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Beyond Fishing:

KCDF's approach to capacity development

by Nora Mwaura

Bernard van Leer ● *Foundation*

About the paper

In BEYOND FISHING, the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) documents its experiences as a local capacity building and grantmaking organisation and describes how it supports community based projects in developing their organisational capacity.

In recent decades, development organisations have been supporting capacity building mainly through training. In this they have often been influenced by the paradigm, 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for today, but teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime'. KCDF takes this paradigm a step further, moving 'beyond fishing', and emphasising the importance of 'helping the fisherman to gain access and increased control over all the resources to which he has a right'.

The first section of the Working Paper concentrates on the value of capacity building and grantmaking as a strategy for development in general. However, KCDF's work is also making a particularly meaningful contribution to meeting the goals of Early Childhood Development. In Section Two of the paper, KCDF explains its view on the value of a holistic development approach to improving the well-being of children. This is illustrated with a description of the work of KCDF with the Nyuat and El-barta projects, two of the Bernard van Leer Foundation's partner organisations in the Samburu district of Kenya.

This description of KCDF's approach to development can be informative for readers working as programme staff, policy makers or academics, whose interests lie in finding ways to achieve local autonomy and participation. Funders and other development agencies will find that KCDF gives a useful description of the role that local grantmaking and endowment building can play in furthering community development; and of how a local community foundation can make a difference in this respect. Finally, the publication will appeal to a wide readership interested in concrete examples of integrated projects in support of the development of the young child.

About the author

Nora Mwaura, a Social Worker by profession, spent over twenty years in Kenya working in the area of community development. She joined Kenya Community Development Foundation as Programme Officer for Community Development in 1997, and worked with others on the KCDF team to develop and implement a grantmaking approach that would help to strengthen communities rather than create dependency. She believes strongly in the value of viewing development holistically, using a variety of interventions to tackle the very complex problems of poverty.

Cover photo: Small gardens near the river have provided vegetables to the community, as well as income for those who are involved in the projects in Samburu district (See Section Two). © All photos by KCDF

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Foreword

All over the world, within different societies and across a wide range of settings, young children are supported in their development through local projects. Given the different contexts in which these early childhood development projects operate, the way in which they are carried out may vary greatly. In some circumstances, it may be crucial to concentrate on creating the necessary conditions for supporting young children's development, and therefore it may be useful to take a wider perspective on how to promote children's well-being.

The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) is a local organisation which takes such a wider perspective. Living conditions can be very elementary in areas where KCDF works, and the overall health, education and care structures tend to be very poorly developed. Without these facilities, any projects designed to support young children and their parents may have little local capacity to build upon, so that achievements will be more difficult to sustain. In such circumstances, strengthening local capacity to address these basic needs may be a crucial factor in creating the necessary conditions for sustainable development.

KCDF takes a different view of capacity building to that of many other organisations, who limit their approach to training and skills development. Financial constraints, for example, are a particular challenge for local organisations, and could potentially make a project unsustainable.

KCDF's capacity building programme is designed to give these organisations the financial leverage and the room they need to manoeuvre, and to allow communities to gain more control over local resources. The programme helps projects to build a stronger institutional basis through contacts and partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental institutions. It also enables community members to sustain the good practices that exist and enhance these with the development of new knowledge and skills.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has supported KCDF's work with two projects in the Samburu district of Kenya: the Nyuat Integrated Programme and the El-barta Child and Family Project. Observations and recent evaluations of these projects indicate that capacity building has played an important role in improving the quality of life for children in the El-barta and Nyuat project areas. Thus, capacity building has made a difference, both through interventions that enrich life in the community in general, and through improving the skills of caregivers specifically. Community based organisations are now able to establish and run their own Early Childhood Development projects, and parents have successfully taken up full management of the local daycare centres. This is an excellent example of how addressing wider developmental challenges in a holistic and coherent way can help to advance the well-being of young children.

Introduction

As a relatively young community development foundation working to build capacity of local Kenyan organisations and communities through a process involving hands-on grantmaking, Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) has been inspired by the experiences of those who are making a positive difference in communities that grapple with the dilemmas and challenges of development. We have, at the same time, been motivated to approach community development with an open mind, questioning common assumptions and models of the past, and sometimes even daring to view development in new ways, articulate concepts through different examples, and to try less common approaches.

In recent decades, charity and relief work by development organisations have given way to a greater focus on capacity building, influenced by the paradigm 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for today, but teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime' [1]. This shift to capacity building, mainly through training, has, in many ways, been an improvement, particularly where it has been seen as a broadening of the options for development interventions rather than as a substitute for earlier approaches. However, at KCDF, we have questioned whether the paradigm really goes far enough. Is it enough to teach the fisherman the skills he needs to

fish if he does not own his own boat and is therefore, subject to continual rental charges, sometimes exploitative? Or, suppose a factory upstream is pouring pollutants into the river and killing off the fish? Or, what if he is unable to sell his fish due to market conditions beyond his control?

We have tried to take the paradigm a step further, emphasising the importance of helping the fisherman to gain access and increased control over all the resources to which he has a right. We call our story 'beyond fishing'.

This paper reviews KCDF's approach and experiences as a capacity building community development foundation, sharing some of our lessons from that work in general. We also give specific examples of how it has made a difference in the lives of young children.

Some major themes include:

The importance of the process

With an emphasis on development of people rather than 'things' (such as equipment, buildings and other material expressions of development), KCDF has learned the importance of the process of capacity building. Of course, the tangible end result is also important, but

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[1] *Throughout this paper, 'fisherman' may also be read as 'fisherwoman'. KCDF's capacity building applies equally to women as to men.*

our experience has shown that the process of capacity building has the potential to start a chain reaction of improvements, that continue to strengthen the organisation and lead to visible results in the community, long after the end of the capacity building initiative.

The value of grantmaking for capacity building

Because grants can be used to purchase a variety of services and material support, including critical technical support in areas where the donor may lack expertise, grantmaking is a very flexible tool for capacity building. It also gives the grantee organisation experience in financial management, and helps to attract other donors.

The value of embedding early childhood development in a holistic approach to community development

Poor communities such as those described in this paper are often characterised by inadequate health services, insufficient food, and lack of clean water and other amenities. In such an environment it is very problematic for parents and caregivers to provide for even the most basic needs of children. Our experience shows that by building the capacity of organisations and communities to improve their quality of life in general, we are also supporting them to

meet the needs of their children. Young children can benefit from a variety of developmental, social and cultural interventions. At the same time, Early Childhood Development (ECD) projects cannot be compartmentalised and seen in isolation from other aspects of community development. In the second part of this paper we illustrate this with two examples.

The role of the capacity building organisation

In every community, parents and other caregivers are working to give the children the best possible quality of life. Therefore the role of the capacity building organisation is to support local organisations and communities to do what it is they do, even better.

Section one

Chapter one

Background and beginnings

Kenya, a nation of around 30 million persons, is a country of breathtaking beauty and great diversity in terms of topography, climate, ethnicity, culture, and religion. It is also a country with significant development challenges. With an estimated 75 percent of the land categorised as arid or semi-arid, deforestation and environmental degradation are further challenging the primarily agricultural economy. Recently, fears of terrorism have impacted upon foreign exchange earnings as tourists choose safer destinations. The adult HIV prevalence rate of 15 percent [2] has not only had a devastating effect on the economy, but has also tested the limits of health services and availability of drugs. The under five mortality rate, which had greatly improved between 1960 (205 per 1000) and 1990 (97 per 1000), has recently begun to spiral upwards, to 122 per 1000 in 2001.[3] There are also significant

The terrain, in spite of its awesome beauty, presents difficult development challenges, as some isolated communities do not benefit from available resources.

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[2] *Unicef, Official Summary of the State of the World's Children, 2003*
[3] *idem*

discrepancies, with urban areas receiving the lion's share of available resources, while rural areas, particularly those most isolated, are neglected. Alongside all of these concerns, mismanagement and corruption have exacerbated the situation in recent decades. But with recent political changes, there is an atmosphere of growing optimism as well as a degree of impatience in the country.

All of this presents great opportunities for development organisations to intervene and make a difference in the quality of life of Kenyans. However, they have often failed to learn from their own experiences, and to develop strategies that empower communities to the greatest possible extent.

In the early 1990s, local leaders in the development sector and donor organisations expressed concerns that externally funded projects in Kenya often failed to continue once funding ceased. In 1994, the Ford Foundation Regional Office in Kenya undertook an assessment of community based organisations. Results indicated that lack of sustainability appeared to be related to insufficient skills and capacity of those involved in the implementation of projects, as well as to a superficial level of community participation. Apparently, the problem was not just lack of money, but lack of other resources as well (skills, systems, experience, material).

In reviewing the assessment, an idea began to take shape. If communities would take the lead in identifying needs and approaching donors, rather than depending upon donors to establish the priorities for funding support, and if these communities developed the necessary skills in project planning governance, management and implementation, sustainability would be enhanced. Those involved at this early stage began to toy with the idea of establishing regional resource centres or a training institute to address these needs. However, connecting the needs of local organisations with the available resources remained a major challenge throughout those early discussions.

A Community Development Foundation

In October 1995, the Chief Executive Officer of a US community foundation that was working to empower rural and other communities and a representative of the Ford Foundation visited Kenya. They pointed out that a community foundation - whose primary purpose is to build endowments that generate grants to strengthen community projects and institutions in perpetuity - might be a model through which the planners could begin to achieve their objectives, without losing the broader goal of promoting community development (see box: Distinctive Characteristics of Community Development Foundations).

The idea of the Kenya Community Development Foundation began to take shape. Within two years, an Advisory Committee had enlisted the co-sponsorship of the Aga Khan Foundation (Kenya), another organisation with a deep

interest in and strong track record of supporting community development. The Aga Khan Foundation agreed to take on KCDF as one of its projects, to serve as its fiscal agent and to lend its credibility and legal status to the new venture.

Initiated in January 1997, KCDF was initially funded by the Ford Foundation and CIDA-Canada through the Aga Khan Foundation. It operated as a project of the Aga Khan Foundation until KCDF's registration on 15th August 2001.

Distinctive Characteristics of Community Development Foundations

Outside the United States, CFs [community foundations] have emerged mainly to address the lack of capacity and resources in the civil society sector and poverty in its various contexts. These CFs, especially in developing and transition countries, have come about as a result of the realisation that, for the civil society sector to rise to the challenges of the day, better organisation, increased capacity, and diversified sources of funding are required. Despite possessing characteristics similar to the community foundations movement in North America, emerging CFs are unique in each country because they respond to the specific contexts in which they exist. In all cases, however, they exist to raise funds for permanent endowment that supports the civil society sector.

Emerging community development foundations are formed by a multifaceted group of local community development leaders, and they are funded from various sources, including private foundations, private and public sectors, local communities, and individuals. Most emerging CFs seek to address community development issues—particularly those related to poverty—by seeking long-term funding to build permanent endowments and by building operational and financial capacity of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) through capacity building and other types of support.

Donor agencies involved in funding CFs see the role of the CF as pivotal in ensuring a greater impact on development, particularly poverty reduction. CFs are locally based and seek long-term solutions to locally defined problems, which facilitate local ownership and eventually lead to sustainability. Community development foundations have several distinct characteristics; a list of those characteristics follows.

- Capacity Building for Civil Society Development Organisations
- Assembling Assets and Resources
- Stimulating and Promoting Partnerships
- Promoting and Supporting the Involvement of the Private Sector
- Interface for Public Policy Dialogue

Source: *Malombe J, Community Development Foundations: Emerging Partnerships, the World Bank, 2000*

During the early years, KCDF programme activities focused on grantmaking for organisational and community capacity building. This strategy helped to give the fledgling organisation experience in grantmaking, first hand knowledge about community development needs throughout Kenya, and recognition by community development organisations as a credible Kenyan grantmakers. A 1999 evaluation recommended that since the grantmaking function was well established, it was time to put more focus on endowment building. Thus, the organisation proclaimed the year 2000 as a year of affirmative action for asset development, and, since that time, has endeavoured to balance its major functions of grantmaking and asset development.

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[4] Lehfeldt MC and Ngondi-Houghton C, An Evaluation of the Kenya Community Development Foundation and Its Potential, 1999

[5] idem

Elements of KCDF as a
Local Community Foundation

Communication

Research

Asset Development

Grant making

Management
Structure
Governance

*Adapted from a presentation to the Africa
Foundations Learning Group by Katharine Pearson of
the Ford Foundation

Chapter two

What we are - the Butterfly

The key elements of the foundation are illustrated by the diagram of the butterfly. The butterfly captures the organisation's unique niche in Kenya's development space, and helps us to balance the major components of our mission, 'to effectively mobilise resources for building permanent funds for grant-making towards the development of communities'. In other words, as suggested in the box above, as a community development foundation, 'we exist to raise funds for permanent endowment that supports the civil society sector'. The butterfly is perhaps a particularly apt illustration for KCDF, not only because of its perfect balance, wings representing our two major functions, but also because of the metamorphosis it has undergone, representing the evolution of our own thinking and identity over the years.

Management, Structure and Governance - This function of KCDF is central to all of our activities. The board takes authority to make decisions, and to ensure through appropriate supervision that the organisation's management is effective, transparent, and accountable to the Kenyan community on the organisation's activities.

Asset Development - KCDF strives to serve Kenya by meeting today's urgent needs without neglecting the future. Consequently, while the foundation's goal is to build a permanent

endowment fund, the proceeds of which will be used for grantmaking in a sustainable way, we also raise non-endowed funds to be passed on as grants to civil society organisations to meet their more immediate needs.

Grantmaking - The right wing of the butterfly represents grantmaking. Good grantmaking is not only KCDF's most valuable means of achieving our vision of equitable development, but it is also the most visible aspect of what we do, attracting donors and stimulating the growth of our endowment fund. KCDF uses grantmaking as its primary tool for capacity building of local organisations, thereby giving them more control over the development processes.

Equitable Development - This is achievable as the two wings of the butterfly enable KCDF to reach out and involve all Kenyans in giving and building permanent resources to be passed on to needy communities.

Effective Communication and Research - These remain important tools for learning and sharing in order to best meet our goals.

Chapter three

What we do -
helping organisations do what they do, even better

> '*Problems that require lasting solutions often are not susceptible to quick fixes.*'
>
> **Source:** Wolfensohn, James D., *World Development Report, 2003,*
> *Sustainable Development in a Dynamic World*

Over time, through various forms of interaction with local organisations and the communities of which they are a part, KCDF has confirmed the findings of the 1994 Ford Foundation research, that such organisations have many critical capacity gaps. KCDF's experience has also confirmed the wisdom of the early KCDF advisory committee in identifying capacity building as an appropriate niche for KCDF in the development sector in Kenya.

The two major functions of KCDF as depicted in the butterfly in Chapter 2 are not mutually exclusive, but rather, interlocked, each supporting the other in contributing towards our vision of 'All Kenyans giving and working together with permanent resources for equitable development'.

We see that vision as one of capacity building. It implies shared objectives, social cohesion, and control over resources of the present, as well as of the quality of life in the future, not only for those presumed to be the needier communities or individuals in the society, but for 'all Kenyans'. We believe that we are all

affected in one way or another by the situation of others. In the words of one development professional, "Poverty is a luxury the rich cannot afford".[7]

Capacity building has come in vogue over the past decade or so, with most development organisations talking about it, and many doing it. But it means different things in different organisations, and the tools through which it is to be accomplished are almost countless.

Definitions

Definitions of capacity building tend to be very broad, vague, and inconsistent. Perhaps the only consensus about capacity building is that there is a need for it. Capacity building is seen as a means (of implementing projects, achieving certain goals), or as a process (of reflection, participation), or as an end (survival, fulfilment of mission), or as all three. Many definitions include elements of self-determination, organisation, participation, links to positive change, and a focus on the poor or vulnerable.[8]

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[7]   *Dr Nici Nelson, verbal communication during a visit to Kenya,1998*

[8]   *Eade D, Capacity-Building – An Approach to People Centred Development, OXFAM 1997*

Like many others, KCDF's definition is very broad. However we find that that gives us the flexibility to apply it to the widely varying environments in which our grantees work, and to work with them to identify the most appropriate areas in which to intervene. The definition has evolved over time, and now includes reference to community implemented projects as well as to enhancing of abilities. It will probably continue to evolve, and as long as that evolution is based on practical experience, the changes will continue to be of value.

The current definition, which serves to guide our work, is: *Enhancing the ability of communities to mobilise and organise themselves politically, economically, socially and culturally. This includes community actions to rehabilitate infrastructure, access education and health, engage in advocacy, improve their livelihoods and other donor advised projects.*

- *A means:*
  With a focus on community development in general, rather than on any narrow technical or sectoral focus, at times KCDF works with organisations involved in general, integrated development and at other times with those with a specific sectoral interest. We support them to *do what they do, even better,* and to see the achievement of their own organisational goals as the ultimate measure of the value of the capacity building initiative. Thus, capacity building and sectoral projects are not detached; rather, the capacity building contributes to improvements in various aspects of community development which work together to enhance results in each particular sector. One notable example of this, to be discussed in more detail in Section 2, is the tremendous contribution of improvements in agricultural, water and other development projects to the accomplishment of early childhood development objectives.

- *A process:*
  We sometimes refer to an allegory, 'Behind the Well' [9] to emphasise the importance of the process itself, not just the product or end result. Even outsiders can come and build a well (or road, or hospital) in a community, but experience all over the world has shown that when the process is not considered, that project is likely to be of little benefit. As important as the visible results, are the answers to questions such as 'How were the decisions made?' and 'Who was involved?' The answers to these and other questions about the process will determine the value and sustainability of the intervention. In other words, the process that went on *behind* the building of the well, is at least as important as the well itself.

- *An end:*
  Obviously, the end is also important. A successful capacity building process will have led to the building of a strong organisation,

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[9] *"Behind the Well" is adapted from an anonymous paper given to KCDF by Lily Presbetery from COPE, an Organisation promoting Community Organising in the Philippines.*

with an identity rooted in the community, a relevant shared vision, accountable and transparent systems and procedures, democratic governance, programmes that are adaptable to the changing political, social and economic environment, and with inbuilt sustainability mechanisms.

Because we work mostly with community rooted organisations, the distinction between building capacity of the community and that of the organisation is often academic. Note that, in our definition, the ability of communities to organise themselves is a central factor. Thus, in strengthening those organisations, we also strengthen the communities they represent and who control them. However, the organisation is always our entry point, and helping them to do what they do, even better always includes their own initiatives to strengthen or build capacity of the larger community.

Tools

Development organisations use a plethora of tools to build capacity, the most common one probably being training. Using approaches that vary from the didactic to the very participatory, training is targeted at such areas as: strengthening of leadership; enhancing participation of membership; conflict resolution; improving management skills; and improving skills required for implementation

of a wide range of sectoral initiatives. Other tools used include: creation of networks; start-up of income generating activities; provision of material or financial resources; various forms of community mobilisation; exchange visits; placement of outside animators at village level with or without attachment to a local organisation; technical assistance in the form of attachment of a staff member to an organisation alongside a local counterpart; and set-up of a new organisation.

Perhaps all of these tools have some value in the 'toolbox' of capacity building, but the selection of the most appropriate tool for a particular organisation, environment or need is critical. The choice of tools is often subject to trends. For example, the move from providing the 'hardware' of development (such as facilities and infrastructure), to giving 'software' (the facilitation of processes) poses a dilemma when organisations go too far in the direction of process, creating an imbalance. The fisherman not only needs skills, but also a rod.[10] Other unsuitable choices occur due to inadequate capacity needs assessment, decision-making that is isolated from the local organisation, or inflexible policies or approaches of the capacity building organisation.

Training, in particular, is often over-used. While it has an important role in many areas, it is not a panacea. Setting up of a new

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[10]   *Yocarni L and Laffeber H, 'Dilemma's van capaciteitsontwikkeling', Vice Versa, 2003*

organisation might also be questioned in many cases, as it tends to ignore the already-existing structures. Esman and Uphoff observe, 'Capacity-building cannot mean the creation of institutional structures that are grafted onto the local context, with no shared commitment to their survival.' [11]

As a community foundation, KCDF considers its most fundamental tool in capacity building to be grantmaking – both the process of grantmaking and the grant itself. Our process varies depending on the circumstances, including what resources are available for what we refer to as 'programme support', and the time available before the grants must go out, but, under ideal circumstances, it includes the following:

Capacity needs assessment

1. Applications and shortlisting
The initial application often consists of a simple enquiry, along with basic information about the applying organisation, which we list on our data base. When funding is available for which the organisation appears to meet the basic requirements (some of our donors have sectoral or geographic interests), we follow up by sending a more detailed application form. Shortlisting is done by a team including most of the programme officers on staff. We have learned that it is very important to include several people in this process, as the number of applications is often almost overwhelming, and it is easy to overlook an applicant organisation with excellent potential.

2. 'Get acquainted workshops'
At these workshops, we bring together a few staff and board or committee members from several organisations. We share experiences, and talk about the meaning of capacity building. It is a good opportunity to see whether or not we share the basic concepts.

3. Initial visits
We visit the applicant organisation to further the process of getting acquainted, to see actual projects of the organisation, hold discussions with more stakeholders, including community members, and to confirm information on the application or conformity to basic criteria, such as minimum standards of accounting systems. Again, it is important for several members of the KCDF team to participate.

4. Capacity assessment workshop
While some of the earlier activities, such as 'get acquainted workshops' and visits contribute to the capacity assessment, we also find it valuable to hold a capacity assessment workshop to facilitate the completion of a comprehensive questionnaire by the team from the organisation, looking at identity, vision and mission, knowledge and skills, resources, systems and procedures, and programme performance.

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[11] *Esman M and Uphoff N, Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development, 1984*

The assessment also includes a summary of strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, and possible interventions for improving weaknesses. At the end of the workshop, a format for a proposal writing and budgeting is reviewed, and participants are asked to follow up by developing a draft for submission. They are reminded that the proposal should be based on the capacity needs as assessed.

Building capacity through proposal development and grant agreement

5. Proposal writing
Applicants submit a draft proposal, which is reviewed by KCDF, who then give comments or suggestions. The draft usually goes back and forth several times before it is completed. Sometimes, additional meetings are required.

6. Grant approval
Proposal summaries are prepared for presentation to the Programme Committee of the KCDF board of directors. The committee either makes a final decision or makes a recommendation to the board, depending upon the amount of funding requested.

7. Preparation of detailed implementation plans
Once the grant is approved, the organisation is expected to complete a detailed implementation plan.

8. Disbursal of funds
A grant agreement is prepared and signed by KCDF and the organisation, after which funds are disbursed. For longer term or larger grants, the funds are disbursed quarterly. This provides for closer monitoring of the activities.

Capacity building in the implementation process

9. Implementation of the planned activities
The grantee implements the agreed upon capacity building activities, which vary depending upon the needs assessed, but often include a number of the following:

At organisational level:
- Use of consultants for board development, strategic planning, training;
- Purchase of basic equipment and supplies;
- Exchange visits for board, staff, and volunteers;
- Evaluations;
- Audits;
- Support for small allowances for critical positions such as bookkeeper or community mobiliser.

At community level:
- Community mobilisation processes, often with a consultant who works with the staff or volunteer team to ensure that skills are passed on;
- Exchange visits for community members, including leaders of local groups, youth, representatives of the government administration, local teachers, elders, and others selected by the community;

- Training for community group members or volunteer resource persons in topics identified by the community such as leadership, conflict resolution, participatory processes, or sectoral topics such as livestock improvement or management of environmental resources.

10. Ongoing mentoring, follow-up, review

KCDF's relatively hands-on approach to grantmaking continues through ongoing mentoring, follow-up and review, including response to general queries, advice on consultants or trainers, training curricula, feedback on narrative and financial reports, visits by KCDF staff, and grantees' workshops.

Advantages and challenges of grantmaking as a tool for capacity building

While many would not consider grantmaking, in itself, a tool for capacity building, we have found that it has many **advantages**. For example:

1. Control

Grants give more control, thus empowering the organisation. For example, when it is the organisation that is purchasing equipment or hiring a consultant, rather than the capacity builder handling these services, the local organisation has the opportunity (and the challenge) of putting into place appropriate procedures and systems for these activities, and must also learn to solve related problems that come up in the process.

2. Flexibility

When capacity building is done through grantmaking, any of the other capacity building tools deemed appropriate and agreed upon, can be used (for example, with grant funds, the grantee organisation can hire a consultant for board development or organise an exchange visit). They are in a position to choose from a wider range of consultants or trainers, as they are not limited to skills within the donor organisation. For example, KCDF staff members are, for the most part, generalists. We do not have agriculturalists or experts in credit and savings on our staff. But the grant gives our grantees the flexibility to engage persons with needed technical skills from elsewhere.

3. Financial capacity building

In some cases, we have been a grantee's first donor. It would be impossible to build their capacity in relation to finances in cases where they have no funds to manage. Having funds to manage, gives a practical opportunity for the organisation to put appropriate systems and procedures in place, with regular mentoring and feedback on financial reports from KCDF staff.

4. Attracting other donors

In several cases, the process and results of KCDF's capacity building through grantmaking appears to have helped organisations to access funding from other sources. The stronger management and financial systems and procedures, improved proposal writing skills, better mobilised community and well-run

projects have made the organisations more attractive to other donors.

Of course, there are also **challenges** involved in grantmaking for capacity building:

1. Experience
Making grants to less experienced organisations requires a great deal of supervision from the foundation. Some require frequent visits, others continuous advice and feedback. Sometimes, even the process of working with the organisation to prepare for the grant (proposal writing and preparation of the detailed implementation plan) can be taxing.

2. Responsibility
Some grantees find that responsibility for the process of both implementation of the activities and accounting for the grant is too tedious and time consuming. Some would prefer that KCDF take care of certain tasks such as purchase of equipment or contracting with a consultant. We, however, believe that that would create dependency in those areas, and be contrary to the objectives of the capacity building process.

3. Readiness
Not all local organisations are ready for grants. Grants require some degree of pre-existing capacity, such as a reasonable structure for decision making in place as well as some financial procedures and controls. In fact, making grants to organisations before they are

ready can actually be counter-productive and create more problems than it solves. In cases where the organisation is not yet ready, alternative approaches (interventions where the donor maintains control of the resources) may be more appropriate.

Capacity building and assets

The ownership of assets can contribute greatly to sustainability of development initiatives in the community, as well as that of the local organisations that initiate and manage them. Assets have the potential to empower, not only financially but also emotionally, as their ownership gives a sense of control over resources in the present and security for the future. There are many kinds of assets that contribute to organisational and community capacity. For example, ownership of an office or resource centre from which a local organisation works, or of an income generating project such as a mill or farm can help to sustain the organisation or to expand community development projects.

A number of KCDF grantees have had disappointing experiences with asset-based sustainability strategies (village banks, grain buying and selling business, steer fattening). Such activities present numerous risks, and tend to draw time and attention of the organisation away from its central development objectives. However, there is growing interest in the idea of setting up endowment funds. An

endowment fund is a permanent fund whereby only the income earned from the principal (the amount invested) is used for a specified purpose. The initial investment, therefore, permanently remains and continues to provide income that can be used to support community development initiatives.

With the belief that every community has resources, KCDF encourages local organisations and communities to build their assets and enhance their sustainability by starting a fund within the KCDF endowment fund. We provide an important incentive for fund builders by matching their initial investment on a one-to-one basis. One former grantee organisation has already set up a fund, and two others are in the process of discussion and fundraising for that purpose. Although our experience is limited at this point, endowment building appears to be a viable approach to capacity building through accumulation of assets.[12]

Capacity building and assets

'Lacking assets is both a cause and an outcome of poverty. Poor health, deficient skills, scant access to basic services, and the humiliations of social exclusion reflect deprivations in personal, public, and social assets. Human, physical, and natural assets also lie at the core of whether an individual, household, or group lives in poverty – or escapes it. These assets interact with market and social opportunities to generate income, a better quality of life, and a sense of psychological well-being. Assets are also central to coping with shocks and reducing the vulnerability that is a constant feature of poverty.'

Source: The World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty*

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[12] *KCDF, Endowment Challenge – Building Permanent Resources for Equitable Development, 2003*

Chapter four

The fishing story

The story explained in the following box, and illustrated by subsequent examples, has greatly influenced the way we conceptualise capacity

building, and, therefore, the approach we use in collaboration with our grantee partners.

The KCDF approach: Beyond Fishing

[As KCDF] formulated objectives for its programme and development agenda… [c]learly the options were between more incomplete and poorly sustained projects or building capacities of the communities in order to give them the tools they need to bring about the necessary change and transformation. Addressing the "people versus things" in the development dichotomy, the Foundation recognised that growth should increase things. Development on its part should, ideally, give people the capability to change the constraining structures in order to create the space, time and environment required for them to bring about their own transformation. The need to enhance capacity and empower Kenyan communities to undertake their own development could therefore not be over-emphasised. In this regard, the Foundation examined the development adage: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." The adage has been used by international development agencies to promote their own transition from a "relief" approach to a "development" approach. Locally, most Kenyan NGOs use it to train endlessly without providing communities with the tools required to utilise the newly acquired skills. KCDF found it wanting since it fails to address control and sustainability of development by communities. This is the basis on which the Foundation created its own motto of going "Beyond fishing".

Mutuku M, *KCDF Annual Report, 2003*

Application of the paradigm: examples in practice

The concept of going 'beyond fishing', described in the above box, serves as a model to broaden our thinking and move us towards higher level objectives as we work with our development partners, and they with the

communities of which they are a part. While both 'giving a fish' and 'teaching to fish' have genuine and important places in community development, we would not want the story to end there, but to grow and deepen into a more sustainable approach. The idea of community participation has developed over the last few decades from contribution, to involvement, and

"BEYOND FISHING"

Over the years, numerous approaches to development have been taken, some more successfully than others.

And we seem to have learned from our limitations and setbacks as well as from our successes.

For example, we have learned that good intentions are not a substitute for sound management and capacity.

In general, development efforts have moved from charitable "doing for" communities to giving skills so they can do more for themselves.

But, have we gone far enough?

If we give a man a fish, it will satisfy his hunger today. But we will need to continue providing fish for him to survive.

So, we teach him to fish. This will solve the problem until someone pours toxic waste into the river. Then what?

He needs to be empowered to sustainably control all those factors which affect his ability to fish.

In summary, three possible levels of activity with the fisherman are:
* Give him a fish
* Teach him to fish
* Empower the fisherman

At KCDF, we want to go beyond fishing—building capacity of the fisherman by helping him to gain access and increased control over resources to which he has a right.

For this, he will require vision, information/learning, appropriate technology, linkages, organisation, resources and an enabling environment.

Are you ready to join hands with us at KCDF and go "beyond fishing"?

on to ownership, without negating the continuing importance of contribution and involvement. In the same way, the 'beyond fishing' paradigm still recognises the importance of giving fish and teaching to fish as valid approaches on their own, under certain circumstances. At times these approaches also contribute important steps towards going 'beyond fishing'.

We try to communicate the 'beyond fishing' concept as a simple story that can be quickly grasped and remembered by our grantee partners, and shared by them with their communities, without much alteration or interpretation. We have developed the following illustration as a guide, as we share the concept, and work with partners to analyse their own approaches and identify areas requiring improvement.

Potential grantees are presented with the above model during capacity assessment exercises. It is a model easily adapted to traditional lifestyles throughout Kenya. Those from around Lake Victoria note that without technology to rid the lake of the recent manifestation of the water hyacinth, fishing skills are of no use. Those from pastoral areas describe how long traditions in animal husbandry are irrelevant in an

Where particularly vulnerable groups are involved, sometimes more charitable, though less sustainable approaches may be most appropriate.

environment where the security situation is out of control. And those from farming areas note that where clashes or increasing population have left many either landless or with land of insignificant dimensions, training in agriculture is irrelevant.

In applying the paradigm to their current organisational activities, participants discover that each element (giving a fish, teaching to fish, and going beyond fishing), can be valuable under certain circumstances. The following are examples of outputs from such discussions:

Giving a fish:
While development organisations are well aware of the drawbacks of traditional charity or relief which is not sustainable and tends to create dependency, at times the necessity of this approach cannot be ignored. KCDF partners generally note that it is still most appropriate in times of emergency (drought, floods, famine, civil strife, displacement), and with particularly vulnerable groups – those not in a position to fend for themselves economically (the aged, children, the sick or severely disabled). A case in point is the growing number of children in Kenya living in particularly vulnerable circumstances. Due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, many are orphaned and others are living with parents too ill to work. Relatives caring for orphans often have too many under their care, and are unable to meet their needs adequately. Other young children are living in child-headed households. Although it is very important to keep in mind the concept of

going 'beyond fishing', and aiming at more empowering objectives in the long run, one cannot ignore the urgency of meeting basic needs in the present situation.

Teaching to fish:
Certainly, this is an important step beyond 'giving a fish'. A quick review of the literature on capacity building reveals that this is a very common approach to empowering communities. Various training methodologies are used, many quite participatory. Training is designed to help organisations and community members to assess and prioritise their needs, identify the most vulnerable groups, monitor their progress towards goals, gain appropriate, general development attitudes and knowledge related to leadership, conflict resolution, respect for diversity, gender sensitivity, etc. Development training is also used to give participants important practical skills in business management, agricultural methods, environmental conservation, primary health care, the making of products for sale, and so on.

When combined with the development of action plans, supported by proper follow up, mentoring and assessment of results, training can sometimes be very effective in building capacity of organisations and community members. The next question posed in KCDF's paradigm, however, is 'Have we gone far enough?' Alternatively one could ask, 'Have we gone too far?' While development initiatives of the past often tended to be project-centred, focusing on 'things', more recently, in wanting to

This training for small business people in Dandora, Nairobi, is not expected to empower participants in isolation from other interventions. Once the training is completed, participants will receive small loans to boost their businesses that range from a music school to sale of bananas.

ensure that initiatives are people-centred, development organisations have sometimes gone too far, ignoring the practical things, other than skills and knowledge, that also contribute to enabling communities to meet their needs.

Training, in isolation, has tended to give mixed results. Often training is done outside of the practical environment of the organisation or community itself, in mixed groups from organisations or communities with very different needs. While this diversity stimulates interesting discussions, the one or two persons participating from a particular organisation sometimes have difficulty in implementing new ideas once they return to their own settings. At other times, the wrong people attend training

activities. When they are seen as perks or networking opportunities for those in higher positions or with politically correct attitudes, rather than important interventions for those who are in the best practical position to implement, it is unlikely that training activities will achieve intended results in the long-term. Another limitation is that those trained may leave the organisation or move out of the community. In one community, we were informed that a major challenge in achieving results of training of volunteer community development workers was that those who volunteered were generally young, unmarried women, who often married within a relatively short time after training, and moved to other villages to join their husbands. So, 'teaching to

fish', while a crucial part of the capacity building process, often needs to be integrated with other approaches, in order to have the desired impact.

Beyond fishing:

Our paradigm refers to going beyond fishing, by helping the fisherman to gain access to and increased control over those resources to which he has a right. Ownership of assets and resources is a very empowering step in a community where people may have begun to experience dependency, and develop a culture of poverty. But it is not simple, taking on different forms in different situations.

1. Structure and governance

At times, it is a matter of the structure and governance of organisations and projects. Where a community has been dependent upon outside non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to 'bring development' to the area, it is very empowering when people form their own organisation, with democratic governance and accountable management, and begin to mobilise resources from within and also from outside the community to meet their own agenda. Some such organisations become strong enough to say 'no' to outside donors whose agenda they may feel is contrary to their own. For the development of organisations that are truly owned by the community, it is our experience that interventions such as community mobilisation can help at the beginning, if done in such a way that community members facilitate along with the outside consultant. Local organisations may also need support in setting up systems, procedures and structures, and for exchange visits to more mature community organisations to help them to strengthen their own vision.

2. Control of resources

Communities also require increased control over their own economic resources. This may sound very obvious, but it is not. People may benefit in a sustainable way, from various forms of support that help them better utilise resources available locally. For example, a water tank or pump can give the community better access to rain or river water. A wind or solar power system can improve access to locally available energy. Lobbying is also often critical in issues related to economic resources. For example, in a gold mining community in Migori, Kenya, for many years it was only outsiders who were licensed to deal in gold. Community members, working for low pay and under harsh and dangerous conditions, benefited little from this important local resource. Recently, through efforts of Lake Region Community Development Programme, the local mining cooperative was given a license to deal in gold, thus eliminating the middlemen and greatly increasing the community's control over their own assets.

3. Endowments

Financial constraints are an almost universal challenge to local Kenyan organisations. With limited resources among community members, generally no government financial support, and with high competition for NGO funding that is often earmarked for specific activities or

geographic areas, it is difficult for organisations to find critical resources for development initiatives, and more so for core costs. Some local organisations have begun to build endowments, using only the interest or income earned for current community development needs, while the principal remains, and even grows, in perpetuity. Decisions related to spending of the income from the endowment are made by advisory committees set up at the community level. Although this has started in

only a small way, it has great potential for giving communities control over resources, and ultimately, their development agenda.

There are many factors that influence which approach KCDF adopts in each specific circumstance. In each case, we have found it helpful to think broadly and not to limit ourselves to giving a fish or teaching to fish, but to always consider various possibilities for how one might actually empower the fisherman.

Gold mining in Migori - Control of local resources is an important aspect of empowerment.

Chapter five

What we have seen - organisations doing what they do, even better

As indicated in earlier chapters, the ultimate test of capacity building is whether or not the organisation whose capacity was presumably built, is now meeting their development objectives in the community. Is it making a positive difference? In other words, are they doing what they do, even better?

KCDF has observed that it is *not* automatic that building the strength of local organisations facilitates them to achieve their goals. In fact, if not well planned for, capacity building can actually be counterproductive, diverting time and energy of the organisations away from their programmatic objectives. At other times, trained staff may leave the organisation, donors may change priorities and reduce expected

funding support or withdraw altogether. Development organisations with approaches that undermine the efforts of the local organisation (for example, paying community members for participation in community activities) may also begin operations in the area. This can limit progress in achieving community level goals, even where the local organisation has made strides in improving their capabilities.

While we do not have a solution to these challenges, at least we are certain that, in every capacity building initiative we undertake, it is of utmost importance that we always keep the ultimate aim of empowering communities in

mind. This influences our work in many ways. For example, we have learned the importance of:

- *Planning with the grantees* from an integral perspective, so that programme activities are not overtaken by capacity building;
- *Ensuring that indicators are developed* for the ultimate goal of empowering of communities and for the intermediate goal of capacity building, and for monitoring and evaluation at both levels;
- *Building skills* in community mobilisation and organisation as part of building capacity;
- *Always keeping the end in mind* – creating opportunities to reflect, learn from experiences and share about community development.

It is not very easy to accurately assess the impact of KCDF's capacity building of local organisations, as there are many variables involved. Some are working with other donors or partners who also contribute to their organisational strengthening. Others are highly motivated, ready to learn and grow through any possible means, and might also have developed over time even without KCDF's intervention. Others are affected either positively or negatively by influences largely beyond their control, such as changes in the economic, climatic or security situations. But there are some grantees who have made considerable, visible progress in their

organisational capacity as well as in the achievement of their development objectives. They have expressed the belief that KCDF's capacity building work with them has played an important role in that growth. The following is just one example of what we feel reflects some of the visible results of our capacity building work.

The case of Makutano Community Development Association

KCDF first came in contact with Makutano Community Development Association (MCDA) in 1997, when the organisation applied for a capacity building grant during our first round of grantmaking.

MCDA is a membership organisation that covers one location, Kinyatta, in Machakos District, Eastern Province of Kenya, about 120 kilometres from Nairobi. In spite of the flooding experienced during rainy seasons, the area is considered to be semi-arid. The major economic activities are farming and livestock, but these generally do not produce adequate income, or even sufficient household food security. District level statistics reveal an adult illiteracy rate of 36.1 percent, people without access to safe drinking water at 62.2 percent, without access to health services at 80.9 percent, and children below five years who are underweight at 27 percent.[13] Makutano

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13   *UNDP, Kenya, Kenya human development report, 2001*

location itself has been marginalised in terms of important services including water, health facilities, access roads, and learning facilities. There is no visible sign of government intervention, and very little from other development organisations.

MCDA was founded in 1995 through an initiative of local community members of welfare associations. Its mission was to enhance the unity and empowerment of the local community in order to take collective responsibility in identifying and addressing development needs, including water, education, agriculture, and income generation. Everyone in the location is eligible for membership. Each village elects a village development committee, and pays a small fee to MCDA for membership. A council, with five representatives from each of 21 villages, is responsible to the general assembly of the full membership. The council elects an executive committee that is responsible for day-to-day management of the association.

At the time of our first visit, the organisation did not have any major donors, but had been operating from membership fees. They had no staff, but implemented activities through executive committee members who volunteered their time. Major accomplishments up to that time were the mobilisation of a broad based, grassroots membership; the development of an organisational structure which gave the community some sense of control over their own development objectives; the creation of awareness about the right to receive relief food

from the government administration without payment; the identification of priority needs in the community; and plans for and preparation of a proposal for dam rehabilitation.

In spite of the organisation's relative lack of experience, KCDF was interested in working with them due to the critical needs in the area, the democratic and community-rooted structure of the organisation, and their positive attitude towards participatory development. The statement by one committee member that 'Poverty is not the lack of resources, but the lack of knowledge on how to use our resources' seemed to reflect the attitude of others, as well, and that encouraged us that capacity building would make an impact in MCDA.

Capacity assessment revealed important needs, including: networking, transport, working space and basic facilities, refinement of strategies and approaches, some full-time manpower support, improved skills for the executive committee (in community organisation, project design and management, and financial management), and knowledge and skills for community members (in soil conservation, agricultural techniques, leadership, and civic education).

KCDF supported capacity building in the organisation through a three year grant, from 1998 through 2000. MCDA used the grant for a variety of capacity building interventions related to their assessed needs, including small allowances for a community development worker and a bookkeeper, training of volunteer

community animators and self-help groups, community mobilisation processes, office rent and basic furniture, a bicycle, exchange visits, executive committee retreats, and start-up costs of a grain buying and selling income generation project. Additional support, outside of the grant, included capacity assessment, participation in KCDF partners' workshops, review and feedback reports, plans and training curricula, visits by KCDF staff for review of progress and exchange of ideas, and introduction and referrals to other donors.

Since the end of the grant period, KCDF has continued to give MCDA opportunities for learning and sharing wherever possible, for example by including MCDA in partners' workshops, and, most recently, support for an exchange visit through an initiative designed to promote the sharing of ideas on local philanthropy.

An evaluation done by a consultant the end of the project period (2000) indicated that there had been considerable improvements in the organisation, particularly in the areas of personnel, administrative systems and procedures, and governance and management. A grain bank was in place. Although it had not achieved the intended purpose of providing financial sustainability for the organisation, the grain bank was appreciated by the community in that it had minimised exploitation by

middlemen, and was a ready source of seed at the beginning of planting season. The report also noted the contribution to the community of a village bank initiated by MCDA. Though this was not supported financially by KCDF, KCDF had introduced MCDA to the donor organisation. The report also noted the high level of community participation and support, including the provision of funds for a plot on which the organisation planned to build an office and a larger grain bank, and for technical surveys for proposed water projects.[14] At this point, however, two of the community's top priority needs, a secondary school, and de-silting of a major dam, had not been met.

Although these were significant improvements, we were not really prepared for the striking changes we saw in the community when we visited early in 2003. MCDA had secured funding from Concern Universal that was used for rehabilitation of Katutuni Community Earth Dam, including a new survey, scooping of the dam, a well, latrine, livestock trough and fencing. The community had planted trees to protect the dam, and was paying the salary of the caretaker. They were also paying a small fee for use of the water, in order to ensure sustainability. Near the dam, MCDA had started a project for multiplication of dryland seeds, and a community based organisation that had begun as a result of KCDF funded training, was preparing to start a tree nursery that will serve the dual

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14 *PREMESE-Africa, Report of the evaluation of Makutano Community Development Association, 2000*

Katutuni Community Earth Dam provides clean water for 3000 residents of Makutano.

purpose of generating income for the group, and improving the environment in the community.

Another significant accomplishment was the construction of the long awaited secondary school. As the implementing agency, MCDA had raised funds for the school, and was represented on the school committee, along with parents' representatives. With reasonable school fees, and located just near Makutano market, the school meets a need that has been felt in the community for a long time. Parents in the area were often unable to send their children to secondary school due to high fees, a problem compounded by the additional cost of travel to and from schools outside the community. The school also makes a notable difference in the economy of the community, stimulating business in the small Makutano market, as the school meets requirements for food, school supplies, and housing for teachers. Teachers from the area now have an opportunity to work nearer home, thus enabling them to contribute more fully to other activities in the community as well. Although the school is not yet complete, since our visit we have learned that they recently held a fundraising event to collect support for a girls' dormitory, laboratory, and

water treatment facility. The government has also promised to provide teachers, an important boost towards sustainability of the project.

In addition to these structural improvements, we were also impressed to meet what appeared to be a very competent and enthusiastic group of youth, representatives of ten smaller groups, who were in the process of planning for a Youth Focus Day. They had identified issues of concern for youth in the community (including drug abuse, child labour, child abuse, child rights, early marriages, and HIV/AIDS) and were planning to use the day to create awareness on these and other important issues. The youth are becoming more active in development in

the area, and MCDA is planning to include their representatives on their Executive Committee. In this very encouraging case we have seen that capacity building can set off a sort of chain reaction of development at community level, that continues to grow and expand long after the initial activities have been completed. It appears that the rootedness of the association in the community, the willingness of community members to volunteer their time and give their financial and material support, and the democratic principles by which the association is governed and which promote the confidence of the community, have in this particular instance interacted with the contribution to the process that KCDF has made, to give excellent results.

Father Makewa High School, opened in January, 2003, with an enrollment of 80 children.

Chapter six

What we have learned - implications for the way forward

KCDF considers itself to be a learning organisation. We learn from a variety of sources and in many ways, but our greatest opportunities for learning come from our own experience – both our successes and disappointments. The following lessons are gleaned from both the cases articulated above and from many other experiences we have had since we began our very challenging work. Each lesson has implications for the future – whether we should be doing more of the same, or making improvements on what we are doing, or if shifts in our approach are called for.

1. *Helping organisations and communities to 'do what they do', even better*

As KCDF we have learned through experience that, while we do have an important role to play in community development, as outsiders we are not in the best position to implement at community level. Efforts at implementation by outsiders tend to be expensive, often inappropriate, and certainly not sustainable. The approach we have taken, and will continue to take, is to help those who are at the grassroots level to do what they do better, by giving support to their efforts both through funding and other assistance such as planning and monitoring.

2. *Importance of the process*

With our emphasis on the development of people rather than 'things', we have learned the importance of the *process* of capacity building, although it is time consuming, labour intensive, and even sometimes tedious. Of course, the visible end result is also important. However, our experience has shown that when we do not try to take shortcuts then visible, positive changes will be the ultimate outcome. When we take time to do participatory assessment of capacity needs and to consider those needs holistically, when we include participatory processes at community level in the plans, and link the grantees with other possible sources of funding where KCDF is not able to help, those results will also be more sustainable than if we had not focused on the process. In other words, the process of capacity building has the potential to start a chain reaction of improvements that continue to strengthen the organisation and lead to visible results in the community long after the end of the initiative. The case of Makutano Community Development Association is one example.

Unfortunately, we too are sometimes constrained by availability of funding support and time, and then we *do* take shortcuts, for example, when our donors allow only a limited time for

grants to go out, or do not fund essential elements in the process (visits, capacity assessment, staff time required for ongoing mentoring and support).

Potential solutions to this dilemma would be to share this more with the donors, in order to increase their awareness on how the impact is likely to be limited if capacity building grants are one-off or very time limited. Where it is not possible for a single donor to support the full capacity building process, KCDF needs to make more efforts to find support for follow-up activities to further enhance the results of one-off grants.

3. Grantmaking as a valuable tool for capacity building

Because grants can be used by grantees to purchase a variety of services and material support, including critical technical support in areas where the donor may lack expertise, grantmaking is a very flexible tool for capacity building. Grants also give the grantee organisation experience in financial management as well as programme implementation, and this helps to attract other donors.

However, not every organisation is ready for grants. Some are weighed down by both the planning process involved in applying for grants and also the accountability that is required once the grant is made.

Therefore, while our experience justifies continuing with our approach of grantmaking for capacity building, we also need to offer alternatives to those not ready for grants. We need to form more effective linkages with capacity building organisations that have other approaches and where more services are offered in kind (for example in training, community mobilisation, technical advice for sectoral projects, etc.).

4. Value added to grantmaking through 'hands-on' support

Although our basic tool in community development is grantmaking, we have learned that a somewhat 'hands-on' approach adds value to the grants. Working with individuals and teams during capacity assessment, planning, visits and workshops, and giving thoughtful feedback on reports and inquiries from partners enhances the effectiveness of the grants. It leaves the organisation with improved skills, systems and procedures that will outlive the grant period, making a sustainable difference in the way the organisation operates and the impact they have in the community.

However, a hands-on approach is very time-consuming, and as our number of grantees grows, will simply not be realistic. In future, if we are to continue giving adequate hands-on support to enhance the impact of grants given, we will need to look for ways to outsource

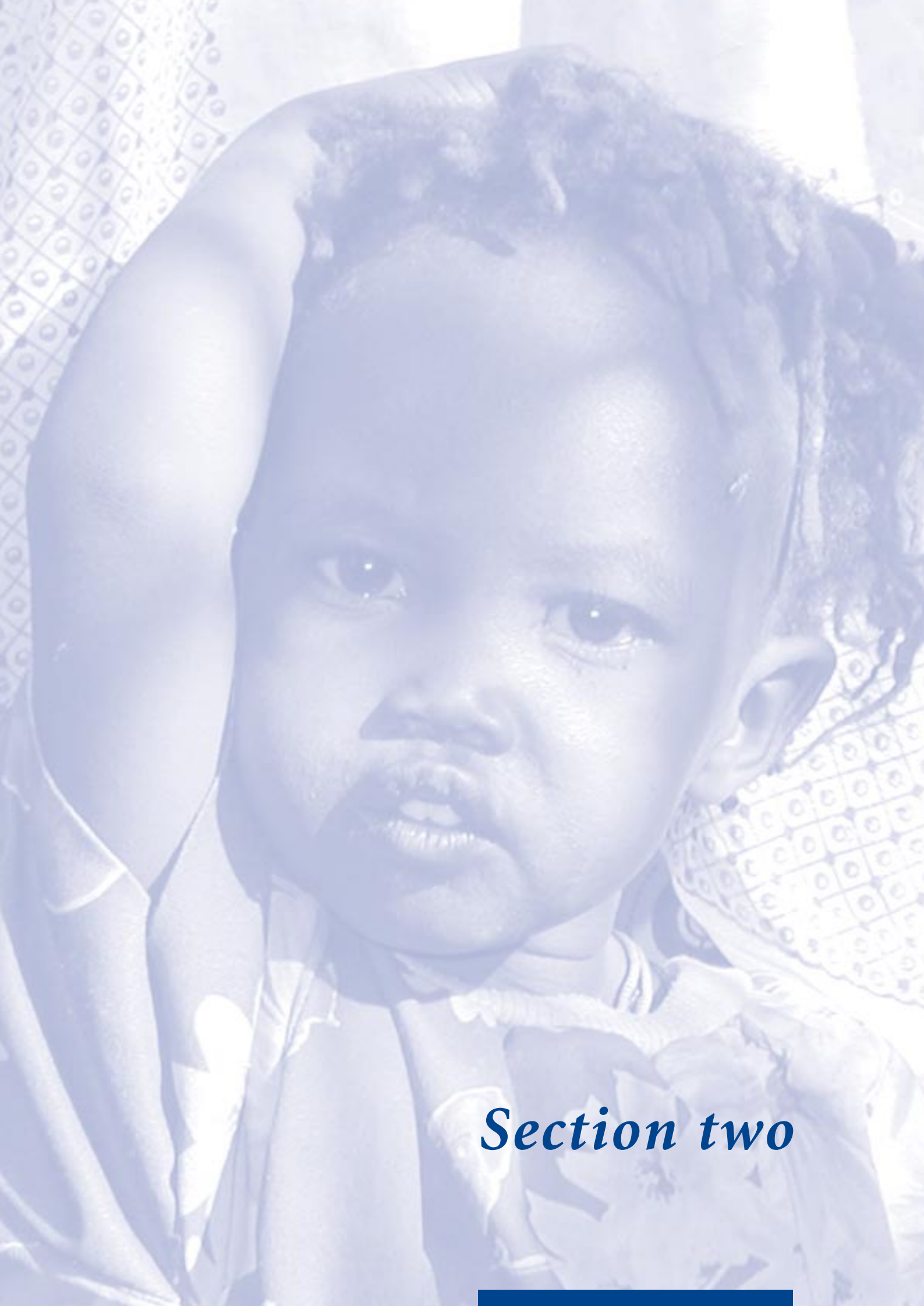some of that support to consultants or other organisations.

5. *Relationship between asset development and grantmaking*

As our work continues, it is becoming clear that the foundation's two major functions, asset development and capacity building through grantmaking, not only complement each other, but actually support each other in many ways. For example, KCDF's endowment fund, while enabling Kenyans to contribute to a charitable and philanthropic cause, also supports capacity building by providing grantee communities with an alternative approach to sustaining their development activities and projects.

In future, we need to give more support to grantees and other community groups interested in asset development, for example, by giving advice, through visits to others who have started endowment funds, and by support for activities that will help them to raise funds for endowment building.

In conclusion, our experience has confirmed, over and over again, the importance and validity of the paradigm that we have made central to our work. There is great value in an approach that goes 'beyond fishing', not stopping at the level of giving things to communities, or of imparting knowledge and skills through a series of workshops and training sessions, but empowering communities to gain access and control over all those resources to which they have a right. When communities have developed a shared vision, linkages with other organisations and communities, an enabling environment, and control over resources (material, financial, technological, intellectual), in other words: when they have gone 'beyond fishing', we begin to see a visible and sustainable benefit for the entire community, including the most vulnerable, such as the children.

In Section 2 of this paper we shall describe how capacity building can be of value for early childhood development activities.

Section two

Chapter seven

Early Childhood Development and capacity building

> There is much in our African heritage, especially concern and respect for others, the *Harambee* [pulling together] spirit, the dedication to integrity and the respect for the family, which we must maintain. Indeed, we must strengthen these traditions because they, together with development, are the principal means by which we can enhance the moral and material well-being of our children. And it is through our children that we build the future of the nation.
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> **President Jomo Kenyatta, 1963**

The above quotation[15] emphasises the impact of the broader societal condition on children, and, therefore implies the value of an integrated approach, whereby children, who cannot be seen in isolation from the families who care for them or the communities in which they live, benefit from a variety of development, social and cultural interventions. Mon Cochran emphasises that 'child care is more than day care'. He notes the importance of community level processes that have direct impact on the welfare of children, and also build capacity of families and communities to provide for their well-being.[16]

In organisations with Early Childhood Development (ECD) projects, other sectoral initiatives related to agriculture, water, sanitation, or livelihood, for example, also contribute greatly to meeting objectives for the development of young children. When these projects are well planned and implemented by strong organisations, and when they have broad-based participation and support from a well organised community, the results are further enhanced and are likely to be more sustainable.

Starting in the year 2000, and continuing to the present, with support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, KCDF has facilitated capacity building with several organisations that implement ECD projects. This section reviews the capacity building work in two of those organisations in Samburu District of Kenya, and effects of capacity building on the lives of young children.

The geographic area in which the projects are located is a pastoralist region inhabited traditionally by the Samburu. Recently the area

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15 *President Jomo Kenyatta was quoted in an article by Lea Kipkorir, 'Harambee Spirit in Kenya' in Empowerment & Family Support, Cochran M, 1991*

16 *Cochran M, Empowerment and family support, 1991*

has experienced settlement by other ethnic groups from neighbouring pastoralist areas, largely due to drought and famine. The whole area has suffered from overgrazing and subsequent environmental degradation, increasingly frequent droughts and challenges of adjustment to more sedentary lifestyles. Many of the newer inhabitants have arrived without livestock, their traditional means of livelihood, and stay in informal settlements around towns, where they are marginalised economically, socially, and culturally. At times, ethnic tension and scarce resources also lead to insecurity in the form of cattle rustling and banditry. With an adult illiteracy rate of 72.4 percent, 75 percent of the population living without access to health services, and 46.2 percent of children under five years underweight, the area is far behind most of Kenya according to almost every indicator. While 50.6 percent of children are enrolled in primary school, only 9.1 percent proceed to secondary education.[17] In this physical and social environment, it is very problematic for parents and caregivers to provide for even the most basic needs of children, such as water, sanitation, health facilities, and food.

There are a number of local organisations in the district working as catalysts in the communities, mobilising and organising people to combine their own resources, attract additional resources from outside the community, and initiate a wide range of development projects aimed at bringing about positive changes in the area. Among those organisations are Nyuat Integrated Programme and El-barta Child and Family Project. Both started in the 1970s and are registered with the government as Community Based Organisations, operating under the governance of management committees, whose members are representatives of zonal committees, composed of a number of *jirani* (neighbourhood) groups. Thus, the organisations are well rooted in the communities of which they are a part. Both are child-focused organisations, but implement a wide range of activities aimed at improving the quality of life for all community members in general, and, more specifically, for children.

Capacity building at Nyuat integrated project

Nyuat works in Kirisia Division, the area in and around Maralal Town, the District Headquarters of Samburu. As the district headquarters, the area benefits from services of government officers as well as from utilities such as telephone and electricity. There are also a number of non-government organisations in the area implementing development activities. Notable problems include the lack of livelihood activities for this traditionally pastoralist community, now living in a more urban area, and associated high level of poverty, malnutrition, and poor

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17 *UNDP, Kenya, Kenya human development report, 2001, addressing social & economic disparities for human development*

health. Slums are developing rapidly in the area, and are characterised by overcrowding, lack of services, poor sanitation, and idleness. Nyuat's vision, 'To create an enabling environment that sustains holistic development of children who become resilient members of the society' and mission, 'To promote and support integrated and sustainable community based programmes that foster children's well-being, enhance project ownership and create self-reliant community' both emphasise the importance of community wide, integrated interventions for the benefit of children.

Through a participatory capacity assessment exercise, the Nyuat team of staff and board members noted a number of strengths such competent staff, good systems, and a sound record in terms of project planning and implementation. However, they also identified needs, including office equipment and facilities, and skills in monitoring and evaluation, documentation, report writing, community mobilisation and financial management, and a need for more participation in some aspects of the project. The team felt that the community would benefit from more widespread participation and improved skills in areas of leadership, resource identification and utilisation. These interventions would not only give community members more influence over activities of the Nyuat project, but would also help them to acquire skills and confidence that would help them in the care of their families and the management of income generation and other community activities.

KCDF supported capacity building in the organisation through grants over what was to be a three year period (2000 through 2002), but which has now extended into a fourth year. Nyuat used the grants for a variety of capacity building interventions related to their assessed needs. This included strategic planning, board and staff development; acquisition of computers; computer training; equipping the documentation centre; exchange visits; community mobilisation; and community level training in a number of areas, including leadership, management, environmental awareness, and health.

Additional support, outside of the grant, included capacity assessment; participation in KCDF partners' workshops on training of trainers and financial resource mobilisation; review and feedback on reports; plans and training curricula; visits by KCDF staff for review of progress; and exchange of ideas and participation in other KCDF supported activities. This included a workshop to review case studies on local philanthropy with a follow-up exchange visit.

An evaluation carried out in 2003 found that the capacity building had made a significant difference in the organisation in a number of ways. Areas of greatest improvement included having a viable strategic plan in place which helped the organisation in approaching other agencies for various kinds of support or collaboration; skills in community mobilisation coupled with a more aware and better mobilised community; a new, more participatory structure;

Documentation at Nyuat has greatly improved.

and greatly improved monitoring, evaluation and documentation. Capacity building had also impacted upon the development of young children through increased environmental awareness, improved health status of the children, and improved parenting skills of the caregivers.[18] Projects undertaken by the community, such as construction of a community well, were improved through community mobilisation processes, and also made a significant difference in the lives of children in the area. Increased participation in all of the organisation's activities, as well as improved systems and structures in the organisation itself also contributed to the sustainability of early childhood development as well as to other projects of Nyuat.

18 *Ogutu P C and Ojwang' S, An evaluation of capacity building process and results of Nyuat Integrated Programme in Samburu District – consultants' report, 2003*

Capacity building at El-barta child and family project

El-barta Child and Family Project, based in Baragoi Town, operates in Baragoi Division of Samburu District. Baragoi is only around 100 kilometres from Maralal, and yet in many ways it is far more remote and isolated from services and development activities. The road between Maralal and Baragoi is rough, and sometimes insecure due to bandits and cattle rustlers. The area does not have electricity, or other basic services, and is one of the driest parts of the semi-arid district. Major development concerns in the area include insecurity, growing slums around the town, lack of adequate water supplies both for household consumption and for livestock, and general problems associated with poverty such as malnutrition and disease. The organisation's vision 'to have a community able to enhance their own well-being and quality of life and that of their children', and mission 'to build the capacity of the El-barta community to mobilise resources to address felt needs in the areas of health, education and food security', like those of Nyuat, reflect a recognition of the importance of strengthening the community as a whole in order to have a positive impact on children.

A capacity assessment, done in 1999 with a team from the organisation, revealed a number of strengths, such as an effective and participatory governance structure, good relationships with NGOs in the area, competent and dedicated staff, and accountable financial systems in place.

However, the following needs were noted: office facilities, including a computer and generation of electricity, and improvement in skills of programme staff in project monitoring and evaluation, report writing, and community mobilisation. The team felt that the community would be strengthened through enhanced participation in development activities, and through improved skills in agriculture, water resources management, disease prevention, and leadership and management.

KCDF supported capacity building in the organisation through grants from 2000 through 2002, and support was extended into a fourth year. El-barta used the grants for a variety of capacity building interventions related to their assessed needs, including a wind power system; computers; photocopier; generator; board and staff development and training; water pump for well repair and construction; community mobilisation; exchange visits for staff and community members; support to a fund for small loans to community members to improve livelihood activities; training of trainers for community volunteers; and community level training in a number of areas, including health care, nutrition, hygiene, and environmental awareness.

Additional support, outside of the grant, included capacity assessment, participation in KCDF partners' workshops on training of trainers and financial resource mobilisation, review and feedback on reports, plans and

training curricula, and visits by KCDF staff for review of progress and exchange of ideas.

An evaluation carried out in 2003 noted significant improvement in the internal functioning of the organisation, the programmatic interventions in the community, and the ECD programme in particular. New financial policies, and more participatory financial procedures are in place. Staff and management committee knowledge and skills have improved greatly in many areas. Community volunteers are supplementing staff efforts in the community, and valuable training materials have been developed and are in use at community level. Equipment has helped the organisation to computerise its accounting system and to produce timely and good quality reports. The community, whose former way of life was almost exclusively pastoralist, has made significant progress in gardening, the crops providing a more reliable food supply as well as an income when excess produce is sold. Thus, life in the community has improved both in relation to nutritional status as well as availability of money for previously unmet needs such as school supplies and improvements in housing. The consultants noted that there was 'remarkable improvement of the lives of the children which the organisation serves.'[19] Substantial contributions to this improvement have been made by community projects that, while funded by other organisations, are the result of community mobilisation and development of action plans, such as sand dams and gardening projects.

Early Childhood Development: summary of results

As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, 'child care is more than day care'.[20] If we view early childhood development as the integrated initiative it should ideally be, referring to 'any community level processes and programmes that have direct impact on the well-being of children and on the capacity of families and communities to provide that well-being'[21], then the capacity building in these two projects has, indeed, made an important contribution to early childhood development. In both cases, communities have been mobilised to take more control over the factors that affect their lives and those of their children, including availability of food, nutrition, supply of clean water, small business initiatives, and, perhaps more significant than even the others, greater ownership and participation in the processes through which these projects are planned, implemented, managed, and evaluated. Among those areas with notable improvement are health and nutritional status of the children as a result of training of caregivers and community members, improved supply of clean water, and availability of food.

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19 *Ogutu PC and Ojwang' S, 2003*

20 *Cochran M, 1991*

21 *idem*

Improved parenting skills of caregivers have made a difference in the lives of the children.

The quality of life of children is not easy to measure as it involves physical, emotional, intellectual and social factors, some of which are more difficult than others to assess. And it is even more challenging to attribute a positive change in that quality of life to a particular intervention, due to the interplay among many factors, for example, community efforts,

individual family choices, and societal or environmental factors, some of which are largely beyond control. However, even casual observations reflect improvement in the lives of children in the two project areas, and recent evaluations suggest that capacity building has played an important role in that improvement. It has made a difference both through interventions that improve life in the community in general, such as vegetable gardening, as well as through improvement of skills of caregivers, that improve the ECD centres specifically. The results of the evaluators are summarised in the following box.

Results of capacity building on the lives of young children

The team noted that the initiative contributed, in one way or the other, to the improved parenting skills of caregivers at day care centres. Discussions with caregivers at the centres visited confirmed that through training, they gained some vital skills such as keeping register, hygiene status of the child, socialisation through plays and cultural artefacts dissemination to the child.

The team found some indirect contributions of initiative to the improvement of health status of children. Discussions with caregivers and parents at ECD centres visited confirmed increased knowledge in various skills including type of food required during growth stages when malnourished; awareness creation on health status and medical services to be provided for a child. Parents also confirmed improved nutritional status of their children due to increased consumption of high nutritional value crops/vegetables grown by individual households.

A major emphasis by parents on ECD centres visited was improved environmental health awareness. In both programme areas, the team noted high standards of general hygiene around day care centres, and its environs. This is particularly so in the children's play fields, resting rooms and toilets, which are kept to high hygienic standards. This was reported to have been enhanced through several trainings on environmental awareness and health.

Regarding the initiative's role in improvement of management of ECD centres, the team noted that parents have taken full management of the centres. Discussions with parents at the centres visited confirmed that the main roles of parents include identification and hiring of caregivers, identification of children needs, planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities of the centres. Although handing over to the parents did not emanate from the capacity building initiative, the preceding community empowerment activities already discussed contributed a lot in preparing the communities for the tasks they have now taken over.

Ogutu P C, and Ojwang' S, 2003

Chapter eight

What we have learned -
on Early Childhood Development

1. *Broad definitions of Early Childhood Development*

Many organisations involved in the development of young children conceptualise ECD projects as childcare centres with a focus on education, separate from other development activities being implemented in the community. To some extent, the fact that these projects are often funded in isolation from other development initiatives probably contributes to this compartmentalisation of early childhood development. However, experiences shared in this chapter suggest that many facets of community development (health, water, agriculture, small enterprise development, etc.) contribute to the well-being of children. When the community is empowered to define and prioritise their own objectives and access resources to meet them, they almost always put needs of their children at the top of the list. In fact, desire to care for their children is often the motivation for initiation of projects in diverse sectoral areas. The implication of this is that, even as programmes and projects for the development of young children are defined, they should not be limited to the activities funded by an organisation with an ECD agenda. Neither should the results be assessed in a way that is limited to activities that have been categorised under that intervention, or funded as projects to benefit young children.

If projects for the development of young children are to make a significant and positive difference to them, the families and communities of which they are a part also need to experience development in relation to more broadly defined needs. Children live within the broader context of society, and the sustainability of ECD projects or of the improvements achieved through those projects will depend on the continuing ability of the society to meet the children's needs.

2. *Value of Capacity Building for Early Childhood Development*

Building capacity of organisations helps them to get communities more involved in early childhood development as well as in other sectoral initiatives. It helps them to attract and utilise needed resources, to plan and implement activities in more efficient and effective ways, and to monitor and document the activities carried out as well as the effects of those activities on community members, including the children. The role of the capacity building organisation is to support these communities and local organisations to *do what they do, even better*.

The empowerment of communities gives people the knowledge and skills they require in areas such as parenting, small enterprise, and

agricultural skills, as well as the sense of control that motivates them to take action on issues that will make a difference in the lives of their children. In every community, parents and other caregivers are working to give the children the best possible quality of life. Our experience shows that, when organisations and communities involved in projects for the development of young children are strengthened, when they have achieved the capacity to mobilise and organise themselves (as referred to earlier, in our definition of capacity building [22]) then the lives of children will be improved and those improvements will be better sustained.

Capacity building has made a positive difference in health and nutritional status of the children.

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[22] *See Chapter three, page 15.*

Glossary

The following terms are defined as they are used, both in a general development context and within the more specific context of KCDF's work.

Accountable - Responsible and answerable for the use of various resources, including funding and non-financial resources; in this case resources entrusted to the accountable person by other stakeholders, for example donors or community members.

Assets/Asset development - Tangible properties or possessions of value, including land, buildings, and money. Asset development is the accumulation of assets.

Community based organisation - A group, association or institution that has been formed by the initiative of community members (as opposed to persons or organisations from outside the community) and that remains, through structure or governance procedures, within the control of community members.

Community development - The process by which community members assume responsibility for identifying their needs, making plans, accessing resources, and implementing activities that lead to the achievement of jointly agreed objectives.

Core costs - Overhead costs such as salaries, office rent and equipment, utilities, and others related to maintaining the organisation rather than implementation of projects.

Empowerment - The process of equipping an individual, group, or community with the information, skills, resources, technology, and linkages that will enable them to assume responsibility for identification and achievement their own objectives.

Endowment fund - A permanent reserve of money whereby only the income earned from the principal amount (initial investment) is used for a specified purpose.

Facilitate - To smooth the way or promote the achievement of specific objectives by the provision of assistance, for example, in the form of encouragement, ideas, skills or finance.

Grant/Grantmaking - Donation or allocation of money to an organisation to be utilised for agreed activities or expenses, within an agreed period of time. In this case, the process of grantmaking may include a number of steps, including assessment of needs, development of a proposal, and approval by specified authorities.

Grantee - An organisation that has a partnership with a donor, based on an agreement that includes the disbursal of funds from the donor to the grantee organisation.

Holistic - Broad, covering a range, rather than narrowly defined. In this case, a holistic approach to early childhood development would take into consideration a range of needs including health, housing, education, psycho-social needs, etc.

Integrated approach - A method or style, in this case of community development, in which a number of objectives are tackled together through particular programmes. For example, an early childhood development programme might provide training for parents that is not limited specifically to childcare, but also deals with environmental health and improved agricultural methods which contribute to the well-being of the children.

Mobilise / Community mobiliser - The process through which a group or community is organised, motivated and called into action for a particular purpose, in this case, for community development activities. A community mobiliser is the person responsible for mobilisation, usually through meetings, visits, information sharing.

Non-endowed funds - Financial resources intended for use immediately or in the near future, rather than for investment purposes.

Participation - A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 1994).

Participatory capacity assessment - The process of identifying strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, as a joint effort of stakeholders, including for example, staff, board members, community members, donors, or others familiar with the organisation's work.

Sectoral - An intervention or development process that is not integrated, but narrowed to a particular aspect of development, generally a technical area, for example, health, water resources development, or road construction.

Stakeholders - Those affected by the outcome – negatively or positively – or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention (World Bank, 1996).

Sustainable - A process or result of development activities or interventions that is prolonged or lasting, that can continue over time with minimal additional outside input.

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The Bernard van Leer Foundation, established in 1949, is based in the Netherlands. We actively engage in supporting early childhood development activities in around 40 countries. Our income is derived from the bequest of Bernard van Leer, a Dutch industrialist and philanthropist, who lived from 1883 to 1958.

Our mission is to improve opportunities for vulnerable children younger than eight years old, growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. The objective is to enable young children to develop their innate potential to the full. Early childhood development is crucial to creating opportunities for children and to shaping the prospects of society as a whole.

We fulfil our mission through two interdependent strategies:

- Making grants and supporting programmes for culturally and contextually appropriate approaches to early childhood development;

- Sharing knowledge and expertise in early childhood development, with the aim of informing and influencing policy and practice.

The Foundation currently supports about 150 major projects for young children in both developing and industrialised countries. Projects are implemented by local actors which may be public, private or community-based organisations. Documenting, learning and communicating are integral to all that we do. We are committed to systematically sharing the rich variety of knowledge, know-how and lessons learned that emerge from the projects and networks we support. We facilitate and create a variety of products for different audiences about work in the field of early childhood development.

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