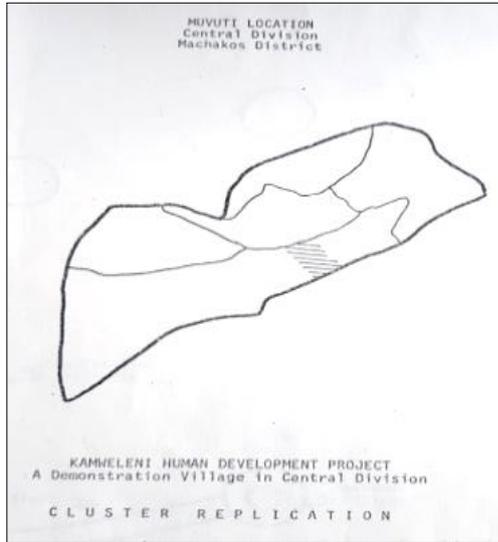


African Case Study: Kamweleni, Machakos, Kenya

In 2019 a team of people in Kenya, led by Patrick Mbullu and Henry Ikatukhu, conducted research to discover the longer term impact of the Technology of Participation methods and the wider ICA approach. Their report is now out and full of interesting information about the different initiatives visited, the long term impact they have had on communities and individuals. Here we bring you one example.



Kamweleni Human Development Project (HDP) began in 1978, in Machakos District, at the request of the local community. Currently located in Kalama Ward, Kyanzasu Sub-County, Machakos County, it was ICA's first rural development pilot project in Kenya.

As in Kabiro HDP (which had been set up in 1975 in a Nairobi slum area), initial activities revolved around consultations and a planning process for change. ICA staff moved into the village, working hand in hand with the villagers to implement the planned activities. More importantly, to impart the development methods and motivational skills

needed for the community do its own projects (DOOP). The community created a motivational song called 'Kamweleni Kuseo' – Kamweleni is Good. In addition, the ICA staff worked collaboratively with the village to create a delivery system that linked the community with the public and private sector providers. ICA was issued a land title deed.



Co-author Patrick Mbullu with Joyce Kyalo, principal of the Kamweleni Secondary School

The process involved consultations and development of community-based plans. A two-year comprehensive human development plan was created with a phased implementation plan development. Weight and focus were on practical social, physical and agricultural actions. These enabled villagers to immediately start implementing their action plans. Other and advanced plans were developed later as the village developed. Initial activities included: making modern bricks, rain water harvesting, poultry keeping, soil conservation. A primary school was

constructed, a Human Development Training Institute built and training schools (HDTIs) started. These enhanced generation of new ideas, change in attitudes and objectives for the villagers. A new sense of accomplishment, self-confidence and willingness to try new ventures was attained and an educational process begun. The project demonstrated what is possible when comprehensive socio-economic development involves all community members in planning and implementation.

ICA left Kamweleni in late 2000 after handing over the properties to community members. By the time ICA left, Kamweleni had reached 377,042 people, worked with 444 village projects, 90 sub-location cluster projects, 20 location cluster projects and three division cluster projects.

Now, nearly twenty years after ICA left, Kamweleni is a community with a secondary (now with a boarding facility) and a primary school run by the Catholic Church, a sub county clinic (county government funded), a tarmac road and rural electrification serving the entire community. Children go to school without walking long distances; interaction between teachers and parents is excellent. The village is now served by a very good mode of transport which



The original Kamweleni stakes established by ICA and still in place, twenty years after ICA left.

The main benefit of this project is that Road networks and communication to Machakos has improved, saving time and boosting economic activity. Current activities include the construction of a water tank, expansion of the primary and secondary schools, and the community is presently constructing a water surface dam with funding support from African Sand Dam Foundation. The stakes are operational with stake leaders still in place¹. These were all key aspirations in Kamweleni's original strategic plan (visioning exercise). ICA taught Kamweleni people to work together; through this they have achieved and learned new agricultural techniques, still in use.



Kamweleni Sand Dam

Despite this progress, most of the initial activities (including the HDTI, brick making, soil conservation and the rain water harvesting tank) have now stopped and, as one community member said 'we have lacked proper coordination of the projects after ICA left'. Water from the dam is not piped to reach the community and also there is limited storage tanks to serve the entire community. A major worry voiced was the threat of

polluting the planned surface dam from a planned construction of a sewer line from

¹ A HDP was divided into 5 sections of the community called stakes. This enabled local participation in planning and implementation of projects

Machakos down through the village that will pollute the water and the environs. Another frustration raised was that ICA didn't have a proper handover /succession plan to ensure community preparedness to take forward all the activities.

So what have we learnt?

Those interviewed said they learnt more skills when working together; self-sustenance; modern farming (before they only planted millet); how to build modern houses.

A key lesson was that when communities are well coordinated they can achieve more of their set goals and realise their dreams. Within that a key factor for success was following their timeline (calendar of activities), making changes where they stagnated in the process of achieving their goals. ICA staff facilitated community togetherness through regular meetings. The stakes worked together to plan for their activities at the smallest level of the village, generating comprehensive ideas.

For the people of Kamweleni, what distinguishes the ICA approach from other Non Government Organisations (NGOs) is the comprehensive approach, involving every individual in the community, not just specific individuals or groups, facilitating them to learn how to work together as a community and as groups simultaneously and, ultimately, ensuring the community took responsibility for its own development and its sustainability.

This is one example from a report rich in stories of personal and community transformation. Further extracts from ICA work in Kabiro, Vwevwesi, Isinya and Ng'wesi will be available soon, together with selected stories from the 20+ people interviewed.