SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN AFRICA

No. 6 June 1967

The Status and Role of Women in East Africa

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SECTION
OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS
New York, 1967

N O T E

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E/CN.14/SWSA/6

United Nations Sales Publication
Sales No.: 67.II.K.17

Sales price: US $ 0.75
(or equivalent in other currencies)

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Preface

Origin of the study

This monograph is the sixth in a series of studies published by the Social Development Section of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) under the generic title "Social Welfare Services in Africa". It has been adapted from the report of a field survey conducted for ECA by a special consultant, Mrs. Helen O. Judd, in the East African countries of Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia in 1965. Additional material on Ethiopia, available to the secretariat, has also been incorporated.

The fourth monograph of the series dealt with social adjustment of the East African population as a whole up to the advent of independence and the consequent changes that have taken place in the economic and social fields. The present monograph focuses attention on the role played by women in the context of such economic and social changes as well as factors that have shaped and continue to shape the status of East African women and which will enable them to play a more active role in the future society of the sub-region. Future monographs are planned to study the role of women in the Central and West African sub-regions.

The status and role of women in Africa have been the subject of several United Nations resolutions, notably:

Resolution 1509 (XV) adopted by the General Assembly at its fifteenth session on "United Nations assistance for the advancement of women in developing countries";

Resolution 1920 (XVIII) of the General Assembly on the "Participation of women in national, social and economic development"; and

Resolution 1921 (XVIII) of the General Assembly on the "Elimination of discrimination against women".

More recently, the ILO, at its Second African Regional Conference, held in Addis Ababa in December 1964, adopted two resolutions on women. One was related to the employment and conditions of work of African women and the other urged ILO action to advance the economic and social status of women in African countries.

In the winter of 1964, the Economic Commission for Africa organized a workshop which dealt specifically with the role of women in urban development.[1] This workshop brought

[1] See *Report of the Workshop on Urban Problems: the Role of Women in Urban Development*, ECA document E/CN.14/241.

together women from various occupations and fields of interest, mainly from the professions, and encompassed a wide range of questions of interest to African women, as is evidenced by the resolutions and recommendations which were made at this workshop and which are cited below:

(a) *On the employment of women in commerce and industry*

The workshop recommended, *inter alia*, that the work of women in industry and commerce should be facilitated by adult education and commercial courses, and by encouraging women to form or join trade unions.

International organizations were to carry out research on the provision of credit for small business and urban co-operatives as a means of facilitating the participation of African townswomen in industry and commerce.

For working mothers, large employers should be required to provide facilities such as crèches and day nurseries. These facilities should be encouraged in other locations as well.

(b) *On education*

Equality of opportunity was sought in a system of education which should be, as far as possible, free and compulsory for both sexes. Equal opportunity should be assured for both sexes either through granting equal facilities or through co-education. Women should be treated equally with men in matters of exchange of scholarships and teachers at all levels.

(c) *On political participation*

Political equality with men was sought, especially the right to vote and to be elected to office. Women were encouraged to participate more fully in political life by organizing practical courses on civic matters for adults, and by active propaganda which women's organizations seemed to be particularly qualified to carry out. Emphasis was placed on the establishment of women's sections within political parties to secure women's political rights.

(d) *On research into women's problems and needs*

The United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Economic Commission for Africa, and international organizations were urged to pursue research and continue to hold meetings devoted entirely or partially to the problems and needs of African women.

It was in pursuance of the above recommendations that the present study was undertaken. However, rather than limit itself to the problems of urban women, it was also concerned with the problems of the vast majority of African wo-

men who live in rural areas, in the six countries mentioned above.

Aim of the study

The aim of the present study is to examine the current situation of women: their needs, their problems, what actions are being taken, and the framework of social, cultural, political, and economic forces which influence their actions and their ways of life. Attention has been focussed on such areas as education and training, employment, health and welfare, and participation of women in community life, in order to discover and encourage developments which would result in women being drawn as quickly as possible into the mainstream of national life and enable them to contribute fully to the progress of their community and country.

Acknowledgement

The Economic Commission for Africa wishes to express its gratitude to all persons and groups who, by their frank expression of views and willing collaboration, have made this study possible.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The traditional role of women in the East African countries included in this study — Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — has varied from country to country, from tribal group to tribal group, and also over time. While women have generally been relegated to a lowly position in the society and have often carried out a major portion of the economic burden they have; at the same time, occupied an honoured position and exerted much power and influence in society. Evaluating the positive and negative factors in the life of the traditional African woman involves an appreciation of the subtle interplay of cultural, social, and economic forces. Even where, in the eyes of modern observers, custom seems to place great hardship on women, there have been balancing factors which have given women security or authority. And women seldom regard themselves as exploited by men.

For example, in a polygamous family, a woman received less attention and material aid from her husband than if he were monogamous; but at the same time, being a part of a polygamous marriage relationship meant that she could count on the companionship and help of co-wives in the domestic and economic tasks which must be performed by women at home and on the farm. Additional restrictions on men sometimes reduced the disadvantages of polygamy for women. Thus in the case of the Chigas of Western Uganda and of other tribes the husband was required to divide his time and gifts scrupulously among his wives in order to keep peace in the home. Even if he preferred one wife to the others, he would have to be as circumspect with her as though he were having an affair with another woman.[2] Checks and balances such as these gave value to women, so that their position was not so uniformly degraded as some western observers and some educated African women are inclined to think.

East African women have traditionally performed the major part of the work both at home and in the field; and this is largely the case even today. Of this situation it has been observed:

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[2] May M. Edel, *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 67.

In the past, amongst most of the tribes, the men were shepherds and warriors, whereas agriculture was the women's business. Even today, the position of women has not been altered. For the cereals on which he lives, man still depends on woman's efforts, sowing, weeding and harvesting are almost everywhere exclusively female tasks. Then it is the women also who do all the housework beginning with the construction of huts, the cleaning of milk vessels, the preparing and sewing of hides for clothing, cutting grass for feeding the cattle, collecting and carrying home firewood and water, involving the transportation of heavy loads for hours, the daily pounding or grinding of corn, cooking and, of course, attending to infants. It is the women who keep the markets going, sometimes walking distances taking several hours to get to an appointed place. The laborious nature of the work in the field varies according to the type of soil and climatic conditions. In some areas, planting and harvesting are performed three times a year and in some areas, twice.[3]

While women carried on this sort of work, men were engaged in other tasks such as hunting, warfare, and heavy building. Much of the need for these tasks, however, has diminished over the years and new tasks have not always taken their place. Thus men may sometimes seem idle in comparison to women because they refuse to do what they consider to be "woman's work". On the other hand, there are new areas in which men do find work; for example, in the mines, on plantations, and in factories. But when men leave their families to work elsewhere, the work of the women who are left at home is intensified.

The changing role of women

Changes occurring in recent years in Africa have inevitably brought changes into the lives of women. Women are increasingly advancing in education and politics, they are exercising their legal rights and freedom of choice in marriage, and they are taking advantage of employment opportunities, health services, and so forth. Yet they are losing some of the status and security which traditional roles offered. This is particularly true of the woman living in an urban setting. Such a woman often loses the influence which comes from the vital agricultural and domestic roles which can no longer be performed in town. The high status goal of grandmotherhood is likely to be beyond her reach because her children may scatter or she herself retire to the country before it can be attained. On the other hand, the free-lance woman may forfeit respectability and general esteem, yet can

[3] Statement by Zahid Ahmed to the Executive Board of UNICEF in Sept. 1958.

undoubtedly win an economic and jural status as an independent business woman and property owner which is not open to her respectable sister.[4]

Women in urban and rural settings

It is necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the urban and rural settings in which East African women live. In urban areas the pace of change is swift and sometimes confusing. People are pressed to adapt themselves to new ways of life: a monetary instead of subsistence economy, modern school education instead of traditional and religious education at home or school, a nuclear family pattern instead of the familiar extended family group. The pressures, dislocations and increased opportunities resulting from social change are also felt to some extent in the smaller towns and the rural areas; but where carriers of change are few and the population is sparsely scattered over large areas, as is the case in much of East Africa, change comes slowly.

Importance of women

Effective development of the economic and social potential of East African countries is dependent upon the women of these countries playing a significant role. First of all, these countries have limited resources and must utilize all available human talent in order to progress as quickly as possible. Secondly, many aspects of improved living such as better nutrition and home sanitation depend on women. Thirdly, women usually have more contact with children than men have, and it is their influence which can facilitate or hinder children's healthy growth and development. Thus, it is important to help women become better mothers and homemakers as well as to provide increasing educational and training facilities for them and to encourage their participation in community life. Periods of change are inherently challenging, and much of the future character of East African life will depend on the efforts of the women. In these times long held beliefs, ideas and customs are being subjected to critical reappraisal and it is upon the women that the burden falls of effecting within the home and family a fusion of the old and the new that will be the corner-stone on which a new civilization in modern Africa can rise.[5]

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4 Aidan Southall, ed., *Social Change in Modern Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 22.

5 Jane Bell, "Further Education for the Women of Uganda" *African Women*, IV (June 1962), p. 73.

Chapter II

EDUCATION FOR WOMANHOOD

The socialization process

The first of many influences shaping the life of an adult woman is, of course, the nature of her childhood. The way in which she becomes part of society — the way in which her parents, relatives, neighbours and teachers interpret their conception of the requirements of her culture to her. These processes deeply influence the kind of person she becomes. Her ability to change in later life is modified to a greater or lesser extent by what has occurred during the period of development in childhood.

Unfortunately, there are not many studies on current child rearing practices in East Africa. While this subject has been studied on a tribal basis by anthropologists, studies concerning the impact of varying degrees of modernization on child rearing are in incipient stages. Many stresses occur because of change. The extended family structure in which parents and relatives interact with husband and wife on an intimate basis is changing into that of the nuclear family in which husband, wife, and children are divorced from daily contact with other members of the traditional family.

There are many aspects of family life in East Africa which are difficult to understand at present. For example, it is difficult to determine to what extent a family has been affected by the processes of rapid societal development. Even when an urban family has been strongly influenced by western ideas, a child may be sent back to a rural area to be raised by relatives or else raised in the city by an uneducated nursemaid while its mother is working or even while she stays at home. Since their skills are at a premium and their contribution to the family budget is important, most educated women in East Africa do work. They, therefore, have comparatively little time to spend with their children or even to teach their nursemaids new ideas about how to raise children.

Traditional attitudes towards women influence girls' attitudes towards schooling, possibilities of employment, and participation in community life. In areas where women are very much protected and are considered to some extent as immature, it can be difficult for girls to try to prove themselves at school, in the case of those who are permitted to attend school. On the other hand, certain types of girls in this situa-

tion may be motivated to rebel and to struggle hard to become independent. In most parts of East Africa, especially among patri-lineal tribes, boy children have been preferred to girls; they were the only ones who could provide heirs to enlarge or carry on traditions of the family. However, girls did have value as they brought in cattle or whatever else was required as a marriage payment or bridewealth, and which often enabled their brothers, in turn, to get married. Parental preferences like these shaped girls' evaluations of themselves as well as of their role in society.

East African women, particularly those who live in rural areas, are brought up to consider men as leaders and themselves as of secondary status. Women are brought up to obey their husbands rather than to develop a relationship of companionship in marriage. They learn to do housework, take care of children, and to farm. The biggest events in a woman's life are coming of age, marriage and child-bearing. Her status derives to a great extent from her husband's status.

The feeling that a girl develops concerning her place in society as a woman is illustrated by the following response to a question about patterns of order in the community made by a woman living in a suburb of Kampala, Uganda. This woman replied that being a woman she had never asked her father, so how could she know?[6] As a woman, her world was circumscribed, and she would never consider asking (perhaps) silly questions of her superiors or inquire about matters beyond the sphere considered proper for women.

The socialization process is the beginning, but of course other influences also shape a woman's life. Possibilities for education and employment, marriage and social conditions, facilities for medical care, legal and political rights, and possibilities for participation in community life all play their part.

Problems of education for girls

In traditional societies, education was usually indirect, oral and pragmatic. Children learned not by attending school, but by observing and participating in the life of the community. Boys and girls had different roles to learn. But even though their education differed, girls were not neglected. For example, they learned to cook and to farm while boys learned to build and to hunt. However, the introduction of modern education has changed this considerably. Education has become more formal and direct and both sexes now undertake

[6] Aidan Southall, "Kinship, Friendship, and the Network of Relations in Kisenyi, Kampala," *Social Change in Modern Africa*, Aidan Southall, ed., (London: Oxford University Press. 1965), p. 221.

similar if not the same type of education. The attitude of parents does not appear to have kept pace with modern concepts of education, however. Typical in this connexion is the acceptance of the idea that girls' education must keep pace with that of boys. Even when an effort is made to send girls to school many have dropped out or have discontinued their education for other than economic reasons.

The drop-out rate for girls in East African countries is high and appears greatest in the early years of schooling. The following figures from Ethiopia are not atypical: of 22,966 girls who started grade one in 1960/61, less than half — 10,693 — remained to reach grade three, and only 6,114 remained to reach grade six.[7] Many explanations have been put forward for the high drop-out rate for girls.[8] In the first place, parents have often been reluctant to send daughters to school. If anyone was to go, they preferred sending their sons as the need for educating boys has been more obvious to them.

Traditional attitudes towards women and their place in society have also militated against education for girls. Some tribes have insisted on girls remaining home during puberty for initiation and betrothal ceremonies. Parents often want children, particularly girls, to stay at home and help with work or with the younger children. Even when permitted to attend school, girls have often been required to do so much work at home that they have been unable to find the time or have been too tired to study. Some parents have not wanted their daughters to make the sometimes long and arduous journey to school because of the physical strain. These factors have all contributed to the delay in sending daughters to school. Girls often get married at a very early age, and this has usually put a premature end to their education. Five of seven married women interviewed at random at the Tenagne Worq training school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, said that they had been compelled by parents or relatives to marry at an early age thereby putting an end to their formal education. While many of the patterns which inhibit girls' attendance at school are still prevalent, parents have begun to co-operate in

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[7] The Ministry of Education and Fine Arts of the Ethiopian Government: "The Development and Expansion of Home Economics Education through the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts", unpublished paper (1966), p. 2.

[8] *Meeting of Experts on Educational Opportunities for Girls at the Primary and Secondary Level in Tropical Africa,* UNESCO document (UNESCO/ED/Cotonou/2), pp. 8, 12; E.S. Nyendwoha, "Uganda" *Women's Role in the Development of Tropical and Sub-tropical Countries* (Brussels: Report of the Thirtv-first Meeting of the Internationl Institute of Differing Civilizations, 1959), pp. 180-182; *Civic and Political Education of Women* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 64.IV.7) p. 17; National Delegation. "Country Report: Ethiopia," A Report to the German Foundation for Developing Countries, Seminar on Women in Professional and Political Life, Berlin-Tegel, 27 April — 24 May 1966, p. 2; "Women's Education in East Africa", *African Women,* I (December 1955), p. 55; Riby-Williams, *op.cit.,* pp. 15-16.

sending their daughters to school as they find out more about the benefits of education. The rapid note of increase of attendance of girls at school in East Africa demonstrates that attitudes towards schooling for girls are changing. Indeed, if more facilities were available, the rate of increase would undoubtedly be even greater.

There are two ways in which education for girls could be improved: one involves changes within the educational system itself, while the second involves changes in attitudes of both parents and daughters towards education for girls.

If there were more women teachers, more parents might send their daugthers to school and, once there, their needs would be more easily cared for. However, it will be difficult to obtain more women teachers until more women are educated. Facilities for training women teachers are few in number and often not well developed; so women teachers often operate at lower standards than men teachers. Furthermore, female teachers are perhaps more reluctant than male teachers to teach in rural areas, since women have often lived sheltered lives and are unaccustomed to living far from their relatives. Sometimes parents are more willing to send daughters to schools which are not co-educational. In certain cases, therefore, it might help to provide all-girls schools on a temporary basis until the idea of education for girls is better accepted. However, in the long run, co-educational schools seem to be more satisfactory because they result in a more balanced and co-operative relationship between the sexes both at school and in society. Co-education also helps boys and girls to learn to work together as they will need to do later on in the modern sector of the economy. It may also challenge the prejudice of men towards women, and of women towards men.

The curricula also need to be made more suitable for girls. For example, home economics courses should be improved or developed. This is important not only for those who choose a career in home economics, but for all women. The basic problem in the implementation of a home economics programme is that there are never enough qualified teachers and facilities and that governments may choose to develop other areas of the curriculum. A further difficulty is sometimes presented by mothers who may be particularly threatened by their daughters' new knowledge in an area that is traditionally dominated by the mother. Fortunately some mothers are progressive and anxious for their daughters to learn new homemaking methods. To encourage parental approval of education for daughters, it is important to involve them in the educational process. They might be given a voice in shaping the curriculum and should themselves be offered the opportunity to use facilities of the schools to improve their own knowledge.

Another important area of the curriculum for women who live in rural areas may be agriculture. This subject is often not taught to women, either in elementary schools or in teacher training institutes, even though in fact women are often more involved in agriculture than men. Tanzania recently adopted a plan to teach agricultural science in all primary schools.

While boys may drop out of school occasionally for a year or two in order to earn money, and then return to their studies this is not possible for girls since many of them marry at an early age and so have fewer years than boys in which to complete their education.[9] Thus it is important to keep girls in school continuously. One way to encourage this is through educational and vocational guidance so that girls do not drop out of school at the first offer of marriage or of a job.

The attitudes of the community affect the school wastage rate for girls, and these attitudes in turn are affected by whether opportunities exist which will allow the girls to make use of their education. In rural areas there are very few paid jobs available. There is, therefore, little or no incentive for girls to remain in school in such communities. Parents and relatives are generally concerned about the age of marriage of their daughters. If a girl remains in school too long and passes the marriageable age — or the age at which she can more easily be married — the parents must support her for a longer time and they begin to wonder whether she can eventually marry and thereby become self-supporting or be supported by her husband. And a girl must stay in school for quite a long time in order to be trained as a teacher, a nurse, midwife or social worker and be enabled to support herself. But when duly educated, the East African woman readily finds employment. increases her prospects for marriage and plays an active role in civic, social and political life of the society. Educated East African women are now to be found in administration and in politics, as teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers and technicians but, more importantly for the future, also as enlightened housewives and mothers.

In sum, the basic problems of education for girls in East Africa are the doubts of the people in some areas about sending girls to school, the lack of a large element of educated women who can serve as an inspiration to young girls and mothers, and the shortage of women teachers who can encourage girls to come to school and remain there. There are also difficulties in making the curriculum more suited to girls. Of course, overall problems in education — such as lack of

[9] Audrey I. Richards. *Economic and Social Factors Affecting the Education of African Girls in Territories Under British Influence.* UNESCO document (UNESCO/ED/Cotonou/4), p. 8.

trained personnel, buildings, equipment, and funds — also affect the education of girls, but the problems discussed above are those that primarily affect girls (even though, sometimes, they affect boys as well). Much progress has been made in recent years, however, in improving education of East African women but there remains a great deal to be done before a satisfactory situation is established.

Vocational education

Vocational education for girls and women includes training both for a job and for improvement of homemaking skills. It may be given as a part of more or less formal education such as in special programmes, in centres run by the government, in private groups or in technical secondary schools, and as part of adult education and community development programmes. This section is concerned with the first two; the next section will deal with the last, although there is really no clear-cut division of these categories.

In the six countries studied; there are as yet enough vocational training programmes. This is also the case with Africa as a whole.[10] Development of such training programmes needs to be given a great deal of emphasis.

Vocational programmes, as conceived in the past, often stop short of providing sufficient instruction to enable trainees to benefit fully from their time, effort and expenditure. Thus a girl may learn to mend and embroider, but not to cut patterns which may be necessary for her to find worthwhile employment. To improve this situation in Ethiopia, it has been suggested that girls who finish tenth grade be provided with further training in order to become home economics teachers in primary schools and that secondary school graduates be offered training in hospital dietetics, child welfare, consumer education, and so forth.[11]

It is often difficult to provide sufficient training for job placement through the adult education programme because of limited facilities especially when it is intended to reach the greatest possible number of individuals with only minimal education or training. In certain areas, however, minimal training can prove quite beneficial. For example, training designed to acclimatize girls or women to work in the unfamiliar context of a factory may prepare them to work in a relatively short time and encourage them not to drop out.

The tremendous drop-out rate of girls in these countries poses a serious problem. Most are unequipped to find satisfactory jobs, and some, perhaps a minority, are forced into

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10 UNESCO/ED/Cotonou/2, op. cit., p. 13.

11 "The Development and Expansion of Home Economics Education through the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts." *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

some form of prostitution as a result. One possibility for drop-outs is a national or youth service programme. In Kenya, students who fail the standard eight examination are trained in youth service units, while in Tanzania, military-oriented training camps for youth provide training in citizenship and in agriculture.

The YWCA has taken a particular interest in drop-outs. By running hostels on a commercial basis, it has been able to subsidize other hostels for working girls. In Nairobi, Kenya it trains drop-outs in domestic science in nutrition and child care for work in institutions, etc. At Kitwe, in Zambia it has trained shop assistants and YWCA programme assistants. In Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, a site has been acquired by the Association and an ambitious scheme is afoot to run, at a profit, a superior hostel for visitors, grammar school and working girls. Part of these premises will be used to train nursery school assistants, receptionists, air hostesses, domestic servants, salesgirls, typists, clerks, dressmakers and hairdressers. Business firms have shown great goodwill towards this YWCA project.

Agriculture is an important area of training also, but one which is often neglected for women. This is unfortunate since farming remains to a large extent women's work. In Kenya, the Ministry of Agriculture originally planned to open farmers' training centres for men only. However, the women successfully convinced the Ministry to open centres for them as well. Their attendance rate was unusually high, in spite of the fact that they had to walk long distances, often with children on their back, and adjust to unfamiliar and crowded conditions at the centres.[12]

Places in agricultural colleges are offered to women in Uganda and in Kenya but, at this stage, most women lack the necessary entrance qualifications. In Malawi six women came out above the men in the entrance examination for the agricultural college. However, the college did not feel that it could admit these candidates because the accommodation was not geared to their needs. Also it was felt that to appoint women agricultural officers, when there was a high rate of unemployment among men, would be unpopular. This may be so, but it is not very logical to accept that women can do all the hard work of the farms and yet should not compete with men for professional posts in this field. Women are quite likely to take scientific agriculture seriously if some of them can see a career in it. As an alternative, it was proposed to run a short course at the Soche College for these able Malawi Women of the non-career type. They might, as a result, improve their marketing.

12 Bertha F. Strange, "Kenya Women in Agriculture," *Women Today*, VI (December 1963), p. 7.

At Makerere University College in Uganda, steps are being taken to introduce a "mature matriculation" examination for those whose formal education has been interrupted and who wish to return to academic study at a later stage. There could also be a means whereby girls who failed their grammar school entrance examinations could come back at a later stage to the various technical colleges run by the departments of government. It seems unnecessary to send them to Europe or to the Middle East or America to bridge this gap. A college of adult education for women is being founded at Rungemba in Tanzania and more of this kind of education could be developed. More use could also be made of sub-regional resources so that girls who have missed an opportunity in one country might find a suitable opening in a college of another country.

The danger exists that governments will neglect training programmes for women in favour of those for men or that they will over-emphasize training for improved homemaking skills over training that will prepare women for jobs. The ILO has called attention to this problem in Africa and has stressed the importance of equal opportunity for girls and boys in training programmes. It has also pointed out that governments need to co-ordinate training programmes with the needs of the economy and then provide vocational guidance so that decisions concerning choice of job are not made as haphazardly as they now are.[13]

Adult education

We girls do not receive vocational training as part of their regular education — or when they have no education at all — then programmes which reach them later on (as women) are very important. Adult education is education outside the regular structure of formal education for people typically considered to be past school age. It imparts new skills, explains and initiates change, and helps readjust attitudes. It includes literacy education, formal adult education at evening classes, and correspondence courses which lead to recognized certificates. It is liberal education concerned with general knowledge and development of cultural interests, fundamental education dealing with basic steps towards improved living, and occupational training — sometimes in-service training geared to the improvement of skills. While adult education is sometimes presented as a separate programme, it is often combined with community development. Indeed, much of the substance of community development in the six East African countries is adult education. University extramural departments also cater to this end.

[13] *The Employment and Conditions of Work of African Women* (Geneva ILO, 1964), pp. 20, 41.

There are a number of rural centres providing adult education in the countries studied. Some of them have been greatly helped by UNICEF grants of stipends to women to enable them to pay the fees for attending the courses. When the courses are residential, they must be fairly short as no woman would leave her home for an extended period of time.

Some centres which started with homecraft programmes of sewing, knitting, cooking, child care, house building, and agriculture, in which the women became more and more interested as they found they could use some of these skills to earn money, have gone on to provide for men as well as women. Both can study local government, club management, book-keeping, buying and selling, and other subjects which are particularly useful as the money sector of the economy encroaches more and more on the subsistence sector. A woman now must not only learn crafts, she must also learn how to simplify and standardize her work so as to compete with machine-made goods where standardization is necessary. Often women need to improve the basic quality of their work. Those who grow vegetables to sell need marketing knowledge. With some training, women can indeed help to start the economy moving.

In Kenya, there are twelve local authority rural training centres. They all started as women's centres with emphasis on child care, nutrition and all branches of homecraft. These are now able to run a large number of short courses which are geared to the needs of self-help in communities. Courses in local government and club management, and courses for literacy and nutrition teachers are also given here. These centres can also emphasize courses and programmes oriented to increasing earning capacity. The hope of expert advisers that "non-career" tuition of women can be linked to participation in community development activities is akin to the Indian belief in voluntary committees which led to a static situation. Indeed much thinking on community development has been unfruitful because the first planners in India did not wish to create spending power in the villages until the capital works programme was under way. They feared that a premature demand for consumer goods would be created. Now it is seen that the circulation of goods and services in the localities is one of the ways of achieving development. S.K. Dey writes "We want the village artisans and craftsmen to become better producers to contribute to the fuller life of the community and in turn, to absorb the increased purchasing power resulting from the increased agricultural production" declaring that "A woman who has been able to earn even an anna with her own labour, is a transformed being".[14]

[14] S.K. Dey, *Community Development; A Chronicle 1954-1961* (Delhi: Ministry of Community Development. Panchayati Raj and Co-operation. 1962).

An example of a useful innovation in adult education programmes is the homemakers' course at the community development division of the Kenya Institute of Administration at Kabete, Nairobi. Here the courses are for both husbands and wives. As a result, married people can function more co-operatively together afterwards, particularly in the areas of agriculture and family budget planning.[15]

The use of radio is very helpful as a means of adult education. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation has various educational programmes. One particularly useful one, is *Elimu kwa Radio* (Education by Radio) which is broadcast in Kiswahili four times weekly and covers liberal subjects and current affairs. Over 760 listening groups have been formed and members correspond with the head of the adult education programme. This provides a good channel of communication. The Department of Information has a number of mobile information units, approximately one per region. Each is equipped with a slide projector, tape recorder, and public address system. This provides a useful way of educating people throughout rural areas where the population is scattered; but in Kenya, as in other countries, there is a continuous need for better educational materials. The more developed countries, with their sophisticated film and other communications industries, should be able to provide more help in this area. However, local conditions must be kept in mind so that the products will be meaningful to the people for whom they are intended. This same principle applies to correspondence courses which are becoming increasingly popular and are particularly useful for women with children who are unable to avail themselves of other educational facilities.

In Uganda, a new course of lessons in English has been designed for the adult education programme. Each course is complete in itself and is planned to last for a short time. In this way women gain a greater sense of achievement and are able to attend more regularly over a shorter time period. The Uganda Council of Women, in planning English and further education training, has emphasized courses for married women who have a small but limited knowledge of English as well as for women in important positions in the community who need an advanced knowledge of English. The Nsamizi Training Centre in Entebbe has been providing special courses for women who possess a certain amount of education already. For example, women with overseas scholarships are given orientation courses prior to their departure. Women whose husbands have been abroad for a while are also given special courses in homecraft, in order to help bridge the gap which

[15] "Draft Report on Kenya: Homecraft/Mothercraft Programmes and Their Relationship to Social Welfare Services," unpublished ECA document, p. 10.

often occurs when husbands go abroad to study or to work and cannot be accompanied by their wives.[16]

In Ethiopia, there is the Princess Tenagne Worq School of Women which offers a two-year course in literacy and the vocations — primarily in homemaking and embroidery. The YWCA and several community centres also offer an assortment of courses. There is a nation-wide literacy programme which encourages students to teach adults; and in the provinces all primary schools are supposed to be "community schools" for adults as well as children.[17] In rural community development centres, women village level workers and the wives of some male workers provide various courses for women, but this practice is not yet sufficiently widespread.

Throughout East Africa, churches and missions run various kinds of classes for women. Non-career type of training is provided by missions of all denominations, Catholic and Protestant, and by the YWCA. This is more for women who have some education or who have reached an eminent position as wives of prominent men. They like to learn dressmaking and international cookery, to become literate in English, to understand modern methods of child care and to know what will be expected of them as hosts in the entertainment of guests. The YWCA has done a great deal to help the emergent townswomen.

An excellent school of this kind is run at the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre in Kitwe, Zambia. The six-month course is attended by women who usually have had six years of education and are literate in Bemba or Nyasa, two of the local dialects. They bring their youngest child with them and a nursery is provided. The organizer discusses the syllabus with them and tries to meet their requirements. In addition to homecraft subjects they take a keen interest in English and current affairs, and lecturers find that they are indeed an alert group. The course enormously increases their self-confidence and helpfulness to their husbands. Another school in Blantyre, Malawi, is run by Dutch nuns who offer two-year training courses in tailoring, catering, commercial subjects and homecraft. More institutions of this type are needed to fill a real need.

The ILO has commented on the lack of "middle level" personnel throughout the area. This is partly the result of wastage of people who have had only eight years of education and have failed the entrance examination to grammar school. Some of the girls in this category go on to teacher training institutions or are trained at the missions as nurses; but there

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[16] See Catherine Hastie, "Training Courses for Women's Club Leaders in Uganda" *African Women*, IV (June 1962), p. 80.

[17] "Education in Ethiopia" *op. cit.*, p. 35.

is need for adult education classes which will enable some of them to qualify for entrance to agricultural colleges and other institutions.

The worth and ability of women who have not had higher education has been proved when they have had the opportunity to study abroad for short periods. In Kenya, a woman who went to England for three months and then to Sweden for a further three months of training was able to lecture on nutrition to clubs scattered widely over the country. Two others, after an equivalent course in the United States, were teaching nutrition in a rural institute insisting that all students, men or women, who attended courses of any kind there should have instruction in nutrition. They were going to lecture to club women who did not wish to or could not come to the institute.

Adult education is of great importance because even where children are educated, many go to school for only a few years and quickly revert to illiteracy. In some areas, particularly outside of towns, adult education has had some difficulty catching on. Often this is because the people are living on the subsistence level and are not interested in education because they are hungry or tired or sick. An interesting experiment has been started in Mali aided by the United Nations and FAO. All people participating in the literacy campaign are being given supplementary food.[18] Programmes like this, if successful, should be planned on a widespread basis.

One difficulty which married women sometimes encounter in obtaining adult education is caused by the attitude of their husbands. Some men are sometimes reluctant to permit their wives to attend adult education courses. When this is the case it has been found essential to help husbands to see that they themselves will benefit, by showing them how they can benefit. For example, if a wife brings home good food or well-made clothes, or a new ability to manage household accounts, her husband may be convinced that the courses are worthwhile. Experience at the Tenagne Worq School, in Addis Ababa, has been fairly typical. Initially many husbands were opposed to their wives' attending courses. But as results became visible the men became enthusiastic, and some of them even started to come to register their wives themselves. Of seven married women interviewed there, four said their husbands favoured the programme, while three were against it. Interestingly, the three women whose husbands opposed their taking the course, were separated from them. Opposition seemed to a large extent based on the husband's wish for his wife to remain at home, and most wives came to the school with hope

[18] Richard Greenough, *Africa Prospect* (Paris: UNESCO, 1966). p. 66.

of employment later. Some of the husbands announced that they could support their family by themselves, and the wife's desire for a job seemed to threaten their feelings of adequacy.

In the development of adult education programmes for women, it is essential that flexibility always be kept in mind. Women often interrupt their education — because their husbands are transferred or because they give birth to another child. Education could be provided on a part-time or on-the-job basis where necessary.

On the whole, adult education — particularly for women — is an area of much interest and activity in East Africa. However, because of limited resources, courses are often too short and without follow-up so that gains are not consolidated and perhaps too often diminish considerably over time. There is need for more sharing of information about successful and unsuccessful programmes, so that future programmes can be designed from a useful base of knowledge. Governments perhaps need not hesitate to duplicate courses which have produced good results so that women of many areas may benefit. Such programmes should not be confined only to women in capital cities as is so often the case. Although adult education courses often struggle at first to catch women's interest, they usually become quite popular after a short period of time. This is so particularly in urban areas where women can see a more direct relationship between education and income.

Chapter III

WOMEN AT WORK

In rural areas

The traditional occupation of women in East Africa has been agriculture; this remains true even today. The majority of women who work are concerned with the production of food for subsistence. It is difficult work because technical aids are unavailable. Women must carry water and firewood for long distances on their backs, and they must make long trips to markets to sell their produce. Their productivity is often limited by traditional land tenure systems, cultural attitudes towards keeping and selling of cattle, and by the use of traditional farming methods.

In many areas farming, or certain aspects of it, is considered to be purely "women's work." The division of labour differs from tribal group to tribal group, and is adhered to with varying degrees of strictness. But more often than not, men cannot help with woman's work without being ridiculed. An example of how labour may be divided between the sexes is seen in the following chart of traditional Kikuyu (Kenya) duties for men and women.[19]

Because of changing conditions, men's work has decreased. In most places they no longer carry on warfare nor hunt as much as in the past. At the same time that men have less work, they expect more from their wives as they learn about modern possibilities for comfort and status. The wives cannot do everything by themselves, but since agriculture and housework have traditionally been their lot, it is often difficult to convince men to help out. However, as technical (in those communities where this is so) innovations are introduced and cash crops become important, it is possible that men will become more interested in farming.[20]

Since the idea of "women's work" as distinct from "men's work" still persists to a great extent, it may often shape attitudes towards various jobs even in the modern sector of the economy. Thus if it happens by chance that the first nurses in a particular region are women and the first secretaries

[19] See table on "Traditional Division of Labour Among the Kikuyu of Kenya".

[20] See *Seminar on Participation of Women in Public Life, TAO document* (ST/TAO/HR/9), p. 15; Strange, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

Traditional Division of Labour Among the Kikuyu of Kenya[a]

Men	Women	Both
Heavy work in home building — e.g. cutting wood and frame-work; fences; granaries	Cutting and carrying grass for thatching; plastering walls of house with clay or dung	
Night watchman	All housework; cook, carry water, wash, fetch firewood, carry loads on back	
Cultivation: clear bush, cut big trees, break virgin soil	Preparing ground for sowing	Planting — men and women plant different crops
Certain work in harvesting; e.g. cutting and burning stalks and spreading ashes	Harvesting	Weeding
Cutting drains, pruning banana plants	Grinding corn and millet, making gruel, pounding grains	
Tending cattle, sheep, goats	Pounding sugar-cane for beer	Brewing beer — men and women are responsible for different parts of the process
Slaughtering and distributing meat	Dressmaking	Trading — men trade livestock and women grains
Preparing skins	Pottery, weaving baskets	
Wood carving, smith's work, bee-keeping, hunting, warfare, making roads and bridges		

[a] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Secker and Warburg) 1953, pp. 53-55, 175

men, nursing may quickly be established as a profession for women only, and office work thought suitable only for men.[21] This is unfortunate for the optimum utilization of available talent.

Women in rural areas will be greatly helped as the infrastructure is improved and technical innovations are introduced and accepted. In most areas there is a need for better water supply, communication and transportation, marketing facilities and co-operatives, and storage.

Development of plans for water control, irrigation, and domestic supply is necessary. This will lighten tasks which women generally perform as they are the ones who usually carry water and do much of the farming. Women — and men — can be educated about the importance of these plans as well as the need for pure drinking water. And once water is more readily obtainable, education for the improvement of agricultural methods will be easier. For example, one young club leader in Uganda was observed showing women how to grow vegetables in the banana groves. The secretary of the women's club had to bring a heavy can of water three miles in order to get the seed-bed started. Under conditions like these, it is understandable that women's enthusiasm for new ideas may be less than it could be.

Producing for sale and producing in greater quantity are hampered by the difficulties in marketing. Roads are few and poor, transportation facilities limited — usually limited to the woman's back or head — and markets are often far away. Some help with roads comes from the youth in national service camps, as in Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. However, often this work is done with primitive methods since means of financing purchase of machinery are limited. The building of roads alone is insufficient, as there is also the need for introducing beasts of burden or trucks. A great improvement has already been made where UNICEF jeeps collect crafts and carry them to the marketing centre, instead of each woman making the tedious individual journey. In Uganda, the Government sends lorries to villages to collect handicrafts and bring them to larger markets as part of its community development programme. Where transportation facilities cannot be provided by governmental sources, private and communal facilities can be developed with governmental assistance. As communication and transportation improve, specialization and division of labour will occur more quickly. thus increasing production. When women are isolated on their homesteads, they must do everything for themselves and produce mainly for consumption or for barter rather than for the market.

[21] UNESCO/ED/Cotonou/3, p. 7.

The growth of co-operatives in urban as well as rural areas is encouraging. The nature of these co-operatives varies but they may serve marketing, production, and/or credit and savings functions. There are co-operatives for high quality craft production, for production of items like necklaces and dressed "character" dolls for the tourist trade and egg production, etc. Co-operatives for aiding with domestic chores, such as grinding of grain with electrically powered mills instead of with the time-consuming mortar and pestle, are also quite helpful. Another need which co-operatives can meet is the provision of storage facilities. Currently, these are scarce or quite primitive, and when foods cannot be stored for long periods, large-scale production is not profitable.

Technical aids for agricultural production need to be introduced by agricultural extension workers, rural animators, community development workers or whoever is available and can promote acceptance. As a first step, it is good to build on skills already available rather than to wait for the emergence of technical college graduates or to work with complicated imported foreign machinery with all the problems of maintenance and unavailability of spare parts. In many parts of East Africa good iron work is already done, and this can be encouraged and linked to the technical devices being introduced.

In urban areas

In the modern sector of the East African economy, no sizable female wage-earning labour force has developed in the urban communities as is the case in West and South Africa.[22] The proportion of women employed in the modern sector of the economy is quite small, both in relation to the number of men employed and to the total number of women. For example, a survey of twenty-three towns in Uganda in 1964 showed that while there were 114,902 African men employed in private industry, there were only 4,918 African women. In the public services, 88,385 men were employed as compared to 3,214 women.[23] However, in the six countries there are some outstanding women who are doctors, lawyers, parliamentarians, educators, administrators, businesswomen, and so forth. Even though few in number, the presence of these women in high professional positions is important as it demonstrates that women are capable of performing the required functions and helps diminish prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of women.

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22 *1963 Report on the World Social Situation.* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 63.IV.4), p. 186.

23 The Ministry of Planning and Community Development of the Government of Uganda: *Enumeration of Employees, June 1964* (December 1965).

In East Africa there is a great demand for trained manpower far beyond the available supply. While some employers have reservations about hiring women, many opportunities still exist for educated women. Even those with only secondary education are much in demand for such positions as secretary and stenographer. And because of the desire for higher standards of living, educated women are anxious to secure work. It is usually impossible to live at the level they wish on their husbands' salary alone. Educated women expect to work full time as a matter of course not only because they have been trained to do the work, but also because they want to play their part in the development of their countries, and would work even when their husbands oppose the idea. Servants or relatives are usually available to look after children, but some women regret, not having more time at home with their children. However, they do not seem to feel the guilt that women in some other countries might feel when they do not devote themselves entirely to the bringing up of their children. This may be partially explained by the fact that few African women have been exposed to modern — and often confusing — theories of child development and also by the overwhelming emphasis on improving living conditions which is seen as being the most important contribution to the welfare of children. This emphasis was revealed when a group of women in one country were asked to voice their major needs. Half of them said "money" and the other half "education that we may earn money". The need for economic security is indeed pressing.

Unfortunately, many women in urban areas do not have sufficient education to obtain employment or are timid about coming into contact with the new conditions of employment, and so are faced with staying at home. This inactivity is often difficult for them, not only because it means that there will be no additional income, but also because they are used to being busy on the farm. The only possibilities available for them in town are handicrafts, factory work, petty trading, or being a servant; and not all women are interested or are able to engage profitably in any of the above. People new to the ways of town life may even consider it improper for a woman to work outside the home where she will come under the control of someone other than her husband. Thus self-employment may be more acceptable. Certain professions such as teaching and nursing may be deemed more suitable for women but literacy and training are required for these professions. Women who do not work may be quite lonely as a result of having to stay at home all the time. They may fear that going out to make new friends will brand them as "loose".[24]

[24] Prudence Smith, ed., "The Changing Roles of African Women", *Africa in Transition* (London: Max Reinhardt, 1958), p. 77.

A study conducted in Jinja, Uganda in 1956 vividly revealed the attitude of men towards working women. Although this study was undertaken a decade ago, many of the opinions still hold, and not only in Uganda. At that time Mr. Carlebach had written:

> What is the attitude of men to the employment of women? On the whole it is highly unfavourable. Men object to the employment of women in occupations which they have come to regard as men's. From these occupations only teaching, nursing, and the care of children are exempted, though approval even of these occupations for women is far from universal. Men oppose the employment of women principally because they judge that a woman's contribution to prosperity is greater in the home than in the factory. The opposition to the employment of women in Jinja and the surrounding district rests on two sets of arguments, though in the minds of particular men both sets might run concurrently. The first is that women are taking men's jobs and that since women are exempt from poll tax, the opportunities for earning money ought to be reserved for men. Despite the fact that many employers find it difficult to fill all their vacancies, men are obsessed with the fear of being edged out by women workers. The second set of arguments is more general. First, there is the fear that women who go out to work will not bear children. Urban life spells immorality. Women drift into prostitution and either cease to bear children or, at best, bear only half-castes. As a result population will decline and with it the power and wealth of the country. The opposition is not only to their own wives working for wages but extends to any employer who is prepared to employ women, since the very opportunity of working for wages acts as a threat to the power of men to prevent women from leaving them. These beliefs are widely held and rigorously defended.[25]

As men come to appreciate the additional income a wife can provide, however, traditional resistances appear to diminish. Particularly in urban areas and among educated men the idea that a wife may work is accepted and the wife is often encouraged to do so. It is probable that women themselves would often risk community disapproval in order to earn money if only they had the requisite skills. In the long run, traditional attitudes which have kept women from being educated and trained also prevent them from finding jobs more so than traditional attitudes which are unfavourable to women becoming wage earners. And it is worth noting that it is traditional attitudes of women as well as of men which have affected the opportunity for education and employment of women.

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[25] "The Employment of Women in Uganda", *African Women, II* (December 1956), p 7.

In countries such as Kenya, the Government has taken the lead in urging equal rights of employment for men and women. This ideal is of course difficult to fulfil when women are not sufficiently educated; but it is important that the Government supports it. Indeed, Kenya and Zambia have complained that women are too conservative and unenterprising and are too reluctant to try out new kinds of work.[26]

Trade unions in some of the East African countries are active in securing rights of employment for women. For example, in Tanzania the Workers' organization has induced some employers to pay salary for all or part of a woman's three-months maternity leave. This is encouraging since it has happened in spite of the fact of low female membership in trade unions. In Kenya, for example, the proportion of female to male trade union members has been estimated as being three to ten per cent.[27]

One of the ultimate problems involved in work for women in Africa, as is the case with the rest of the world, is the difficulty of finding ways of helping wives and mothers to supplement family incomes without neglecting their children and home life. One partial solution is the provision of adequate day-care facilities; the need for these will become more pressing as the extended family with its readily available mother-substitutes becomes less common and servants less available. Another is increased flexibility in setting conditions for working women; such things as nursing leave and part-time schedules are useful. In East Africa one approach might be increased emphasis on handicraft work which women could do at home and/or on a part-time basis.

Development of handicrafts is useful in both urban and rural areas. One interesting example of this was a project carried out in the mid-1950's in Karura, Kenya. A community development worker got women interested in making better pottery by using a simple kiln. There was a good response to this and the women soon branched out into making new items such as lamp bases. Similar projects were started later in other areas with the hope that these women potters could eventually form the nucleus for a large-scale pottery industry with more modern equipment.[28]

To sum up, women in East Africa work predominantly in agriculture, although a small but growing number are employed in the modern sector of the economy. Women in rural

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[26] *The Employment and Conditions of Work of African Women*, (Geneva: ILO. 1964), p. 12.

[27] Julius Carlebach. *"The Position of Women in Kenya"* ECA document E/CN. 14/URB/9, p. 13.

[28] A. Belcher, *"The Future of Pottery for African Women"*, *African Women*, II (June 1957), pp. 28-29.

areas need help in modernizing their farming methods as well as improved infrastructure to encourage the cultivation of cash crops for marketing. Women interested in work in the modern sector need education and training, flexible working conditions and, as other arrangements become less available, day-care centres for their children. Of course, as the economies of East African countries develop on a large scale, women will benefit from increased opportunities.

Chapter IV

FAMILY LIFE and DEVELOPMENT

Marriage and its problems

A wide variety of marital relationships exist in East Africa. Customary marriages are entered into in accordance with established traditions and customs, and non-customary marriages in accordance with civil statutes or regulations of organized religion. Stable *de facto* unions also exist but these do not have the force of civil or customary law.

Customary marriage is often arranged through a system of exchange or payment (e.g. of cattle, cash, or beer) or, less commonly, through payment by services only, as among certain matrilineal peoples in Malawi and Zambia or among others when a man cannot afford payment. This means that the husband helps his father-in-law and that his children become members of his father-in-law's lineage.[29]

The matter of marriage payment or bride wealth has been the subject of heated discussion among educated Africans, particularly women, as well as interested outsiders. Some think that the bride price ensures that the wife will be well treated because it means that the husband thinks a great deal of her.[30] In some tribes, such as the Kikuyu of Kenya, the bride price is not returned if the wife leaves her husband because of cruel treatment.[31] On the other hand, bride price is considered to compromise a woman's dignity[32] and, in recent years, this has been looked upon as representing a commercial business transaction rather than a traditional symbol of intentions. This is particularly so in places where parents demand high payments and, in effect, "sell" their daughter to the highest bidder. Often a prospective bridegroom must contract a large debt and so the marriage starts out under strained circumstances.[33] Thus the possible effects of bride price or bride wealth on a woman's well-being are varied. In recent years, new variations on the meaning of bride wealth

[29] *Collection of Statistics of Marital Status in Africa,* ECA document E/CN.14/CAS.4/CPH/5, pp. 5-6.

[30] *Women in the Traditional African Societies,* ECA document E/CN.14/URB/13, pp. 6-7.

[31] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953), p. 185.

[32] E/CN.14/URB/13, p. 7.

[33] ST/TAO/HR/9. *op.cit.*, p. 19.

have developed which further affect women's marital arrangements. For example, in Zambia the traditional *mpango* payments, which used to assure the husband of the services of his daughters' husbands, are being used as an insurance against the possibility of the dissolution of marriage. Kinsmen receive the payment from the bridegroom, but may be forced to return it if the wife deviates from normal wifely behaviour and the husband demands divorce. Thus the kinsmen bring strong pressure to bear on the wife to behave properly.[34]

There are some situations where financial interests benefit the wife rather than the husband. These situations usually occur in urban areas where women have certain rights which can readily be enforced. For example, in Uganda by marrying an African woman an Indian might gain rights to land from which he would normally be legally debarred. As a result, he would not be tempted lightly to leave the marriage.[35] The same is the case in Ethiopia, where foreign men and Ethiopian women are known to enter into marriage of similar marital benefits.

Another aspect of marriage which has been much debated and which also affects a woman's well-being and status differentially, is polygamy. Being one of two or more wives provides the woman with help for the various and sometimes arduous tasks she must perform in rural areas especially on the farm. Polygamy also often helps to ensure that a woman will be married and so fed and sheltered and not condemned by the stigma of spinsterhood. Yet it often creates a climate of rivalry, deceit, and distrust. This also results in young girls often being married to old men (who are rich and can afford them).[36] In any event, for economic and other reasons, polygamy as traditionally practised is on the wane. For example, a sample survey in 1957 in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) showed that only just over one-fifth of adult males (age 16 and over) were polygamous.[37] Still, there are modified forms of polygamy which flourish today. Men practise successive monogamy or serial polygamy and have a number of concubines along with an official wife. Many men still believe that sexual access to a number of women is a male prerogative, a belief which Islam sanctions and against which Christianity has made little headway.[38] As the desire for a wife as a companion becomes widespread and necessitates intense psychological adaptation in marriage, it is likely that the status of women will be positively affected.

[34] J.C. Mitchell, "Social Change and the Stability of African Marriage in Northern Rhodesia", *Social Change in Modern Africa*, Aidan Southall, ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 326-327.

[35] Southall, *Social Change*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[36] ST/TAO/HR/9, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[37] E/CN.14/CAS.4/CPH/5, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[38] Southall, *Social Change*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Some factors of instability in marriage

With urbanization and increased freedom of thought and action have come many factors that make for marital instability in both the rural and urban settings. There appears to be a trend for men to discard their wives after some years of marriage in order to marry younger women. This results in a difficult situation for women, particularly in the light of the limited educational and vocational opportunities available to them. And the children inevitably suffer when homes are broken. In a 1963 survey done in Addis Ababa, 21.2 per cent of the total child population (up to the age of fifteen) had been exposed to some family disorganization at one time or another; and this figure may be low.[39] Among migrant families, the rate of disintegration was found to be higher: 40.5 per cent.[40]

Lack of stability in marriage is increased in some areas by the fact that men who work in urban areas leave their families behind in the rural communities. Reasons for this include low wages and shortage of housing. The family left back in the rural area is often expected to be able to provide its own subsistence living.[41] In a study made several years ago in Mombasa, Kenya almost as many men had wives back in tribal units as had wives with them in the city.[42] Men in the cities can find female companionship quite readily. One study in the Sudan showed that there was a much higher percentage (three times higher) of mental illness among women than men and suggested that absence of husbands might be a factor in this.[43]

Another problem in marriage, particularly among the educated, is the resentment caused by interference of relatives. Ten of thirteen educated adults interviewed in Addis Ababa thought that problems with relatives caused serious difficulties in Ethiopian marriages. While the maintenance of close ties with the extended family can provide protection and support which even educated people cherish, it means interference and sometimes financial demands which couples with new conceptions of marriage find difficult to tolerate. They wish to devote time and money to their immediate family as they try to build up the nuclear family relationship. But the ex-

39 B. Chatterjee, "Community Development and Social Welfare in Ethiopia", unpublished paper (July 1963), pp. 27-28.

40 *Applicability of Community Development Techniques to Addis Ababa,* ECA document E/CN.14/SWCD/10, p. 7.

41 J. Van Velson, "Labour Migration as a Positive Factor in the Continuity of Tonga Tribal Society", *Social Change in Modern Africa.* Aidan Southall, ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 234.

42 Gordon Wilson. "Mombasa — A Modern Colonial Municipality", *Social Change in Modern Africa.* Aidan Southall ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 107.

43 *1963 Report on the World Social Situation,* p. 179.

tended family does not accept this. However, since urban couples often are far away from kin — or at least from the complete array of kin — the pressures are less and can be more easily evaded. In some cases, this may result in less stability in marriage since some kinship relationship is essential for marital stability in all societies.

On the whole, it is usually advantageous, for women to remain in marriage (unless they are compelled against their will); and where marital stability prevails in a society, this usually is a positive reflection of the status of women. Some of the recommendations made at the ECA Workshop on Urban Problems (Lagos, 1964) concerned ways of improving marital stability and the position of women in general. It was urged that Africans should try to retain their traditions in so far as they were compatible with progress and current moral principles, with emphasis on the active and positive aspects of women's traditional roles. It was recommended that the amount of dowry be reduced and, perhaps, eventually abolished by educational and legal means. Refund of the dowry in case of divorce should not be legally enforceable. All types of marriage should be registered and divorce not granted except in front of an officer and for reasons previously recognized by law. Where polygamy was allowed, the woman should first consent to it.[44] Measures such as these would be helpful to women, although the nature of marriage and family relationships are slow to change and the changes cannot only come about through legislation.

Social status

In traditional societies, women were generally treated almost as "minors" both before and after marriage: first under the guardianship of their fathers, then their husbands or, in matrilineal societies, under the guardianship of their mother's brother.[45] Women were usually required to obey their husbands without question and in many ways were considered lower in status. An example of a tribe's differential evaluation of men and women is evident in the traditional Kikuyu (Kenya) scale of compensation to be paid in the event of death caused by another person. The compensation for a man's death was one hundred sheep or goats or ten cows; for a woman's death it was thirty sheep or goats or three cows.[46]

A secondary-school teacher in Uganda, while seeing some positive aspects in the traditional life of women in certain groups, presented a generally negative picture of the role of women:

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[44] See E/CN.14/241, pp. 30,32.

[45] E/CN.14/URB/13, pp. 2 - 3.

[46] Kenyatta, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

Traditionally, the position and status of an African woman was definitely inferior to that of a man, in spite of her doing most of the hard work in support of the family. A woman was treated as a minor. Before marriage she was under the authority of the male head of the household. After marriage she was under the authority of her husband and after his death, she was under the control of some other male of his family. Husbands had considerable authority over wives. In Bunyoro—part of Western Uganda—women could not even go visiting in other parts of their own village without their husbands' permission. They could not dispose of their own property, even a basket made by themselves, without the knowledge and consent of husbands. If wives misbehaved, husbands were entitled to thrash them. Women were required to be completely subservient to the men and had no chance of getting together to use their combined strength to resist excessive oppression by their menfolk. In family life preference was given to males... Women did not generally take part in the government of the tribe and did not attend tribal assemblies... Unmarried women were a liability and an embarrassment to parents. This is understandable since women were not financially independent and society had no form of insurance and welfare organization. Therefore the inheritance of widows provided that women would not be left destitute. But all women did not always hold this low and depressed position. Some privileged and distinguished women were looked up to and even respected, such as the princesses of Bunyoro and Buganda Kingdoms, and the King's mother who held positions of great power and influence. In Ankole, women have been known to be chiefs.[47]

However, there were countervailing aspects which bolstered even the ordinary woman's role in the traditional setting. In many tribes the bride wealth provided security to the wife and, in any event, enabled her brothers to marry. This contribution raised her status, at least as a sister. She also had prestige as the mother of married daughters, especially when she was seen as a link with female ancestors who held the power of procreation; thus she could influence whether or not her daughters bore children.[48]

Unfortunately, in urban areas a woman often loses many of her traditional sources of status before she gains new ones. The "emancipated" townswoman may be relatively free of negative aspects of her traditional role; but she has also lost the positive ones. She is often no longer economically productive, compared to her former dominance in agriculture.

[47] Nyendwoha, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

[48] Smith, *op. cit., pp.* 74-75.

Her brothers may not live near her and so she does not gain in status via her relationship with them. Any protection in marriage she may have derived from the intervention of kinfolk or traditional laws and customs is usually much diminished or absent in town. And when children are sent to the country for rearing she loses her status as a mother. She may be less important *vis-à-vis* younger wives because she may be less educated than they are. As modern facilities become available, she loses prestige which came from traditional expertise in such areas as childbirth. Her lack of education often prevents her from gaining in status in her new situation. She is then very much left in an unstable world without either traditional or modern guidelines. Her position may be affected favourably or unfavourably by her husband's changing conception of the role of women — depending upon the nature of the impact on him of the new ideas acquired in the city.

In the urban setting, with its unsettled conditions of life and insufficient opportunities for employment, the problem of prostitution arises as well as the problem of loss of status. The causes of prostitution are many and complex, and the nature of this problem varies in the six East African countries. While this study does not encompass an examination of prostitution, it should be noted that prostitution reflects on the negative aspects of the situation of women while contributing to it.

Housing

Living conditions in many parts of East Africa are less than satisfactory. People often share their one room with cattle; and sanitation is poor. Ventilation in many cases is lacking and smoke has difficulty in escaping. In the cities there is overcrowding and often no open areas for recreation. Food, rent, and transportation are usually very expensive. Under conditions like these, women are not encouraged to improve their homes:

> In the lower income groups the physical and cultural context of urban home life makes domestic fulfilment difficult. It is only in the higher paid elite groups that house pride becomes a viable proposition in terms of the type of housing available, or the cost of any refinement and personal expression in decoration, furnishing and fittings, and the likely education of the wife which enables her to interest herself in urban life at this level.[49]

Low cost housing schemes are being experimented with in all the East African countries. Simple improvement in existing houses can also be made. For example, shelves and grain

[49] Southall *Social Change, op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

storage barrels could inexpensively be made from clay in many areas. Some members of the Falasha tribe in Ethiopia do this, and even though they are extremely poor they have more satisfactory homes than their neighbours who have not learned to make things from clay.

Health problems and facilities

Medical facilities and personnel. The shortage of medical personnel and health facilities throughout the East African area is acute. It is particularly noticeable in Zambia and Malawi where health was a federal subject during the period of federation. As usual, it is the rural areas which suffer most from this shortage.

In Ethiopia there are 65 health centres and 400 health stations. However, it has been esimated that there is a need for 400 health centres and 5,000 health stations.[50] Centres are larger and more fully staffed than stations, with staff coming mostly from the Public Health College at Gondar.

Tanzania plans[51] to set up eighty-three rural health centres which will provide supervision for rural dispensaries, basic materials, and child welfare and clinical services. It is hoped to staff them with assistant medical officers or medical assistants and with nursing staff of two nurse midwives, two village midwives, and three nursing orderlies. It is understood that the nurse midwives will not be of SRN standard, but the training of village midwives will be systematized and nursing schools at Mwanza and Moshi will train for the nursing certificate at advanced level. There is also provision for the training of psychiatric nurses.[52] Four nurse tutors are being trained, with WHO assistance, to develop the teaching of public health nursing.

Nursing training has started in Zambia, but hitherto nurses of SRN standard have been expatriates or South African-trained. There are also about 200 Irish nurses in the country. Mission training has consisted of one year of nursing and one year of midwifery, which is not sufficient for modern scientific medicine. The use of modern drugs in areas of ignorance and superstition implies a high standard of professional integrity if there are not to be malpractices; and knowledge of social work to get them used at all is also essential.

One problem in getting nurses trained is lack of accommodation. If they are sent to Europe, there is a risk that when they qualify, the nurses may be absorbed by the understaffed but comparatively secure health services there and may not

50 By Dr. J.S. Prince, USAID.

51 *Tanganyika Five-Year Plan*, Vol. I, pp. 70-71, Vol. II, p. 118.

52 *Official Records of the WHO*, No. 30, p. iii; No. 139, p. 136.

return. Also, training away from home does not focus on local health conditions and needs. Clinics on the Copperbelt and in Lusaka are staffed by a nurse of SRN standard, one staff nurse or mission-trained nurse, and one orderly. WHO has suggested that maternity wings should be provided in the clinics with beds to meet emergencies. These are built and equipped, but cannot be used for lack of staff.

It is essential that medical and community development personnel learn to work together. So many possible improvements in health depend on prevention, especially where there is a lack of skilled staff, that nurses and other medical officers must get out into the community in order to be effective. Too often they are so pressed by demands on their curative skills that they have no time for preventive work. Another problem is one of status: a person with medical training may believe it is not fitting for him to tramp through the mud and perform certain trying but necessary health tasks. Community development workers can encourage medical personnel to leave their offices. Mothers particularly could benefit from more contact with nurses, both in improving their knowledge of child care and in providing proper care for themselves in the pre- and post-natal periods. Medical personnel in turn could help community development workers learn more about health problems and especially preventive measures. More use can also be made of audio-visual aids in the health field. Slides and movies about health problems can be extremely effective, but need to be closely related to local conditions.

Harmful health practices. The infant and child mortality rates in East Africa remain relatively high. Along with the problems of inadequate medical facilities, endemic diseases, and improper nutrition, traditional health practices are a major cause of death and sickness. Female circumcision is perhaps the most widely known of these traditional health practices; but there are a number of others which also cause harm — primarily as a result of infection from unsterile procedures and loss of blood. For example, in some places the uvula is cut out to cure respiratory diseases or improve the voice; and the roots of teeth are pulled out through the gum to cure diarrhoea. Dung is sometimes used on the umbilical cord to stop the bleeding; but tetanus often occurs as a result. Rickets is widespread in parts of Ethiopia not only because of malnutrition, but because babies are carried completely covered in *shamma* or cloth so that they will not be exposed to the "evil eye" of the sun. Lack of sanitation in food preparation is a common problem in the six countries which often results in the child becoming sick and sometimes dying. Even non-pathogenic organisms, when present in large numbers, may result in sickness or death for infants and children.[53]

[53] Dr. J.S. Prince, USAID.

It is difficult to eradicate traditional health practices, even with education. Pressures from relatives can be so great that even people with some college education give in to it. An educated woman in one of these countries was determined to ensure that her infant son should be circumcised in the hospital. However, her relatives were not content to wait for the hospital to schedule the procedure and insisted that a traditional practitioner be called in. The mother finally succumbed to the pressure, although in the end the baby had to be taken to the hospital because of damage inflicted by the traditional practitioner.

Family planning is another area that often seems to conflict with traditional outlooks. Yet there is a need to consider its usefulness in East Africa, not only to safeguard the health of some women, but to ensure satisfactory spacing and adequate care of children as well as an optimum population for economic and social development.

Traditional practices may also result in damage during childbirth. For example, massaging of the stomach, vagina, or uterus may cause tèars. One common tear, between vagina and bladder, leaves the mother without bladder control and incapable of sexual relations. Unless she is fortunate enough to get to a hospital where repairs can be made, she may be left by her husband and shunned by friends. Yet women often prefer to use traditional practitioners even when trained personnel are available.

Lack of cleanliness is a health problem in many places in these countries. People may not wash themselves or their clothes often because water and/or soap are hard to obtain. This is particularly true of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where because water is sold quite expensively, even to the poorest, water is generally used for cooking and drinking purposes and seldom for ablutions. Furthermore, frequent washings — usually by strenuous methods — tend to turn clothes into rags. Uncleanliness may result in skin diseases and typhus and relapsing fever from lice and fleas.

Chapter V

SOCIAL WELFARE and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Governments of all six countries have expressed concern with the improvement of community development and social welfare services. Programmes in these two areas are sometimes combined, sometimes separated, depending on the organization of the ministries concerned and the role of voluntary associations. In these countries social welfare is usually conceived in terms of providing specific services, such as care of orphans, help for the destitute, and rehabilitation of handicapped people. Target groups are often considered to be those with special problems which set them apart from the bulk of the population. Community development, however, is considered to be a process with the goal of reaching most or all of the people in a given area. It aims to encourage the people of the community to define problems and work towards their solution with as much reliance on their own initiative as possible. It also helps provide technical and other services designed to promote self-help and make it more effective.

Programmes in urban areas are varied and, to some extent, are supported by voluntary organizations. In a country like Uganda, where urban problems are not as pressing as they are in Kenya, urban social welfare and community organization programmes are less developed. The major problems faced by urban women which require the attention of social welfare services are desertion by husbands, inability to buy the minimum necessities for living, and delinquency on the part of the children. Help is also needed in adult education for handicraft skills, vocational training, and home economics, as well as health and day-care services. And there remains the need, for both men and women, to become involved in the community development process in order to work together to provide for common needs such as better roads, water supply, and sanitation systems.

While co-ordination of services is always important, it is particularly important in urban areas where there are more programmes than in rural areas and so more chances for overlapping and wastage. The voluntary agencies are co-ordinated in varying amounts in the six countries studied, by a voluntary council and/or the Government. Uganda and Kenya both have fairly strong councils, with Uganda's covering about 40 organi-

zations and Kenya's 52. However, in Addis Ababa, attempts to form an active co-ordinating council have not yet produced concrete results.

In towns where industry is developing, there are incipient schemes of social security, provident funds, provision for maternity leave and the like, but the East African countries have no country-wide framework for dealing with destitution. Responsibility for destitutes is usually left with the municipalities. However, neither they nor the national governments have the resources for care of the poor. For the present, those in need must rely primarily on churches and charitable organizations for help. Eventually national governments will undoubtedly develop comprehensive laws and provision for those who cannot support themselves, hopefully avoiding many of the detrimental aspects of welfare, such as categorical aid, as experienced in the industrialized countries.

Different approaches to community development

Different philosophies have led to somewhat different approaches to community development in the six countries. For example, in one of the countries visited, the members of a woman's club were trying to build a clinic by voluntary labour in the hope that the Government would supply a nurse. However, building is not usually woman's forte and idealizing such communal labour may merely be an attempt to make a virtue of necessity. The method used in another country of paying craftsmen to supervise the work appeared to be far more efficient. Relying on voluntary communal service may be a hangover from the colonial era when community development schemes to build roads and improve living conditions depended on volunteers. Today, the emphasis is on patriotism and practicality rather than community spirit in the newly independent countries. The trend is away from undifferentiated communal labour towards the development of skills and pursuits that will bring in money. The emphasis is on enlightenment rather than on emotional involvement.

It is interesting to compare the East African experience with that of India where enthusiasm for voluntary labour has come to be replaced by emphasis on the development of co-operatives and Panchayati Raj (i.e. the development of a set of inter-connected democratic and popular institutions at the village, block, and district levels). Here, the representatives of the people in the councils and co-operative organizations function with the support and assistance of the various government development agencies and both work together as a team. It was found in India that as long as the central government relied on voluntary committees to co-operate with them, programmes were static. It was when authority was given to elected representatives of Panchayats, who were

responsible to the people for what they did and how they spent the money, that progress was made. There was less mutual exhortation and more use of available technical skill.

In Zambia there was a great desire to take community development out of the sphere of social work and make it a co-operative activity which depended for leadership on "resource persons" within the community. But the lack of such resource persons has been tacitly acknowledged in the continuation of grants to missions and local authorities that run homecraft courses for girls and women who can contribute towards the cost of the materials used in the courses. Also, the Oppenheimer Department of Social Services is trying to emphasize co-operation between community development and social work.

In choosing between the "co-operative" and "community development" approaches the point needs to be strongly emphasized that one does not rule out the other. The protagonists of the co-operative philosophy of "each for all and all for each" need to realize that co-operatives imply the presence of a money economy. Moreover, if thousands of miles of roads, better water supply, and better housing have not been achieved through persistent clear-headed community development projects, the time may not be ripe for a breakthrough in production and commerce along the co-operative line.

On the other hand, in communities which are more fortunate or more advanced in cash production methods, where the combined forces of literacy, technical knowledge, and availability of good land make possible co-operative ventures, these should by all means be encouraged.

Expectations that living conditions can be improved are a prerequisite for community development as well as sufficient free time to enable participation. If a woman exhausts all her energy in providing a basic minimum for her family, she has none to spare for improvement. Human capital, like finance capital, can only be created by a surplus of production over consumption. In very poor areas women must be helped before their initiative and enterprise can come into play.

The need for some economic improvement with outside help to precede involvement of women in community development and education is vividly described by a social worker writing from a poor area:

> In L... Province, the soil is mainly poor. There is no ready market for cash crops (with the possible exception of fish) and village life is barely maintained at a very low level... Of a hundred women attending a clinic, perhaps two are able to sign their names... Poverty and lack of water supply close at hand do partly explain the dirtiness

and squalor found in most villages... The poverty of people practising subsistence agriculture without the opportunity for cash crops is increased by the drift to the towns of many able-bodied men. Many of the families coming for help have "lost" their father. He went to the Copperbelt some years ago to seek his fortune. He has not returned and probably never will. In depressed areas such as this, I do not think much worthwhile education of women can be done until village life itself is improved economically. Side by side with the economic improvements which are beginning to be put in hand, there could be instruction in home economics at village level.

The need for women's programmes

Unfortunately, few developing countries have involved women in the early years of community development programmes. For example, in Ethiopia there were no personnel in community development directly concerned with women — or children — for approximately the first six years. The first women village level workers did not start training until 1964. In other places, such as Uganda where rural women's clubs were started in 1946 by the Government, involvement of women had an earlier start.

Thus one reason for special programmes for women in community development schemes is that they are all too often neglected, perhaps because the administrators who are usually men, may not be aware of women's special needs and potential contributions. Another reason is that in many areas women lag behind men in educational attainment and social advancement; thus they need special attention to enable them to catch up. Thirdly, much of the progress hoped for as a result of community development depends almost completely on women. For example, it is up to them to provide better nutrition, safe drinking water, and a clean household. Also, the family's standard of living is partially dependent on how the woman handles family resources.

Community development directed towards women is focused on the uneducated masses of women who live in rural areas and urban slums. It is hoped that the two types of educated women, those few with university education and the larger number with secondary level education, will provide the leadership for community development with women. And much leadership does come in these countries from the educated members of women's clubs. Unfortunately, in some areas there is tension between educated and uneducated women, with jealousy on the one hand and lack of understanding on the other. However, where this problem exists, a community development approach may be able to ameliorate it. Sometimes educated women need help in recognizing that they do indeed

have something to give to uneducated women; when they gain in self-confidence they become interested in offering help.

In most communities in East Africa, programmes for women in community development must gain approval of male heads of household in order to be successful. Their approval, and indeed strong support, is especially necessary when the projects call for men to supply labour or pay expenses. Usually the best approach to winning men over is through programmes which involve the teaching of homecraft which enable wives to make improvements at home or through handicraft courses which result in marketable products or products for home use which would otherwise have to be purchased or done without. Initially, projects might cost little or nothing so that the financial aspects do not deter women or their husbands. In order to encourage women to participate, the first programmes need to start where the women's immediate interests lie, be it in dancing, child care, singing, or midwifery.

One valuable approach is the development of traditional welfare societies where these exist. For example, many Ethiopians belong to traditional mutual aid groups such as *senbete, mahber, idder,* and *ukub*. The functions of these groups are, respectively, taking turns to prepare one another's food on Sundays, inviting other group members and/or poor people for food and drinks on a particular saint's day, making monthly contributions which are put into a fund for funeral expenses of members or for occasions of great need, and making monthly contributions which are collected by one member each month who is usually chosen by lot, with each member being assured of a turn. In Addis Ababa, community development has been attempted through these traditional groups, but a problem has occurred when there have been long-standing arguments existing between these groups.

Programmes designed for women in community development include literacy, cooking, nutrition, housecraft, laundry, budgeting, child care, health, first-aid, home nursing, midwifery, handicrafts, agriculture, and family problems. In some areas more advanced subjects are offered such as environmental hygiene, civics, and leadership. The topics of family relationships and other social and emotional problems are not usually presented in a separate course, but are discussed as a secondary feature of other courses or meetings. For example, while women sit around and sew, a skillful leader may enable them to air family problems and search for solutions.

A useful project which some community development programmes offer women is nursery school or day-care for children. Often nursery programmes are held in centres where there are child-care courses so that observation and demonstration can be part of the training. In some centres women

help run the nurseries on a co-operative basis; this is helpful as few trained nursery school teachers are available. Tanzania's plan for training nursery school teachers is imaginative and workable. One girl was sent to Israel for training and, on her return, a school was opened in which this trained girl began to work together with a teacher and two helpers. This staff trained two girls who were expected to staff two more schools where other girls would be trained, and so on progressively. The mothers pay a little fee for the care that their children receive here; but poor children are admitted free. A nutrition snack is provided from charitable sources. In Zambia, however, the education department insists that no one may run a nursery school who does not hold an internationally recognized qualification, in spite of a shortage of such qualified personnel. Nevertheless, it is necessary to safeguard children by insuring sufficiently high standards of those who work with them. A mid-way solution must be found, as in Uganda, where there are "play groups".

Nursery or day-care is an important programme because it often enables older girls, who would ordinarily be kept home in charge of younger siblings, to attend school. It also gives free time to women who may then work or study or enjoy some relaxation. In Nairobi, Kenya and in Kitwe, Zambia, a marked difference was observed between classes for women who brought babies on their backs and those for women who had made other arrangements for their children. Sometimes women clamour for nursery schools to an overwhelming extent. At one annual general meeting of the Kilimanjaro district of the Union of Tanzania Women, the women wanted nursery schools for their children starting at one year of age. The platform had to point out the impossibility of good day-care for such young children and the necessity to start experimentally with four schools.

Yet for all their advantages, nursery programmes sometimes do not appeal to mothers as much as might be expected. For example, in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, a nursery programme is provided, but the stimulus and participation comes from educated women with higher positions in the community. The female villagers themselves did not initiate the programme nor do they help run it. Similar experiences have occurred in other villages, with impetus often coming from community development workers. While leadership from educated women is needed and admirable, more attempt can be made to involve village women.

Leadership in women's programmes

Keen observation is necessary in each locality to determine what the needs are and what approaches will lead to more participation by women. Programmes should be designed

with local conditions and concepts in mind, be it local cooking equipment or local distribution of roles. Besides lack of economic resources and local orientation in programming, so that women are too hard-pressed to be interested in community development or self improvement, a common problem in community development for women is lack of leadership. There are not enough women community development workers, nor local volunteers who have received training in providing leadership within the spirit of community development.

Local volunteers are of major importance to the success of community development because, if correctly chosen and encouraged, they are able to use the confidence other women have in them to inspire change. Leadership is also important to enable women to face the inevitable disappointments and still keep on going. For example, in Ethiopia, women's groups often become enthusiastic about sewing and wish to buy sewing machines. When they are unable to raise money for them, there is danger that the group will disintegrate. Encouragement and new directions for enthusiasm must be supplied.

One source of leadership, not yet sufficiently tapped, is student manpower. University and technical school students could, if inspired and organized, provide a great deal of help in community development. Schools or departments of social work and community development already provide help through their field work programmes, but few other schools or departments are involved. An exception is the College of Agriculture and Mechancial Arts, at Alemaya, Ethiopia, where the students have organized a strong community welfare organization including home economics and literacy programmes for women. The national service programme at the Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa also has provided a great deal of student manpower in the field by requiring students to teach or do some sort of development work for one year as part of their course of study.

Training

There are various programmes designed to train local women as volunteer leaders and sometimes even as paid aides, although not usually with the full status of community development worker since the training courses are much shorter. In Uganda such courses were started in the late 1940's. The enthusiasm of women for these courses is demonstrated in the experience of one three-week course given in 1949. Since it was held during the rainy season when most women were busy planting, not many women were expected to come. But forty-nine arrived, and mid-way through the course another twenty came who were scheduled to relieve the first group. However, the original women refused to go home, so that there

were sixty-nine attending the course at the end. "And the women had to bring in buses or on the back of the husbands' bicycles not only their personal clothing, but a mattress, bedding, lamps, crockery and cutlery!"[54] Another example of the determination shown by women trainees in Uganda occurred when a mother in one course gave birth to a baby and only two days later reappeared to take — and pass — the British Red Cross Examination in child care.[55]

Tanzania is developing short but intensive training courses for local leaders, both men and women, to be given at district training centres. Thirty of these are scheduled to be built during the Five-Year Plan. Course content is concerned with all matters fundamental to the understanding and achievement of local development targets, including agricultural subjects, basic health instruction, and courses for village shopkeepers and artisans. Directors of the centres are senior community development assistants acting as general programme organizers.

Ethiopia has submitted a proposal to UNICEF to set up and conduct two centres of thirty women volunteers each for six weeks of training in home management. If and when these centres are started, it would be useful if the wives of village level workers were among the ranks of the volunteers, for they can contribute a great deal working alongside of their husbands. Some wives of village level workers were trained in the first course given for women village level workers, but the entrance requirements for this course were subsequently raised and most wives of village level workers could not fulfil them. However, as single men and women are trained for community development in the same centres, it is not unlikely that some will get married and so form community development "teams".

Departments of community development are usually responsible for running these training centres and must find the resource personnel to provide the courses. Many officers in these departments are highly trained, often university graduates, and some studied abroad. Those who are involved in teaching courses or planning curriculum, both for volunteers and village level workers, need to be aware of any tendency they may have to unload on the trainees unnecessary sophisticated professionalism of the West, with its complex theories and techniques. In Africa a more direct and practical approach may be possible, and certainly less confusing for the trainees who often have little formal education.

A number of programmes exist, usually for a period of one or two years, for training men and women community development officers. Students may come directly from primary or

54 Hastie, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
55 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

secondary school or be drawn from various fields, notably teaching. Entrance requirements vary, and are often raised over the years as needs are seen more clearly and recruitment becomes less difficult. Besides the one- or two-year courses, shorter courses are often offered to people already in the field or in related fields.

All of the countries in the area have centres where women are trained as community development officers except Malawi. Here women are trained as homecraft instructors at the FAO college at Soche. At the Nsamizi Training Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, and at the Kenya Institute of Administration's Community Development Training Centre in Kebete, Kenya, students of community development have a chance to mix with students studying other fields such as public administration and law. This helps them to develop a sense of what is going on in related fields and encourage co-operation later on with people in other departments. Further more, it increases the chance that students will come to understand the principle of multi-casuality of social problems. Students in multi-purpose schools, for example, learn more easily that malnutrition can be caused by lack of correct foods, traditional attitudes, parasitic infection, and/or low earning power. They may then turn more readily for help to medical colleagues, sociologists, agriculturalists, and co-operative officers. Another benefit of multi-purpose schools is that students can readily change fields if they so desire.

At Tengeru in Tanzania, where a similar institution is established, there is the stimulus of working with students from other countries. There is co-operation between the community development and the agriculture training centres at Tengeru, and the International Co-operative College in nearby Moshi. The authorities would like to develop Tengeru as an international training centre also.

In some of the schools, such as Nsamizi, training for community development is closely linked with training for social welfare. This is a sound approach since basic courses are similar or identical for both specialities. Furthermore, community development workers sometimes find themselves doing what is more commonly labelled as social work, while social workers often become involved in community development programmes.

In Zambia and elsewhere, a major problem in recruitment is attracting women. Usually fewer women than men apply, and they are younger and have a lower educational background on the whole. Thus there is a continual shortage of women community development officers and those who do enter the field are often trained at a lower level than their male counterparts. Recruitment of women is often further limited by a refusal to take married women, unless they are

married to community development workers, because of their lack of mobility. However, at Nsamizi in Uganda and Soche in Malawi, married women are encouraged by the provision of nursery care for their babies.

The admission requirements for community development training courses are usually a certain number of years of primary or secondary school, roughly varying from grades six to eleven. This means that women of a fairly young age can enter training and, indeed, few older women have the prerequisite education to enter. However, young girls may have trouble establishing themselves within the community when they start to work. They may do well in straightforward teaching projects such as literacy or handicrafts, and may even organize various projects successfully. But older women will not be willing to take their advice on questions of homecraft and child nurture. One young female worker complained that her male counterparts had little trouble being accepted, but that she was always questioned when she went out into the community. However, as the girls develop confidence through experience, acceptance is possible. The alternative of asking girls to work in a field other than community development until they are older has the drawback that the girls may be lost to community development because they remain in their other work or marry and have children and are no longer available for prolonged training.

Planning a curriculum for the training of women community development workers has been a difficult process for several reasons besides the general problems of teaching community development to students of either sex. First of all, courses are often given in English and most women trainees are poorly prepared for this. Secondly, the facilities that will be available to the women in rural communities are generally very poor, necessitating development of special techniques in such fields as homecraft. Workers must learn how to work with the barest minimum facilities and under adverse circumstances. But often teachers are familiar only with more sophisticated methods in exotic environments. Thirdly, there is a shortage of home economics teachers; and home economics is a basic subject for women community development workers. And then, on an overall basis, courses for women trainees need to be adapted to their often limited educational background until more educated women are available in sufficient numbers. Lack of education does not mean that such women will be unsatisfactory community development workers. They must, however, be reached in new and imaginative ways. Experience with "neighbourhood workers" in the United States has shown that people with limited education can be quite successful in community development and social welfare work, but that they require the type of training which is tailored to their needs, and also sympathetic supervision by

trained workers. Courses run in Lusaka, Zambia and on the Copperbelt for relatively uneducated women covering child welfare, homecraft, social problems, and group work are organized in small groups so that there is plenty of time for discussion and the going over of the same materials repeatedly until they are absorbed. A great deal of practical work is also included; a necessity in training people who do not have much experience with formal schooling.

There are four major schools of social work in the East African region. The Oppenheimer Department of Social Services of the University of Zambia, School of Social Work of the Makerere University College in Uganda, and the School of Social Work, Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa, offer diplomas in social work. Entrance requirements are graduation from secondary school and/or passing specified examinations usually given at the termination of secondary school. In the past, the courses have lasted two years except at Oppenheimer where there was a regular three-year course or an eighteen-month course for university graduates. Now, in Addis Ababa, a four-year degree programme has just been started along with the two-year diploma course which will be phased out. At Oppenheimer, a four-year degree course has also begun. The School of Social Work at Machakos, Kenya, offers a professional certificate after a two-year course to those with eight years of formal education plus at least one year of experience in a field related to social work. These schools share the common problems of scarcity of indigenous teaching materials and theory adapted to conditions in East Africa, and also of lack of structure and supervision in organizations where students are placed for field practice and go to work after graduation.

The groundwork has been laid for social welfare and community development for women in East Africa. But the need remains to improve the quality and increase the quantity of training programmes at all levels so that more leadership is available and to give more support to existing programmes and to planning. In the welter of many pressing needs, there is a tendency for women's programmes to be relegated to a low priority for action. It does not speak well for women's programmes when a social worker in charge of them says that her plans are always filed away and so she has lost interest in her work. Exciting plans exist and some programmes have already proven very successful. The push forward needs to be continued with the active support and encouragement of all concerned.

Chapter VI

LEGAL and POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

In most traditional societies of Africa legal and moral sanctions have generally discriminated against women. For example, divorce and child custody practices have favoured men. Indeed, women often had no rights of parenthood in custody matters. Women were usually punished more severely than men for the same wrongdoing, such as adultery or desertion.[56]

Today, traditional legal ideas are changing although the process is a slow one. Sometimes change comes through promulgation of a civil code or ordinance superseding traditional practices. However, judges who come from a traditional background or who know how much change tradition-oriented people will accept, often interpret civil codes in such a way as to obtain traditional results. Much public education is required before new laws can become effective; they need to be known, understood, and accepted. A good example of publicizing a law occurred in the Sudan where young girls were repeatedly told at school and through, the mass media of their legal right to refuse an offer of marriage.

In East Africa, traditional and civil law often co-exist side by side. For example, in Tanzania marriage is valid, under the relevant circumstances, in customary, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, and Civil law.[57] As more and more women learn about the legal avenues open to them, their actual legal rights increase. And even those still bound by customary law often have an improved legal position because of modifications in customary law made by the Government. Thus in Tanzania, it has been declared that a dowry is not necessary to validate marriage and that a marriage certificate is necessary even under customary law.

On the whole, the women of East Africa are faring well in the acquisition of formal legal rights, but the actual fulfilment of these rights tends to lag behind.

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[56] See E/CN.14/URB/13, pp. 2,8.

[57] See United Nations publication, Sales No. 66.II.K.7, *Family, Child and Youth Welfare Services in Africa*, pp. 68ff.

The progress that women are making in enlarging their legal rights is important because it also affects the way in which women can exercise their political rights.

> Legislation guaranteeing women equal political rights cannot be fully effective if at the same time, laws or customs permit child betrothal and child marriages; if equal parental rights and duties are not accorded to the mother; if women do not have equal rights of ownership, management and inheritance of property; and if women are not equal before the law with their husbands, fathers and brothers. In short, if a woman is treated as a second-class citizen in her status in the family and in economic life generally, she cannot be a full citizen in the political sphere.[58]

At the same time, political rights affect legal status since women may be able to better that status through political action.

In East Africa, women did not face a long struggle to obtain political rights as they did in some Western countries. By the time constitutions were being written in the six East African countries, the rights of women to vote and to hold office were well established in many parts of the world. These rights were granted upon independence, except in Ethiopia where they were granted in 1955. And in Tanganyika, women with certain qualifications were permitted to vote in the first territorial elections in 1957 even before universal suffrage was granted at independence.[59]

Thus the achievement of formal political rights is a past issue for East African women. Instead they must look forward to using these rights to their own and their country's advantage.

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58 *Civic and Political Education of Women*, p. 16.

59 *Constitutions Electoral Laws and other Legal Instruments relating to Political Rights of Women*, 28 September 1966, United Nations document (A/6447), Annex, pp. 1, 10, 20.

Chapter VII

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY LIFE

There are many forms of participation in the life of the community. Some of these have been touched upon previously, such as the participation of women in economic activities and in community development. This chapter is concerned rather with the participation of women in political life and in women's organizations.

Although in some tribes women, particularly elders, assumed importance at public functions, traditionally East African women were not active in public life. However, the struggle for independence mobilized women as well as men and they started to play a more active role in politics and community life. Except in Ethiopia where there are no political parties, political activity has provided an arena for women and has also shaped to some extent the development and programmes of women's organizations.

Action for the emancipation of women and their increased participation in community life occurs at two levels. A small women elite — those with higher education and/or prominent positions in society — become active in politics and women's organizations. They are often involved in fighting injustices and restrictions which no longer apply to themselves. The majority of women, however, have little or no interest in participating in activities concerned with implementing their political, legal and social rights. They leave theory behind and "come out" in more practical ways to do as they wish rather than to try to change attitudes directly or to get laws passed. Both types of action, that on a small scale but organized and that on a larger, popular basis but haphazard, combine to produce progress.

Where women are active in politics and in government, they may be more accepted at the national than at the local government level. For example, in Uganda women are encouraged to participate on the national level, but are held back by tradition at the local level. One or two women have been able to rise above this obstacle in Tanzania. In the six East African countries there are a small number of women who have achieved prominence in the political or governmental spheres; but they are exceptional. Strong political participation is still

the domain of men. According to Dr. Hamamsy of the United Arab Republic,

> Women's limited contribution to political leadership may be attributed to the recency of their entry into the political sphere of activity and their lack of 'political maturity' and experience; their preoccupation with domestic and family obligations which do not allow them the time nor the sustained effort needed to achieve a position of leadership in the highly competitive world of politics; the existence in some countries of an ambivalent attitude towards political activity (while politics is admitted as the road to power and influence, it is, at the same time, regarded as a 'rough and rude' game in which women especially should not dabble or else they risk losing their dignity and integrity); and above all, the cultural attitudes towards the role of women, which, in spite of the formal recognition of their political rights, still consider their place to be the home and their primary role to be wives and mothers.
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> The impact of traditional upbringing on the women themselves makes them timid about assuming positions of leadership and makes them as reluctant as the men to vote other women into responsible positions... Women have to be deeply convinced of the importance of their political participation and of their ability to cope with political responsibilities if they are to contribute to any appreciable degree to the political leadership of a nation. This points to the important part that civic education needs to play in order that women's political rights do not become a 'legal fiction'[60]

Women's organizations

East African women have been drawn into participation in community life — in some instances into political or quasi-political activity — through the women's organizations. These organizations have been able to articulate women's needs and, as organized groups, have had some impact on governmental decisions and national policy. Their centres of organization and activity are usually urban areas although some groups attempt to develop branches in rural communities. However, because of difficulties in finding leadership and resources, development of women's groups in rural areas is often left to departments of community development. This may be advantageous because educated women in cities usually live in

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60 Laila Shukry El Hamamsy, "The Political Role of Women in Tropical and Sub-tropical Countries," *Women's Role in the Development of Tropical and Sub-tropical Countries* (Brussels: Report of the Thirty-first Meeting of the International Institute of Differing Civilizations, 1959), pp. 479-480.

conditions far removed from those of rural life and as a result their ideas may be unrelated to the needs of rural women.

The women's organizations have many origins. Some were started by the old colonial regimes as a means of educating women, but have taken root and become strongly independent and strongly African movements. Many clubs were started by the missions. Others were started in co-operation with Europeans as a means of bridging communal differences between wives of European officers and the few educated African women, or between one class of African women and another; and these have social rather than economic or political aims. Some are branches of world movements, such as the YWCA or Girl Guides. The departments of community development in each country encourage the growth of women's clubs and use them in their literacy projects and home improvement and rural development programmes. Sometimes women who are employed take part in trade unions and the activities of co-operatives. Except in Ethiopia where circumstances differed, the women's clubs played a great part in the struggle for independence and there were strong women's sections in the political movements. One woman may join several clubs as she widens her range of interests and it is therefore easier to ascertain the number of clubs run by each organization than to calculate the number of women participating in all organizations together.

In the achievement and celebration of independence, women moved about their countries participating in political rallies. It might have been possible for disillusionment to follow when it was discovered that freedom did not at once bring economic and social improvement. The political leaders have therefore tended to throw back upon the women the onus of achieving political and social aims. They are encouraged to form "umbrella' organizations covering all existing societies and associations, and in which the "grass-roots" clubs can have the guidance and support of people in the more sophisticated club movements which cater to the better educated. Progress is being made in reducing the natural jealousies which arise between the educated and the uneducated, between those speaking only a vernacular language and those who use English in their daily life, and between those who have developed contacts with world movements and have had the benefit of foreign study and travel, and those who have never been out of their own country. The world "umbrella" is generally used to indicate that no participating organization need lose its identity.

The aims and activities of the different women's organizations vary, but in general the emphasis is on improving women's knowledge and skills so that they can attain a higher standard of living and contribute more fully to the develop-

ment of their country. Their contributions are often in the field of welfare; for example, running day care centres, training programmes, and orphanages. Women's clubs provide a training ground for women to develop the organizational abilities and confidence necessary for active participation in public life. At their best they can experiment with pilot programmes which, if successful, may attract governmental aid. One suggested project where women's clubs might be helpful is the development of reception centres in urban areas for rural migrants.

Women's clubs are financed in a number of ways. These include membership subscriptions, donations, government subsidies and fund-raising events such as dances and bazaars. A brief description of the various women's movements in the six countries should illustrate their variety and the multiple influences which have shaped their development.

The Women's League in Malawi started as an improvement society for the wives of civil servants living in "the lines" at Zomba, but later became strongly political. Recently, there has been an exodus of educated women from Malawi and the movement is strongly popular. The need for literate members to act as secretaries and organizers is in part being met by adherents from the Mvenos (guilds) of the Christian Presbyterian Church of Africa. Literacy is a main plank of the party programme.

In Northern Uganda also, women's sections take active part in the work of political parties, but their patriotism tends to be directed to their local communities rather than to Uganda as a whole. They are successful in getting women councillors elected at the district level. For purposes of social improvement, Uganda women will join clubs of the Mothers' Union (Church of Uganda) which has about 10,000 members; of the Catholic Grail, which has about 9,000 members; or those run by the Community Development Department which have about 33,000 members. In Buganda, the Uganda Council of Women eschews politics and is dedicated to public affairs. Members gave evidence, together with other voluntary women's organizations, to the Commission of Enquiry into Marriage and Divorce and the Status of Women in Uganda. There are nearly 150 voluntary organizations in Uganda, some communal, some local, but many of them are branches of international organizations. The National Council of Voluntary Social Services which has a co-ordinating committee has been established. The Uganda Association of Women's Organizations has been set up as an umbrella organization for about ten member organizations and has about 80,000 women members.

The Women's Brigade in Zambia is the women's section of the United Independence Party with a membership of around

50,000. It is now turning from politics to the struggle for social progress. In this country the tension among women of the various classes seems to be acute. The reasons are fairly obvious. Formerly, African education was left to the missions, while government schools were for European children only. As the country is vast, with poor communications, large areas were left untouched. In some parts, even where there are schools, children have difficulties in reaching them. For example, the children from one valley in the Bemba area come to school on Sundays carrying a week's ration of maize, etc. There is no boarding accommodation for them. They camp out in a hut and cook for themselves. When, through a succession of disasters, there was famine in the valley, they arrived with so little food that they were too weak to study by Wednesday and had to be sent home on Thursday. They came again on Sunday. Missionaries who had a very modest sum of money available saved the situation by buying and giving them groundnuts which have a high nutritive value. In such difficult circumstances, girls have tended to drop out of schools.

In Rhodesia there are many mission schools, and qualified women have tended to come north to Zambia as nurses and teachers. Others come from South Africa. The schooling situation for local women has vastly improved and the secondary schools for European children which used to be run by the federal government have been desegregated. The fact remains, however, that a high percentage (sometimes estimated as high as 90 per cent) of Zambian women over 16 years of age have had two years or less of education and feel themselves under-privileged compared with the immigrants.

The situation is complicated by the rapid development of industry on the Copperbelt where the standard of living is comparatively high and where refugees from south find jobs. There are far more opportunities for training here than in the rest of the country. Zambian women resent the fact that while they carry on a good deal of the heavy work in the fields, paid employment goes to their more fortunate sisters from across the border. Yet, the two groups of women could be of great help to each other.

Tanzania affords an example of a country where the women are coming together for their mutual profit. The *Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania* (Union of Tanzania Women) was the political branch of the Tanzania African National Union and had trade union members in its ranks. Also, many women were organized in international movements and church clubs. There were social clubs as well with the aim of promoting racial harmony. At independence there was some friction, but under pressure from the Government a constitution was drawn up by the Union (UWT) and the communal and class storm has been weathered. All women's organizations come under the

umbrella of the UWT. The educated women are beginning to be a source of strength to the uneducated. Their hand is apparent in formulating aims which include literacy and education in citizenship; health education to increase the span of life; definition of social problems and the building of a progressive social framework; increasing women's gainful employment within and outside the home; running nursery schools for basic social training; cultural development of handicrafts, dancing, and folklore; leadership training.

The Tanzanian Government, on its side, offers orientation courses for leaders, and the women themselves are promoting training seminars. One member of the Council of the UWT is Commissioner of Girl Guides and Secretary of the YWCA. She has had experience of training in both these organizations and has suggested that the chairman, secretary, treasurer, and two members from each of the five districts of Dar-es-Salaam should meet in a seminar on the history, constitution, and programme of the UWT and should have instruction in how to keep books and other points of business management. District commissioners and community development staff are to help run similar meetings in other parts of the country. Leaders of the church organizations urge their members to join the "grass roots" clubs and help with the work of education. The Catholic Church in particular has about 400 sisters and lay workers, African and expatriate, who are ready to help. The work that the YWCA does and can do, is appreciated. Other voluntary societies, such as the Red Cross, are proud of their recognition by the international movements as national societies, but the contribution they can make is limited by lack of funds. The Red Cross in Dar-es-Salaam has concentrated on teaching hygiene and nutrition in grammar schools.

In Kenya the women have used to advantage their contacts with international movements such as the Countrywomen of the World, the International Council of Women, and the Women Presbyterians of Canada. Women of some education have been active within the YWCA. Many of the leading women have had the opportunity to travel abroad and money has been provided from abroad for running seminars which the women have found stimulating and interesting.

The *Maendeleo* clubs in rural areas and clubs run by the Department of Community Development are, however, sometimes too remote to keep in touch with the headquarters of the *Maendeleo* in Nairobi. They are at present actively interested in economic enterprises. In some cases, the women are running produce co-operatives. The clubs make and sell handicrafts for which the tourist trade provides a market. The women show some adaptability in making goods that will sell at a reasonable price and use mostly local products. Chamois

leather polishers are a strong line. They have, however, imported little dolls wholesale from the United Kingdom which they dress up in tribal costume and which have proved readily marketable. A craft co-operative in the Kikuyu country made £500 in a few months by selling handicrafts; and its members were about to build a hall by voluntary labour so that clinics and classes could be held in it. The *Maendeleo* had had a gift of handlooms from India, and the Government was finding a shed and an instructor so that the women could get to work. Handlooms may be useful to learn on, but if weaving is to become economic, power driven looms will be necessary.

Women seemed to have a great sense of social service. They have been asked to take up the problem of child-care and it was reported that a group of very poor women in a near-famine area were trying jointly to maintain and care for nine little orphans. A government system of relief which would, in time of emergency, call upon international funds seems to be a necessity.

The Kenya Council of Women, with the help of funds from overseas, ran very successful seminars on current problems for its own members. The success of this venture led them to run an East African Women's Seminar attended by women from the neighbouring countries. It was much appreciated by many of the participants and the organizers began to promote seminars in all regions of the country, which the *Maendeleo* slightly resented.

The kind of outlook developed in such seminars is demonstrated in the resolutions the women agree on. For example, at the Second National Kenya African Women's Seminar in 1963, the women urged the first governor of Kenya to nominate at least four women to fill national seats in the new legislature, wanted the governor to nominate at least one woman to be a representative at the United Nations, and desired new legislation to be promulgated concerning women's right to inherit property.[61]

The friendly contacts made at the East African Women's Seminar bore fruit. The Kenya women were aware of the Tanzania move towards unity in the *Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania* and decided to follow suit. They drew up a constitution for an umbrella organization and this was accepted at a joint meeting of all the clubs. The new organization is called the National Council of Women of Kenya. Individual membership has been abolished. (Individual membership is a device by which the International Council of Women admits distinguished and influential figures to its membership and gives them voting power.) Expatriates who are resident in the country may join as "Friends of the National Council" or through a member organization. "Friends" may attend meet-

[61] "Kenya African Women's Seminar", *Women Today*, VI (December 1963), p. 5.

ings and give help, but they do not pay subventions and have no right to vote. This zeal for independence from outside influence does not amount to racialism. Women speak gratefully of money received for relief work from Indian business men, and of educational trips abroad organized by international women's movements. Ideally, the *Maendeleo* which has over 45,000 members, would like the members of all participating organizations of the National Council to join the *Maendeleo* as individual members. Then the Council could be called the *Maendeleo* and would occupy an equivalent position to the UWT in Tanzania.

In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association (EWWA) is the major women's organization. It has a smaller membership than women's organizations in the other five countries, perhaps because there was no long-term colonization and so no stimulus to organize to attain independence. The EWWA is concentrated primarily in Addis Ababa, although there are some more or less independent branches in several other cities. It was founded in 1931 by Empress Menen and still remains under royal patronage. The aims of the association, which is apolitical, include relieving the distress of the needy, improving child-care and welfare, and contributing to the advancement of women. In Addis Ababa it runs a training school, a clinic, an orphanage with school, and three community schools. Clubs in rural areas are mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of National Community Development. While the women's club movement is growing slowly in Ethiopia, a large number of women are active in various traditional clubs which have welfare, religious, economic and social functions.

The women's movements bring together progressive forward-looking women who are ready to make great efforts in self-improvement and "nation building". A problem, however, is that the clubs do not represent all women. For example, the *Maendeleo* clubs seem to meet the needs of literate more than illiterate women. Sometimes the weak may be coerced to participate. It is hardly right, for example, to insist that overburdened women should attend literacy classes whether they make progress in reading or not. Some of the teaching is inexpert and there are no means available to know whether a woman's eyesight is defective. Governments insist that the club movement is voluntary, but some clubs are over-zealous. Again, there are areas too depressed to develop a women's club movement and where, as an African parliamentary secretary remarked, "we really need a social worker in every village". At a certain level of subsistence, exhortation without individual sympathy and help is not enough. Women are anxious to help each other, and training facilities are increasing; but governments must make personnel available to the clubs which do not yet have sufficient leadership resources.

Relations with international women's organizations

Considerable help has been afforded to the women's movements in East Africa by the large international women's organizations, especially those that have Non-Governmental Organization status with the United Nations. The contact has naturally been made with African women who can speak English and this means women of some education. A much valued type of help has been the opportunity for individual women to travel abroad for a variety of courses: from a brief study tour of a few weeks' duration to an opportunity to follow courses for six months or a year. There have even been scholarships for protracted university study. Women speak with enthusiasm of even brief visits abroad. Asked what she got out of a six-month tour, one woman replied, "It opened my eyes. I noticed that the children in Europe were much healthier and happier than our children. So I came to understand that this was due to diet. I was able then, to learn about nutrition and to come back and teach our women." Another said, "It made me brave. If women can come out in these countries, they can come out here." A third said of a visit to West Africa, "It gave me hope, when I saw all that women were doing there."

Women are grateful, too, for the opportunity to take a qualification although they will not necessarily use their training in the field for which it was given. Provided they have learned to think and to form their judgement and direct their actions on a basis of consideration of the total situation, the actual course they have covered does not matter. Perhaps because the organizations have known how to pick outstanding women, it is only a few who come back with dogmatic ideas about a "right" way of doing things when the field of operations is totally different from the one in which they studied.

Good advice conveyed by tactful consultants is also highly welcome. Sometimes even the moral support of someone with wider experience will help clubs to take the plunge in new development or to branch out in new directions. Sometimes advice is coupled with timely financial aid. An unobtrusive contribution is made here and there by expatriate women living in the country, who will quietly undertake clerical work in the background or use their cars to convey messages to club members. The efficacy of this kind of service underlines the need for training secretaries among the women themselves, although this raises the whole problem of payment for clerical work. Paper work should be kept to a minimum. There is no need to unload on low income countries the passion for paperwork that besets the West. Only necessary accounts and records should be kept. If meetings are effectively summoned by word of mouth, there is no need to post notices, and if people know what they want to discuss, an agenda on a blackboard is sufficient.

Conferences and seminars such as the East African Women's Seminar and the Seminar of the Associated Countrywomen of the World at Nairobi, Kenya are important because of the opportunities for sharing ideas and the experience of travel they afford. It might be a very good thing to hold a seminar in West Africa at which market women could meet from West and East, but language would present a problem. It was said that "Seminars are good; but the seminar habit is bad." The purpose of a seminar is cross-fertilization of ideas. The ideas must then be left to germinate and action on them can only be taken after careful assessment of their applicability in new situations. On the other hand, resolutions can be taken at conferences, because the theory is that documentation and study have gone before, and that some consensus of opinion can be evolved.

Resolutions, however, tend to be couched in very general terms and are not always as relevant to all countries as they may seem at first. A woman from Kenya who had attended the United Nations Seminar on the Status of Women in Family Law in Lomé, Togo, spoke of her experience to the National Council of Women of Kenya at their annual general meeting and her reaction was that the whole situation would have to be carefully studied.

The international organizations would all insist that they do not set out to form branches and national councils of their movements but only admit indigenous organizations already formed. In view of the very great help they can give in finance and education, it is unfortunate that some of their rules are rather rigidly conceived and would demand a high degree of acculturation on the part of East African groups if they were rigorously adhered to. They may have, for instance, an undue resistance to government aid and an insistence on independent action, which is out of place in countries where there are hardly any financial resources other than government assistance, very few businesses, no trusts, and where remote branches of the movement are, if anything, left too much to their own resources and are given too little help by anyone. Furthermore, much international aid is channelled through national governments. If help from government, which is natural in a period of emergence, is too much criticized, there, will be a reaction against international co-operation. This would be unfortunate; for the international organizations afford limitless opportunities for the development of friendship and understanding by interchange of members and visits to homes and clubs in other countries.

International contact is an educative, two-way process. But there is no system of organization that is suitable for every situation. Any national organization should be prepared to say, in the international context, "This is our organization.

This is how we like it. Take what is useful and leave what is not." A difficulty arises because many international women's organizations today enjoy African contacts and would like to have correspondents in the new countries. This sometimes may be an undue strain on the African clubs, although some women seem to like to attend different varieties of organizations in much the same way as university students would attend lectures in different disciplines in order to benefit from the stimulus and to find out where the truth lies. The international organizations, in various ways, are trying to get together and to avoid overlapping in their projects. This is highly desirable.

East African women have a contribution to make to the international women's movements in showing how status can be achieved by usefulness to the community. They, for their part, benefit highly from the sophistication that comes with visits abroad. Considering the important social and economic role which these women play in their own countries, they deserve to be more in evidence as participants at international governmental conferences. For this, the apprenticeship in non-governmental organizations, with members of their own sex, may stand them in good stead.

Equal citizenship and equal opportunity have been conceded as principles in all these countries; yet there are many ways in which women are under-privileged. Feminism does not meet the situation. What is needed is practical help in overcoming difficulties of education and economic development, with some insistence on the principle that the demands made on women and their ambition to meet them should not outrun their resources of physical and psychological strength. Much progress here can be made through women's clubs.

Chapter VIII

SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

The conditions of change in East Africa are presenting new opportunities, new challenges, and new difficulties to the women of this sub-region. Many are coming forward with enthusiasm and energy to take advantage of the possibilities for higher status and broader and more satisfying roles. Others are left behind, either untouched by the new developments or already hurt by them.

In all six East African countries, progress has been made in widening the scope of opportunity and activity available to women. Programmes in education, training, community development, social welfare, and health, designed either for women alone or for men and women together, are becoming more numerous. Women are entering the modern sector of the economy in increasing numbers and are learning to exercise their political and legal rights. Men and women are finding ways to adjust to the impact of new and unfamiliar circumstances on their lives, and, at best, are trying to select the promising aspects of the new while preserving what they consider worthwhile in the traditional.

But when conditions of life are in a state of change, progress is inevitably uneven and sometimes painful. It is clear that the women in East Africa need help at many levels in grasping the opportunity to develop improved ways of life. They need more schools and conditions which will encourage them to attend school. They need more women teachers and curricula more adequately adapted to their needs. They need the support of their parents who should be involved in the development of school programmes so that they approve of these programmes.

Women need equal access with men to training programmes, and these programmes must be well designed in order to give women sufficient competence in skills which the economy can use. These programmes should be flexible and provide for drop-outs and adults as well as students in regular courses. Successful programmes should be duplicated in other parts of the country, and information about them should be exchanged on a sub-regional basis. The development of multi-purpose training schools, sub-regional training institutes for higher levels of instruction, and vocational training services should be encouraged.

Rural women who remain in agriculture need help in adopting better farming methods and in being supplied with an improved infrastructure so that their produce can readily be marketed. There is need for the development of water supply, communications, roads and transport, marketing and storage facilities, and co-operatives. These improvements can come in part through the process of community development and the action of women's movements; but technical and financial assistance are also required. Almost everywhere there is a shortage of middle-level workers to provide leadership in the community. This is so in health, education, marketing, and agriculture as well as in community development. National government ministries often have highly qualified personnel, many of them university graduates. to devise the overall programme from the capital. But there are few middle-level workers who go into the field and actually help put the programmes into being. Training courses must be opened up as quickly as possible to provide these middle-level workers. Meanwhile much reliance must still be put on expatriates — professionals, technicians, missionaries, and various kinds of volunteers.

As training programmes increase and improve and as the economy is developed, more and more women will be able to find jobs in the modern sector of the economy. In some cases employers may need to be encouraged to hire women and to provide appropriate protection for them. The African woman has always had an important role in the economy, and her ability to work, even though under new circumstances, is important to her. As women make substantial contributions in the new economy, they will develop their sense of self-worth and regain the prestige formerly granted them by men for their role in agriculture. They will also be able to contribute more effectively to the political process, which will in turn enable them to enlarge their rights and responsibilities at work. Community development will play an important part in encouraging and enabling women to take part in all facets of community life. It will also help develop leadership among women, as will the various women's movements.

With increased participation in the economy and political life as well as the availability of education and training to prepare them for this participation, women will undoubtedly come to be viewed more sympathetically by men, who will recognize not only the new power of women, but also the advantages they can gain from the advancement of women. Educated women are more likely to understand their educated husbands and to bring up children in the way educated fathers wish. And as men and women learn to develop a stable marriage relationship under the new conditions—usually meaning a nuclear or modified extended family situation — children will certainly benefit.

The United Nations, its specialized agencies, voluntary organizations and individual countries can provide a great deal of aid for African women to hasten the period of transition and decrease its hardships. Many programmes have already been started: ILO and the Swedish Government provide secretarial training in Kenya, WHO has helped in the development of rural health centres, the United Nations provides experts in many fields to help with education and training, UNESCO provides teaching materials, UNICEF provides milk for nursing mothers and aids mothercraft/homecraft programmes, many individual countries build schools and hospitals in East Africa — the list is indeed very long. But there is a need for co-ordination of programmes, a function which might well be performed at the Regional level from where specialists in women's programmes can operate. Co-ordination is important in making research known to all those interested so that plans for new programmes can make full use of knowledge about existing needs and previous programmes.

Co-ordination is also required to encourage the various aid-giving agencies and countries to work together, perhaps, for example, in developing polytechnic institutes rather than narrowly specialized schools. And it is essential that a Regional scheme ensures that all types of programmes take into account the participation of women where relevant. Since women make up approximately one-half of the population in East Africa, programmes which ignore them ignore a major force which can promote or impede progress. In some programmes there is no need for special attention to women's needs, as progress can be made tnrough general improvement affecting both men and women. However, certain areas require special attention to women. Such fields would include agricultural programmes designed for places where the women do most of the farming.

The women in East Africa are "coming out", perhaps more slowly than some of their West African sisters, but still with verve and style and thoughtfulness. Sometimes it is their own reserve that holds them back, sometimes the disapproval of their men, and sometimes the lack of training facilities, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. With well-planned help from their own governments, international and bilateral sources, many more women can be reached and will learn to improve their basic living conditions. Those who receive further training will be able to make increasingly more important contributions to their country's development.