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The Assessment of Community Development Policies in Kenya

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Abstract
This paper gives a discussion of the role of community development policies in Kenya. The paper traces the genesis and rationale of community development policies. Particular emphasis is paid on the implementation of the policies and their contribution to community development since independence. The paper presents a discussion of the performance of the various community development strategies adopted by the Kenya government since independence. Strengths and weaknesses of each of the strategies adopted by the government are assessed. The paper further discusses the major challenges encountered in the implementation of policies which include inadequate financial resources and the non-inclusion of the local people. The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of public participation in the implementation of policies. Recommendations on the way forward with regard to community development work in Kenya are presented.
Keywords: Community development, Public participation, Policies and Strategies

1. Brief History of Community Development in Kenya

Community Development work in Kenya began long before the arrival of the colonial administration and was seen in welfare assistance in all communities from land preparation, house construction to food assistance. During the colonial time, community development began as welfare work carried out by the social welfare organization which was established in 1946 as a section of the colonial administration (Chitere, 1999).
In 1954, the social welfare organization became part of the newly created Ministry of Community Development. Social welfare work was concentrated around social halls (centres) aimed at uplifting the economic and social wellbeing of communities through informal education. In 1957, Community Development Officers (CDOs) were employed to man the training centres. The CDOs are the current Community Development Assistants in County Councils working with rural communities to identify development needs in various civic wards. The CDAs also help communities form groups which can apply for development funds from county councils.
The establishment of the Jeanes School at Kabete in 1925 played a significant role in the training of social welfare workers who later became community development assistants. In 1954, a second school was established in Maseno to enhance training of social welfare workers who would assist in community development in Nyanza.

2. The Role of Government Policies in Community Development

2.1 Harambee Philosophy

Immediately after independence, the Kenya government adopted the Harambee Philosophy of self-help development as a key feature of development planning aimed at meeting the needs and expectations of the indigenous populations. The Harambee movement which operated on a 'pull together' doctrine was responsible for the mobilization of large capital sums for a wide variety of basic needs. Similarly, the initiative at social inclusion and integration of populations in development processes (Leys, 1994).
Kenya's first attempt at decentralizing development came on 1st July 1964 when the Directorate of Planning was established in the Ministry of Finance. In 1965, the government through the 1965-1969 Development Plan decided to set up District Development Committees (DDCs) and District Advisory Development Committees to spearhead decentralization of development activities at their level. The District Development Committees are chaired by the area district commissioners while the District Development Officers serve as secretaries. Other members of the DDC include Heads of Departments of ministries represented in the district, chairmen and clerks

of county councils, representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations operating the district and representatives of professional associations in the district such as the Kenya National Union of Teachers.

The Harambee movement continued to be implemented after independence. Whereas its main aim was to mobilize local resources for development, it was also a way of attracting government funding of development projects since the government was interested in funding on-going projects. Community development has largely been through the participation of self-help groups outside the formal system of governance. Therefore, the Harambee movement can be said to be the first attempt by the government to involve local communities in community development by ensuring that the communities pulled their resources together for their own development. However, Leys (1994) observed that the strategy did not fully succeed since it was hijacked by vested interests. Mbithi (1982) concurs with Leys (1994) and points out that the Harambee movement did not succeed because the very autonomous nature of the movement led to manipulation by politicians for private political ends and also the oversubscription to the movement by the poorest and the most needy rural citizens.

2.2 Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965

In 1965, the government came up with Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965. Its essence being:

i. Traditional African society did not exclude the private ownership of capital but only required that capital be used in ways 'consonant with the general welfare'.
ii. The prime need of Kenya was for rapid economic growth, which could only be secured through a large inflow of private foreign investment.
iii. Given that private property must never be expropriated without full compensation, rationalization was undesirable except in certain special circumstances.
iv. There never had been, nor were there now, any class division between Africans.
v. The emergence of an 'inequitable' distribution of wealth and of future class divisions as a result of growth based on private property would be prevented by (a) the vigorous implementation of traditional political democracy and (b) a range of sensitive controls over the use of privately owned resources, which would rule out the use of economic power as a political base.
vi. Foreign firms would be controlled so as to make them Africanize their management and make their shares available to Africans who wished to buy them and
vii. Africans would be established in private enterprise by all possible means such as loans and extension services.

Key issues in the Sessional Paper were:

i. There was promise to reduce debt and redistribute land to the landless.
ii. On agriculture, it was recognized that Co-operatives played a key role in development of human resources and that extension services would be sustained to enhance rural development.

Despite being a good document, the Sessional Paper of 1965, has not been implemented fully to ensure local communities have access to land for production purposes.

2.3 African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya

In the same year, 1965, the late president Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya came up with the ideology of 'African Socialism' which was embodied in the KANU regime remarkable policy statement of 'African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya'. The policy statement was introduced by Tom Mboya and passed unanimously by Parliament in May 1965. Jomo Kenyatta described it as Kenya's economic 'Bible'. However, the policy was described as pure statement of 'bourgeois Socialism' i.e. it focused on redressing social grievances in order to ensure existence of bourgeois society. This policy did not take effect because some leaders alleged that it was an American document of neo-colonialism (Leys, 1994).

The African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya document provided a wide range of policy considerations. Amongst these policies which centred around community development were: that planning would be extended to provinces, districts and municipalities so as to ensure that progress towards development were made at each administrative unit; self-help schemes would be planned and controlled to ensure that they were consistent with national development; there was emphasis on education and training to enhance the capacities of citizens so as they would take up positions left behind by expatriates; priority would be given to consumer co-operatives and there was need to develop the less developed areas of the country to ensure even development (Republic of Kenya, 1965).

The main strategies for development in the paper included:

i. Attacking directly limitations on growth i.e. shortage of capital and skilled manpower

ii. Revolutionize agriculture in Kenya by developing unused land/underutilized land such the Arid and Semi-Arid Areas through the introduction of modern farming methods
iii. Develop industry for example processing of agricultural, livestock or forest products. This led to the establishment of the Kenya Co-operatives Creameries, Kenya Meat Commission and the Pan Paper Mills.
iv. Develop the transport, power and marketing sectors and other services for accelerated development
v. Provide for a more equitable distribution of benefits of development (currently, this relates to such Commissions as the Revenue Allocation Commission, the National Management Committee of the Constituencies Development Fund).

The policy proposals in the 'African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya' formed a basis for development planning in the country. However, the implementation of all the policies was not fully realized except for the training aspect which saw the establishment of the following institutions of higher learning to provide the much needed skilled manpower for industry: the University of Nairobi, The Kenya Utalii College, The Co-operative College of Kenya and The Kenya Polytechnic. The attainment of community development was not therefore realized in full using the document since the establishment of the learning institutions only addressed the education and training aspect.

2.4 Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP)

In 1966, a conference was held in Kericho which led to the emergence of the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP). The objective of SRDP was to stimulate increased incomes and job opportunities in 14 selected divisions in Kenya with a view to applying the lessons learnt more generally in Kenya. In 1968, a survey was carried out in the whole country and resulted in the selection of the 14 areas for implementing the rural action programme (SRDP) which was to be implemented in two phases. Areas which were identified for the first phase of the project included Mbeere, Tetu, Kapenguria, Vihiga, Migori and Kwale. Divisions that would be included in the second phase included Wundanyi (Taita), South Imenti (Meru), Yatta (Machakos), North Baringo, North Nandi, Irianyi (Kisii), Kiharu (Muranga) and Central Busia. The department of Social Services was to play a central role in the implementation of the programme.

The establishment of the SRDP was informed by the failure of the central planning system, and wanted to address the imbalance in the allocation resources for development which in most cases were skewed towards where it supported the government certain resources were also in the hands of the private sector and the only way of benefiting the locals would be through setting up the SRDP to tap such resources at the grassroots level where the resources were found.

In 1971, the Special Rural Development Programme was abandoned barely after a year of operation in only five out of the 14 experimental areas because the 1970-74 development plan would already have the lessons learnt. Several reasons were given for the abandonment of the Special Rural Development Programme; they include:

i. Confusion about its objectives. It was argued that the SRDP did not have clear objectives for rural development.
ii. Excessively visible expatriate involvement. Those implementing argued that the progamme was being implemented by expatriates therefore denied the locals a chance to participate.
iii. Lack of support from senior civil servants
iv. Lack of suitably qualified field staff to implement the programme.
v. Threatened supremacy of the Provincial Administration. There was concern that the presence of the programme undermined the role of the provincial administration in bringing about development at the grassroots level.

The Special Rural Development Programme therefore collapsed because it ran counter to the development strategy implied by the regime's overall policies which were inherently urban oriented. The budget of SRDP then was $6 Million per annum which the government considered quite high.

Akong'a (1991), points out that even though the success of any development project depends on many factors, it is a collaborative endeavour that should benefit from all the interested parties. In the case of the SRDP, the inclusion of the beneficiaries was minimal compared to expatriate involvement which compromised the success of the project.

By 1968, it was realized that urban centres were growing more than the rural areas and that men were moving to urban areas, yet the, which meant that Sessional Paper No.1 of 1965 could not completely succeed. This meant that rural areas suffered the effects of rural-urban migration. Therefore, there was need to reverse the situation. Urban areas had challenges such as congestion and crime. Rural areas on the other hand had been depleted of the able-bodied men including form four leavers. The nature of formal education given then was white collar

oriented. Similarly, the thinking amongst the form form leavers was that jobs in urban areas paid more than those in rural areas. Due the rural-urban migration, families in rural areas broke down while children in urban areas were bought up by fathers. Chambers (1983), acknowledges that project bias tends to favour urban areas as opposed to rural areas thereby denying rural areas the much needed development.
Therefore, an alternative policy arrangement was required at the time to reverse the situation and control or reduce rural-urban migration. The government addressed the situation by encouraging local and foreign investors to relocate industries in rural areas. To some extent, this was relatively successful for example the location of sugar factories in rural areas such as Mumias, Sony, Chemelil and also paper industries such as Pan Paper Mills in Webuye. Rural industrialization encouraged rural people to grow cash crops but people got poorer because of the presence of middle-men who took most of the profits.

2.5 District Development Grant Programme (DDGP)
In 1969, the government set up the District Development Grant Programme (DDGP) which later became the Rural Development Fund (RDF). The objective of the DDGP was to set aside funds in each district to implement specific development projects. The DDGP had been joined with the Rural Works Programme (tasked with the responsibility of maintaining rural roads) whose main objective was to encourage local participation in development. However, the programme did not last long because of the corrupt nature of government officials in charge of distribution of the development grants. Some of them even stole certain equipment such as sewing machines which were meant to be distributed to village polytechnics for use by students.

2.6 District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD)
Due to the failure of the Special Rural Development Programme, the president of Kenya announced that resources from the central government would be directed to the district level. On 1st July 1983 the government initiated the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD). The DFRD was a process and strategy of rural development conceived as an ultimate step in improving development inequalities between various regions. The main objective of DFRD was the allocation of resources on amore geographically equitable basis. Even-handedness in a geographical sense was felt by some to offer the possibility of social and economic equity and poverty alleviation. Funds were to be allocated to less developed regions which were then encouraged to submit project proposals for funding. The DFRD was launched with two arguments; first, it was expected to enhance development of rural areas and secondly, it was to focus on district specific needs.
The main objectives of DFRD were:
(i) to accelerate rural development;
(ii) encourage local participation;
(iii) increase employment opportunities and
(iv) Slow down rural-urban migration.
The responsibility of implementation of the DFRD strategy was left to the District Development Committees (DDCs). The DDCs were expected to identify projects for funding in their respective districts and implement the identified projects to completion.
In 1988, the DFRD strategy of development however, failed because of a number of reasons. Firstly, the government did not disburse adequate funds to districts for development projects. Secondly, the programme excluded the poor and the vulnerable groups from direct involvement in project design and implementation. Thirdly, there was inadequate preparation by the government to implement the programme coupled by the unfamiliarity of district staff with participatory methods. Fourthly, there was rampant corruption which led to the procurement of unsuitable materials, equipment and machinery for use in development programmes. Finally, there was absence of monitoring and evaluation on how the programme was being implemented.
Therefore, since the poor and the vulnerable were not included in the design and implementation of the projects, most of the projects implemented were termed as government projects. Overall, the programme made limited efforts in strengthening social and administrative structures below the district level, even though these structures were closer to the people than those at the district level. In a number of situations, Leys (1994), points out that the priorities for district projects were explicitly set by politicians and the district level staff.
District Focus for Rural Development therefore did not establish the participatory and poverty alleviation processes it was meant to promote since it was characterized by weak local support and low levels of ownership and commitment to projects by the local people.

2.7 Social Dimensions of Development Programme (SDDP)
In 1994, the government launched the Social Dimensions of Development Programme (SDDP). The programme

was intended to address a broad range of economic and social problems experienced by low income and vulnerable groups. The Social Dimensions of Development initiatives were meant to make important contributions to poverty reduction and were given considerable publicity.

However, after four years of initiation, the programme did not achieve much due to two main reasons; firstly, there was lack of adequate staff to implement the programme and secondly, the programme did not receive adequate funds for implementation. Thirdly, there was lack of appropriate institutional mechanisms to implement the programme.

After the failure of the Social Dimensions of Development Programme (SDDP), there were other initiatives which the government put in place to address community development and poverty alleviation. These initiatives include the creation of institutions such as the Community Development Trust Fund (CDTF) which is expected to fund community development initiatives; National Youth Development Fund (NYDF) which was meant to fund development projects initiated by the youth; the Disabled Fund (DF) set up to assist the disabled people in financing income generating activities and the National Women Development Fund (NWDF) which was set up to assist women activities all over the country.

2.8 Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF)

In 1998, the government introduced the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF). This initiative is aimed at mobilizing communities at ward level to participate in development. Communities are expected to identify development projects at ward level through the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) process. Once communities identify priority projects, they are then submitted to the County, Town or Municipal Councils for consideration for funding. Once such projects are funded, local communities are given priorities to provide labour or raw materials for construction type projects. The objective is to empower the locals economically at the ward level.

Although the LATF strategy of development has had a few challenges including misappropriation of funds by development committees of funded projects and interference of project implementation by Civic Councilors, it has improved development at the grassroots level throughout Kenya. The programme incorporates all stakeholders at the ward level in project identification and implementation phases. The programme is still being implemented to date with varying degrees of success throughout the country.

In the year 2000, the government launched the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The objective of this strategy was to bring on board all stakeholders to tackle the problem of widespread poverty in the country. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers were made in each district in Kenya. The PRSPs highlighted key problem areas in each district and how communities would be involved in solving the identified problems. The implementation of the identified strategies to solve the problems however was not achieved due to inadequate funding from the central government and other stakeholders.

2.9 Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation

In 2003, the government came up with the Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth creation. The main objective of the strategy was to create 500,000 jobs annually and improve Kenya's economic growth from less than 1% annually to 6% in five years. The focus of Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) was to encourage local people participate in development. It was also intended to encourage the private sector assist in the creation of employment opportunities for the unemployed in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

Principally, the ERS emphasized the need to empower communities to take charge of their own development processes through capacity building. In the agricultural sector for instance, the government's objective was to empower resource poor farmers through strengthened extension services and improving farmers' access to credit. In the same document, there was emphasis on co-operative development which stressed the importance of training farmers on production, good governance, sensitizing members on their rights and marketing of their products. Similarly, the document spelt out the role of regional development authorities as complementing the government's local development efforts.

Recognizing the role played by the Harambee movement in the realization of community development, the ERS paper spelt out that the Harambee movement would be abolished by end of year 2003 and replaced with a more accountable and productive community initiated development project. To achieve this, the government proposed to establish the Kenya Social Action Fund by end of year 2004. Although the idea was quite welcome, this was not realized (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

Overall, the ERS paper contained good proposals which if implemented would enhance community development work in Kenya and ensure equitable sharing of national resources. However, its implementation was not realized due inadequate and untimely disbursement of funds. The ERS as a strategy is however, credited for the creation of some employment opportunities by the private and public sectors and also ensuring that there was improved economic growth from a GDP of as low as 0.6% in 2003 to 6.1 % in year 2006 (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

2.10 Constituencies Development Fund (CDF)

During the same year, 2003, the government came up with Constituencies Development Fund (CDF) as a way of enhancing rural development by allocating all constituencies 2.5% of total revenue collected. The objective of the fund is to enable communities participate in development through identification and implementation of development projects in their constituencies. Communities at the constituency level are expected to identify development projects for funding by the constituency development fund (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

The Kenya government's introduction of Constituencies Development Fund is to empower local people by encouraging them identify their own development needs by writing proposals to their respective Constituencies Development Fund Offices for consideration for funding. The government's effort in enhancing community development is seen in her classification of projects for funding by CDF. The CDF Act specifies that projects that can be funded by CDF should be community based development projects that ensure the benefits are shared by all. This statement indicates the government's commitment to processes that will ensure local participation while at the same time upholding economic justice to citizens in constituencies.

The Constituencies Development Fund is managed by Constituency Development Committees (CDC) whose composition is between 13 and 15 members. The area Member of Parliament is the Patron of the CDF. At the national level the Constituencies Development Fund is managed by the National Management Committee (NMC).

All over the country, projects funded by CDF are visible and gives an indication of the level of success of CDF as a strategy of enhancing community development. The participation of the beneficiaries is seen in project identification and implementation through proposal writing and contribution of money, labour or materials in construction type of projects. This approach ensures project ownership and sustainability since beneficiaries are involved in the critical stages of the project life cycle.

2.11 Other Devolved Funds

Apart from CDF, there were other funds disbursed to the Constituency level from the central government; all of which directed at empowering the local people to participate meaningfully in development processes of their constituencies. These funds include the Rural Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF)), Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) and Constituency Aids Control Council Fund, Women Enterprise Fund and the Youth Development Fund.

The utilization of the constituency funds i.e. CDF, RMLF, CBF, etc. has had some considerable success in all the 210 constituencies. However, the management of the funds has had a number of challenges; among them political interference by local politics and the implementation of 'ghost' projects. To date, all the devolved funds are still disbursed to the 210 constituencies for development purposes.

2.12 Kenya's Vision 2030

On 4th October 2007, Kenya launched the Vision 2030. The objective of Vision 2030 is to drive Kenya to a middle-income level country by enhancing social, economic and political development. The three pillars are to be emphasized in all development work. The objectives of Kenya's Vision 2030 include:

i. Maintaining sustained growth of 10% per annum
ii. Ensuring a just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development and
iii. Having a political sector which is transparent and accountable.

The Vision 2030 is to be implemented through 5 year development planning from 2007 to 2030. Using Vision 2030, the country is also expected to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Vision 2030 recognizes communities as major players in the development process (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

Kenya's Vision 2030 recognizes the role of the three pillars identified and acknowledges the importance of all the three in realizing development in the country. While the economic pillar aims to improve the prosperity of all Kenyans through an economic development programme covering all regions of Kenya, the social pillar aims at having a just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development in a clean and secure environment. The political pillar aims to realize a democratic system founded on issue based politics that respects the rule of law and protects the rights and freedoms of every individual in the Kenyan society (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

The Vision 2030 as a strategy to achieve community development highlights major sectors where communities are expected to participate in to realize community development. The role of communities is expected to be seen in different sectors such as in utilization of renewable sources of energy, modernization of agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors since Kenya is an agricultural country. The processing of agricultural products will add value to such products in the market.

2.13 Kenya's New Constitution

In August 2010, a new constitution was promulgated. The new constitution recognizes the contribution of local communities in development processes. The structure of government in the new constitution is two-tier, which is the national level and county level government. The counties are the focal points of community development since this is the level at which resources from the central government are managed for use by the local people. Governors under the new constitution shall be elected by the residents of respective counties to manage resources on their behalf for development purposes. There are 47 counties nationally in the new constitution.

The creation of certain Commissions such as the Commission on Revenue Allocation, establishment of the Equalization Fund in the constitution points out the fact that if these institutions discharge their duties well, then there shall be equitable development of all regions of the country.

Conclusions

Several efforts have been made by the government since independence to realize community development to date. Such efforts have been seen in the national development plans right from independence and have all stressed the need for community participation in all development processes. Many of the efforts have failed either because of inadequate funds, lack of political will or government bureaucracies.

Communities have persistently pursued community development initiatives right from the Harambee movement to the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects as evidenced by the formation of Community Based Organizations and Co-operatives.

There have been a lot of challenges facing communities in their pursuit of community development work for example political interferences and mismanagement of development funds by project management committees.

Considerable progress was however recorded by the government on education and training through the establishment of institutions of higher learning to provide training to citizens in different fields. Such institutions include public Universities namely: Univeristy of Nairobi, Moi, Kenyatta, Egerton, Jomo Kenyatta, Maseno, and Masinde Muliro; National Polytechnics – Kenya, Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret; Agriculutral Training Colleges – Bukura, Naivasha, Kilifi.

Despite the numerous efforts made by the Kenya government to realize community development, not much has been achieved as a result of inadequate funding, mismanagement of development funds, political interference and government bureaucracies which hinder participation of communities in community development.

Recommendations

1. There is need therefore for the government to provide adequate funds for all community development projects in order to fully implement community development policies.
2. The government should also come up with policies to guide the proper management of devolved funds and reduce the interference of community development projects by political leaders i.e. civic and parliamentary leaders.
3. Since the main objective of community development is the ownership of development by the local people, there is need for capacity building of project beneficiaries before the implementation of community development policies.

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