentralization usually assume that the problem with development is over-centralization of decision making in the government system. They have then gone ahead and suggested the evils of it and the benefits to be derived from its elimination through decentralization. But there are still the skeptics who do not believe that decentralization is the inevitable answer to the problem of development administration. They see many other things as being involved. They see the differentiated structure of administration at the sub-national level in many developing countries as one such problem. Hence the notion of integrated rural development.

This paper does not attempt to deal with the theories of decentralization and integrated rural development.¹ Its central purpose is simply to take stock of what Kenya has done and is still doing in the field of decentralization and integrated rural development. This is an incomplete report of an on-going research in this field.

1. For more on the theory of decentralization see Henry Maddick, Decentralization, Democracy and Development Asia Publishing House London; UN Decentralization for Local and National Development U.N. N.Y. 1964; ; P. Zelznick T.V.A. and the Grassroots Univ. of California Press 1949,

The Historical Background

The structure of local administration in the former colonial territories was largely influenced by their historical connections. The British introduced a system of administration in Kenya as in its other colonial territories which emphasized departmental independence in project identification and implementation. The system of colonial administration introduced in the early phase of colonialism though resembling the French prefectural system in many respects lacked the authority which the latter is institutionally endowed with. Members of the Provincial Administration were vested with a lot of powers in the field of maintenance of law and order in their respective administrative units. On matters of development however, the initiative rested very much with the individual heads of technical departments.

There was no integrated organizational framework within which decision-making for development took place at the sub-territorial level. Projects - and these were mainly of social welfare type - were identified within departmental framework with the officers at the sub-territorial level working under close instructions from the centre. The only forum in which departmental heads got together was the team meeting. These were held routinely to discuss general problems of administration and were chaired by the officer of the provincial administration on the spot. Hardly ever did they involve themselves with questions of integrated development. Part of the problem was that even at the Centre there were no standing committees or organizations charged with integrated development planning. Simply put, development planning was not an on going preoccupation of the colonial Government. Development committees where and when they existed were adhoc. A development sub-committee of the 'Cabinet' would meet and draw up a plan (e.g. 1951-54; 1954-57; 1957-60) for the colony, but thereafter there would be no standing committee or organization to monitor and coordinate development either centrally or at the sub-territorial level. That was the situation which 'modern' Kenya inherited at the time of independence in 1963.

The independence constitution provided for a regional system of government. It consisted in dividing the newly independent Kenya into six regions more or less on the basis of the present provinces. The 'majimbo' (regions) constitution gave most of the administrative powers to the regions. The regions were supposed to have and control their own civil services. Even the provincial administration that had been the eye of the colonial Governor at the sub-territorial level was to be responsible to the regional Governments in carrying out their duties.

This set up was strongly opposed by the Kenya African National Union who, as was later to be made known, had merely accepted the Independence Constitution as a tactical manoeuvre to speed up the pace of independence. But once in power after the 1963 June elections the KANU government did everything humanly possible to block the implementation of the major provisions of the constitution.² In violation of constitutional provision, the Central government decided in 1963 to merely second its former officers to the regions and thus still maintained control over them.

The fight with the opposition Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) in the first two years of independence preoccupied the minds of both central and regional governments to the extent that there was no time to think about development matters. The Provincial administration which traditionally mobilizes the people for development was itself at the time the major instrument which the central government was using in frustrating the implementation of constitutional provisions.³ In fact with the situation being that uncertain nothing could be done in the field of development by either the central government or the regions. The central government was therefore bent on abolishing the 'majimbo' set up. Thus, the whole of 1964 passed with very little or nothing being done in the field of development.

The concerted pressure put on the Opposition led it to disband in November 1964. Most of its MPs had by this time crossed the floor to join the Government side. With the Parliamentary opposition disbanded, "Majimbo" died its natural death. It was after then that the Central Government began to think about problems of development. Two things happened in that year; the first one was the publication (in June 64) of the first National Development Plan (1964/70) by the Directorate of Planning then housed in the Ministry of Finance. Later in the year (December) a new Ministry of Economic Planning and Development was created. By 1965 the new Ministry had managed to produce against the background of heated "ideological" debate in Parliament on Development strategy, a sessional paper that attempted to outline Kenya's development goals and strategies for their realization.

2. For more on this See C. Gertzel The Politics of Independent Kenya. E.A.P. & T. 1970; Also her "Provincial Administration in Kenya in the Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, November 1966.

3. Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its application to Planning in Kenya Govt. Printer 1965.

Conspicuously omitted in the two documents was any discussion of decision making for national development. There was no attempt to identify for instance the roles to be played by the local level organizations in the process of planned development.

Notwithstanding that omission, the two documents had gone a long way to create a sense of development consciousness within the government system. By 1964 the call for 'harambee' (joint efforts between the Government and the people) for development began to be heard. By 1965 President Kenyatta could be heard telling an audience at the Kenya Institute of Administration (K.I.A.)

- "From now on civil servants merits will be judged by their contribution to the development plan. They will be called to explain any failure to achieve their targets"⁴

Their new roles in development had been formalized earlier in the year when the development committees were formed.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES IN THE RURAL AREAS 1965 - 1970

The establishment of development committee in the rural areas was a logical outcome of the Government's efforts to strengthen its development machinery. A decision was made to strengthen the organization of planning in the rural areas by establishing both at the provincial and district levels development and development advisory committees. The development committees were to be made up of civil servants whose ministries were generally involved in development matters. The advisory committees consisted of the membership of the development committee plus local MPs in the case of the provincial committee and MPs, KANU district chairman, clerk to the County Council (Local Authority) and a few prominent citizens nominated by the D.C. in the District Committees. The Committees were to be chaired by the P.Cs and D.Cs respectively.

The functions of these committees /^{as} set out briefly both in the revised 1966 - 70 plan and also in 1970/74 development plan were to be

4. Speech at K.I.A. on 15. 12. 65 contained in Kenya News Agency Hand Out No. 763 Also in East African Standard 16. 12. 65 quoted by C. Gertzel in Provincial Administration and Development in Kenya: Paper read at E.A.S.S.C. Dec. 1970.

"the coordination and stimulation of development at the local level by involving in the planning process not only the government officials but also the people through their representatives, and also to be a major instrument in plan implementation"⁵

In starting these committees the new Ministry of Economic Planning and Development had hoped it would create a machinery in the rural areas through which it could generate viable project and coordinate development implementation generally. The system did not work in the way its architects had intended it. Several factors were responsible for that.

The first important factor was the inexperience of the Government on matters of planned development. The committees were established at a time when the central government's planning organization itself was still very weak. The MEPD just created was still manned predominantly by expatriate officers who were not in touch with rural realities and could not therefore guide these committees into playing useful roles. Simply put, the local committees' weaknesses were directly related to the overall national organizational weaknesses.

A second major problem was the structure of administration at the sub-national level. The differentiated structure was unable to accommodate a machinery that emphasized integration. Although the P.Cs and D.Cs are generally assumed to be responsible for coordinating the activities of government departments in the field, they are not authoritatively responsible for the activities of government departments in their administrative areas. Thus there was very little a P.C. or D.C. could do to the heads of technical departments that were reluctant to make use of these committees. Worse still some P.C. and D.C. did not think highly of the new machinery. Some of them even argued the proposed committees would merely duplicate what the traditional Team meetings had been doing.

A further problem was the lack of effective functional leadership for the committees. For two years following their 'establishment' these committees depended for their existence on the initiative and good will of the provincial administration. And even after the appointment of Provincial Planning officers the problem still remained unsolved. The PPOs were and still are the employees of the Ministry of Planning. The

5. Development Plan 1966-70 P 8
Dev. Plan 1970/74 P 75

committees are officially chaired by members of Provincial Administration. In fact officially a P.P.O. in any province is supposed to be his PCs advisor on development matters. This means that where a P.P.O. runs into a difficult P.C. there is very little that he can achieve in the field of planned development. In otherwords^a P.P.O. does not have a free hand in exercising his functional leadership in the field. But even if a P.P.O. and a P.C. did get along well there was still outstanding manpower problems to be solved. The P.P.O. lacked support staff. As a result he was unable to cope up with the amount of work that was outstanding. He was secretary to provincial and district committees. Considering that some provinces had several district committees (e.g. R. Valley's 15) the P.P.O. could not obviously lead them effectively. That in part may have been responsible for irregularity of meetings in many areas.

The problem was however much bigger than that. In fact some of the causal factors we have identified here were merely signs of a major constraint - namely the failure by the Government to make a bold decision about the structure that planned development should take. The failure to do this led to a lot of irrelevant accusations and condemnation of the committees. The committees were being expected by observers to do what nobody at the Centre had equipped them to do!

Three things are necessary if local level organizations have to function effectively. They should have control or some control over:

1. Finances
2. Personnel
3. Decisionmaking. (discretion)⁶

The Development Committees at the local level controlled no finances between 1966 - 1970. Because they controlled no finances, functionally they had no useful role to play in coordinated planning. It is only when a local level officer knows that a local committee has the resources he can count on would he take their deliberations seriously. As long as somebody else outside his area of operation has that decision making power, he would tend to relate his activities to him. This is precisely how the individual members of D.D.Cs and PDCs behaved.

6. For more on this see Philip Zalznick. T.V.A. and the Grassroots, Univ. of California Press 1949.

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The politicians and other local leaders in the Advisory committees also realized their participation often yielded nothing. If they could go to Nairobi and negotiate directly for whatever they wanted, since Nairobi held the key to the purse, what was the use of attending the 'useless' committee meetings.

Also the fact that there was no single authority at the local level to whom all the members of the committee were responsible in carrying out their development roles made it is difficult to secure any planning discipline. It is common knowledge that the effectiveness of any organization depends on the availability of resources - the most important of which is manpower. The Committees had no control in this area. It worked with anybody that happened to have been posted there at any given time. Furthermore because of the structure of decision-making in the governmental system, the committees lacked any discretion in decision-making. Whatever they agreed on was not binding on anybody. Rather it was seen just as another piece of information to be used or not used by the real decision-makers in the development process. These were of course the Nairobi based officers.

Thus the first decade of Independence saw some attempts at deconcentration for rural development but due to built in organizational obstacles not much was achieved in that regard.

EXPERIMENTS UNDER THE SPECIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SRDP)

Any discussion of decentralization and integrated rural development in Kenya would be incomplete without discussing the experience of the so-called Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP)⁷. The SRDP is supposedly an integrated area based development mounted in six ecologically representative /^{areas} (each area covers a single administrative division within a district) aimed at experimenting with various development strategies.

The idea was born at /^{an} international conference⁸ held at Kericho (Kenya) in 1966. The conference recommendation to the Government

7. Our concern here is to analyse the programme's decentralization aspects. For more on its other aspects see Institute for Development Studies I.D.S. Nairobi An Overall Evaluation of the Special Rural Development Programme Occasional Paper No. 8 1972; Also Second Evaluation 1975 (forthcoming).

8. For background Information See James Sheffield (ed) Education Employment and Rural Development Report of the Kericho Conference 1966 E.A.P.H. 1967.

of Kenya to / launch such a programme was accepted in 1968; from which time planning of the programme in the six selected areas started. Since that time a number of things have happened which merit our observation here.

On the acceptance of the programme a decision was made to establish a Central Coordinating Committee at the National level that would provide overall coordination of the programme. The committee in question was established in February 1969. Known as the National Rural Development committee (NRDC) it comprised of the Permanent Secretary office of the President as its chairman with the Permanent Secretaries to the Treasury and Economic Planning and Development as its other permanent members. Other Permanent Secretaries were to be cooped whenever a matter concerning their ministries were to be discussed. The committee was thus a civil servants committee. Right from the beginning no attempt was made to associate the politicians with it.

From the time of its establishment the Committee created a small secretariat (initially 2-man) in the ministry of Planning. Through this secretariat the committee was supposed to monitor what was taking place in all the SRDP areas. Specifically the committee was charged to:-

- 1) Consider and approve experimental projects in the field of rural development.
- 2) Coordinate applications to donors for external assistance towards experimental projects and to allocate funds to operating ministries for their execution.
- 3) To draw the attention of operating ministries to constraints, bottlenecks and subjects that require priority attention and to coordinate projects.

The records available up to December 1972 showed that this committee had only met twice in four years. In the intervening period its functions seemed to have been carried out by the secretariat which at the time was manned only by about three people the leader of whom was an expatriate. This secretariat was responsible for initiating most of the activities that took place in the field. More important for our consideration here is the organizational structure which developed at the local level for programme administration and the relationship of that organization with the Secretariat and other central level organizations

in the administrative process.⁹

The immediate effect of the SRDP at the local level was that it strengthened some committees by giving them something to do. The area based orientation of the programme called for active participation by the local committees in programme planning and implementation. This new role was to be played in very close consultation with and supervision by designated officers both in the Ministry of Planning (especially the Secretariat) and the other Government Ministries directly involved in the programme.

The procedure to be used to produce the SRDP area plans were outlined by the Secretariat of the NRDC at the beginning of the programme.¹⁰ Other than stressing local participation by the committees it did not depart from the traditional planning relationships between the centre and the periphery. The committees were to initiate the projects subject to approval by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in addition to the particular ministry under whose portfolio a project fell. Any proposals originating from the local level had to be endorsed by the district development committee and then by the Provincial development committee before it found its way to the secretariat of the NRDC. The Secretariat in turn circulated them to the concerned ministries and also to the sectoral officers in the ministry of Finance and planning for comments. The Secretariat then put together a revised programme package in the light of Ministry comments. This was then pushed back to the DDC and PDC for 'final clearance'. It was after this exercise had been gone through that detailed implementation preparations could be made by the officers implementing the programme.

The experience was however different from one SRDP area to another. In one area (South Nyanza) the projects were, in the initial period, identified mainly by the divisional heads of departments who pushed their proposals to their District heads who then with very little modifications put them before the D.D.C. for vetting. The D.D.C. in turn did very little, other than to approve the version edited by the P.P.O. as the Secretary to the Committee. I once had the privilege of attending one such committee meeting where a document presented /^{was} 'passed' without any discussions. The points raised by some members had no bearing on

⁹ Covered more in W. Ouma Oyugi The Administration of Rural Development in a Kenyan sub-District: A Study of the interaction between Technical Assistance Personnel and the Kenyan Bureaucracy. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis Nairobi.

¹⁰ "Checklist of Procedures used in Preparing Area Projects for the SRDP" mimeo undated. It was sent to all PPOs early in 1969.

what the document contained. In that particular district therefore, the introduction of the SRDP had done very little to change the participatory orientation of the DDC members. An explanation could be the fact that at the time the D.D.C. did not control any SRDP funds. The release of SRDP funds was still subjected to the regular departmental hierarchical channels. There was therefore no direct benefits to be derived from group participation yet.

The other SRDP areas presented different experiences. In most of them there was very little Kenyan input at the beginning of the programme. The first plan produced in Mbere (Embu District) was done by Norwegian planners then attached to the office of the PFD Embu. In two areas Vihiga in Kakamega District and Kwale at the coast, plans could not be produced until Nairobi had sent a planning team to prod the local officials into action.¹¹

A major characteristic of planning in the SRDP areas in the initial period was therefore strong central monitoring and control of what the local officials were doing. Where it was felt they were not moving first enough the Ministry of Finance and planning intervened directly by actually sending a person or people to spearhead the operation. The SRDP in its early years thus involved very little delegation of planning responsibilities.

Strengthening Local Level Coordination .

One of the bottlenecks we mentioned above with regard to local level development is the usual absence of a mechanism for coordinating the activities of government officers in the field. This realization led to the decision to have in the SRDP areas one administrative officer in charge of overall coordination of the programme in each of the SRDP areas. The officer was to be known as area coordinator.

His functions were spelled out in a circular put out by the office of the President in 1970. In this circular, the role of this officer was seen as :¹²

1. To help officers at all levels to get the programme going and in particular to tackle the problems as they arise at the different levels.

11. See John Nellis "The Administration of Rural Development in Kenya" E.A. Journal Vol 9 No. 3 March 1972.

12. Office of the President Circular GEN 149/009/88 of July 25, 1970.

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2. To act as communication link between divisional, district and provincial levels and interministerially between departments to speed up communication of information.
3. To act as contact or link man at the programme level with donor representatives, evaluators and visitors.
4. In collaboration with the P.P.O. to draw up timetables and work programmes to maintain the momentum of the programme.

These functions placed an area coordinator as the most important actor at the programme level. Also implicit in his role was the fact that he had access to government officers at any level of government, something his divisional officers could not do.

The very idea that a subordinate district (divisional) officer would have the right of access at any level of government was unbelievable to the senior members of the Provincial Administration in the field, the FCs and the DCs. Initially they opposed the idea. A further suggestion that they (the Area Coordinators) be responsible directly to the Ministry of Finance caused further apprehension in the Provincial Administration quarters. They interpreted this as an attempt by the Ministry of Planning to remove them from their leadership role in the development process. It was only after the direct intervention by the Office of the President that the FCs and DCs gave in. This was followed immediately with an instruction to them to designate one of their long experienced divisional administrators (D.O.) to be incharge of the programme in their respective areas. By 1971 five of the six SRDP areas had coordinators.

The lessons which have been learnt since they were appointed are many and varied. In the field of planning an area coordinator has been instrumental in getting departments to move, thus taking over the role which used to be played by the NRDC Secretariat before they (the A/Cs) were appointed. The degree to which that has happened has also varied depending on the dedication of the individual coordinators and on their relationships with other government officers involved in the programme - especially at the divisional level.

In one area, Vihiga in Kakamega, the area coordinator operated from the P.C's office at the beginning. As a result he managed to get his plans worked out at the highest level possible if only to assure passage at the D.D.C. The DDC members who are subordinate to the Provincial officers could not be expected to override the suggestions of their superiors. The divisional project committee was only used for the purpose of popularizing the programme - at least up to December 1973.

In South Nyanza on the other hand, the AC operated at the divisional level. Most of the projects identified after 1971 originated at that level. Still there was no difficulty in getting acceptance at the DDC level. The problem often was in Nairobi. Here proposals coming from the local level were subjected to serious scrutiny. If any proposal originating at the local level was ever turned down it was not at the district or provincial level but at the Ministry level. This simply showed that in spite of the presence of this programme which required active and frank participation by the DDC such had not been the case. Another area where divisional officers seemed to have participated in planning more actively was Tetu in Nyeri District. This was the only SRDP area which did not have a donor. In the other areas the donors also insisted on participating in project identification ending up in some cases by their drawing up the programme single handedly as in Kwale and Mbera (Embu) in the initial period.

Where the locals were allowed the opportunity to participate in planning, it was quite an experience. It provided a real learning situation to people hitherto used only to receiving directives from their superiors up the hierarchy. The divisional heads of department participated with keenness because they realized there was payoffs in so doing. The AC's right of access meant that he was in a position to help the other officers get things much faster than is usually the case. It also had a negative aspect. There was the fear that non-cooperation could be reported to the superiors either directly or indirectly through "The Reporting System".

The "Reporting System" was a simplified network analysis worked out by two research scholars Robert Chambers and D. Belshaw then of I.D.S. University of Nairobi. The system identified coherent and isolated sub projects in an SRDP area, divided each project into its

13. For more on the System see Bel.

For more on the System See Belshaw, D and R. Chambers "A management System Approach to Rural Development". Discussion paper No. 161 I.D.S. Nairobi; Belshaw and Chambers "PIM: A practical management system for Implementing Rural Development Programmes and Projects". Discussion Paper No. 162, I.D.S. University of Nairobi; Also R. Chambers Managing Rural Development Ideas and Experience from East Africa. The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala 1974 especially Chapter II.

For a critique of the System See Michael Chege "System Management and Plan Implementation in Kenya" in The African Review Vol. 3 No 4 1973 pp 595-609. Also Chabala H.A. David H. Kiiru, Solomon W. Mukuna and David K. Leonard "An Evaluation of the Programming and Implementation Management (PIM) System" Working Paper No. 39 I.D.S. University of Nairobi March 1973.

component parts or activities, phased the project into proper sequence of events and assigned a timetable and responsibility for each of the steps in the procedure.¹⁴ The system was handled by an AC who monitored what the departments were doing, what hadn't been done, why and who should be held accountable. This was reflected in a monthly report which was a major component of the system. The Reports were widely disseminated in the Government system. Whereas the fear 'to be reported' might have got the divisional level officers to work harder, the reporting system did not help to get action done whenever the bottleneck was traced to the centre or Province. Month in month out, a certain bottleneck would be repeatedly identified without any correctional measures being taken by the senior officers concerned. The timely release of resources earmarked for the programme was always a bottleneck. An AC's report would pinpoint who should act month after month without anything happening. The deliberate ignoring of the reports often led to unnecessary trips being made by ACs to the Provincial Hq or to Nairobi and hence resources being wasted thus.

At the programme level another source of the Coordinators' influence was the fact that he partially controlled development votes. All the feeder roads development funds were controlled by A.Cs. They were the holders of the Authority to incur Expenditure (AIEs). They could also hire and fire casual labour in consultation with a roads Engineer or Inspector. When therefore it came to the question of deciding on which routes to be opened or improved the knowledge that money was available locally made people to take participation very seriously. The lessons that have been learnt from the SRDP are thus many and varied. Important to repeat here is that the "ability" of some area coordinators to bring together the divisional officials in the process of planning and implementation was the result of the fact that they were endowed with political and economic resources. This made their call for cooperation be taken more seriously. We can therefore deduce here that local control of development resources by one integrating generalist is likely to increase participation of local level officers in collective decision-making.

But the most important lesson learnt thus far in the SRDP planning is that where development resources are controlled at the Ministry Headquarter, however much local officers participate in project identification, that alone does not guarantee acceptance by the Centre of plans produced

14. J.R. Nellis "Report of the SRDP -- Calendar Year 1971" I.D.S. University of Nairobi.

unless simultaneously they had consulted very closely with the Centre. The SRDP strategy thus represented what may be termed partial deconcentration.

DISTRICT PLANNING STRATEGY

The decision to make the district the basic operational unit for planning and implementation seems to have been made by the Ministry of Finance and Planning sometime in 1972.¹⁵ This was a year following the publication of the Ndegwa Commission Report¹⁶ in which a recommendation that the district be strengthened as the basic unit for planning and plan implementation had been made.¹⁷

The Report was published at a time when the real implementation of the SRDP was just beginning. Yet there were quite a number of recommendations in it especially regarding District development - that resembled some of the things were being considered for, or being done in the SRDP areas. It is highly possible that the chapter on District Development in the Ndegwa Report was drafted by an officer in the Ministry of Finance and Planning who in doing so might have had the SRDP structure in mind.

Like the SRDP, district planning aims at increasing the participation of local organizations, people and staff in development. As the Government sees it,¹⁸ district planning will be concerned with the spatial distribution of Government Services, such as schools, and health services and also with identifying, in detail, the development resources available in each district which remain unexploited. The district plans thus produced are to be forwarded to Nairobi for comments by the relevant Ministries and then approval by the Ministry of Finance and Planning before the District Development Committees can begin to work out their implementation details.

To strengthen District Planning the Government has appointed District Development officers¹⁹ to be in charge at the District level, of coordinating Planning and plan implementation. The role envisaged for them is similar to the one being played by the Area Coordinators in the SRDP areas. Like the ACs the appointment of the DDOs met with a lot of initial

15. Report of the Commission of Inquiry (Public Services Structure and Remuneration Commission) 1970-1971. Chairman: D.N. Ndegwa. Govt. Printer May 1971.

16. Republic of Kenya. Development Plan 1974/78 p. 112

17. The appointment of DDOs and District Planning officers had also been recommended by the Ndegwa Commission. See Chapter of the Report.

redidance from the Provincial Administration. All the PCs opposed the idea of getting these officers appointed by, and responsible to the Ministry of Finance and Planning.¹⁸ They invoked the arguments they had used in 1970 when a similar proposal had been made about the appointment of the Area Coordinators, namely that their location in the MEP would deprive the Provincial Administration of their development roles. This insistence that the DDOs be responsible to the Provincial Adm. in carrying out their responsibilities led to a delay of about 4 years in appointing these officers. A compromise was reached towards the end of 1974 by which the DDOs were recruited by the MEP, then later seconded to the Provincial Administration. All the expenditures incurred by the D.D.O. are voted under the MEP who then transfers it to the Provincial Administration.

The D.D.O. is now faced with the same dilemma that before him the Area Coordinator had been faced with, namely that professionally he is responsible to the MEP and administratively to the Provincial Administration. This has the potential for authority conflict as the experience of the SRDP and the A/Cs has shown.¹⁹ Like the ACs, the D.D.Os are also allowed the right of access. This means that whenever they feel the need to consult with say a Provincial head of department or with an official at the Ministry headquarters in Nairobi they are free to do so. Even in their relationship with the MEP they communicate directly and do not have to go through the P.P.Os. As a result (this writer has learnt from Authoritative sources) there has been a lot of direct communication between the DDOs and the Ministry. What that tends to reveal is that the DDOs realize that if the decisions they make are to hold there must be regular contacts with the Ministry Hq.

18. Private communication.

19. Based on personal interviews with all A/Cs

Part of the problem could be associated with the question of sitting down. There have been reported cases of friction already between some D.D.O.s and departmental heads who claim they were not informed of the role of a D.D.O.²⁰ Some D.C.s have also given them very cold or negative reception. In one area, a D.D.O. has been given to do what an ordinary District officer (D.O.) usually does. In such areas the D.D.Os have felt 'threatened' and have sought clarification from the Ministry of Finance and Planning about what they actually ought to be doing. What the DDOs are supposed to do have never been spelt out in details save that they are supposed to do what the PFOs used to do at the district level. Some of these functions included:

1. Secretary to the District Development Committees
2. Advise the DDC on development matters
3. To maintain detailed records and prepare regular reports on planning and development matters within the district.
4. To prepare, review and revise plan targets at the district i.e. to develop district specific plans
5. To coordinate and assist in the implementation of the projects.²¹

No structured field study has been done to assess the role of the DDOs thus far. Until such a study is done, we must continue to rely on the little that we have been able to gather through informal contacts as outlined above.

But one observation could be made nevertheless, and that is, that the success of a DDO will largely depend on:

- (a) Professional commitment of the officer
- (b) His understanding of the development problems of his district
- (c) His correct reading of the district power structure
- (d) His good working relations with his colleagues and with the Ministry Hq.

20. Private communication from an authoritative source July 75

21. These were the major duties of the PFO at the district level as contained in the Annual Report of PFO Nyanza for 1968 Recent Government documents also make reference to some of them e.g. 1974/75 Development Plan P. 112.

District Development Funds

These grants have been provided in a small way since 1971 primarily for the purpose of stimulating the D.D.C. to take more interest in planning.²² The amount involved was rather modest at the beginning. The Central Government set aside K£100,000 to be distributed equally among the provinces, thus giving each province about K£14,000. This²³ was increased to K£25,000 per district per year in the current plan, giving a total of about K£4.2 million during the plan period.

The grants are centrally controlled by the Ministry of Finance and Planning. To effect the control an elaborate procedure for their release has been devised. Projects are to be identified by the D.D.C. After DDC approval, a Ministry Profoma is to be completed. In the project profoma the following information must be provided.

- (i) Name of the project, and its location
- (ii) The name, title and signature of officer responsible for its implementation
- (iii) The nature and purpose of the project including the benefits the project will provide
- (iv) Detailed breakdown of estimates
- (v) Other sources of support e.g. self-help
- (vi) Whether the project would give rise to recurrent costs and what arrangements have been made to meet such costs.
- (vii) Evidence that the project has been approved by the DDC.
- (viii) Evidence of commitment (by way of signature) by officers of the relevant ministries that they are willing to implement the project.²⁴

Upon receiving the profoma the relevant official (s) of the MEP decides whether to approve the project or not. If the project is turned down the reasons for so doing are communicated to the D.D.C. through the P.P.O. At that stage there is nothing which either the P.P.O. or D.D.C. can do to reverse the decision. All they can do is make a resubmission bearing in mind the original Ministry grounds for rejection.

22. National Development Plan 1974/76 P 113

23. Ibid P 113. I gather it has since been increased to £50,000 per district.

24. Information abstracted from the Profoma in question.

It is this authority over the release of the Grants to the individual projects which the Ministry retains that the D.D.O.s if they have to be successful must be fully conscious of.

In the case of approved project, the MEP releases the authority to Incur expenditure (AIE) to the P.P.O. who in turn may decide to issue a sub-AIE to either the D.C. or the implementing officer. Between July 71-June 74, the P.P.Os issued sub AIES to the D.Cs. But in July 1974, the Ministry decided to abandon that arrangement for two major reasons, (1) The MEP was usually unable to know how much had been actually spent on the projects. In some cases funds went to the wrong projects. (2) There were also alleged cases of funds released for development projects being used for routine administration. The present position is that the P.P.O. is the AIE holder. The money is released to him and he is the only one to make payments. In this way the MEP hopes to ensure that funds are used for their intended purposes.

The Central control over these funds has had some 'unintended consequences'. Two are particularly worth citing here

- (1) Districts which cannot come up with acceptable projects usually end up getting at the end of every year, less than what was originally due to them.
- (2) That the districts capable of coming up with acceptable projects have ended up taking the lion's share in any given year.

This 'problem' was more serious between 1971-74 when allocation was made on provincial basis. It was possible for one or two districts to get all the provincial allocation if the others were dormant. In fact that experience seemed to have influenced the Ministry into making allocations on district basis.

But the major question to ask now is how has the availability of the district grant funds strengthened decentralized integrated rural development? The fund was intended to stimulate the DDCs into active participation in planning. From the evidence available thus far this objective is being achieved. Secondly the fact that the funds release depends on sound project formulation seems to be encouraging serious project analysis by the local officers involved in project identification. But the fact that there has been some problems with the way the Grant was used after being released by the PPO simply highlights the need for central financial surveillance at the local level.

25. Personal Communication from 5 of the 7 PPOs late 1974.

CONCLUSION

Several lessons can be learnt from the Kenyan experience in the field of decentralization for rural development. To start with the fact that the political system is not decentralized means that any attempt by the Bureaucracy to decentralize planned development is faced with a lot of built-in limitations. It is these limitations as we outlined above that have been responsible in making it difficult for the development organizations at the local level to operate effectively.

The experiments under the SRDP and the District planning highlights some of these problems. Whereas both are characterized by some form of decentralization, their successes have been limited by the control which the central level units continue to have over them. Decisions they make are not binding. The closer the consultation with the centre the better are the chances that the decisions they make will be acceptable.

In view of this and of the forgoing analysis one can say that what Kenya has been trying to do in the field of rural development can most appropriately be referred to as partial deconcentration. As long as the political system is not decentralized, that will inevitably continue to be the case.

