

Can bilateral programmes become learning organisations?

Experiences from institutionalising participation in Keiyo Marakwet in Kenya

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Introduction

Bilateral programmes are inherently politicised. Any analysis of bilateral programmes as learning organisations will be incomplete and skewed if it fails to treat the political dynamics as central. These dynamics determine what is to be learned by whom, for what purpose, when, and how. In discussing the case study drawn from Keiyo Marakwet, Kenya,¹ I use two metaphors (following Morgan 1986): organisations *as machines* and organisations *as political systems*. The image we start out with (acknowledged or not) frames our thinking about organisations and their capacity to learn and change.

The case compares three major programme phases between 1983 and 2000, and analyses how different actors engaged in the process of institutionalising participation and managing its intended and unintended lessons and consequences. While the concept of the learning organisation presumes an interest in institutional memory as a basis for future learning, the Keiyo Marakwet case study shows that every transition from one phase to the next appears to have been a missed learning opportunity. The case illustrates that if one views organisations as political systems, the process of institutionalising participation emerges as one that will inevitably generate conflict, and any learning from it is therefore bound to be selective and contingent on the perspectives of specific actors.

Key concepts and context

In Kenya, participation has become increasingly crucial in decision making with the introduction of decentralisation policies and strategies such as the District Focus for Rural Development Strategy (DFRDS) in 1983 and the emergence of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) a few years later. Connell (1997) describes people's participation as both a

methodology and a strategic goal of development. Participation is a model that proposes to improve people's standards of living and also to give them a measure of control of these standards. Participation in development projects should therefore be seen as an entry point to enable the poor to challenge and transform existing power structures. In Kenya, although many bilateral programmes are moving away from their traditional 'top-down' styles and adopting 'bottom-up' approaches to development, they have tended to limit participation and the use of participatory methods to a means of generating projects.

While institutionalising participation demands that organisations create an environment that is conducive to it, the way we go about changing organisations in order to do this is shaped by our assumptions about them (Pimbert *et al.* 2000). Morgan (1986) argues that there is a tendency to think of organisations as machines and thus expect them to operate in a conditioned and predictable manner. This view tends to assume that managerial control and procedures are what makes an organisation function well. The focus is on organisational performance in terms of outputs. Viewed from this perspective, institutionalising participation would simply be a means for improving an organisation's efficiency rather than a learning process with the goal of empowering weaker actors to transform it.

Morgan (1986) also presents a contrasting view of organisations as *political systems* in which different interests are represented, conflicts occur, and actors use space provided by the organisations to promote or inhibit the process of change. This metaphor enables us to dig beneath the 'common goal', the organisational map, rules, and procedures, and begin to understand the politics behind the 'machines'. This in turn enables us to engage with the process of institutionalising participation as a critical learning process that could lead to organisational transformation.

Background to the case study

Keiyo and Marakwet Districts are named after two ethnic groups who were traditionally herders but also practised some subsistence agriculture. The area is characterised by three major agro-ecological zones: the highland plateau, the intermediate escarpment, and the valley. Most of the poorer people live in the valley, which is hot, receives low rainfall, and is considered an arid or semi-arid (ASAL) zone. The ASAL programme² was established in 1983 as the vehicle for development in this area with the goal 'to improve the living standards

of the ASAL population by integrating ASALs into the mainstream of the national economy and social development, in an environmentally sustainable manner' (Republic of Kenya 1992:6). The policy identifies three reasons why the government should make such an investment. First, ASALs have substantial potential for development, although its realisation might entail higher costs than in other areas. Second, since most of Kenya's poorest people live in ASALs, there is a need to improve their livelihoods through increased productivity and the creation of employment opportunities so that they may share equitably in the benefits of development. Third, the increasing problems of soil erosion and environmental degradation could lead to desertification, which would result in severe hunger and malnutrition and in turn lead to the unplanned expenditure of public resources on famine-relief operations. The policy underscores the importance of participation by grassroots communities for the development programmes in ASALs to be successful. This emphasis on community participation and the multi-sectoral programme approach are among the features of the policy that attracted the Dutch government (GON) and other donors to support ASAL programmes in the early 1980s. Since its inception in 1983, the Keiyo Marakwet programme has tried to promote the participation of grassroots communities in decision making, but it has done so with very little success.

ASAL Phase I: 1983–1987

The bilateral agreement between the Dutch and Kenyan governments gave the Kenyan government (GOK) line ministries exclusive mandate to provide technical expertise in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Keiyo Marakwet programme.

The first phase (ASAL I) invested mainly in major infrastructure projects such as water, irrigation, roads, health, and education. Despite the stated ideals of decentralisation and grassroots participation, the reality was one of standardised procedures or blueprints. Government officials were in a position to assert their power over both the decision-making process and programme resources. The 1983 decentralisation policy (DFRDS) required that all ASAL programmes be implemented through it. Ironically, the Dutch government saw this policy as complementing the programme's efforts, little realising that it gave the government officials too much power. Grassroots communities were perceived as passive recipients and their participation was viewed in terms of cost sharing through their contribution of local materials and unskilled labour.

The GON seems to have applied the *machines* view of organisations as it failed to dig beneath the DFRDS structure to question the level of power that it gave to district-level bureaucrats. It had assumed that the GOK policy statements, as well as the elaborate management and control systems put in place, would enable the programme to deliver development to the poor.

By the second year, serious conflicts erupted between GOK officials in the district and the Dutch Programme Adviser. The former wanted the programme's budget quadrupled but the adviser disagreed. This conflict forced the adviser to leave, and his successor did not take up post for another five months. When he arrived, he found that extensive leakage and embezzlement had taken place in the intervening period, on account of which the programme was temporarily shut down (ASAL 1999a). Both governments avoided talking about the episode publicly, as this would hurt diplomatic relations. When Dutch support was resumed in 1990, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) was contracted to run the programme primarily as a way of avoiding direct conflict between the two governments. Rather than deal with the causes of the problem, diplomatic considerations dictated only a minor change in managerial structure.

ASAL Phase II: 1991–1994

In its second phase, the programme adopted Community-Oriented Project Planning (COPP), an adaptation of ZOPP (Goal-Oriented Project Planning, a tool developed by the German government agency, GTZ). COPP's major objective was to sensitise the rural population about its role in identifying, planning, and implementing development projects (Mbagathi 1991). However, the COPP pioneers did not have a free hand in initiating a genuinely participatory process. Rather, their role was to train the District Development Committees (DDCs) to write and forward proposals within the government's framework. Despite the intention of promoting community participation through COPP, the government bureaucracy remained the greatest obstacle to the processes of institutionalising participation in ASAL Phase II. GOK officials and provincial administrators dominated the planning and implementation of projects. Efforts to create a shared vision through COPP bore little fruit, as these key people had personal visions that ran counter to what the programme sought to achieve. The COPP moderators took a 'neutral position' by avoiding conflict-generating processes and thus became merely an instrument for producing project proposals. Participants were always assisted to reach consensus or

compromise and bury their differences. Instead of empowering the communities to engage in questioning the management of the programme, COPP reinforced the interests of the official bodies. Thus, COPP did not create reflective learning spaces in which conflicting interests would have been brought to the surface and openly debated. Had it done so, this would have provided an opportunity for sharing experiences, which would have forced government officials to come face to face with the fact that their interests were overriding those of the grassroots communities.

ASAL Phase II did not appear to have learned from the previous phase. There was no analysis of the political dynamics underlying the formal structure, nor was participation viewed as offering learning opportunities that could help transform the government bureaucracy. The latter had become a tool for enhancing state efficiency in controlling the ASAL programmes and the rural poor, exploiting the latter's potential and excluding them rather than addressing their needs.

The following section describes how a team of participatory methods practitioners engaged in the politics of the ASAL programme and facilitated a process of institutionalising participation that created opportunities for learning and for the transformation of the management of the programme and the GOK bureaucracy.

ASAL Phase III: 1995–1999

During the five-month lapse before the new full-time Dutch Programme Adviser assumed his post, the programme was managed by a GOK officer and a part-time Programme Adviser (PA), leaving the doors wide open for the local counterpart and his associates to control the project's resources.

The GOK officials seemed to be uncomfortable with two *Mzungus* (white persons) in the programme. The Programme Officer (PO) objected to the Dutch advisers visiting project sites unless accompanied, while the accounts showed that there had been misappropriation (ASAL 1999b:38). The PO tried to avoid conflict, hoping that the advisers would forget the past and move on to ASAL III. The advisers used their first encounters to learn about the programme's organisational set-up, culture, and the behaviour of individual actors. Some GOK officers also volunteered information to them.

The two advisers had attended a pilot exercise on the use of Participatory Educational Theatre (PET) organised by a programme that I was facilitating. They invited me to present the approach, and a proposal on how this could be used in their programme was accepted.

Few of the officers present in the consultative meeting realised the implications of using PET as an entry point to ASAL Phase III.

Steps in the process of institutionalising participation

Team formation

Not all GOK officers had a genuine interest in the process of institutionalising participation in the programme. The management therefore decided that it was going to work with a taskforce of only ten officers. The heads of department (HOD) attempted to influence the selection process but the advisers rejected some of the names they proposed.

It inevitably became important to build alliances within and outside the programme, lobby for support from the two governments, and build coalitions among line-ministry officers and the local communities. Informal methods of establishing allies were used, such as chatting, meetings in local bars, and eliciting information from support staff.

The strategy

The taskforce became a think-tank on land-use planning for the new strategy through which an organisational framework called the 'Transect Area Approach' (TAA) was developed. Unlike the earlier phases, where the activities were restricted to the valley zone, ASAL III would also include the escarpment and the highlands.

The strategy sought to apply the programme's resources more efficiently in the concentrated Transect Areas (TAs) rather than spreading them too thinly in the whole district. A wider section of local communities would also be organised to participate in these selected areas. In order to neutralise any tensions, the new approach was presented as a strategy that would strengthen district planning, in keeping with the government policy. However, unlike the DFRDS, the new strategy would promote community participation through a 'mixed grill' of approaches, namely PET, COPP, and PRA.

The strategy had political implications for the DDC. The decision to work in concentrated TAs implied that the administrative units, i.e. the districts, divisions, locations, and sub-locations, also had to change. The TAA strategy meant that the DDC would become redundant, hence creating the need for alternative decision-making structures and new actors. In a nutshell, the TAA strategy laid the foundations for weakening and transforming the government bureaucracy and creating space for the communities in the TAs to participate in managing the programme.

The programme introduced a new funding policy that created tension and division among government officers, further weakening the bureaucratic structures. This policy meant that 70 per cent of the programme's budget would be spent in the productive sector (agriculture, environment, water, and veterinary services) and 30 per cent in the service sector (health, education, and roads). It was in the service sector that most of the misappropriation and other financial irregularities had occurred in earlier phases. While the programme management capitalised on the tension and found allies in the productive sector to support the new strategy, some of the senior personnel sought to frustrate the initiatives intended to institutionalise participation. The Keiyo Marakwet community, who had witnessed how the programme had been managed in the past, saw this process as an opportunity for transforming it and making it more accountable to the people, and therefore supported the programme's management.

Selection of concentration areas

Initially, the taskforce divided the programme area into 14 potential concentration areas (ASAL 1999b), but eventually only four were selected, two in each district. The leaders, communities, and government offices whose ongoing projects were outside these TAs complained bitterly, and negotiated with the programme management to ensure that their projects would be supported until completion.

The local politicians also voiced their interest and the programme ensured that each of the four constituencies got a TA, which served to neutralise any basis that the politicians might have used to discredit the programme. In fact, they became strong allies and played a supportive role in the process of institutionalising participation. Upon realising that the politicians were in favour of the programme's new strategy, some of the government officers also crossed over.

People's stories

The process began with Awareness Raising Campaigns (ARC),³ using PET as the entry point. The ARC provided a space for stakeholders to reflect, analyse, and learn from the experiences of ASAL Phases I and II. The presentations articulated problems such as inadequate water supply, poor hygiene, environmental degradation, loss of soil fertility and low crop yield, inadequate community participation in projects, politicians' interference in development projects, and corruption by government personnel. The communities called for the management's assurance that the programme would be managed better and

that they would be involved in decision making and have control over the projects and resources in ASAL Phase III.

The DDC was publicly questioned for the first time by the Keiyo Marakwet communities about embezzling the programme's resources. Using the image of a 'big rat', local people accused the DDC of destroying project proposals that had been forwarded to them by the communities. The ARC provided transformative learning opportunities, and the campaigns were a major step towards institutionalising participation beyond projects. Interests surfaced, conflicts arose, and resolutions were reached. It was like washing dirty linen in public as wrongs done in earlier phases of the ASAL programme were brought out into the open for discussion. The ARC was a critical entry point in that it not only enabled all the actors to learn from past mistakes but also helped to build rapport and lay the foundation for trust between the programme's management, the government, and the Keiyo Marakwet communities.

Participatory planning

ASAL engaged a team of PRA trainers to train GOK officers and the core facilitation team, which I headed. The training aimed to develop participants' skills in using PRA for designing land-use and natural resource management (NRM) projects. The trainers presented PRA as an instrument that would enhance the efficient operation of the programme, rather than as a political process for learning and empowering the communities in order to transform the government bureaucracy. The PRA training contradicted the political process we had begun during the ARCs.

PRA did not seem very different from the COPP approach that had been used in ASAL Phase II. However, the visual aids and tools it offers enabled us to involve non-literate members of the community in gathering and analysing data as well as drawing up Community Action Plans (CAPs). We introduced a budgeting component with the communities, and this boosted their trust in the programme. Their knowledge of, and access to, budget information gave the communities a tool for mobilising local resources and also laid a basis for holding all parties accountable.

The outcomes of the first PRA exercises were not very impressive. The CAPs were just shopping lists of projects not unlike those generated through the COPP approach, and they did not seem to have been informed by the data generated by the PRA teams. This was in part due to the fact that the three-day PRA training had not been sufficiently

thorough. Trainers emphasised the application of tools to generate NRM projects, ignoring the critical reflection and analytical aspects necessary for facilitating sharing and learning during the PRA process. Also, some officers were not committed to the process and saw their duty as being simply to produce CAPs. They argued that the process was lengthy and tedious and not commensurate with their daily stipends. We dropped them and retained those who had demonstrated good facilitation and analytical skills and interest. Through a reflection session we learnt that we needed to be open minded and to accept failures, conflicts, and mistakes as part of the learning process, and there was marked improvement in the following PRA exercises. Although PRA had been presented to us as a very mechanistic approach, through reflecting critically on its application we managed to move beyond the 'sticks' and the 'maps' and to integrate other tools into it.

Transect Area Action Plans (TAAPs)

The PRA exercises produced 19 CAPs that were synthesised into four TAAPs. These were in turn consolidated into the 1996 Annual Work Plan (AWP), which was approved by the ASAL steering committee. For the first time, the programme had involved the communities in developing the Work Plan.

An alternative grassroots organisation, the Transect Area Committee (TAC), emerged from this process.⁴ TACs gained more popularity and legitimacy at the grassroots level than the DDC, and they became the yardstick for the communities to assess the government body. This revealed further weaknesses, and as the bureaucratic structure began to disintegrate at the bottom, it enabled alternative community-based structures to evolve.

Feedback and training

Following approval of the AWP by the Dutch government, the TAAPs were presented back to the communities through forums similar to those held during the ARC. The communities renegotiated some priorities and budgets with the management team and these were amended accordingly. The government officers in charge of the approved projects were invited to declare their commitment publicly as though they were being sworn into an oath of transparency and accountability. Some found this exercise intimidating and embarrassing and declined to attend.

The TAAPs led to the birth of Project Management Committees (PMCs), which numbered 319 by the end of 1997, with a total

membership of 4147. Capacity building became a very important step for preparing the PMCs to take up new responsibilities in the programme. An important outcome of each training event was a detailed implementation schedule, which provided a description of the project, objectives, activities, indicators, timeframe, responsibilities, inputs, and budget. This in turn became a management tool for ensuring accountability among the stakeholders.

Outcomes of the process

Through the ARC a space for dialogue was created, communities' voices were heard, and verbal agreements were made to the effect that these would be involved in planning and management of project resources and benefits accruing from them. The communities took over the role of planning from the line ministries and the Programme Management Unit (PMU). They had gained the power of knowledge and information about resources. More importantly, they discovered the power they already had within themselves – potential that had not been realised in ASAL Phases I and II.

Another community-based structure also emerged out of this process, with two major units: the PMC and the TAC. The PMC is the smallest unit within the structure and is made up of 13 members elected by the beneficiary communities. It created an opportunity for more people from the grassroots to participate in decision making and managing development projects that affect their lives.

The TACs play an important role in mobilising the communities, thus phasing out the role of GOK officers in coordinating grassroots development. Since 1997 the TAA structure has become the main decision-making and management body for ASAL programmes in Keiyo Marakwet. These radical changes caused considerable tension in the programme, shifting the power base that had been established by the government in earlier phases. While the process of institutionalising participation in the programme had empowering outcomes for the groups who had been marginalised, those who had been in power suffered disempowering consequences.

Managing the outcomes

Government officials had not anticipated that institutionalising participation in the programme would threaten their positions of power. The PMU, comprising the two Dutch PAs, a GOK representative, and a gender adviser, was a relatively small but powerful body whose main role

was to coordinate the implementation of ASAL operations by supervising the PMCs. With all the implementation plans coming from the PMCs, the PMU faced an increasing workload, and the PAs feared that there might be fraud within the PMU and in the line ministries. One adviser computerised the accounts system and networked it with his office computer, enabling him to track all transactions. With his laptop set like a trap, he was like a hunter waiting to catch the big 'rats'. As implementation began, the trap started catching out minor instances of misappropriation, such as drivers cheating on use of fuel and officers using fake receipts for expense claims.

Tension began to build between the adviser and his local counterpart, and cliques formed around them. While the former had the support of the junior staff, core facilitation teams, and the community, support for the PO came from the accounts department, top district officials, and the ministry headquarters. Under the slogan 'all the *Mzungus* out', the PO and his team seemed determined to get the Dutch PAs out of the district, blaming them for initiating the new strategy. As the battle high-toned, some community leaders camped near the programme offices to monitor the situation closely. They feared that the programme would be closed down, as had happened with ASAL I, while the PAs received threats on several occasions. The conflict served to widen the gap between government officers and the local people as the communities lost confidence in the government system when they learned that the PO had the support of the ministry headquarters. Subsequently, the GON revoked the joint venture and one PA became the sole signatory for the donor's funds while the PO became the sole signatory for the GOK money (ASAL 1999a:38). The PO eventually left the programme, and the embezzlement proved so extensive that the entire accounts office staff was later replaced (ASAL 1999a:38).

The GOK officials also underwent a painful experience. They learned that by relinquishing their responsibilities during the participatory planning phase they had let go of the power over, and access to, the programme's resources. Under the new structure, departmental workplans were no longer used as the basis for project design and implementation. The HODs complained of being ignored and sidelined as the programme shifted planning and implementation to the communities (ETC 1997). The PMCs opened bank accounts and became signatories for all expenditure related to their projects, including vouchers for the line ministry officers' allowances. While senior officers opted out of the programme activities, their juniors,

who had been involved in the process from the beginning, became the Transect Coordinators, with the full support of the PAs.⁵

The DDC was also affected by the new structure. An ASAL programme steering committee used to coordinate the departments during planning, appraisal, implementation, and approval of annual budgets. Within the new framework, these roles had been shifted to the communities, who now had their representatives in the steering committee. This had never happened before and government representatives felt that the PMU was taking its power for granted. Instead of drawing lessons from the outcomes of the new strategy, they accused it of being responsible for creating parallel and illegal structures, which they claimed were usurping the powers of the government structure.

A 1997 external evaluation confirmed that the programme's performance had improved. There was improved sector coordination, less bureaucracy, prompt disbursement of funds to the communities, and flexibility in shifting budget lines from one sector to another in response to local needs. There were reduced opportunities for corruption and marked improvements in supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. The communities and local politicians began trusting the ASAL programme, and the politicians and local élites began to understand the programme and the real meaning of participation in development. The entire reorganisation of the operating structure that took place had effectively empowered the communities and represented real progress towards decentralisation (ETC 1997). Although institutionalising participation had succeeded in developing an effective 'alternative structure' for involving the communities in decision making and management of the programme, the government side did not want to draw lessons from it. Government officials did not recognise it as a legitimate body that could replace or complement the DDC, but rather saw it as a threat.

Back full circle: changes from above

Recent restructuring of ASAL by the GON includes name change to Semi-Arid Rural Development Programme (SARDEP), and its attention has shifted from the political process that was initiated during ASAL III towards a more mechanistic use of participation and participatory approaches in order to realise short-term programme goals. This experience highlights the risks embedded within these shifts and raises further debate on how lessons from ASAL phase III

could be used to engage in a political process of transforming GOK bureaucracy rather than solely focusing on SARDEP's immediate goals.

The changes in the ASAL programme have been associated with two major exercises, both commissioned by the Royal Netherlands Embassy: a review carried out by ETC East Africa (1997) and a Value for Money Audit (VFMA) undertaken by the auditors PriceWaterhouse, also in 1997. The review noted problems of corruption, unmotivated civil servants, political interference, and non-enforcement of existing procedures. The VFMA also revealed misappropriation of funds and weak procedures and financial control systems, and recommended overhauling the institutional structure to improve efficiency and effectiveness. It also suggested that the programme should build on the strengths of the participatory approach used in ASAL phase III and promote community ownership of the projects. The review mission, however, favoured more controlled and centralised management units at the national and district levels. These would give the management units the power to control resources as an instrument of increasing output and efficiency.

Both sets of recommendations seem to have been based on the view of organisations as machines. They focused on getting systems, rules, and procedures right as the means for improving the programme's efficiency and performance. They assumed that, by putting in place managerial control and procedures, the programme would function better. SARDEP was contracted out to the Dutch organisation SNV, and then major decisions were made by the Embassy without the involvement of the GOK or the grassroots communities.

Since SNV took over SARDEP in July 1999, the process of institutionalising participation as a political process is slowly shifting to the 'machine mode' of generating projects. Although an essential feature of the programme's vision is the development of viable institutional vehicles that can stimulate, facilitate, and sustain the change process (SNV 1999), there seems to be more emphasis on building 'legitimate' grassroots organisations for attracting support from other donors after the planned phase-out of Dutch funding in 2002. Sustainability in this sense is perceived in terms of operation and maintenance of the physical projects – not the political empowerment of community organisations to engage in terms of the process of transforming the structures of power.

Although SARDEP's basis for community capacity building is the experience of ASAL III, it places more emphasis on the structure and

the projects than on the political process of institutionalising participation that the programme went through before such structures evolved. Efforts to replicate and adapt the experience of ASAL III in other Dutch-funded programmes have been rushed, compromising community empowerment in favour of achieving short-term goals.

The Keiyo Marakwet programme seems to be learning and responding to the current direction as dictated from the central management unit. Lessons from the ASAL III strategy of institutionalising participation as a political process have been shelved. The current team seems to have begun a new chapter, erasing the recent history that had shaped the programme. They seem to avoid any confrontation with the government that could derail the implementation of projects within the short timeframe of the programme.

Conclusions

This article reveals the real difficulty of learning from participatory processes in a highly politicised context. The case study of ASAL Keiyo Marakwet exposes certain gaps and assumptions in the theory of learning organisations in the context of bilateral programmes that have multiple actors, competing interests, and conflicting goals. While most theorists imply that there is a kind of consensus or shared vision within organisations about which learning should occur, experience reveals that learning depends on where individuals are situated within a programme or organisation. This argument does not automatically lead to the conclusion that such organisations cannot learn. Rather, it raises the question as to whether what individuals choose to learn or not to learn contributes to a shared vision. In the ASAL case, for instance, some people were forced by circumstances to learn while others chose to resist learning because their own interests were at stake. In fact, they learned how best to defend their interests in changing circumstances.

While individuals and teams may learn from the process of institutionalising participation, in the programmes we have seen in the case study these lessons may not necessarily translate into action towards a common goal. While the learning led to changes in ASAL III, it was not easy to predict what was going to be learned by whom and the effects the learning would have in the programme.

The concept of the learning organisation also seems to presume that there is an interest in keeping institutional memory as a basis upon which learning can occur. But as we have seen, every phase of the ASAL

programme marked the beginning of new history. The staff turnover in bilateral programmes is very high and there is a tendency of the new management to erase history and create a new knowledge base.

We have also seen that bilateral programmes learn and respond more to macro-level factors such as policy directives and diplomatic considerations than to what is happening locally. While the SARDEP programme could have used the case of Keiyo Marakwet to bring about changes in the government bureaucracy and to influence Dutch international development policy, it yielded to pressure and the GON decision to withdraw funding. Other donors were also pulling out of the country, with the IMF and the World Bank withholding their funding on the grounds of bad governance.

In order to make the concept of the learning organisation effective in bilateral programmes, we must view organisations as political systems and begin to recognise that it is these dynamics that determine what is to be learned, by whom, how, and for what purpose. This way we will be able to design participatory processes as critically reflective and open forums that allow more stakeholders to participate and develop the learning agenda as well as to manage the learning and its intended and unintended outcomes.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

- 1 The case study is based on my experience as lead facilitator and consultant. My tasks and interests were to advise and facilitate the process of institutionalising participation in the programme. For a more detailed account, see Musyoki (2000).
- 2 The ASAL programme and the subsequent Semi-Arid Rural Development Programme (SARDEP) were funded by the Dutch government, implemented through the Kenyan government line ministries, and managed through the DFRDS decentralisation policy and

the government District Development Committees (DDCs).

- 3 For detailed steps see KEPNET (1996). KEPNET is the consultancy firm under which the author was contracted for this assignment.
- 4 Unlike the DDC, whose members were exclusively from the government, TAC membership was diverse in scope and representation.
- 5 Interviews with the former PAs, July 2000.

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