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EXPERIMENTATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
KENYA'S SPECIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

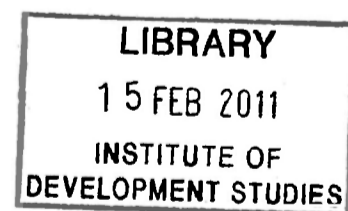
By

Ian Livingstone

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INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The author, who was a major contributor to the Institute for Development Studies' Second Overall Evaluation of the Special Rural Development Programme (Occasional Paper No. 12, 1975), presents here some of his personal observations and conclusions concerning the S.R.D.P. He evaluates the Programme in terms of its success as an experiment, its record in improving project preparation and implementation, its success as a system of development administration, the coordination of projects and progress towards integrated rural development, the achievement of local involvement, and its performance as a medium for foreign financial and technical assistance to the rural sector.

He concludes that a great many positive results have emerged from the Special Rural Development Programme, but the results have frequently been disappointing. The shortcomings of the Programme stem from the fact that it was not given the best chance to succeed in the first place and reveal the great difficulty of making headway in the promotion of social and economic change. This accentuates the need for pre-testing and closely monitoring rural development programmes, along the lines envisaged in the S.R.D.P.



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In recent years the development policies of less developed countries have shown an increasing emphasis on the agricultural sector and rural development generally, with support for this emphasis coming from academic circles, aid agencies and international bodies, as well as the governments directly concerned. The question of how to accelerate expansion in the agricultural sector and how best to improve welfare for the mass of the people in the rural areas is now the focus of considerable attention. Kenya's Special Rural Development Programme (S.R.D.P.) is of particular interest in this regard because of the breadth of activities covered, the range of geographical areas encompassed, and the specifically experimental and innovative nature of the Programme.

The idea for S.R.D.P. originated at a conference held at Kericho in 1966 on education, employment and rural development.¹ After fairly lengthy preparatory work, involving researchers at the Institute for Development Studies (I.D.S.) of the University of Nairobi, fourteen pilot areas were selected of which six were to be the subject of the first phase of the Programme. As things turned out, the Programme has not been extended beyond these six areas which have occupied the stage up to 1976, when the Programme is due to be phased into a new national system of district development planning. Donor representatives attending the Kericho conference had already expressed interest in funding Kenyan Government proposals in the area of rural development and it proved most satisfactory to each donor country eventually involved to be associated with a particular area among the six. The areas selected, together with the donor agencies involved, were Migori, Nyanza Province (SIDA/FAO), Vihiga, Western Province (U.S.A.I.D.) and Kapenguria, Rift Valley Province (Netherlands), in the south-west, west and north-west of Kenya respectively; Tetu, Central Province (Kenya Government) and Mbere, Eastern Province (Norway), both in central Kenya; and Kwale,

1. See James Sheffield, ed. Education, Employment and Rural Development, the report of the Kericho Conference, Nairobi, 1967.

Coast Province (U.K., O.D.M.) on the coast. The six areas offered a diversity of physical conditions and agricultural economy.

The S.R.D.P. proposal was included in the Development Plan for 1970-74, though some awkward delays in the Treasury in approving finance held back operations until the 1971-72 fiscal year. The Plan identifies the three guiding principles of S.R.D.P. as being experimentation, replication and the use of existing resources. Regarding experimentation, it is stated that S.R.D.P. "... is an experimental programme, that it is intended to provide experience in conception, design and execution of comprehensive rural development". In respect of replication, it stated that "one of the fundamental principles of the whole programme is that projects and methods that are proved successful in the pilot areas can be reproduced in other similar areas subsequently".

Finally, on using existing resources, it said that it would be a fundamental principle "to utilise existing resources of staff and finance as far as possible, and to seek external assistance to support what will, in effect, be a large-scale self-help effort". In other words, it was to be a Kenyan show.

What came to be an important, and perhaps unusual, feature, however, was the extent of University staff participation, via the Institute for Development Studies, in a major government development programme. It was from a government-sanctioned I.D.S. study that the original S.R.D.P. areas were selected; the basic management system underlying the S.R.D.P. and several other features of the S.R.D.P. administrative structure were devised by the I.D.S. researchers; in the first year or so of the Programme resident I.D.S. evaluators were stationed in some of the S.R.D.P. areas, although staffing problems prevented the continuation of this arrangement; and finally the I.D.S. was called in to organise two major evaluations of progress achieved under the S.R.D.P. in 1972 and again in 1974-5.² The present

2. See An Overall Evaluation of the Special Rural Development Programme, Occasional Paper No. 8, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, 1972, and The Second Overall Evaluation of the Special Rural Development Programme, Occasional Paper No. 12, 1975. The present writer wrote or co-authored five of the nineteen substantive chapters of the second report and participated in its overall organisation of research and preparation. This paper draws on this collaborative report but responsibility for the presentation here rests with the author.

writer was part of a team of nineteen which undertook the second evaluation. This article draws heavily on the collaborative work done in the course of this evaluation, but formulates the writer's own conclusions regarding the experience under the S.R.D.P.

THE CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE S.R.D.P.

As stated above, the essential aim of S.R.D.P. was experimental, to try out experimental projects or methods in particular areas with a view to possible replication in other parts of Kenya. This is why a cross-section of types of areas was selected and why the areas chosen were relatively small ones, below the size of a District. In addition, it was of course hoped that successful projects would increase incomes and employment in the areas concerned. Experimentation was to be involved not only in the projects established but in the system of development administration itself, which had a number of new features. Finally, it was hoped that it would be possible in this new system to encourage local involvement in the development process, which represents another experimental aspect.

The main administrative features of the S.R.D.P. have been:

(1) The geographical size of the unit selected, generally consisting of one or two Divisions within a District;

(2) The appointment of an Area Coordinator out side of the usual administrative machinery. The area Coordinator was of District Officer level and appointed from the Office of the President, although later reporting to the Ministry of Finance and Planning. His task was the coordination of the efforts of departmental officers in the area into an area development planning exercise. The Area Coordinator was only to be concerned with development projects rather than general administrative duties or law enforcement, for which the District Commissioner's office, with a designated District Officer, would continue to be responsible. The Area Coordinator works with a Project Committee which meets three times a year to initiate and check on the progress of projects. In addition to departmental officers representing the various ministries at the local level, membership of the committees includes the local M.P., three other local leaders and a representative of local voluntary agencies, so that one would look to the Project Committee for ensuring coordination of policies and other forms of cooperation among departments and for involvement of the local community in the development process;

(3) A management information system, known as the Programming and Implementation Management System (PIM). This involves an Annual Implementation and Evaluation Review, an Annual Programming Exercise and an Annual Re-plan and submission of new proposals, in sum the introduction of a much more formal set of planning procedures than is usual at the local area level, at least in Africa. A particular feature of the Annual Programming Exercise is that the component operations of each selected project are identified, listed in sequence, and scheduled for completion by specific dates. Phasing forms and bar charts are then used to check on the progress of individual projects, so that failure to complete an operation on time can be traced and cause discussion. Project charts are kept up to date by triennial reports presented to the Project Committees by all S.R.D.P. officers, and thus they provide a potential focus for team discussion of problems arising in any part of the area development programme.

(4) The link-man system, by which a specific officer, at a reasonably senior level, in each central ministry was designated 'link-man' for S.R.D.P. matters. Any Area Coordinator was able to contact the link-man of any ministry directly in order to raise any queries or sort out a problem. By this means it was hoped to increase administrative flexibility and improve communications between headquarters and officers in the field;

(5) A field management system for extension staff. Devised in 1971 by two I.D.S. researchers, Belshaw and Chambers, this can be considered an extension of PIM, reaching down to extension staff. This was applied mainly to agricultural extension staff in Mbere, but also to home economics assistants, and in a revised form, livestock assistants in that area. This involved planning and recording the daily activities of extension assistants, and the results of farm visits.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE S.R.D.P.

Before giving some results of the S.R.D.P., it is necessary to ask what one might hope would emerge from the Programme; that is, to formulate some criteria on the basis of which the performance of S.R.D.P. might be judged. In an assessment published in 1974,³ J.W. Leach pointed with some

3. J.W. Leach, "The Kenya Special Rural Development Programme", Journal of Administration Overseas, 13 (2) April 1974.

pride to the fact that by December 1972 there were already a total of 123 sub-programmes, and argued that "after 18 months running this showed a substantial improvement in government's capacity to plan and implement development at the local level". (p.360) Before coming to such a conclusion, however, one would need to have knowledge of the content and the success of the projects listed: a list of project titles does not prove that the projects were in fact on the ground, raising productivity, or likely to be successfully carried through to fulfil their objectives. Otherwise satisfaction could be obtained from the fact that their number had increased from 123 to 188 by December 1974.

The objectives which the Programme might be said to aim at included:

1. Successful experimentation. The primary emphasis in the Programme being on experimentation and replication, the first question to ask is what success has been achieved in eliciting projects of an experimental type and the proportion of these which have proved replicable.

2. Improved project preparation and implementation. Apart from the experimental aspect, the hope would be also to produce better projects, or at least better formulated projects, together with better implementation of projects, thus raising the 'success rate' among projects. This follows from the fact that the management system, with project phasing and tracking, has been a major element in the S.R.D.P.

3. Success as a system of development administration. The various innovative features of the S.R.D.P. administrative system can themselves be directly appraised.

4. Coordination of projects and progress towards integrated rural development. We might hope to find coordination of clusters of projects and perhaps integrated development of the S.R.D.P. areas as a whole. This would provide some guide as to how area or District planning should be organised, together with an indication of its possible success.

5. Achievement of local involvement. Self-reliance and local involvement in development were to be a significant aspect of the Programme.

6. S.R.D.P. as a medium for foreign financial and technical assistance to the rural sector. Despite the aim of local involvement, foreign donors have

been involved and interested in the Programme, and it is interesting to ask if the Programme has been successful in raising external finance and to consider any lessons regarding the potential role technical assistance in such programmes.

EXPERIMENTATION AND REPLICABLE PROJECTS

To fully assess the results of S.R.D.P. would require detailed knowledge of, in December 1974, 188 sub-projects. It was the task of the 1974-75 I.D.S. evaluation team to report on the progress of as many of these projects as possible, but even with nineteen members it was impossible to do a uniformly thorough job. Nevertheless some attempt at comprehensiveness was made, and in an effort to pool the knowledge acquired by all the members of the team a questionnaire was circulated with a number of key questions about the nature of the projects, the progress made, whether they were in fact being executed, and so on.

In deciding which projects were genuinely experimental in terms of the 'guiding principle' of S.R.D.P. a distinction was made between those projects which were experimental in the context of Kenya as a whole and which could, if successful, be copied elsewhere, and those which are innovative, rather than experimental, in terms of a particular part of Kenya. For example, the introduction of commercial pig breeding or groundnut production in Migori may be innovative for that area, but not in terms of Kenya as a whole. Similarly with the introduction of sheep into Lelan, though here there are some differences in the credit and supervisory aspects of the projects. The essential criterion is that there is some element in the project itself or the way in which it is carried out which might be replicated in other areas, rather than simply the exploitation of a resource limited to one area. This is not to say, of course, that the introduction of new activities of any sort into an area is not important.

The list of active projects which were deemed experimental by the team is given in Table 1. The striking feature is the extreme brevity of the

Table 1. Experimental content of S.R.D.P. Projects.

All Areas	1. Women's programmes. 2. Functional literacy.
Vihiga	3. Labour-intensive roads. 4. Family planning. 5. Maize credit scheme. 6. Agricultural input supply. 7. Tea expansion (credit element).
Migori	8. Stockist credit scheme for hybrid maize development. 9. Group extension and agricultural village committees. 10. Crop storage extension. 11. Model dairy farms.
Tetu	12. Mobile family planning unit. 13. Dairy production experiment. 14. Hybrid maize extension for less progressive farmers.

- Mbere 15. Health services extension project. 16. Management and reporting system for extension staff. 17. Agri-service station (not strongly pursued).
- Kapenguria 18. Rural access roads.
- Kwale Nil, beyond 1 and 2.

Source: Second Overall Evaluation of the S.R.D.P., I.D.S. Occasional Paper No. 12, 1975.

list, considering that it embraces activities in six different areas over a period of four years. It should be taken into account also that a certain amount of experimental activity, particularly crop research and extension, would have gone on anyway. In particular there are a number of major experimental programmes, some of which are described below, which the Kenya Government had in any case decided to introduce as national programmes, but which it was convenient to introduce into the S.R.D.P. areas. Some programmes or projects, even if experimental or innovative are not particularly confined to S.R.D.P. areas, and therefore cannot be said to have emerged from this Programme. This includes group ranching, village polytechnics, 4-K clubs, day-care centres, poultry production. Other projects for which the Programme cannot claim credit are those which started in these particular areas before the S.R.D.P. itself was launched. Thus the Mwereni Group Ranch project is listed under S.R.D.P. although it was first mooted in 1967. Equally, the Rural Industries Development Programme, the operations of which do not in any case completely coincide with the S.R.D.P. areas, was planned and initiated before the start of S.R.D.P. It should be noted also that some of the projects given in Table 1 were minor activities, and that some have not been particularly successful. It may be concluded that relatively few projects have emerged from the S.R.D.P. which Government has been able to replicate or could consider replicating in future in other areas of Kenya.

This appears to have stemmed partly from incomplete appreciation of the main objective of the S.R.D.P. , but perhaps more fundamentally from an absence of ideas for useful experimentation. Apart from the fact that the Ministry of Finance appears to have insisted in only a mild way on experimental content in the projects which it was funding, it is surprising, considering that this has been Kenya's central rural development programme over the past four years, that central ministries did not take greater opportunity to suggest possible experimental or innovative activities which the areas might take up. The number of activities initiated centrally rather than locally is not large. Yet planning units of the central ministries are in many ways much better placed for devising experimental programmes than officers in the field. While decentralisation of decision-making was one objective of

S.R.D.P. it seems that a greater effort should have been made to ensure sufficient experimental and innovative content in the Programme.

Pessimism regarding the experimental content of S.R.D.P. projects should not be taken too far. Substantial economic change of an innovative but non-replicable type was achieved on a local basis in several of the S.R.D.P. areas. And if the list of genuinely experimental projects carried out in the areas was not as long as one would hope, a number of important experimental development programmes were carried out, particularly in crop experimentation, group extension methods, extension of unsecured credit to small farmers, labour-intensive road construction, functional literacy, women's programmes and family planning. Yet, as mentioned above, some or all of these programmes might well have been undertaken even in the absence of S.R.D.P. the opportunity simply having been taken to locate them in S.R.D.P. areas as a means of giving apparent content to S.R.D.P. and in order to take advantage of the favourable administrative set-up in the areas. The results of some of these programmes are reviewed briefly in the next section.

RESULTS OF SOME MAJOR PROGRAMMES

In the agricultural field there were nearly forty crop development projects of various types, covering crop production, credit schemes for particular crops and crop extension. Of these about twelve showed positive results, some very positive, particularly in extension, and about fourteen showed negative results, with others still in process. Crop experimentation is constantly being undertaken in all parts of Kenya; however, and how much more was undertaken in these areas than elsewhere is difficult to say. What can be reported as significant and sometimes striking are increases in acreages of hybrid maize in Migori, Tetu and Kapenguria, tea in Vihiga, soya beans in Migori, sunflower in Kapenguria, and Mexican 142 beans in Mbere. A really important result was the success of a new approach to extension in Migori, based on groups of farmers rather than approaches to individuals, and utilising village development committees. This, together with the demonstration in Tetu of the possibilities of influencing less progressive and average farmers, rather than more progressive farmers as often attempted, might even provide the basis for a new rural development strategy in Kenya if possibilities were systematically explored and the system adopted more generally.

The labour-intensive roads programme in Vihiga is a case where the existence of S.R.D.P. permitted the experimental content of a programme to be preserved in the face of local pressures to concentrate on constructing more roads

in a shorter time by standard methods. A considerable amount of data on alternative methods were collected, and though this still has to be fully analysed, sufficient positive evidence was obtained to warrant replication in other areas by the Ministry of Works.

The Women's Programme consists, in the S.R.D.P. areas, of strengthening groups by training leaders in a variety of fields related to family welfare and community development, supporting this with subsequent follow-up by field staff. The Programme is essentially an exercise in extension, with a variety of 'messages' passed down through women's groups. Activities encouraged might be income-generating, such as poultry-keeping or handicrafts, or in the area of welfare, such as nutrition or the establishment of subsistence vegetable gardens. The number of groups in 1974 in the six S.R.D.P. areas had reached an estimated 229, with a recorded membership of 8,050, more than half of the latter in Tetu, the economically most advanced area. The Programme thus appears to have been a fair success, and the potential social impact is obviously considerable, if difficult to measure. The income-generating activities which have been encouraged are not those with much potential, and the only important development, of Mabati/savings groups among women in Tetu, is one which occurred before the advent of S.R.D.P. The encouragement of women's groups is, however, a national programme, organised with considerable assistance from voluntary agencies (UNICEF and the Programme for Better Family Living, P.B.F.L.), and within the S.R.D.P. areas it is also fully-funded by these agencies, without use of S.R.D.P. finance.

The Kenya Functional Literacy Programme is a national programme which used the S.R.D.P. areas for its trial development but would have been carried out independently of S.R.D.P. As its title suggests, the Programme aims to correct illiteracy among adults by concentrating on the teaching of functional words in daily use in the rural areas. Data are not available on the numbers of people who became literate (the period is too short in any case) or who were moving towards literacy as a result of the Programme. However, rough drop-out rates for attendance at the courses can be deduced from (imperfectly recorded) data collected by the I.D.S. team as 30 per cent (for Kwale, over a period of 23 months), 72 per cent (Mbere, over 24 months), 20 per cent (Migori over ^{about} 20 months), 9 per cent (Vihiga, over about 11 months), 32 per cent (Tetu, over about 11 months), and 6 per cent (Kapenguria, over about 12 months). It might be concluded that if drop-out rates are as high as they are, the proportion of those remaining who are likely to become literate will not be high. On the other hand, the recruitment of a total of 1,650 students at the end of 1974 is a hopeful sign, suggesting that vast numbers of rural

Kenyans could be attracted to literacy classes if the Programme were organised on a country-wide basis. Against such extension is the cost of the Programme of Kshs. 342,000 (UK £20,000) in 1973-4, equivalent to an expenditure of Kshs. 207 per person registered at the end of the year, indicating a very low social rate of return on investment.⁴

The family planning programme in Vihiga, Kakamega District, was of great potential national importance in a country where the population growth rate, approaching four per cent, is one of the highest in the world. The special element in the Vihiga programme was an intensification of family planning facilities in one area, particularly the provision of additional clinics, but also increasing numbers of field educators and midwives and vehicles. The response here might thus indicate the possible response to an intensified programme throughout Kenya. The results show a huge increase in the number of first visitors to clinics in the first year (starting from a situation with very few clinics available in 1971) and a hundred per cent increase even in the second year, but some uncertainty as to whether the momentum is maintainable subsequently. At the same time the writer's own study in Kakamega District as a whole showed an extremely low continuation rate among clients of 28.0 per cent after twelve months and only 3.4 per cent after twenty-four months, implying a low number of avoided births obtained presumably at relatively high cost. Nevertheless, the results obtained contain some hopeful signs, and, with a critically high rational population growth rate, represent an important and useful experiment which should clearly be extended.

EFFECTS ON THE QUALITY OF PROJECT PREPARATION

Turning now from the number of fully experimental projects to the general quality of project formulation and definition, we can obtain some impression from the project lists issued for each area. The descriptions of the different S.R.D.P. projects in these lists are extremely poor. In many cases only general headings are given, such as 'livestock marketing' in Kapenguria, 'adult education' in Tetu, 'community development' in Mberere, 'animal health and husbandry' in Kwale, and 'tea, coffee, pyrethrum, maize dairy products' in Tetu. The project lists do not in fact usually indicate what the specific activity or project is, let alone what aspect of it is innovative or experimental. Partly this is because the aim is simply to provide headings under which allocations of funds may be authorised by the Ministry of Finance and Planning. But it is also a reflection of a failure to clearly identify what constitutes a development project, and its effect has

4. In addition, the I.D.S. evaluators found serious weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching methods employed. Their recommendations are likely to yield considerable improvements in the programme in future.

probably been to blur the distinction in the minds of the officers concerned between such projects and, for example, the normal activities of a department. The willingness of the Ministry of Finance and Planning to accept such poor definitions when allocating funds may also be indicative of weakness in project formulation at the central level.

Within the project lists, also, we find a variety of items which fall outside the narrow definition of development projects. We find some items of ordinary social expenditures, such as a show ground in Mbere or 'social halls' in Tetu. There are a number of items which are listed separately as projects but are in fact component aspects of some other project or programme, and which themselves do not directly yield a stream of output or consumption benefits. Building cattle dips, for instance, may be part of a programme to prepare an area for the introduction of dairy cattle, but cannot by itself be properly considered a project. The 'livestock staff build-up' in Vihiga and the stock and milk census in Kapenguria are in the same category.

Many other projects listed should more properly be considered to be part of the normal, on-going activity of the departments concerned. These would include, for example, cooperative marketing in Mbere and Migori, water supply for domestic consumption in Kwale and Tetu, animal disease control in Migori and Mbere, artificial insemination services in Kapenguria, and expenditure on primary schools in Tetu. Also listed are projects which are either not experimental, or not confined to S.R.D.P. areas, such as village polytechnics or 4-K clubs.

There are a number of projects which are no longer being pursued, or perhaps were not in the end started, but which are nevertheless still listed. These include for instance a fruit nursery (Migori), pig production and a crop extension experiment (Vihiga) and a beef production experiment and 'experiments in the promotion of commerce and industry' (Tetu). The expectation would be that in an active experimental programme the list of current projects would change, as projects are completed or unsuccessful projects deleted and new ones initiated. In contrast the current list of projects in Tetu, for example, is identical with that of the original S.R.D.P. proposal put up in December 1969.

There are a number of reasons, some quite rational, why these rather unsatisfactory lists have emerged. There is a natural tendency for the local areas to attempt to impress headquarters with evidence of their

activity by producing as long a list as possible. Contributing to this also was the attempt to find S.R.D.P. projects in all sectors, that is, in practically all areas of social and economic development, even if in some fields it was not likely that any very new approaches might be found. Partly this was an attempt to involve all officers in the area in the exercise. More than this, it was an attempt by the Area Coordinator and his team to use the S.R.D.P. to obtain additional funds for the area, and for as many different development/s as possible within the area. For example, in Migori all the ministries are listed, first of all, and then projects under each ministry head! Here project lists are not attempting to identify specific activities so much as to provide sub-heads with the minimum description necessary for the allocation of funds.

Nevertheless these loose descriptions of projects do not suggest a very high level of project planning capacity at the district level and, once again, the willingness of the Ministry of Finance and Planning to accept such descriptions suggests a similar situation in the centre, with perhaps also insufficient involvement by central ministries in the planning process in the Districts, through lack of communication, lack of interest or mere inertia.

THE S.R.D.P. AS AN EXPERIMENT IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Although the number of experimental projects organised under the S.R.D.P. should have been substantially greater, the main experiment in S.R.D.P. is the S.R.D.P. itself: the new system of development administration in its various aspects. We consider here briefly the success of the system and the lessons to be derived from it, specifically the elements which might be replicated.

We might note first that as a prototype experimental model of a development administration system which might be extended to other parts of Kenya the S.R.D.P. had some badly designed features from the start. The geographical unit on which it is based, an area equivalent to one or two Divisions within a District, is problematic if the basic administrative and development planning unit is going to be the District, something which was always inevitable (barring regional development plans): though we should say here that the experiment revealed the problems of planning for economic and social change even within the smaller area. Related to this, secondly, is the fact that the present limited number of qualified Kenyan staff will make it difficult enough to find suitable appointees to the corresponding

posts of District Planning Officer, let alone the much larger number of Area Coordinator posts which would be created if this system were generalised. It is difficult to conclude that a District Planning Officer acting in a similar capacity at the district level would be as effective as an Area Coordinator since the latter has been operating outside the usual bureaucratic machinery under special arrangements, while a District Planning Officer would of necessity work from within this machinery. The use of a 'link-man' is of value only as an expedient to cover a temporary programme in a limited number of areas: a single officer could not deal in a parallel way with matters pertaining to all District or Divisions of Kenya. Thus some other means of improving central/local communication and cooperation need to be found which can function with respect to all forty-one districts. Thus the S.R.D.P. was not altogether well-designed to serve as a guide for development administration on a country-wide basis.

Having said that, it can be said that the innovation of having a senior officer, the Area Coordinator, charged solely with a coordinating development function has been a distinct success, although not equally so in all areas. The most important determinant seems to have been the quality and drive of the appointee, though in some areas turnover in the holding of the office affected progress. Also important was the degree of cooperation secured by the Area Coordinator from the local bureaucracy, which was variable in its attitudes. A fundamental weakness in the Area Coordinator's position, in relation to both programme preparation and attempts at coordination, is that he has had, for the most part, no funds in his control, another factor which must surely change in a system of district development planning.

Turning to the Programming and Implementation Management System, this seems to have been valuable and, though complex, was generally found workable by officers in the field. One Area Coordinator judged PIM to be "perhaps the best thing associated with S.R.D.P.", though its effectiveness seems to have depended very much on the ability and authority of the Area Coordinator using it. The value of the new system is difficult to assess because the conventional reporting of projects is so inadequate as a source of information or basis for action and this fact is not generally realised. Certainly one is struck with the apparent timelessness with which certain major projects are promoted and the failure to secure certain basic information at the right time: for example, a major ranching project in Kwale has been under discussion by Government for seven years now, and only after six years was it found that the proposed ranching area was badly affected by tse-tse fly. The poor quality of project preparation and the difficulties in finding good projects revealed above only underlines the need for a management system. What needs to be

appreciated, of course, is that the system cannot itself produce good projects. It is not a system of project evaluation or selection, but merely a device for checking the timing and implementation of projects and revealing deficiencies and problems as they arise. In fact it generally failed to break down the strong inclination to assume or report that "all is going well" with a project and the reluctance to pronounce failure. And as already discussed the system failed to produce a radical improvement in the description of projects.

The Field Staff Management System (F.S.M.S.) tried out in Mbere was abandoned at the end of 1973 after the expatriates involved in devising the system had left. This was probably a pity. Certainly it had proved time-consuming, and not all the information produced was useful. But there was an increase in information, more direction and purpose was afforded to the work of agricultural assistants, and in many cases a greater commitment to their work was reported. Some kind of organisational and reporting system is clearly needed.

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT UNDER S.R.D.P.

Apart from the number and nature of projects initiated, there is the question of the extent to which coordination of activities occurred. While a number of examples of coordinated activities can be identified, there are perhaps more examples of lack of coordination or even cooperation. In Mbere there was little coordination between water development, land adjudication and range management personnel, the last two attempting mutually incompatible things. In Vihiga there was no attempt to coordinate the rural industry promotion efforts of Partnership for Progress, a voluntary agency, and the Rural Industry Development Centre in the area. Officers responsible for functional literacy programmes and women's programmes found it difficult to obtain the services of extension agents to assist in the development of demonstration plots or other activities. In Vihiga the local Agricultural Finance Corporation Officer was unwilling to administer loans made through the Corporation with S.R.D.P. funds, with negative effects on the repayment rate.

Such coordination as existed was very much a function of the activities of the Area Coordinator supported by the Economic Advisor, helped no doubt by their specific concern with development activities on an area basis; and also it was a function of the special administrative arrangements. Area Coordinators convened Project Committee meetings in order to replan programmes and in some cases critical discussions took place which represented

an integrated review of proposals. There have been partial attempts in some areas to produce integrated development plans. The original idea in Kapenguria⁵ was to develop trade and exchange between a more commercialised lowland area, based on livestock, and the highland area, producing crops. In Kwale a 'sequential master plan' exists, though this lacks content at the moment, and constitutes no more than a proposal.

The aim of integrated development is implied in some statements of S.R.D.P. objectives. Thus Leach reports⁶ that the objectives of the Programme were officially described as follows:-

The primary objective is to increase rural incomes and employment opportunities. The secondary objective is to establish procedures and techniques for accelerated and self-generating rural development which can be repeated in other similar areas and, in particular, to improve the development capacity of Kenya Government officials in the field.

The first objective of increasing incomes and employment significantly in an area requires a substantial programme of integrated development. But this is to an important extent competitive with the second objective. And it could be argued that the S.R.D.P. fell between the two stools of experimentation and innovation on the one hand, and integrated area development on the other. For, while the available finance was hardly sufficient to support integrated programmes in these areas in order to produce a significant development impact, the absorption of a considerable proportion of funds into non-experimental projects and into the normal on-going activity of the various ministries operating locally reduced the amount available for genuinely experimental or innovative projects. S.R.D.P. accounted for only about twelve to fourteen percent of district development expenditures, according to one estimate,⁷ showing very clearly that the funds available were far short of what would have been required for an intensified, integrated rural development effort. An intensified district development effort might be expected to increase development spending by fifty or one hundred per cent.

5. See the section by C. Barnes in the 1972 S.R.D.P. evaluation report. This idea was highly optimistic about the rate of increased commercialisation in the lowland areas.

6. Leach, p. 359.

7. Second Evaluation Report, pp. 19.28 and 19.29.

Similarly infrastructural projects such as roads may be basic to integrated area development, but absorb substantial funds which might have financed a great many more experimental activities. On the other hand, purely experimental projects being tried out with a view to possible replication elsewhere are, by their nature, not likely to have a large immediate impact. The kind of projects which may contribute more to integrated development at the local level, apart from infrastructural projects, are those involving the introduction of new, but not experimental, activities to the area which have already been proved elsewhere.

THE S.R.D.P. AS A MEANS OF FOSTERING LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

Although the first I.D.S. evaluation report considered at some length the extent to which S.R.D.P. had succeeded in encouraging local involvement in the development effort, the second report allocates little space to this subject. The fact is probably that not enough effort was made by the S.R.D.P. administrations to obtain such participation for any judgement to be made on the possibilities for and benefits arising out of local involvement. The participation of local M.P.s and other leaders in the Project Committees does not appear to have made any impact or, for example, prevented some M.P.s from exploiting local hostility to particular development proposals for the sake of electoral advantage. Specific successes in involving the community with direct benefits appear to have been particularly in relation to the location of roads, in Migori and elsewhere, suggesting possibilities for useful consultation and involvement in relation to social infrastructural investment, and in the establishment of village development committees and response to group extension methods. Together this suggests that involvement can most usefully be obtained at the 'grass roots' level with the community at large rather than with its representatives in project and programme preparation itself.

S.R.D.P. AS A MEDIUM FOR OVERSEAS FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

There was considerable lack of enthusiasm in the central ministries for the proposed S.R.D.P. when it was being set up, and this has been the case to some extent ever since.⁸ One of the main reasons for the decision to pursue the Programme was undoubtedly that it seemed a useful device for

8. See Leach.

attracting foreign aid into the rural sector and for general and recurrent development expenditure rather than identifiable capital projects. The question arises, therefore, whether the establishment of regional or ^{district} development programmes along S.R.D.P. lines is a good medium for increasing the inflow of foreign financial aid and for widening the purposes for which aid is available.

The actual amount of foreign funds obtained and disbursed via S.R.D.P. is not especially large. Donor contributions for the period 1971-76 amounted to about K £2 millions out of estimated expenditures of K £2½ millions.⁹ As mentioned earlier, S.R.D.P. expenditures were probably only about twelve to fourteen per cent of development expenditure in the Districts concerned. But the interest shown by different donor countries in 'adopting' particular areas is sufficient to indicate the potential. Similar interest by donor countries in supporting regional planning efforts in neighbouring Tanzania also support this view. Moreover the aims of the S.R.D.P. were specific, and did not require very large financial expenditures. Schemes for integrated rural development on a district or regional basis call for greater expenditures, if any impact is to be made, and indications are that there is considerable donor interest in participation in a substantial, if not open-ended, way in such efforts. It may be noted also that over the last three years taken together more than a quarter of S.R.D.P. recurrent and development estimates were for rural access roads via the Ministry of Works, for which funds might not otherwise have been available.

The second question is what the S.R.D.P. experience can tell us of the usefulness or otherwise of foreign technical assistance, apart from the immediate value of the existence of a locally-based advisor in reassuring the donor country regarding the productive use of its funds. There has been a certain amount of friction between the expatriate advisor and local officers in some of the S.R.D.P. areas, and this appears to be the main reason for the criticisms of the role of the expatriate advisors in the two I.D.S. evaluation reports and elsewhere. In fact, the evidence available is quite inconclusive. The advisor in Kwale District, where S.R.D.P. results were particularly disappointing, has been much criticised; but the main reasons for limited success in this area appear to have been turnover in the position of Area Coordinator and lack of commitment to the Programme by the district authorities, as indicated specifically by the use of the Area Coordinator

9. Second Evaluation Report, pp. 19.27 to 19.28.

half-time on non-S.R.D.P. duties and by the location of the Area Coordinator at District Headquarters rather than in the S.R.D.P. area itself. In Migori, the Programme improved after the SIDA/FAO team left, but the Kenyan Area Coordinator there was a particularly energetic and impressive one. In Tetu there was no outside involvement and level of S.R.D.P. activity was rather low, though admittedly the amount of S.R.D.P. funds disbursed was much smaller than elsewhere. Moreover in many of the major development programmes there is substantial external (as well as internal) involvement, as in the case of rural credit (The Agricultural Finance Corporation), family planning, functional literacy, labour-intensive roads (USAID) and women's programmes. Apart from the value of the programme itself, the number of reports prepared in the Vihiga area (by American expatriate officers and researchers) and in, for example, the Rural Industrial Development Programme (by Scandinavians) suggests that technical assistance is at least effective in monitoring programmes, measuring results and preparing reports.

It is doubtful, therefore, whether any general conclusion may be drawn from the S.R.D.P. experience regarding the usefulness or otherwise of advisors or technical assistance in general, so long as these operate as they should in a supplementing role rather than as a substitute for local Kenya-organised activity. Relative success or failure has tended to depend on the quality and enthusiasm of the personnel involved, whether Kenyan or expatriate. Where expatriates appear to have been successful in generating additional activity this has been the result, not of any special expertise, but of the designation of people with responsibility for a specific programme, while Kenyan officers carrying general administrative and routine duties as civil servants have not been free to involve themselves as much in special programmes.

CONCLUSIONS

A great many positive results have emerged from the Special Rural Development Programme, but the results have frequently been disappointing. The conclusion should not be to abandon the S.R.D.P. approach, however. In the first place the system was not given the best chance to succeed since, as Leach indicates in his review, the Government of Kenya, or at least some of the senior civil servants in the ministries and in the district administration, did not always give maximum support to the Programme. Moreover the diversion of S.R.D.P. funds to support staffing and ordinary on-going activities in the departments reduced the amount available for genuinely experimental projects. This was facilitated by the inclination to make some

allocation to all departments, as well as a failure to insist on projects satisfying S.R.D.P. principles as a condition of such allocation. We have suggested further that there might be an inherent conflict between the two objectives of the Programme of directly increasing incomes and employment and of experimenting with potentially replicable projects and this conflict may have diverted funds from the second objective.

In the second place, failure to secure better results probably lies not with weaknesses in the S.R.D.P. approach itself but with more basic deficiencies which in fact the S.R.D.P. served to expose. For example, the S.R.D.P. showed up (and admittedly failed to correct) deficiencies in the quality of project selection and formulation at the district level. It also revealed the scarcity of ideas for experimentation, not only locally but in the central ministries. The main initiatives which should have come from the central ministries did not materialise except in certain specific areas such as roads, and adult education. Both locally and in the central ministries, S.R.D.P. found it difficult to break through the inertia and preference for routine of the bureaucratic system. This inertia is something to be resisted, and the attempt should certainly be made to incorporate the best elements of the S.R.D.P. system of development administration into the system of district development planning to be introduced.

Finally, what should be observed from the high casualty rate among projects and the generally variable results is the sheer difficulty of making headway in the promotion of social and economic change. This accentuates the need for pre-testing programmes before adoption on a national basis and for close monitoring subsequently along S.R.D.P. lines.