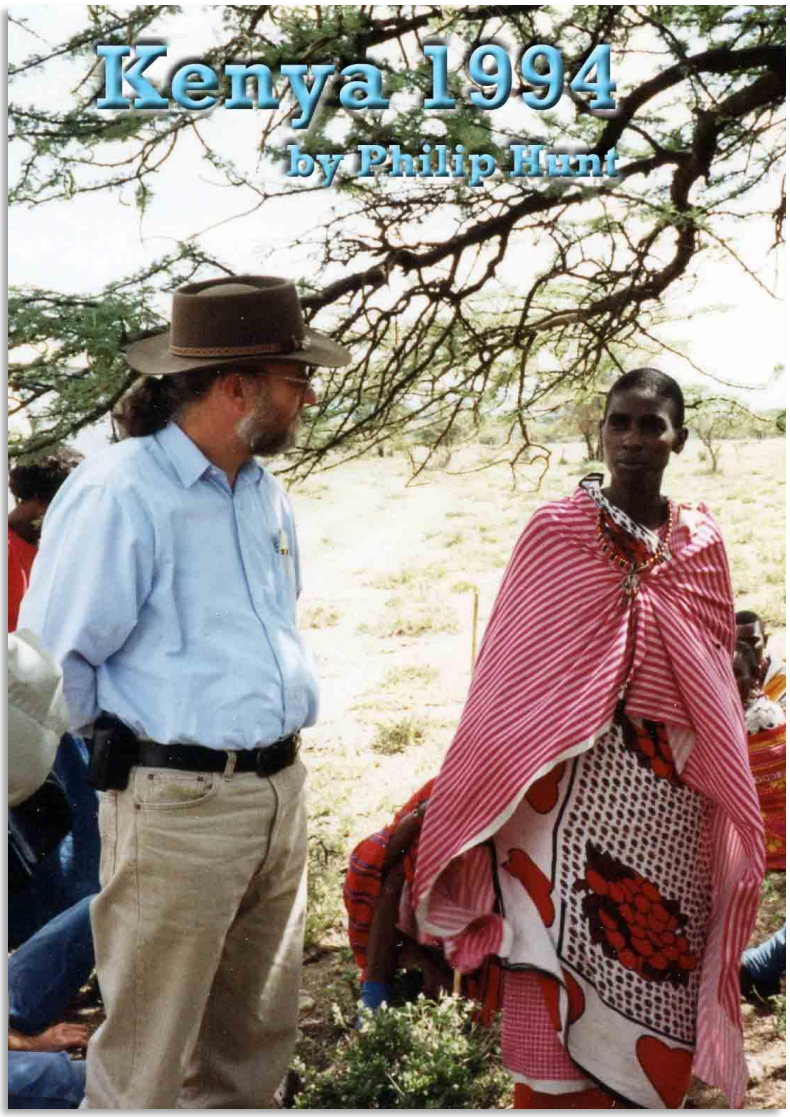

Preface

Philip Hunt, former chief executive of World Vision Australia, writes about the travel experiences that came with the job description. As CEO of a major development aid organisation, he writes with a singular perspective, combining the humour and adventure of travel with deeper insights into a world that enables him to move from Melbourne to Matabeleland, from providence to poverty, from luxury to loss.

Kenya 1994

28 May - 4 June 1994

In 1994, I had been CEO of World Vision Australia for five years. I had become increasingly focused on the knowledge gap between donors and the poor. The people who gave the donations and those who received them lived in two worlds with contrasting world views. Perhaps later than I should, I had come to believe that one of World Vision's important tasks was to bridge that gap.

I invited a few colleagues to travel with me to Kenya to see how the colleagues there were changing the way they did projects and to dialogue about the implications for the way we did our marketing and fundraising work at home.

Saturday, May 28, 1994

Hawthorn played and lost at Victoria Park and now I had to go on a long flight. The keys to my suitcase were on the key ring in my car, now being safely piloted home by my son, Jamie. The car phone was not in the car. It was on loan to the State Office for the 40 Hour Famine. I would have to work out how to open it in Nairobi. Life can be cruel sometimes.

With three of my World Vision Australia colleagues, Denis, Liz, and Ian, I headed off on QF221 to Sydney and, via Perth, on QF63 to Johannesburg. Check-in was allocated to us all over the place on the way up to Sydney, giving me the benefit of extra legroom on the exit aisle of the economy section. From Sydney, Liz, Ian and I were allocated from the window to the aisle, with Denis on the aisle in the row in front. The plane to Perth was only about half full, so I moved back to a middle row where another passenger was already sitting alone. She got up and moved! Something I said? As a result, I had four seats all to myself on the four hours over to Perth. I stretched out and slept.

We arrived at Perth at an ungodly early morning hour and wandered around the terminal. From Perth to Joburg, seating was the same story. We were allocated together, but the rest of the plane was lightly loaded. I didn't crack it for four seats, but I did get two free and had the chance to sleep comfortably for another three or four hours.

Sunday, May 29, 1994

In Joburg, we met up with the fifth member of our Aussie party, Brian, sauntering across to the transfer counter. He had arrived at the same time from Zurich on Swissair. He had taken advantage of a free flight offered to us by Swissair from Melbourne to Johannesburg via Zurich. It was quite the long way round, but free was free.

South African Airways took us to Nairobi a couple of hours after landing in Johannesburg. We whiled away the time with coffee in the airport.

The flight to Nairobi was on an Airbus A320, about the same size as a Boeing 737 that one would fly from Melbourne to Sydney. Remarkably, I again had the extra legroom seat by the central exit door. Perhaps I should give credit to our travel agent for this. The plane had an uncomfortable low oscillation vibration that could make those prone to travel sickness uncomfortable. The last and 27th hour of the flight found me rather brain-dead but physically restless. You can't read. You're mind weary. Yet you want to pace. I meditated sitting upright for a time, and that seemed to help.

On the ground in Nairobi, we were met by Kenyan colleagues Crispus (Ops Director) and Charles (Communications Director) and shown into the rather shabby government VIP room. Our passports were taken, stamped, and returned in about ten minutes, and Charles whisked us through customs. "How did you manage that?" I inquired. "Is it your clerical collar, your smile, or the fact that the man behind the counter is your cousin?" "All of them!" laughed Charles.

Nairobi was humid with rain threatening, or so it appeared to Melbournites. It was 24 degrees.

At the hotel, I called the maintenance man to open my suitcase. He brought a small screwdriver and was temporarily stymied. He went for a larger screwdriver. I suggested he prise open the lock itself. He humoured me by pretending this was possible before returning to his tried and tested methods. Sproing! and the right clasp fell open. Sproing-tawaing! and the left clasp fell open with a small piece of black plastic zinging across the room. I gave him a $5 tip and inspected the damage. I removed the still-locked lock with my Swiss army knife and found I could close the clasps again. The suitcase was still in useable shape. Amazing. Fortunately, it also has two combination locks, one of them being the result of damage done by Melbourne baggage handlers when they replaced a lock with a better-quality Samsonite one that included a combination lock.

We agreed to meet 5.30 on the patio for a first team discussion.

We went to the coffee shop in the evening, and I had ravioli. The evening air was cool, and there were no noticeable mosquitoes.

Monday, 30 May 1994

At Wilson Airport, we climbed aboard two single-engined MAF Cessnas. I wondered if I could put one of them down in an emergency. Certainly, I'd have a better chance today than a year ago. At least I knew what most controls would do from my flying lessons at the Lilydale airport. And I knew where most of them were located from the Microsoft Flight Simulator program!

We took off in a very leisurely rate of climb at around 80 knots, with the stall warning buzzing loudly. It soon stuttered off, and our airspeed slowly picked up. I was surprised at how slow the climb out was. We settled on straight and level at around 6,000 feet, but this was less than a thousand feet above the terrain, which, at Wilson Airfield, is 5,150 according to how the pilot set his altimeter. There is little opportunity to run through normal forced landing checks at this low height as the plane will only glide for about 2 minutes before reaching ground level. For that reason, they taught us to fly at or above 2,500 feet above terrain. But I looked out the window and realised that a forced landing would be easy here. The plains are flat and wide and level with few large trees. We could see zebra, wildebeest, ostrich, goats and cattle from this low height.

It took us about 45 minutes to get to Amboseli Game Reserve in Oloitokitok. We were heading for the tiny town of Namelok, the site of the ADP office for the Loitokitok Area Development Program. The centre office complex was almost larger than the town, boasting three shops and no roads, just wide, bare spaces between trees and dusty buildings.

Our pilot proved to be an Englishman who had spent time in Australia doing his pilot training. He knew someone at Denis's church. The other pilot was an Eritrean who had retired from flying F5 fighter jets.

Brian went looking for a toilet. "You can go to the ADP office," he was assured, "it's only five minutes." 45 minutes later, having passed by giraffes grazing near the airstrip and bounced along dust-filled roads, we arrived at Namelok.

Crispus talked about Rwanda with dismay. "It is the worst holocaust. We are ashamed of our continent." Ian countered kindly with cold comfort, "Europe is just as bad." Brian agreed gloomily that "deceit is in the heart of man."

We rested for a while at the ADP guest house. It had two bedrooms with ensuite facilities. Electricity was collected in a solar panel and stored in batteries. It would be ample for normal purposes, but with all of us present, the power gave out a couple of hours after sunset, and we relied on hurricane lamps and torches. Each bedroom had two beds with new mattresses, clean sheets and blankets, and a mosquito net. The ensuite had a flush toilet—an unexpected benefit—and a shower that trickled cold water. And I mean cold. It came from a spring fuelled by the melted snow on nearby Mount Kilimanjaro.

The mountain dominated the landscape. It climbs 21,000 feet from the almost dead-flat plain at around 3,000 feet. No wonder no one believed the explorers who returned to Europe, saying there was a huge mountain on the equator with snow on its summit! But there it is. You cannot miss it! It has twin peaks, the lower one craggier than the wide snow cap to its west.

Lots of trees had been planted by the guest house, and the team asked me to plant another one. Aba pointed out the "40 Cures" tree from which quinine is produced. We visited the dispensary,

where the government was running a clinic. Then, we visited a demonstration garden, which included a breed of banana from Israel specially designed to grow well in dry conditions. There was also papaya (although sensibly, they called it pawpaw) and onions.

By now, it was lunch. We wondered what this might be, and our wonder soon became relief. The food throughout the week was excellent and plentiful, even though some were unfamiliar. There was rice, chicken, mtoki (like mashed potato but made from bananas), gravy, tomatoes, avocado, onions, carrots and beans, followed by pawpaw and pineapple.

The program in Loitokitok began as a USAID-funded Child Survival project in an area where four out of ten kids died before their first birthday. After some years, the project attempted to move to a transformational development model emphasising community participation and ownership. The challenge was changing the mindset of the people from dole-out dependency to taking control of their own future.

After lunch, we drove out into the community. It was a disparate community scattered in family groups over a wide area. Traditionally nomadic pastoralists, the Maasai were now becoming agriculturalists. As a result, their herd sizes were reduced, and their nomadic lifestyle disappeared.

We met people who successfully farm maize, onions, and other crops using irrigation from a spring in Kilimanjaro. An endless supply of water in the desert! Many of the trained people were now teaching others. We also met traditional birth attendants. I asked how the traditional birth process differed from what I would be familiar with. There was much laughter, and the staff translated, “The process is exactly the same!” The difference here was that women have babies wherever they happen to be. Many have babies in their homes, but it is common for a pregnant woman to go for water and come back with a baby.

A group of women came walking across the fields toward us. When they were 200 metres off, they broke into song. Soon, they were upon us, singing loudly and shaking each person by hand. It was the local women’s group that, in addition to their individual plots, had developed a common garden.

Across a rocky landscape, the result of Kilimanjaro's volcanic activity millions of years ago, we met a woman who had made such a good profit on her onion crop that she had built a new house. The traditional Maasai home is a wood and mud-walled oblong with a thatch roof. About 5 metres by three with three rooms. One for cooking, one for sleeping and one for animals such as young calves brought in at night. I last entered a Maasai home a decade before, but the memory was still strong. The roof is low and pitch black inside until one's eyes adjust. The fire fills the home with smoke, which is hot and claustrophobic.

Ian brushed his head on the roof and found himself picking cattle ticks out of his hair and other body parts for the next day or so.

Next door, she had built a new house, using timber walls and a corrugated iron roof. It had the same basic three-room layout but more headroom and clean walls! She hoped to raise money from her next crop to lay a cement floor to improve hygiene.

In the evening, we sat around a campfire. The staff sang songs in Swahili and Maasai. Their rhythmic freedom contrasted with our stiffness. But as the week went along, we loosened up—some of us more than others.

Tuesday, 31 May 1994

I showered early in the morning, and it was icy! After that, I showered in the evening. It was better that way anyway since driving around in the non-air-conditioned car left us with dust in every crevice.

We met with the staff for their devotions. Again, there was singing in Swahili and Maasai. It was encouraging to find the emphasis on indigenous music. Too often, the hymn book is imported along with the gospel. The harmonies sounded like Pacific singing, but there was more emphasis on the leader and choir here. Someone almost always led with a line or a verse, and the rest responded. After a while, one song degenerated into a cacophony of prayers. It was very beautiful.

Crispus gave a message from 2 Kings 22. He mentioned verse 7, "But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly." The story concerned Josiah finding the lost books of the Law. It happened as he planned to give money from the stores to certain contractors who would rebuild the temple. He says that "no accounting shall be asked from them . . . for they deal honestly."

What does this mean? We do not need accounts? We don't need audits? We have full trust in the distribution of money? If someone appears honest, we do not need to ask for an accounting.

The answer is yes and no. Yes, honest people do not need to be asked for an account. Why? because they will automatically provide one without being asked.

These people could be permitted the trust of no request for accounting because they would do it without asking.

The evidence for this is in the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 34:12-13.

"The people did the work faithfully. Over them were appointed the Levites Jahath and Obadiah, of the sons of Merari, along with Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to have oversight. Other Levites, all skilful with instruments of music, were over the burden bearers and directed all who did work in every kind of service, and some of the Levites were scribes, officials, and gatekeepers. "

An accountable structure was in place, including scribes, who were the record keepers. Such record keepers provided reports and accountability without the need for Josiah to ask for them. They kept records to demonstrate their honesty.

Moral: *Trust is earned and demonstrated.* It can only be given to the extent that it is demonstrated.

On the table was a box of tissues branded “Cleanext,” and the packaging resembled Kleenex.

Aba introduced our discussions and commented that there were few papers for our week. “Some are down-to-earth with papers. Some are down-to-earth with earth.”

He also observed that there were different rules about how to greet groups in different cultures.

1. Greet the whole group at the same time.
2. Greet each person individually. This is the African way. Everyone shakes hands with everyone.

Although I didn’t comment on it at the time, there is another way: the Aboriginal Australian way. Wait on the side until you are invited in.

Maasai’s liked to sit and “eat the news.”

Frances attributed the move towards focusing on transformational development in Kenya's operation to their experience with Large-scale Development projects. These gave them something to compare with traditional projects. Why was there a difference? They asked if we were addressing the right people. Are we meeting the most important needs? How effectively are the funds being used? What are the results? When they looked at their traditional projects, they found them to be more dole-out than expected.

Why was I not surprised at this discovery? It had been the same in the Philippines. Despite an excellent theoretical understanding of development, both offices failed to deliver on their rhetoric. The rhetoric-reality gap is the most difficult to cross—the gap between vision and outcomes.

Kenya found no sustainability for most projects without World Vision and no relationship between the community and World Vision. This was especially because of the nonsense of insisting on church partners, which misinterpreted international policy on working with the church.

In contrast, large-scale development projects achieved community ownership because time was invested in staff development, and the level of contact with community members was extensive. Furthermore, these projects had staged phase-outs that left the community with capability.

Traditional projects partnered with one church, thus “exalting” that denomination rather than building up the whole church and its witness. Also, churches had a weak understanding of holistic development. “We were not equal partners in the development process.”

When people became Christians, they learned to read faster. However, the relationship between faith, practical outcomes, and evangelism and development was unclear.

Sixty per cent of Kenyans were Catholic, yet World Vision had projects with only two Catholic churches, and not a single Catholic was on staff when Aba came. When Aba first visited the Catholic bishop, he was shown the door. It took work, but they got this changed. Hopefully, soon, he would be offered a chair.

The Kenya office embarked on a “Back to the People” process. It was expensive, and more staff were required. Traditional staff see themselves as clerks. Even when they go out to the project, it is “Nairobi transferred to the village.” This had to be changed.

It seemed to me that Kenya could implement this attitude change process successfully. Although the underlying bureaucratic environment was like India's, for example, there was a significant difference in the vision of leadership and senior staff orientation.

They introduced a volunteer program in which graduates could work with World Vision for one year without the promise of full employment thereafter. This usually led to full-time work, however. So far, ten per year, and nine have been employed this year. I wonder whether we could develop an order of service like this at World Vision Australia. The Uniting Church had its Order of St Stephen, in

which people gave a year of service to the church. Could that order become available for World Vision as well?

Outside the window, the dry, dusty terrain was peppered with trees full of the nests of weaver birds. The nests were round, and the birds lived inside. You heard the birds more than you saw them—the best alarm clock in Africa.

A common bird was beautifully coloured, with an orange flash on its breast and black feathers glistening with a metallic blue-green sheen in the sun—another bird with a tail longer than its body fluttered near the clinic.

One of the signs of change in the community was the change in the role of women. One of the female development motivators explained that traditionally, a woman could only speak in meetings if a man stood up with her and held grass in her hand as a sign of submission.

This has all changed within the last three years here.

Soon, we were on the road again, visiting another traditional birth attendant, a young kindergarten teacher with a mother who looked like a black version of the actress Linda Hunt. In the nearby village, I saw someone with a T-shirt that read, “Someone in Cleveland loves me.” We also visited a farm that had failed owing to the lack of good rains and the lack of access to irrigation. Stunted maize was a painful testimony to the drought. The young man running the farm had been employed by the project on a special survey that was being done. His young brother was sponsored, and he got a large brown envelope. Inside were all the letters and cards, including the special World Vision Australia greeting cards, dating back a few years. His sponsor was a single woman in her thirties from a farm near Echuca. Liz took pictures and details.

We finally drove up onto the edge of the long, steady climb that was the side of Kilimanjaro. There were no foothills—just the huge conical mountain. The town here on the border with Tanzania was Oloitokitok. We wandered around the market, full of cheap torches, batteries, wallets, key rings, and useful bric-a-bracs for African rural life. Many fruits and vegetables were also on sale. Crispus, passing a fruit seller, commented, “They even sell wild fruits.” “Wild fruits,” said Aba indignantly, “we eat them all the time in Tanzania. They are my favourite.”

That night, we had a late dinner of barbecued goat. It was tasty but extremely tough, and the fat was juicy. I was tired and declined the invitation to sit around the campfire again. African singing lulled me to sleep.

Wednesday, June 1, 1994

It was a public holiday, so we could not visit communities that day. Instead, we visited the game park, had another round of discussions after lunch, and drove the long drive towards our second ADP at Makueni.

We had to begin before 6 to keep up with the animals. All the Australians greeted this news with good-hearted expressions of dismay, but no one dragged their feet when the opportunity came. We spent over three hours in the game park, seeing giraffes, elephants (more than 50 all told), a couple of hyenas, ostriches, wildebeest by the hundreds, zebras, buffalo, a couple of hippos, warthogs, Thompson gazelles, impalas, antelopes, guinea fowls, crested cranes and others we could not name.

When we spotted the hyena, our hosts commented predictably on its stupidity and cowardliness. “You know the hyena is so stupid,” said Aba. “When it follows a man walking, it is said to be waiting for his hands to fall off.”

At 10 a.m., we stopped by the Amboseli Serena guest house for breakfast and wished we could stay longer.

Back at Namelok, we continued to explore the ADP model. Frances took us through the five stages. Selection, entry, training & growth, consolidation and phase over. They admitted there were still problems with the model. For example, the timeline was enormously variable. Three years is allocated for the entry phase, but the reality was that it could be as short as a year or as long as ten. So many factors impinged on this. Also, the process was not linear. It was often cyclical, with entry-phase activities needing to be revisited at later phases.

Brian gave a good speech about the child's place within sponsorship-funded projects. His language allowed for an interpretation of a minimum benefits package approach. I suggested he should say that it was necessary to show how the project benefited the child rather than ask, "What benefits does the child receive?" When one asks, "How does the project benefit the child?" we imply that the project is an ongoing thing that can be shown to benefit the child. When one says, "What benefits does the child receive?" people tend to think of specific things they could give the child. This resulted in a "Minimum Benefits" approach.

After a late lunch, we said our goodbyes to the Loitokitok team and embarked on the long drive north to Hunter's Lodge en route to Makueni. The road was fast and not too dusty, and a hot shower was promised at the end. About one hour out of Loitokitok, I realised I had left my watch sitting on the windowsill of my room. I was sorry I mentioned it, as Aba said he would get someone to bring it to me. I didn't think this was worth the trouble for a $50 watch. We stopped at a small village, and someone went away to tell some local person about my lost watch. "The bush telegraph will get the message to them", assured Aba.

Hunter's Lodge, on the Mombasa Road, looked attractive from the road. Inside, it was shabby and lacked hot water. I had a lukewarm bath that improved my cleanliness without improving my demeanour. The drinks were cold, though. The bed linen seemed clean, but the mattress was well-used, and I flicked some bugs off the sheets before climbing in.

"Where are we staying in Makueni?" we asked. Aba informed us, Bjelke-Petersen style, not to worry about such things.

Thursday, June 2, 1994

The drive to Makueni took the best part of two hours. We were hot and dusty quickly. En route, Aba discussed Kenya's role in delivering World Food Program food to starving people in Kenya. There seemed to be real opportunities for World Vision to play an important role here. Especially if proper links could be made between our fundraising capability and Kenya's need for funds for logistic support, WFP would provide the grain and transport costs. Still, World Vision needs to pay for distribution and logistical management.

We arrived at Mumo and were met by the project manager, Gideon and two colleagues, Angelina and James. The former two had visited us in Australia. Sarah led us in devotions from Psalm 46. We sat around on chairs under a tree. It was sunny, quiet, calm. The temperature was under twenty, and a gentle zephyr was refreshing. We could hear birdsong and the sound of children playing. Sarah spoke about the blessings she had received in Australia. She pointed out that we did not deserve God's blessings, whether Australian or Kenyan. "We have not bribed God!" [I was confused. It had to do with the definition of blessings (the Swahili word is baraka). We live in a things-oriented society, which breeds solutions-oriented people.]

Emma from the local project office was asked to lead the singing. She suggested, "This Is the Day," but Aba interrupted and suggested, in Swahili, that they sing an African song. They did, and then, at Brian's suggestion, they also sang "This Is the Day" for us to join in. We soon found we could easily sing along with most African songs.

Ian said, “I prefer CDP to ADP.” And Crispus replied, “It doesn’t matter what you call it—it’s the process that matters.”

First, we arrived at a place where the community had completed a water catchment project that a government agency had started some years before but was never completed. It involved building a low wall around a huge rock formation near the village and channelling the water to a large concrete tank. The tank, which contained enough water for about three months' supply to the village, was already full. Indeed, it had been filled with just one day’s rainfall! Normally, all that water just ran away. The village was without water until it rained again. Now, they were harvesting water.

Lillian was the development motivator here.
The people were charging one shilling per 20-litre container, and only people from the village were eligible to get water. It saved the women a walk of more than 10 kilometres. I tried to pick up a full water container and found it very heavy. The women placed these on the small of their backs and took the weight with a strap around their foreheads. The impact on their backs of a 10-kilometre trudge with this weight must be significant. Lillian said it affected them in childbirth.

Makueni was now dry after insufficient long rains. Portentous. Famine was coming fast. People prefer white maize (corn) to yellow. They reckon the yellow corn (that we eat in the West) is “for animals”.

Everywhere we went, we made jokes about another of our colleagues, Ken Tracey, who had been Regional Director in East Africa some years before. People mentioned him so warmly that someone suggested that KENya be named after him!

At another place, we discovered that the food stores were already empty. There would be no more rain until November and no harvest for ten months. These people were already hungry. Part of the problem was that government policy prevented them from creating private stores. Last year, they had a good harvest. They were forced to sell it all to the common marketing body. Now, when they had no harvest, the government should have been responsible for feeding them since they took away their own capacity to protect themselves against famine. At least, now the government had opened the markets so that people could sell or not sell as they chose and at prices determined by the free market.

Of course, we were shown toilets. VIP latrines, no less. Ventilated, Improved, Pit, Latrines.

I was concerned that the staff were showing us the outputs of the process rather than helping us to see the development process itself. Frances and Aba must have shared my concern for, as the day went on, Frances tried to get people to talk about how they had achieved what was achieved. It would be better to spend less time flitting from the dam to school to the pit latrine and more time with a single community committee, having them describe the process.

I wondered whether we should send Ken ahead to work on the program in some detail in the future. But in the end, I discovered that Aba and Frances had the same concerns, and it was simply difficult to get the project staff to see what was required. They tended to assume that we understood the development process that underpinned these outcomes.

At a local high school, we were fed in a large community hall that had been built. The students initially entertained us with poetry and songs about the development process. Most of it was, impressively, in English. They were led by one teenage girl with a face and style full of commitment to the performance. So lovely.

Late in the afternoon, we arrived at a church where several tents had been pitched. This was our Serena for the night. It proved to be the best accommodation of the week! Each tent had a proper groundsheet and contained one or two camp beds with clean sheets and blankets. And no snakes, although we checked before we slid between the sheets.

To the side of the church were three plastic-walled shelters that served as shower recesses. Hot and cold water was provided, and we soon ladled the day's dust from our bodies. It was luxurious. The centre shower stall had been ringed in yellow plastic, while the others were black. Unfortunately, the yellow plastic was rather transparent, so we all modestly left it alone.

Behind the church were two clean VIP latrines that needed some air freshener.

In the evening, again around a campfire, Gideon orchestrated a music and entertainment program. This included a game of Simon Says, except they called it Peter Says. Brian and Ian won this in a tie when the leader found it impossible to trick them. Gideon announced that the Australians would sing Waltzing Matilda, which we did with more freedom, rhythm and harmony than most Australians did. The food was of a superior standard, and there was much of it.

Friday, June 3, 1994

After our visit, we spent the morning discussing issues with the team. There was some concern here about sponsorship. Indeed, the local team had decided to talk about “Child For Development” to distinguish our approach from people’s expectations.

Among the Makueni learnings were:

- Development is a process that requires patience, authenticity, consistency and commitment.
- Development is not money or material dole-out. It is people a people-to-people relationship.
- Development is a learning process for all involved.
- One must transform oneself to transform others.
- The development process cannot be photocopied.

What is development is how people have changed to show these fruits. It is not the tangible outcomes that are development.

Aba raised the concern about “How this process could be communicated?”

Before lunch was served, a man from Loitokitok arrived on a motorcycle. He was carrying a brown envelope containing my hairbrush and my watch. He was “on the way to Nairobi” to have his motorcycle serviced. His detour to deliver my watch would have taken him four or five hours extra riding.

Our discussion about sponsorship revealed some of the challenges. How do we do sponsorship in Samburu with nomadic people? Boarding schools was one suggestion, although another strategy was to find ways to make people less nomadic, as had been achieved in Loitokitok. I wondered what price was paid socially for having the kids away from their parents for long periods of their development. Were mobile schools (“School of the Air”) possible? I didn’t get the chance to explore these ideas.

Frances said he “recognised that sponsorship is the only way funds are being raised.” Angelina made a similar statement and asked why we do not raise money by other means. I pointed out that we did and that Frances’ statement was incorrect. The truth was that sponsorship was only one of many funding sources, but it was the one that raised the most money.

The choice was not between this or that funding but between more or fewer projects.

After another generous lunch, we set off for the drive back to Nairobi. We spent three hours on dusty and bumpy roads and then an hour or so along the main tarmac. At one point, someone asked

why we were taking the dusty route. “We are so near the tarmac,” came the reply. It was another 45 minutes before we saw the tarmac.

We checked into the Serena again, and I had a good shower, watching the water at my feet gradually fade from brown to clear. The water wasn’t dirty. I was.

In the evening, we went to the Trattoria, an Italian restaurant in Nairobi.

Saturday, June 4, 1994

Our last day was to be spent in another Maasai community in the Rift Valley—the Lodariok project. On the way, we stopped by the new World Vision office being built outside of Nairobi at Karen. It looked like a lovely, modest and modern complex. On-site is a good-standard four-bedroom guest house. It looked like a much better place to stay than a city hotel.

Introducing ourselves, Liz said, “I’m Liz.” The project manager replied, “Ah. But not last.”

At Lodariok, we saw the first successes in turning nomadic Maasai into pastoralists. The learnings of working with the Maasai in Loitokitok were being transferred here.

There were springs of water in the nearby hills. One had been capped, and water was piped five kilometres to a large tank. The community was laying more pipes to transport the water.

We were shown a local thorn bush. Its name was “Wait-a-bit” because it catches on your clothing.

We were shown a modern house being built by one man for one of his three wives. The women built it.

Around midday, we stopped by a river gully without water and were invited into the shady trees. Some Maasai men were carving up a roast goat, which they offered generously. It tasted like the others—very nice but very tough. A soup was boiling in a pot over the fire. The flavours appeared to be drawn from a goat’s stomach, which had been stuffed with herbs and spices. This didn’t look very appetising, and we were not offered it.

After this, we went to an area near the main project office where a community hall had been built. A demonstration farm was planned for this site, and work on a fence had begun. Each of us was invited to plant a tree. Two trees were already on site, having been planted by the aforementioned Dr Ken Tracey.

After the tree planting, we sat together with community representatives, men and women (although in discrete groups), and endured over an hour of speech-making, including my two minutes' worth. The order of speeches was Crispus, the project manager, the regional chief, me, Aba, the chairman of the community, the Chief Mamma, the assistant chief and the regional chief again. There seemed to be me to be a lot of politics going down. The chief did not strike me as having full integrity. At one stage, he talked about the government giving the people seeds. This was, we were assured by others, a total lie.

This project began with sponsorship. I was impressed by how thoroughly developmental it seemed to be. Surely, the key was not what you start with but how good the leadership was and whether it had the right vision and values. The right leadership, equipped with the right vision and values, could overcome the limitations of any methodology or funding source.

We ate our picnic lunches from the hotel and then returned to the Serena via the Ngong hills, an attractive, if bumpy, drive.

For the next two hours, we met and wrapped up the week, sharing our reflections and reactions.

I made the following seven reflections.

1. The quality of ministry depended on the vision and capability of the development motivators and their leadership.

2. Could we introduce a new strategic criterion into how World Vision Australia determines where new sponsorship growth will come from? I suggested we plant a flag for transformational development and message to the partnership that this is where we stand. We wanted to make a commitment to process before outcomes, to people empowerment, and to sponsorship as a mutually transforming relationship for both customers.

3. World Vision Australia needed to remain committed to refining our accounting systems to be clearer about the relationship between funds raised and spent, and how much was specifically available for each ministry entity and for what purposes.

4. We needed to continue working on the challenge of the common vision. A fundraising office did not serve only donors; it also served the people of Makueni, and it needed to be held accountable for the quality of that service. The local project manager did not serve only the people of Namelok; he also served those who sponsored children in Namelok, and he needed to be held accountable for the quality of that service.

5. We needed some help from the Kenya colleagues to ensure Australia met their planning expectations. It was unclear to me what kind of closure Aba and his team needed.

6. I discovered more about the quality and limitations of these colleagues with whom I had travelled. Their quality easily outweighed their limitations. Travelling with, listening to and watching them had been a pleasure. And especially to hear so much from their lips that affirmed my own visions.

7. I believed Aba was pulling off what I had dreamed about—earthing a vision in practical outcomes. I was learning how to be tough enough to do this tough work.

As we concluded, Cris commented, affirming the week's value, “How can we do development without a forum like this?” I agreed with the rhetorical answer that we could not. Since development began with and rested upon shared visions and values, we needed such forums in our relationship between field and support entities.

We needed to do this more often and with a wider group of people.