International Labour Review, Vol. 119, No. 3, May-June 1980

Basic needs: from words to action

With illustrations from Kenya[1]

Dharam GHAI*

1. Introduction

Since 1976, when the ILO held its World Employment Conference, there has been an intensive debate at national and international levels on the concept, relevance and implications of a basic-needs approach to development. This has given rise to a growing number of studies concerned with the elaboration of a conceptual and analytical framework, the identification of the distinctive features and key elements of a basic-needs strategy, and the analysis of data and policies relating to the satisfaction of basic needs. However, one of the persistent criticisms made of the basic-needs approach is that it does not yield an operational strategy in terms of concrete programmes, projects and policies.

The main object of this paper is to propose a simple methodology for the practical application of some of the ideas associated with a basic-needs approach. Its starting-point is the conviction that in most private-enterprise market economies there exist certain programmes and projects which display basic-needs characteristics but that they generally remain marginal to the central thrust of the development effort. Starved of financial and manpower resources, their growth and effectiveness are constrained in a variety of ways. Hence one of the tasks of development policy in these economies must be to identify and plan for a major expansion of such programmes. In the present article, these programmes are referred to as "basic-needs activities" (BNAs). After first defining the concept of BNAs, I shall outline their characteristics and attempt to demonstrate their operational potential in planning for basic-needs satisfaction. I shall then go on to provide a couple of illustrations of BNAs in Kenya, concluding with some observations regarding their possibilities and limitations in attaining the basic-needs and poverty-alleviation objectives.

* Chief, Rural Employment Policies Branch, International Labour Office.

2. Basic-needs activities: definition and characteristics

A government programme may be defined as a basic-needs activity if it incorporates some or all of the following features:

(i) it raises the incomes of poverty groups to specified levels over a given period through employment creation, asset redistribution and productivity-enhancing measures;

(ii) it makes a direct contribution to the achievement of the targets established in respect of core basic needs such as nutrition, health, education, housing and water supply;

(iii) it increases production of other basic goods and services purchased by low-income groups from their disposable incomes and by public sector and communal agencies;

(iv) it promotes decentralisation, participation and self-reliance.

The first task is to identify concrete activities and programmes which incorporate these features. In Kenya, for instance, there are several examples of category (i) activities: schemes designed to provide land for the landless or for those with tiny holdings; redirection of extension services, research, credit and other inputs in favour of poorer smallholders, as for instance under the Integrated Agricultural Development Project and credit schemes for low-income farmers; labour-intensive infrastructural schemes such as the Rural Access Roads and Rural Works Programmes; and various measures to stimulate the rural and urban informal sector.

Examples of category (ii) activities are provided by programmes concerned with rural water supplies, school meals, health centres and dispensaries, "site and service" housing projects, literacy campaigns and universal primary education, The essential feature of these programmes is that they seek to provide vital social and economic services for the masses rather than for the few.

Feature (iii) is to be found in public sector programmes encouraging the production of goods required to satisfy basic needs through private and social consumption: consumer goods such as food, utensils, cooking oil, textiles, shoes, stationery, books, simple furniture and medicines; intermediate goods such as building materials, agricultural and mineral raw materials, fertilisers and pesticides; and capital goods such as wheelbarrows, hoes, shovels, buses and lorries. While these goods are produced by both formal and informal sector enterprises, the latter are particularly suited to expanding the production of basic wage goods and the simpler types of tools to meet the increased demand resulting from a shift in consumption and investment patterns.

Category (iv) activities are exemplified above all by numerous self-help ("harambee") projects undertaken in the country since independence. Under the harambee movement, people have donated labour, cash and

materials for the construction of schools, colleges of technology, dispensaries, roads, waterworks and cattle dips.

The activities listed above do not necessarily fall into mutually exclusive categories. The roadside "restaurants" in Nairobi provide not only employment and incomes for the urban poor but also essential services for the low-income population, thus sharing features (i) and (ii). Likewise, self-help labour-intensive works projects such as the construction of rural access roads and water facilities may be classified simultaneously in categories (i), (iii) and (iv). It is also possible of course that certain activities, while satisfying some criteria, may be incompatible with others: for instance, the most efficient provision of certain economic services may require the construction of basic infrastructure using highly centralised methods of operation and advanced technology, thus limiting the scope for employment creation and participation in decision-making and implementation.

There are certain characteristics which flow from the criteria outlined above and are normally associated with BNAs. It should, however, be stressed that not all BNAs necessarily exhibit these characteristics.

Many BNAs operate on a relatively modest scale; examples are rural works programmes, the building of rural access roads, self-help construction of cattle dips and the establishment of rural health centres and dispensaries. The small scale of operations facilitates participation, decentralisation and self-reliance. It would, however, be wrong to associate the basic-needs strategy only with small-scale operations. There are numerous instances in all sectors of economic activity—agriculture, manufacturing, construction of social and economic infrastructure—where large-scale undertakings are socially optimal and are justified on grounds of cost, quality and durability of the final product, linkage effects and the upgrading of technological and managerial capabilities.

A second characteristic shared by many BNAs is the fact that they have low capital/labour ratios and thus generate far more employment than conventional activities for a given amount of capital; examples are site and service housing projects, small-scale manufacturing and repairs, construction of rural access roads and rural works programmes.

Thirdly, the execution and management of some of these BNAs require less sophisticated and more easily acquired skills; this is true, for example, of small-scale manufacturing, food-processing and repair enterprises operating informal apprenticeship training systems; simple building techniques required for site and service house construction; paramedical personnel needed to operate health centres and dispensaries; and primary school teachers for universal primary education.

Fourthly, in many cases such activities use local materials or recycle discarded materials, e.g. leather or old tyres for making shoes, recycled scrap metals for making braziers and water containers, and local

construction materials for low-cost housing and modest communal buildings.

Fifthly, BNAs typically involve the use of unsophisticated equipment and implements such as shovels, wheelbarrows and hoes for building rural access roads, and of simple tools for informal sector manufacturing and repair work.

These characteristics have some important consequences for development potential and patterns.

(1) A major shift toward BNAs should lead to a much more integrated economy. This follows from the many interdependencies that characterise such activities. By way of illustration, the expansion of expenditure on site and service housing projects should generate a demand for predominantly locally produced building materials and for locally available skilled and unskilled labour. Expenditure on rural access roads should stimulate activity in the manufacturing of shovels, hoes and wheelbarrows. The increased incomes of workers in these activities should in turn lead to greater demand for basic goods and services provided to an increasing extent by informal sector enterprises.

(2) Following from the above, a strategy along these lines should result in greater economic independence and self-reliance. Many of the BNAs, as indicated above, use local materials and simple equipment and tools which are, or can be, economically manufactured on the spot. Thus with a strategy emphasising the expansion of BNAs, the share of imported raw materials and intermediate and capital goods in domestic economic activities should decline. Likewise, changing patterns of income distribution and demand should result in a switch of expenditure from imported to local goods and services. The demand for highly paid skilled expatriate personnel might also be expected to decline. Indigenous entrepreneurship, which is predominant in many such activities, should receive a great boost. The skills needed to carry out BNAs should provide an orientation and focus for the myriad of training institutions ranging all the way from village polytechnics and "self-help" institutes of technology and schools to more formal establishments.

(3) For the reasons spelled out above, emphasis on BNAs should have very favourable effects on the balance of payments. Easing of the foreign exchange constraint should in turn make possible a further increase in the pace of economic growth by expanding the volume of BNAs.

3. Planning the expansion of basic-needs activities

For planning purposes it is necessary to have information on the quantitative as well as the qualitative dimensions of BNAs. This information is needed in order to estimate the resources required for expanding BNAs as well as to evaluate their total impact on the economy. The data

requirements depend to a large extent on the planning techniques used. There are some well known planning techniques such as input-output tables and activity analysis which, with the necessary modifications, could provide appropriate frameworks for the design, formulation and implementation of BNAs. However, the use of such techniques requires data and skills which are generally not available in most developing countries. It is therefore important to devise simple frameworks for the organisation and interpretation of essential data. These may be analytically inferior to more sophisticated techniques but have the compensating advantages of simplicity and operational feasibility. In the context of planning for basic needs, these advantages have a special significance in so far as they facilitate the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes on a decentralised and participatory basis by groups lacking knowledge of sophisticated planning techniques.

Essentially, what is required is information relating to the specified planning period on the following aspects of major BNAs:

- nature of output
- value of output
- capital expenditure
- recurrent expenditure
- local costs
- foreign exchange costs
- labour requirements by skill categories
- raw material requirements
- tools and equipment
- value added by wages and surplus

This information should be calculated both in value and, where relevant, in physical terms. It will need to be supplemented by appropriate evaluations of such qualitative features of BNAs as decentralisation, participation and self-reliance. It should be noted that it is perhaps easier to rank infrastructural projects with reference to these qualitative features than directly productive activities whether in the public or private sector. Nevertheless, it is important to develop criteria, crude and imperfect though they may be, for evaluating all BNAs with respect to these vital features. Some of the factors relevant to this evaluation are likely to be the scale of the given activity, the ownership pattern and location of decision-making powers in the executing agency, mechanisms for consultation, and controls on implementation.

It may be useful at this point to elaborate on the utility of these "data profiles" for planning and implementing the expansion of BNAs. A single glance at these profiles yields valuable information on such characteristics of an activity as its potential for employment and income generation, and its requirements in terms of raw materials, tools and equipment, skills and foreign exchange. A comparison in respect of these variables with alternative activities designed to satisfy a particular basic need may be helpful in making rational choices. A comparison of this sort between BNAs and their conventional counterparts should serve to highlight the

structural differences between them. The data profiles can also be used to assess the impact on basic-needs satisfaction of alternative combinations and varying magnitudes of BNAs. For a given package of BNAs, it should not be too difficult to obtain rough estimates of employment and income distribution effects, forward and backward linkages, indirect employment created, skill requirements and the effect on the balance of payments. This information in turn can be helpful in identifying potential bottlenecks, whether in the form of shortages of certain kinds of skills or of specific materials, and thus in launching timely remedial measures.

The information contained in the data profiles should make it possible to calculate conventional cost/benefit ratios and thereby guide decisions on the allocation of resources between competing programmes. The profiles can also facilitate the optimal phasing and sequencing of BNAs. Analysis of the data may reveal that certain activities can be pushed forward much faster than others, or that complementarities are particularly strong among certain activities and it might therefore be advantageous to expand these simultaneously. On the other hand, a particular BNA might involve intensive use of a resource which is in short supply and its expansion may thus need to be postponed.

If the necessary information were available, it would be highly illuminating to establish the current importance of BNAs in the economy in terms of some of the variables listed above, as well as their relative weight in different sectors, and hence in the production of the basket of basic goods and services. While this information is not available for Kenya, it may nevertheless be useful to illustrate the application of the approach proposed in this section to selected BNAs in that country.

4. Two illustrations of basic-needs activities

Here I shall discuss in detail two of the BNAs in Kenya that I mentioned earlier—the Rural Access Roads Programme (RARP) and the Site and Service Housing Schemes (SSHS). A quantitative analysis of these programmes along the lines sketched out in the preceding section is ruled out for lack of data, but it is still possible to provide a broad evaluation of their basic-needs orientation.

A. The Rural Access Roads Programme (RARP)[2]

The RARP was established in October 1974. Its main objectives are to improve transport and other links for the relatively inaccessible parts of the rural areas, thereby stimulating their development, and to provide employment opportunities, especially during slack periods, to rural low-income groups. From the outset emphasis was placed on labour-intensive technology, small-scale operating units, decentralisation and local partici-

pation in planning and implementation. Thus in its objectives, technology, organisation and scale, the RARP represents a sharp contrast to conventional road-building programmes in Kenya.

Starting with £32,700[3] in 1974/75, expenditure on the RARP rose rapidly in subsequent years to reach £3.5 million in 1978/79. The programme's share of total government expenditure on roads went up over the same period from 0.1 to 10.8 per cent. This makes it the largest labour-intensive public works programme being implemented in Africa today.

The basic-needs character of the programme is best brought out through its comparison with conventional road construction projects. This is done in the accompanying table.

Comparison between RARP and conventional road construction, 1977/78

Item	RARP	Conventional programme
Cost per km of road (£)[1]	2 050	7 500
Cost per job directly created (£)	152	1 760
Capital/labour ratio	1.04	3.0
Share of wages[2] in total cost (%)	49	25-30
Foreign exchange component in total cost (%)	20	60-65

Note: The comparison is between RARP roads and machine-intensive Ministry of Works class E (minor) subdistrict link roads, both of which are earth/gravel surfaced.

[1] The costs include overheads. Construction costs vary widely depending on the terrain and soil characteristics and on the location. The figures shown are rough averages. [2] Excluding salaries of RARP engineers and headquarters staff.

Source: Various project documents.

The table shows first that, for roads of broadly similar quality, the average construction costs using conventional technology are more than three-and-a-half times greater than for RARP roads. Secondly, the RARP uses vastly more labour-intensive construction techniques: the share of wages in total costs under the RARP is twice that under the conventional programme and capital/labour differentials are in the region of 3:1. The cost per job created is only 9 per cent of that under the more mechanised system of road construction. Finally, the foreign exchange share in total costs is one-fifth for the RARP compared with three-fifths or more under the conventional programme.

The RARP generates not only direct employment on road construction and maintenance but also indirect employment resulting from the expenditure of workers hired on the project and from the associated backward and forward linkages. As of January 1977 there were 19 construction units of roughly 300 workers each, providing daily employment for about 5,500 unskilled workers and 400 permanent supervisory staff. When the present phase of the programme becomes fully

operational in 1982, it will comprise 74 units employing about 22,000 workers. Furthermore, the maintenance of the 14,000 km of roads that it is planned to construct during this phase will create about 7,000 part-time jobs of a permanent nature, i.e. one maintenance contractor for every two kilometres of road.

The indirect employment effects are more difficult to quantify though they are likely to be significant. The multiplier effect of the first round of employment created is likely to be considerably greater under the RARP for three reasons. First, a relatively high proportion of the total costs of the RARP—around 50 per cent—are accounted for by wages. Secondly, the bulk of those payments go to unskilled, low-income employees—over 90 per cent of total employment—who have a high marginal propensity to consume. Thirdly, a high proportion of their expenditure is on locally produced goods and services.

Likewise, the indirect employment created by backward and forward linkages is likely to be substantial. Nearly one-third of the expenditure on the RARP is accounted for by materials, tools and equipment. Practically all of the materials required are available from local sources. This is also true to a large extent of the tools employed—shovels, wheelbarrows, pickaxes, rakes, hoes, moulds, etc. The quality of some of the locally manufactured tools has tended to be poor, and RARP engineers are working closely with local manufacturers and craftsmen to improve existing products and develop new and more practical tools.

It is only with respect to mechanised equipment—tractors, trailers, trucks, pumps, etc.—that the share of imports tends to be high. But even here considerable progress has been made in recent years in developing local facilities for assembling trucks, trailers and four-wheel-drive vehicles and manufacturing parts for them.

The forward linkages are due to increased investment, production and incomes made possible by cheaper transport costs and all-year access to nearby marketing centres. These may turn out to be important in the medium-to-long run but in the very nature of things are extremely difficult to estimate.

Before turning to the organisational features of the programme, it may be useful to make a rough assessment of the distribution of benefits generated by the RARP. These benefits accrue in the form of increased income and employment opportunities and the enhanced development potential of the area concerned. As noted earlier, the programme has been relatively successful in creating employment and income-earning opportunities. Information on various characteristics of the RARP workers has been obtained through a survey carried out as part of the project.[4] The questionnaire was completed by 287 workers selected from the initial project sites in Nyeri, Kwali, West Pokot and South Kyanza. It is not possible to compare their income and asset position with that of households in these districts since information on the latter is not available.

However, a comparison with national data indicates that RARP workers are generally representative of smallholders in the country as a whole. On the basis of the information available, it would not seem that RARP workers come exclusively from the poorest groups.

Nearly 13 per cent of RARP workers owned less than half a hectare of land and 35 per cent less than 1 hectare. The comparable national figures for smallholders are 14 per cent and 32 per cent. Nearly 37 per cent of RARP workers had family incomes of less than £100 per annum compared with over 40 per cent of smallholders.[5] Prior to recruitment, nearly 42 per cent of the workers had been without jobs for more than six months, but another 47 per cent had merely changed jobs to work on the project.

Another interesting statistic relates to their pay in the last job. Fifty per cent of the workers earned less than 100 shs. (£5) per month in their previous jobs, and 70 per cent less than 150 shs. per month. At the then going rate of 6.75 shs. a day a RARP employee working for 25 days a month would be earning nearly 170 shs. per month. Thus the great majority of RARP workers had considerably improved their incomes by being employed on the project. This employment, however, is inherently of a temporary nature.

The other major benefit from the programme is the enhanced development potential of the area concerned. The criteria used in the selection of sites for road construction were the inadequacy of the existing network, the agricultural potential of the area and the likely traffic volume. Thus in one sense the relatively deprived areas were chosen but the criterion of growth potential clearly favoured the areas where some development had already taken place and could, it was thought, be accelerated by the removal of the transport bottleneck. The areas finally selected are located in districts showing considerable diversity in development levels and potential with no particular bias in favour of high- or low-income regions. The ultimate distribution of benefits from improved transport facilities will thus be determined by the pattern of income and asset distribution in these areas as well as more generally by the over-all direction and thrust of rural development policies.

The programme has also introduced some organisational innovations which could be adopted by other labour-intensive programmes. The first one concerns recruitment, training and organisation of work on projects involving large numbers of unskilled, temporary employees. Over time the RARP engineers and managers have been able to identify and implement progressively more efficient arrangements for organising workers into gangs, assigning specific tasks on a daily basis and exercising supervision. This has resulted in levels of productivity considerably higher than those originally foreseen.

The second notable innovation of the programme is the emphasis put on decentralisation in decision-making. The construction units at the project level enjoy considerable autonomy in spending (within the limits of

the approved budget) and with respect to labour recruitment, remuneration and organisation of work. The central administration of the RARP in Nairobi acts as a co-ordinating body which allocates funds and other resources to individual units in the light of over-all needs and priorities. The programme has set something of a precedent in this relatively decentralised mode of operation.

Thirdly, some attempt has been made to evoke local participation in project implementation. The choice of the route to be followed by a project road is made in consultation with the local people through "district development committees". The new system of road maintenance that has been devised relies largely upon local participation. Greater involvement of the local people has resulted in better decisions and cost savings, made possible in part by free donations of land for road construction.

The RARP represents a pioneering attempt in Kenya to carry out large-scale road construction using labour-intensive methods and a relatively decentralised pattern of operation. The techniques adopted lend themselves to the building of good quality feeder roads and there remains considerable scope for the expansion of the programme to other areas in Kenya. However, because of the nature of the technology used, the time required for construction, and the type of roads built, the RARP cannot be expanded to construct larger highways and trunk roads. The scarcity of adequately trained local engineers is another obstacle to its rapid expansion.

B. Site and Service Housing Schemes (SSHS)

Lack of adequate housing and high rents are among the major problems faced by the urban poor in Kenya. It has been estimated that a minimum of one-third of the population in Nairobi, and probably a higher proportion in other urban areas, lives in unauthorised and unserviced areas, lacking basic facilities such as electricity, water and sewerage. In the past, the bulk of public housing expenditure has gone towards building houses for middle- and high-income groups. It is only since the early 1970s that attention has been given to solving the housing problems of the urban poor through a variety of low-cost housing schemes. These include upgrading infrastructure and communal facilities in the existing squatter and slum areas, providing site and service plots with or without superstructure, and equipping settlement plots with communal services.

Public expenditure on the SSHS has risen from £30,000 in 1973/74 to £660,000 in 1976/77, or from less than 1 per cent to nearly 20 per cent of total public urban housing expenditure. Besides its main objective of making low-cost housing accessible to low-income urban groups, the SSHS also seeks to promote employment opportunities and encourage small-scale construction enterprises. The basic infrastructural work is undertaken by the public authorities, while the building of the house is normally left to the

plot-owners. The latter may choose to build the house through their own efforts with assistance from family members and friends, on a co-operative basis with other plot-owners, through subcontracting to small private builders, or through a combination of these methods. The characteristic of all these methods is that they use highly labour-intensive techniques requiring only simple, low-cost tools. The plot-owners receive loans to meet the construction costs and, where requested, technical assistance. Thus in terms of cost, technology and organisation of production, these schemes represent a considerable departure from conventional housing development projects. Three basic-needs features of the programme will be discussed here: the provision of low-cost housing facilities for the urban poor, the generation of employment and income-earning opportunities, and the satisfaction of other needs through the development of appropriate social infrastructure.

Houses constructed under the scheme are a quarter to one-fifth of the cost of a similarly sized conventional house. The two major reasons for the lower costs in the SSHS are the use of semi-permanent and temporary local materials and the building of the house through an "owner-builder process". According to National Housing Corporation estimates, at 1975 prices it cost a plot-owner between £1,600 and £2,000 to build a six-room house in permanent materials, but only £600-650 if semi-permanent materials were used. The owner-builder process results in a further saving of contractors' overheads and profits amounting to approximately 30 per cent of the construction cost.

The bulk of the houses constructed under the first phase of the Dandora Scheme in Nairobi have capital costs ranging from £550 to £600 (1975 prices). Assuming that expenditure for shelter and services should not exceed roughly 25 per cent of the owner's income, it has been estimated that a monthly income of £14 would be required in order to afford the cheapest plots. This would bring them within reach of all low-income urban households except for the bottom 15-20 per cent. However, such schemes also help to ease the housing shortage for the poorest groups by increasing the over-all supply of low-cost housing and more specifically by permitting plot-owners to rent part of their premises to tenants. Inclusion of such rents in the monthly income would bring site and service scheme houses within the reach of another 5 to 10 per cent of urban families.

In order to qualify for the housing loan, an applicant must satisfy a number of criteria. These include an income of between £15 and £60 per month, payment of a deposit of 5 per cent of the loan (i.e. up to about £35), and at least six months' residence in the town. In addition, the applicant must not possess other houses and is required to live in the house built under the scheme. The total annual charges to plot-owners under the SSHS are 11-13 per cent of the loan, including amortisation, administrative charges, land rent, etc. Thus the very poorest sections of the urban population would find it difficult to meet the income criteria for loans

under the SSHS. They are more likely to derive benefits from other schemes such as the provision of settlement plots and the improvement of squatter housing.

It has been estimated that a £1 million investment in the SSHS provides a year's employment for 800 persons. Direct employment is generated by the construction of infrastructure, wet cores (basic plumbing), houses and community facilities such as schools, markets, health centres and workshop clusters. The basic infrastructure is generally constructed by large-scale contractors using modern capital-intensive technology. As we have seen, however, the construction of houses is typically carried out by plot-owners and small contractors using simple, low-cost tools. With greater use of labour-intensive methods in the construction of infrastructure and community facilities the employment effects could be further intensified.

As with the RARP, the indirect employment generated through backward linkages could be quite important. This is because a high proportion of the construction materials and tools used by small contractors—handmade bricks and blocks, timber doors, window frames, paint, furniture, hammers, etc.—are locally manufactured, often by informal sector enterprises. The workshop facilities and traders' kiosks on the housing estates create additional employment and income-earning opportunities by stimulating small-scale enterprises.

The SSHS provide for relatively high standards of basic services and physical and social infrastructure. This should help significantly in meeting minimum requirements for health, clean water supply, education, transportation and recreation facilities. Given the fact that a high proportion of families benefiting under these housing schemes are likely to have been previously housed in squatter and slum areas without water supply, sewerage, electricity and community facilities, it may be said that the SSHS is contributing to a more equitable distribution of these services. In this connection, it is interesting that the second phase of the project seeks explicitly to provide an effective low-cost delivery system for health, nutrition and family planning services.

The experience with the SSHS thus far has been encouraging. Standards of self-help and privately contracted construction are very high. Debt recovery has been excellent, with very low arrears and no defaults. Allocation of loans in general seems to have been fair, although there are inevitable exceptions. The rise in construction costs, however, is a matter of serious concern since it could place housing under the SSHS beyond the reach of the poorest urban groups. If these schemes are to retain their basic-needs character, it is essential to hold down the cost increases through appropriate policies concerning land acquisition, training of personnel and infrastructural standards. Other measures that might be taken to make the SSHS more accessible to the urban poor include the provision of loan facilities to those earning less than the present minimum qualifying

amount. This may best be done by encouraging them to participate in the schemes through co-operatives.

5. Some concluding remarks

This article has attempted to indicate an approach for putting some of the ideas associated with a basic-needs strategy into practice. This approach consists essentially in the identification, development and expansion of BNAs. It was noted in the context of Kenya that while BNAs represent a considerable advance over conventional programmes in terms of objectives, technology and organisation, as well as in their impact on poverty, the very poorest groups sometimes remain beyond their reach. In order for them to have a significant impact on poverty and unemployment, it will be necessary both to bring about some policy changes and to provide for a major expansion of such activities. It should be stressed that the approach suggested here represents *one* component of a basic-needs strategy. A more comprehensive statement of the strategy would underline the need for wider changes in income and wealth distribution and in patterns of consumption, investment and production.

Notes

[1] This article draws upon material contained in Dharam Ghai, Martin Godfrey and Franklyn Lisk: *Planning for basic needs in Kenya: performance, policies and prospects* (Geneva, ILO, 1979). I am indebted to the two co-authors for their help and co-operation.

[2] For a detailed study of this programme that has just been published see J. J. de Veen: *The Rural Access Roads Programme: appropriate technology in Kenya* (Geneva, ILO, 1980).

[3] All references in this article to pounds and shillings are in Kenyan currency. The rate of exchange in 1975 was 1 US dollar = 7.41 shillings (£0.37).

[4] See K. G. Vaidya: *Labour supply study report No. 2: Kenya Rural Access Roads Programme* (UK Ministry of Overseas Development, 1977; mimeographed).

[5] The national data are taken from Central Bureau of Statistics: *Integrated rural survey 1975/76* (Nairobi, 1977).