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Trading Crafts, Trading Places: The Promise of Alternative Trade for International Education & Development

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**TRADING CRAFTS, TRADING PLACES:
THE PROMISE OF ALTERNATIVE TRADE FOR INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**

A Master's Project
by
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**CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
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Abstract

Alternative trade is a relatively recent movement of artisans, importers and retailers which brings the handcrafted products of artisans in the third world to consumers in the U.S. and Europe. The goal is two-fold: to provide increased economic opportunity to artisans by bypassing middlemen and penetrating the markets of wealthy nations, and to educate consumers about the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental situation of the artisans, their communities and their nations.

This paper deals primarily with the educational aspect of alternative trade. It examines the current reality of the global handicraft trade and the existing knowledge of U.S. consumers about the third world and international development issues. The paper proposes numerous educational strategies which alternative trading organizations (ATOs) can use to bolster public awareness about these issues. A case study of one ATO, which trades with the East African nation of Kenya, is included. It is argued that alternative trade can make a unique and meaningful contribution both to reforming the practices of global trade and to fostering international understanding, cooperation and development.

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1. Introduction

"The mutual and universal dependence of individuals who remain indifferent to one another constitutes the social network that binds them together."

– Karl Marx

1.1 Overview

In the world today, there are few people whose lives have not, in one way or another, become linked together through the global economic system. Such linkage implies not only economic relationships, but social, political and cultural ties. However, in spite of the globalization of the market, the producer and the consumer remain distanced from each other, separated as much by geography as by class, language, culture and nationality.

Most trading relationships in the global economy--mediated increasingly by transnational corporations--remain veiled in anonymity behind packaging, boardroom doors, foreign sweatshop walls and advertising campaigns. Thus, consumers--the driving force of the world economy--are unaware of the human exploitation and environmental degradation that so often accompany the production of the goods they purchase. In response to this situation, a new movement has emerged: alternative trade.

Alternative trade is a relatively recent movement dedicated to the equitable

exchange of goods between Southern¹ artisan-producers and Northern consumers. In addition to trading, many within the movement believe that the education of consumers about development issues and the situation of producers is integral to both economic justice and international understanding.

1.2 Alternative Trade

"...Whosoever commands trade commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself."

- Sir Walter Raleigh

Activist Kevin Danaher (1992: 109) explains the background of alternative trade:

During the 1970s and 1980s, as more and more people grew impatient with the market economy's inability to foster development in the third world, progressive activists in the industrial countries began to develop a different type of business relationship with poor countries. Fair trade, or what is often called alternative trade, is based on different principles than normal profit-making enterprises.

While these "principles" may vary somewhat, they generally fall within the criteria established recently by Paul Freundlich of the Fair Trade Foundation in the U.S. (brochure 1992):

1. Fair distribution of income among workers.
2. Healthy working conditions.
3. Concern for environmental impact of products and production.

¹ In naming regions of the world, there seems to be no satisfactory terminology. The use of "Third World" and "First World" as well as "developing" and "developed", to describe nations represent a heavily biased and outdated perspective about development (read worth, value, esteem). To avoid such bias, and to simplify matters, I have adopted the most contemporary and least (in my opinion) objectionable terms: "South" (or "Southern") for nations of the southern hemisphere who share a legacy of colonization and, later, decreasing standards of living (defined by income, health, longevity, political, economic and social justice), and "North" ("Northern") for nations of the northern hemisphere who were at one time colonizers of the South and today enjoy a relatively high standard of living.

4. Strategy for community economic development.
5. Participation by workers in decision-making.
6. Support of community life and cultural traditions.
7. Commitment to product quality, sound and ethical business practice.
8. Reasonable cost to consumer.

Alternative trade deals primarily with handicrafts and foodstuffs which are produced in Southern villages and shantytowns by cooperatives of artisans. The products are brought to the U.S. and European markets by businesses and other organizations, known as "alternative trading organizations", or ATOs. In bringing these products directly to Northern markets--bypassing middlemen and other barriers--ATOs can ensure that producers receive greater earnings for their work. It has also become common for ATOs to provide producers with technical assistance in design, production, marketing and management.

According to Danaher:

This [whole] process does more than simply... provide income for third world producers. It poses a moral challenge to the dominant system of profit-making enterprise.... alternative trade suggests that helping people escape poverty in a dignified way is a greater reward than accumulating a personal fortune (1991: 109-110).

The past decade has witnessed tremendous growth in alternative trade, with the participation of dozens of ATOs and hundreds of producing groups. The ATO movement in Europe started much earlier and has grown much larger than its counterpart in the U.S. In 1992, total sales were close to \$85 million in Europe, while U.S. sales were barely \$15 million. But with the increasing interest among U.S. consumers in "ethnic" products, and a growing awareness

of the environmental and social impact of trade, ATOs are poised to assume a greater role in the marketplace.

Next to bettering the quality of life for producers and their communities, there is another, perhaps equally important, element of alternative trade: the education of "first world consumers about the conditions under which the third world goods are produced" (ibid., p.110). It will be argued in this paper that the education of consumers about local and global development issues is crucial if the prevailing economic system is to be transformed. Such transformation is urgently needed to ameliorate the negative and life-threatening social, political, economic and environmental effects of the present system. Consumers have power, and given the ability to make informed choices about the products they purchase, they can help determine the shape such transformation will take. After all, the ring of a Northern cash register is a sound heard 'round the world. It is this endeavor, the education of consumers by alternative trading organizations, which is the primary focus of this paper.

1.3 The Need for ATO Education

There are many reasons why the education of consumers should be included in ATO activities. The most obvious among them is the growing need for cross-cultural and international understanding in our increasingly interdependent

world. This understanding can be galvanized through education about the diversity of cultures and nations, and about the ways in which, both historically and presently, they are related: culturally, politically, economically, ecologically. Alternative trade offers a direct way to develop such understanding because it "has the potential to reach any American consumer with a desire for coffee, tea, cashews, peanut butter, baskets, wood carvings, jewelry, tapestry or a host of other products." (ibid., p. 112)

ATOs have made significant contributions to public education about the South by coupling the sales of products with educational materials about the countries where the goods are produced. As Danaher (ibid., p. 112) explains: "Sometimes just a few sentences on a product label is enough to stimulate the interest of a consumer to think of the human beings who made the product, and to find out more about what is going on in [the producer's region]."

Most ATOs recognize that beyond purchasing fair trade products and disseminating information about producers and their nations, "political action is essential to end poverty" (ibid, p.112). This is because the conditions which produce poverty in Southern countries are heavily influenced not only by their past experience of European colonialism, but by contemporary international political and economic policies. It is widely known that Northern nations such as the U.S., wield tremendous power in policymaking bodies like the U.N., the

World Bank and the IMF. Policies consequently reflect strong bias toward the North, leaving Southern countries in a disadvantaged position.

By encouraging Northern consumers to learn about this process and to "plug into various political and human rights campaigns (ibid., p.112), ATOs can help bring about small, but meaningful, changes in the global political arena. At Jubilee Crafts, a U.S.-based ATO, Melissa Moye says: "We can--and do-- discuss the political situation in the producer countries, the role of the U.S. government there, and what we should be doing to make things better" (ibid., p.112).

Lastly, with the drop in living standards throughout most Southern nations, there is an urgent need for appropriate development alternatives. There are many examples of successful community-based development activities in the South which, with exposure, could be shared with other regions. Such exposure could also help to gain increased material and financial support from the Northern public.

Moreover, in a reversal of the prevailing belief that "development" is somehow confined to economically poor nations overseas, rich nations like the U.S., who are now experiencing manifold problems of their own, could benefit from ideas

and activities born in the South². ATOs present a compelling opportunity to bring some of these development alternatives into the light by sharing their activities with their consumers and the public-at-large and by providing opportunities for them to become involved.

In the next chapter, having defined briefly alternative trade and its mission, we will examine the context in which ATOs operate. We will begin by looking at the nature of marketing as it pertains to the trade of handicrafts between the South and the North. The following chapter, #3, will discuss the various educational methods and strategies available to ATOs in their efforts to educate Northern consumers. We will then turn in chapter 4 to a case study to see how one ATO, founded by the author, has applied these strategies. Since the case study concerns alternative trade with Africa, this region will figure prominently throughout the paper. The paper concludes with some thoughts on the future direction of education within the alternative trade movement.

² Witness, for example, the Grameen Bank, a Bangladeshi model for financing small businesses. This model has received much attention in the North and has been adopted in a number of U.S. communities.

2. The ATO Operating Environment

2.1 Focusing on Handicrafts

This paper will focus on the handicraft sector of alternative trade. Handicrafts are among the most commonly traded items within the movement. In thinking about the handicraft industry, it is helpful to set some parameters. First, we need to define what we mean by "handicrafts." Handicrafts are defined primarily by the nature of their production: items which are produced by hand by skilled and semi-skilled artisans. The items which will be discussed here are primarily produced within the cash economy and for the use and/or consumption of in-country tourists and of consumers in the rich countries of the North. The majority of these items are unique to the cultural/geographical region of the producers. They are often highly decorative, and adapted to the needs and preferences of the consumer. Items include clothing, jewelry and accessories, household items.³

The primary reason ATOs focus on handicrafts is because they are often the most appropriate for Southern producers. First, handicrafts require relatively little capital investment in materials and technology; second, they can usually be produced using local materials and knowledge; third, production can work

³ Handicrafts, traditionally defined, also include such items as tools and other implements, but these are rarely traded for export to the U.S. or Europe.

in harmony with local life, e.g., agricultural cycles, providing income during lean months; fourth, products can sometimes help preserve cultural traditions; and, finally, they offer Northern consumers a more direct link to artisans/producers, which is unique in a global market increasingly saturated with machine produced products (Tiffin, 1990: 14). In the case of alternative trade, this last reason fills an important cross-cultural gap. As Florence Dibell Bartlett, founder of the Museum of International Folk Art, once said "The art of the crafts person is the bond between peoples of the world" (The Crafts Center brochure: 1992).

Since this paper concerns itself with the educational potential inherent in the handicraft industry, particularly by ATOs, it is essential to review the current situation of the industry. There are two main areas to discuss: first, the marketing/educational behavior of the mainstream handicraft industry, and second, the knowledge-base of U.S. consumers about Southern nations (in this case, African nations) and of development issues.

2.2 Business as Usual: The Missing Links of Handicraft Marketing

The artist, like the God of the creation,
remains within or behind
or beyond or above his handiwork,
invisible, refined out of existence,
indifferent, paring his fingernails.

- James Joyce

"A portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"

Most handicrafts produced in the South arrive in Northern markets with no background information except country of origin (which is required by law). Retail merchants seldom possess further information because the products have passed through so many hands since leaving the producer that such details have been lost. Thus, upon reaching the shelf, the item becomes as so many others--depersonalized and decontextualized. The consumer has a mere aesthetic relationship with the item or, if the country of origin is significant to him/her, probably a limited or stereotypical understanding of the socio-historical situation from whence it came. But perhaps this anonymity is preferable to the alternative: the falsehoods propagated by marketers.

It is my belief that some imported "artistic" products--handmade or mass produced--are marketed through mis-appropriation of cultural information to expedite sales. Tantamount to this process is the creation by trading companies or merchants of a "mythos" around their saleable items.

The construction of a mythos, through advertising, packaging or display is geared toward reinforcing or altering "a product's associations for consumers...." (Janus, 1986: 137). For example, to heighten the appeal of third world products in the North many importers and retailers have drawn upon the exoticism and "otherness" of the product and its origin. This has occurred often within the handicrafts market, especially with products whose alleged design

origins predate Western contact and industrialization.

The words "traditional," "handcrafted," and "ceremonial" are used to denote a purer, simpler way of life, a rooted manner of existence outside the experience of most urbanized moderns in the North and the South (e.g., national elites who collect "traditional" art). The "otherness" of a product holds a fascination for the consumer for other reasons: its so called primitiveness (e.g., relics from the "untamed Dark Continent") and even its symbolic link to the now romanticized experience of white explorers and colonialists outside the pale of 18th and 19th century Europe and North America.

Oftentimes, the product itself is stripped of its context. For example, baskets used in East Africa by tea harvesters to carry tea, are marketed in the U.S. as laundry hampers. There is no mention to consumers of the origin and use of the product. On, the other hand, if there is mention of origin and use, it is highly selective. A mask used for ritual purposes will be identified merely as a "ceremonial mask", leaving the consumer with no idea of the value and meaning of the object. This is an act of conscious "fragmentation...in which reality is broken into pieces ...taken out of their social context" (Montoya & Robeil, 1986: 156).

2.3 The Knowledge of Consumers

Equally as important as what handicraft marketers relay to consumers about a product is the background knowledge consumers already have. This knowledge will dictate to a considerable extent how the industry presents its products and how well the consumer is able to learn, understand, or perhaps "fill in the informational gap" about these items. I would argue that, where the consumer is well educated about handicrafts, their production, and nations of origin, it is less likely that the industry will resort to crass stereotypes and ungrounded marketing hype to sell their products. For the purposes of this paper, let us consider, together with the factors mentioned previously, the general knowledge about and perceptions of Africa which dominate in the U.S.

The "Dark Continent" Reconsidered

It is reasonable to suggest that most U.S. citizens have relatively little knowledge about Africa. Its history, people, nations, and how the continent is connected to the rest of the world through social, political and economic activities and policies remains distant and obscure. No doubt this is partly due to the paucity of Africa-related curricula in the U.S. educational system. It is also due to the relatively minimal coverage of Africa in the global media. Further, Africa, on the whole, figures very minimally in the political and economic spheres of U.S. life.

With the exception of military conflicts (many nurtured by former colonial powers and by cold-war contestants), apartheid in South Africa, famine, and the continent's environmental problems (the destruction of species and habitat), the world has paid little attention to Africa. In the realm of trade, there are, in the U.S. marketplace, relatively few finished products which connect Americans to Africa. Most of the goods traded between Africa and the U.S. are raw materials, such as cocoa, which arrive on retail shelves as finished products with little or no reference made as to their countries of origin. Otherwise, most African products reaching the U.S. are of the artistic kind, typically handicrafts which, as mentioned above, tend to be sold without much information about their background.

Perhaps as important as what Americans don't know about Africa, is what they do know. And, judging from the literature and from personal experience, this knowledge is often heavily biased and inaccurate. As American journalist David Lamb writes: "No continent has been more mistreated, misunderstood and misreported over the years than Africa. Ask an American to mention four things he associates with Africa and the answer is likely to be "pygmies, jungle, heat and lions." (To his quote, I would add war, governmental instability and famine, which have constituted the majority of reportage and relief organization publicity material in recent years.)

However, these Northern stereotypes of Africa are by no means new.

Misconceptions and misperceptions about the continent trace their roots to its first encounters with Northern peoples centuries ago. Colonialism, imperialism and natural curiosity provided the impetus and opportunity for their creation. Knowledge of African culture has often been filtered through and communicated by Northern cartographers, scholars, writers, artists, lecturers and museum curators. In this century, journalism, tourism, film, music, modern art, education and the African-American community have each contributed to our understanding of Africa. Few North Americans have actually been to Africa and many of those who have went as tourists on short "safaris."

It is outside the scope of this paper to examine the history and ramifications of African stereotypes exhaustively. Suffice it to say that this issue is an important one for those who seek to build cross-cultural understanding. The burden of remedying the perceptions which many U.S. citizens have about Africa is enormous. In addition to reforming and bolstering school-based curricula and other knowledge channels, the alternative trading movement provides an appropriate and effective avenue for learning more about this region and its people. The following chapter will examine the nature, possibilities and methods of ATO-sponsored education.

3. ATO Education

3.1 Content Areas of ATO Education

What do ATOs seek to educate their clientele about? There is not at present a definitive curricula upon which all ATOs draw in their efforts to educate the public. However, in reviewing the literature written by or about ATOs, a number of commonalties emerge. They ask and attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Where are the products made?
2. Who produces the products, and for what purpose are they produced?
3. How are the products made?
4. What materials are used in production and where do they come from?
5. How do the products and their production reflect the social, political, cultural, environmental and economic realities of producers' communities and their nation?
6. How will the purchase of the product benefit the producers and their communities?
7. How can consumers create positive change in international and national policies which impact the developing world?

ATOs go to different lengths to answer these questions, depending upon their mission, their consumers and, of course, their budgets. The educational methods they use is the topic of the next section.

3.2 Educational Methods

In their efforts to educate their clientele, ATOs have drawn from at least five educational methodologies: social marketing, consumer education, global

education, development education, and nonformal and informal education.

Social Marketing

This approach was developed in the 1960s as a method to improve the health and well-being of people in the South. Bringing together western marketing techniques, such as multi-media advertising, and health-creating ideas and technologies, social marketers sought to change behaviors which caused poor health.

In recent years, social marketing techniques have been widely used in public health campaigns in the U.S. This is witnessed by television, radio, billboard and print advertising to combat AIDS and smoking, reduce alcohol consumption, prevent drug and substance abuse, and counter other agents of death and disease. These techniques are not altogether adequate, however.

Social marketers have discovered that while they are effective in distributing information and reinforcing certain behaviors, they are less successful in changing behavior. For example, messages tend to be diluted by racial, ethnic, linguistic and age differences. Other disadvantages to social marketing include its cost (for research, production and distribution), and the relatively high level of expertise required.

Because it relies chiefly on experts operating in a "top-down" manner, and targets individuals, social marketing often does little to empower people or to mobilize communities to tackle the social, economic and political realities which are often the root causes of problems.

Consumer Education

Consumer education is not a particular methodology per se, but a movement from whose experience ATOs can benefit. In recent years, consumer advocates, unions, citizen groups and others have developed or adapted educational methods to effect change in the marketplace.

To mobilize consumers, these groups have utilized a wide range of educational media: leaflets, periodicals, books, videos, films, direct-mailings, telephone trees, bumper stickers, buttons, posters, billboards, picket signs, emblazoned clothing, even graffiti. They have also staged thought-provoking activities such as concerts, rallies, popular theater, teach-ins and marches.

By showing their strength through boycotts, demonstrations, "monkey-wrenching," petitions, and other means, consumers have forced producers, retailers, even governments, to change their products, marketing practices and policies. Among the more memorable achievements are the Nestle boycott (to change the marketing strategies for baby food products in Southern countries),

the recall of the Ford Pinto automobile (to replace defective fuel tanks), and the world-wide embargo of South African products and companies (to force the dismantling of the apartheid system).

Another innovative strategy, developed initially by so-called "socially responsible investment" firms in the last decade, is the use of social, economic and environmental ratings to help investors and consumers make informed choices about their investments and purchases. One example is a book, "Shopping for a Better World", which rates products and their producers according to their effect and policies on, for instance, women, minorities, the environment, and South Africa. The ratings are updated annually to record changes in corporate policies and activities. And, the criteria used to produce the ratings are becoming ever more sophisticated.

Consumer education is also undertaken by government agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (U.S.), and by manufacturers and retailers. This education typically focuses on the content and use of a particular product. It may also include information about the company, the development of a product, the manufacturing process and other data which the company wishes to impart.

The format of this type of consumer education consists of multi-media

advertising, in-store demonstrations, literature (booklets, instructions, packaging, etc.), and sometimes, classroom instruction (e.g., home economics courses).

Global Education

A relatively recent development, global education is making inroads into formal education in the U.S. and elsewhere. According to Global Horizons, a project of the Center for International Education (Brochure 1991),

Global education is a process... not a discipline. [It] is a perspective to be incorporated into all disciplines and classroom subjects. It emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all peoples and cultures.

This perspective is one of the hallmarks of ATO education.

Development Education

That aspect of alternative trade which concerns itself with educating consumers in the North about their relationship with the South (and its producers) falls within the locus of what is often referred to as "development education."

Development education (hereafter called "DE") focuses on "development," or the ways in which peoples and nations of the world define and activate the process of bettering their overall quality of life. DE examines the theories, assumptions and activities which have guided development in recent centuries. It tends to be a multidisciplinary approach, including within its range the fields

of geography, economics, anthropology, sociology, history, and ecology.

Much of the curricula deal with the legacy of colonialism in Southern countries, tracing many of today's problems in those nations to the policies and practices of the European imperial powers, beginning as early as 1492. DE also deals with post-colonial themes, such as nation-building, the Cold War, economic development and environmental destruction.

Although DE is largely offered in secondary school and university curricula, it is also found outside of the formal educational system. Development and relief agencies, ATOs, alternative news media, and others have been instrumental in educating the non-school population about such issues as population growth, poverty, ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, and cultural change.

Nonformal & Informal Education

Because the majority of ATO educational activities take place outside of school settings, they rely chiefly on nonformal and informal education. Coombs et al (1973: 11), define nonformal education as:

...any organized educational activity outside the established formal system... that is intended to serve identifiable clienteles and learning objectives.

As for informal education, Evans (1981: 29) has offered this definition, which clarifies the distinction between nonformal and informal education:

...learning which results from conscious efforts either on the part of the learner to learn from the environment or on the part of an individual or organization with intent to create a learning situation, but without a specific set of individual learners in mind.

While nonformal and informal education go by many names (e.g., adult education, community-based education, indigenous education, and socialization), both are found within ATO education.

3.3 Peculiarities of ATO Education

There are a number of challenges that ATOs encounter when attempting to educate their clientele. These are based on the following assumptions about the U.S. marketplace and its consumer "culture."

- 1) For the most part, consumerism is an individualized activity. Although consumers may learn from others about a product, they often make their purchases on their own. If consumers receive information about a product and its background, such information is presented and received in relative isolation.
- 2) Consumers are not necessarily in the marketplace to learn about the background of a product. They are primarily interested in what the product can do for them.
- 3) Information about a product typically provides "one-shot" education, i.e., it is short term, and extremely unlikely that there will be any ongoing education. If there is, it depends upon the consumer taking the initiative to learn more.
4. The learners, in this case, the "clientele," are heterogeneous. They can differ widely in their class, ethnicity, race, gender, age, ability, educational attainment, etc. Moreover, their knowledge of the South, the arts, and of the world economic system can vary widely.

Thus, it becomes crucial for ATOs to tailor their educational strategy to the

particular needs and interests of their clientele. In this, one can see a definite parallel with basic marketing; strategies will be effective only if the consumer is in clear focus. This means careful market research and identifying appropriate marketing (or educational) outreach and materials. The next section examines some of the marketing/educational activities developed by ATOs.

3.4 Educational Materials & Activities of ATOs

Within the educational arsenal of small ATOs are simple brochures, product tags and labels, leaflets. They are low-cost media which provide the consumer with the basics: information about the product, the producers, and the ATO itself. The media are also designed to alight the curiosity of the consumer to explore issues further. Some ATOs offer resource guides to their consumers to assist such exploration. The guides contain information about books, periodicals, films, videos, educational opportunities, other ATOs and NGOs, and sometimes, current legislation and political initiatives which concern producers' regions or their livelihood.

Some ATOs have the capacity to offer the consumer more in-depth materials and educational opportunities. Publications, musical and cultural events, community presentations and workshops, in-school activities, "Tupperware"-style parties, substantive catalogs (e.g., Pueblo to People), guest appearances

by producers, and overseas tours to producing regions are just some of the ways ATOs have brought their consumers closer to producers and the issues which affect their lives.

3.5 The "Multiplication" Factor in ATO Education

"The purchasing of an African product can be an initial step that leads to greater awareness about the problems and prospects of Africa "(Danaher 1991: 112)."

Although most consumers will receive only a small amount of information related to their purchases, this can open the way for further learning, both for them and for others. The purchase of a bracelet from East Africa might, for instance, inspire the purchaser to consult an atlas, read about the product or the nation of its producers, and, in general, create an ongoing interest. And, even with a little knowledge about the product they purchase, consumers have an opportunity to extend this new knowledge to others. It may, for example, occur through a simple response to a friend's complement about, say, their new earrings from Kenya, which offers an opportunity for them to discuss the product, its significance, and the situation of the producers. In these seemingly small ways, a purchase can become the means through which cross-cultural education and development action can be realized.

And within alternative trade, this same purchase can create an immediate and

positive impact in the lives of producers many thousands of miles away. Since most ATOs have neither the resources nor the ability to provide comprehensive educational opportunities to their consumers, the importance of this kind of "informal" education cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, for consumers to become self-directed learners and educators is, perhaps, the best possible outcome of ATO education.

3.6 Developing ATO Educational Materials & Activities

The development of educational materials and activities combines principles common to marketing and curriculum development. Thus, it would entail asking the following questions about the consumer/learner:

1. Who is the consumer?
2. Where, why and how will the consumer make his/her purchase?
3. How will the consumer learn about the product and its marketing outlet?
4. What does the consumer already know about the product and about the producing region, culture, economic and political situation?

Based upon these questions and others, the ATO would begin to conduct research into the areas specified. This process could take many forms, ranging from the informal to the formal: asking friends or family, trial marketing through retail establishments to elicit consumer background and opinions, or sponsoring focus groups to discuss these questions.

After gathering the data, the ATO would be equipped with a fairly comprehensive profile of the consumer/learner and their needs. The ATO

would next compare this information with its own marketing goals and educational mission. From this comparison would emerge a strategy to market their products and educate their consumers. Such strategies should be tested in the context of their use and revised, if necessary, to better accommodate the situation and needs of the consumer/learner.

3.7 Problems and Dilemmas in ATO Marketing/Education

In the marketing/educational process there exist a number of dilemmas and problems. The greatest among them is the portrayal of producers and the producer-ATO-consumer relationship. Too often the portrayal of producers and their cultures (especially in less politically aware ATOs) boils down to simplistic generalization and exoticism.

Another problem in this vein, is the tendency of some ATOs to portray producers as "dependents" of the company's or the consumer's goodwill, for example: "Twiga helps African Youths Craft Richer Lives," (Twiga Trading Co. 1992). While there is nothing inherently wrong in relaying these basic truths to consumers, there is a fine line between fostering a sense of solidarity with the producers and reinforcing pity and paternalism, attitudes which are so often directed at the South from the North.

There are several conceivable ways to address this dilemma: 1) situate the

producer's reality within the context of the "self-help" movement; of people's creative response to the difficulties of their lives; 2) promote and label the product in collaboration with the producers themselves. Use their own words, names, and/or photographs (with their permission and understanding of possible political repercussions). It is also important to discuss the consumer norms of the U.S. market with the producers to ensure that these "participatory" marketing materials are accurate and effective in reaching their target audience.

On the whole, however, ATOs present their producers and activities in a positive, empowering manner. ATOs like "Pueblo to People" use their catalogs to depict, through words and photos, the realities of the producers' lives and how alternative trade creates better conditions in producer communities through meaningful, dignified artistic work.

Another problem ATOs face is balancing marketing and education. There is often a tendency to provide consumers with too much information. This has the potential to diminish the marketability of their products. The solution to this problem is, of course, market research; the ATO should ask their customers about their needs.

3.8 Trading Places: The Education of Producers

This paper has examined the education of consumers. But what of the education of the producers and their communities? Should not they have the opportunity to learn about the lives of those who purchase their handicrafts and others in the North? These questions go to the heart of one of alternative trade's central organizing principles: building bridges between people.

The primary education ATOs generally provide to producers is technical assistance and training. As is the case in all North-South development activities, there are "ripple" effects. Social relationships within producing communities shift. New technologies create new problems and challenges alongside opportunities. Northern values and ideas infiltrate indigenous knowledge and behavior. And, of course, the incursion of money into the local economy can produce great disparities between community members. So, acknowledged or not, ATOs are "educating" the producers and their communities.

One could argue that ATOs should cloister their producers from the vagaries of foreign markets and the influence of endogenous culture. After all, many ATOs depend on products which require producers to maintain their cultural traditions, while providing Northerners with products free from "modernistic" standards. But the ideal of cultural isolation is illusory in today's world. The

challenge instead, should be to empower and assist producers to determine, as much as possible, the kind, degree and rate of cultural change within their communities.

This requires ATOs to listen carefully to the producers and their community and determine what they wish to learn about the North and the global economic and political order in which they participate. The ATO, then, has an obligation to help them learn, through dialogue, informational materials, and other educational opportunities. And, of course, the ATO needs to consider the level of literacy, traditional style of learning and other factors to ensure an appropriate and respectful educational experience. If desirable and possible, the ATO can even play a facilitating role. For example, they could help producers and their Northern clientele meet each other through letters, photographs and, perhaps mutual visits.

This chapter has attempted to provide a general overview of ATO education. The following chapter will narrow the focus by examining the activities of one ATO, Twiga Trading Co., a small organization which trades with the East African nation of Kenya. We will look both at the background and context of this company and at its educational goals and activities.

4. Case Study

4.1 Twiga Trading Co.: Background

Twiga Trading Co. was established in 1988 as an international partnership for the trade of East African jewelry and other handicrafts. Consisting of four members, (in Kenya, the U.S., Canada, and Germany) Twiga markets the products of young East African craftspeople in North America and Europe. The company's products are available in a variety of designs and are marketed through specialty shops and public markets.

Twiga pays the artists a fair price in advance for their handiwork and channels over half of its profits back to Kenya. These funds help artists and their assistants sustain themselves and their families. Twiga also hopes eventually to support other community development activities in Nairobi.

Inasmuch as Twiga is a business, it is an organization founded by and dedicated to developing an awareness of itself vis-a-vis its operating environment. This awareness enables the company to include social, cultural and political factors in its decision-making alongside the more usual economic considerations. For example, we have whenever possible circumvented oppressive socio-economic situations by marketing products of individuals and groups related or known to us and negotiated to ensure they receive maximum

earnings from sales. But there remain relationships and activities which support rather than transform inequity. Occasional procurement of handicrafts from exploitative workshops, over-reliance on marketing middlemen, and discriminatory costs of transport due to small-volume trading have sometimes meant that the artisans receive lesser earnings and benefits than would otherwise be the case.

In setting a context for the case study, it will be helpful to briefly visit past and present Africa for a look at the development of the handicraft industry in the eastern part of the continent. Following this historical overview, we will take a closer look at the environment in which Twiga operates.

4.2 African Handicrafts in Historical Perspective

Before we begin to examine African handicrafts, we need a caveat. It is common to call the type of African handicrafts discussed in this paper (e.g., jewelry, baskets) "art". This, however, is to use a misnomer. The notion that an object can be classified under such an umbrella term derives from a post-Renaissance European worldview. Within this weltanschauung, or paradigm, was the belief in the separation of people from nature and from the spiritual world, at one time embodied by the great religions.

On the other hand, if we can carefully generalize, African cultures drew no

such line between themselves and their environment. For them, everything human was intertwined with nature and with the spiritual world. Therefore, the production and use of implements and other material objects was drawn from this understanding. It was impossible to separate out objects under any one classification (such as "art"). The argument should be made that in both Africa and Europe alike, cultural objects were (are) contextual; they are derived from the relationship between the "artist" and the historical, political, economic, environmental, social and spiritual forces which shape his/her world.

Newman (1974: 2), for example, said of African "art" that:

"Hundreds of distinct cultures and languages, and many types of people create [countless objects and] styles that defy classification. Each art [sic]...form has its own history and its own aesthetic content."

The following section will briefly delineate the history of arts and crafts in East Africa.

The Pre-Colonial Period

The historical record on African craft production reveals countless instances of both innovation and diffusion in handicraft materials, technology and design. This belies the static and linear view of non-western cultures which pervades early modernization theory and anthropological literature, where societies appear stuck in perpetual "tradition."

Indeed, ethnohistorical accounts of East African cultures delineate how geographical movement and cross-cultural interaction catalyzed social change long before European contact (Curtin et al 1978: 172). Proximity to the Indian Ocean yielded many opportunities for material exchange and social interaction between coastal Africans and Arabian, East Indian and Chinese seafarers who visited Africa for commercial and exploratory purposes.

There was also significant contact between culturally-diverse African peoples. Contributing to the region's dynamic social landscape were elaborate trading and social relationships, inter-tribal conflict and competition, and social dispersion (into new groupings). The slave trade, beginning in the fifteenth century, and the arrival of the European colonial powers on the continent in the nineteenth, altered the African landscape as nothing before.

The Colonial Period

According to Melchers and Muller-Maige:

Colonialism...afforded traditional crafts no new openings or markets. It was marginalized. Worse, to obtain exploitable manpower and markets for industrial products, the colonial rulers had to break up the closed structures of the African economy. African crafts were an impediment to be removed by competition (industrial goods) or brute force (1990: 24).

On the part of European missionaries and colonial administrators, attempts were sometimes made to squelch the "African-ness" of Africans in the

countryside. Objects considered "religious", for example, were often destroyed and replaced by Christian objects, bearing European iconography.

At the same time, a peculiar phenomenon was taking place in some African capital cities. It is my belief that colonial regimes actually encouraged the production of some traditional African objects to create and maintain the illusion of peaceful coexistence between itself and the native population. This served both to placate Africans living in or visiting the cities while simultaneously providing tourists and settlers with social and material tokens of traditional Africa. Then, as now,

"[in Nairobi Kenya]... Africa showed only in the semi-tropical gardens, in the tourist-shop displays of carvings and leather goods and souvenir drums and spears, and in the awkward liveried boys in the new tourist hotels..." (Naipaul, *In a Free State*, 1971: 111-112, in Desousa, 1978: 47).

Since Independence

The independence in the 1950s and 1960s of most African nations from the European powers witnessed two basic attitudes toward handicrafts in the newly liberated nations. First, some African elites viewed handicrafts "as a sign of backwardness and underdevelopment" (Melchers and Muller-Maige, 1990: 24).

The authors continue:

This meant that apart from a few exceptions...development efforts focused on the "modern" sector: industry and large-scale mechanized farming. This phenomenon marginalized village crafts even further and increased the dependence of the developing countries on the world

market enormously, as modernization could only be effected by importing from abroad.

According to Mabogunje (1965: 420; as quoted in Desousa, 1978: 46), this soon resulted in "the flooding of local markets by imported but cheaper manufactured goods [which] undermined local crafts and industries and rendered jobless a sizeable proportion of the population..." On the other hand, some handicrafts were encouraged. African leaders, following in the footsteps of their colonial masters, recognized that indigenous handicraft production for the tourist and export markets could generate much needed revenues.

They also understood that handicrafts could be a powerful ally in the post-independence push for national unity and international identity (Canclini 1988). Drawing on "tradition", African leaders could better legitimize their authority. By encouraging "African-ness" they could better reduce the widespread tension between their modernization programs and the public's desire for cultural continuity. This process is perhaps best described by Halliday (1990: 99), who writes that "tradition is an artifact, a selective collection of myths and inventions made for contemporary purposes; and what constitutes tradition is defined by those with power."

And nowhere, perhaps, was this phenomenon more true than in Nairobi, Kenya—the "Venice" of Africa. Since the case study presented in this paper focuses on alternative trade with Kenya, the following overview of the

handicraft industry there will provide a fitting context.

4.3 Handicrafts in Kenya

Kenya is one of the most popular destinations for Africa-bound tourists. In 1989, over 700,000 of them visited this East African nation. Since the early part of this century, tourism has been one of Kenya's largest foreign exchange earners.

Among the industries which benefit from the tourist trade is the souvenir industry. The bulk of souvenirs manufactured in Kenya consist of handicrafts: carvings, jewelry, clothing, etc. Handicrafts are typically produced by rural villagers and urban workshops and are marketed through a variety of outlets both within and outside the country. Within the industry itself are vast disparities in the earnings of rural and urban artists, middlemen and retailers. There are also marked differences in working conditions. While it could be argued that handicraft production offers an alternative to factory employment, for example, most handicrafts workshops are highly exploitative enterprises which design products expressly for the tourist market.

However, in recent years there have been numerous efforts to reform the handicraft industry by creating better conditions for producers. Among these are two cooperative businesses based in Nairobi. The Jacaranda Workshop

employs and trains young people with mental and physical disabilities to design and produce high quality jewelry. The workshop, which also doubles as a school, markets some of the jewelry within Kenya and exports the rest to the U.S. Working in a similar manner, the Undugu Society, a religious organization based in Nairobi, has a handicraft workshop which employs homeless youth.

Before moving on to examine the marketing/educational activities of Twiga, it would perhaps be helpful to understand in more detail the immediate context of the Company's work in Kenya.

The Producers' Social Reality

Most of Twiga's products are made in Nairobi, Kenya by young artisans of Kikuyu, Maasai, Kamba and Luo ancestry. The majority of the producers grew up in rural areas and left school early for financial reasons. Like thousands of their peers, the lack of jobs and land contributed to their decision to leave the countryside to seek work and adventure in the capitol city. Subsequently, most joined the ranks of the unemployed or the underemployed, living with relatives in the expansive shantytowns outside the city.

In time, these young people managed to find work in several of the city's small handicraft workshops. Most had not received formal training in handicraft production before joining the workshops. By supplying the local tourist shops,

kiosk vendors and the export market, they manage to eke out a living⁴.

The Products

To examine a product--in this case Kenyan jewelry--is to discover an important intersection of history and social reality. The materials, design, technology and manufacturing method used to create the product can each provide insight into the relationship between producer and consumer in the world system.

Materials

There are several factors which determine the artisans' use of materials: price, availability, tradition, individual preferences and, today, consumer requirements. Most of the raw materials used to create the products are culled from forests and savannas throughout East Africa and the Horn.

They are typically extracted by local people in small quantities without placing undue stress on ecosystems. For instance, sisal (a grass), seeds, shells and wood, are renewable resources which can be harvested regularly. Recycled materials include cowrie shells and European millefiore glass beads, which were used in antiquity for trade currency. Many of the raw materials used are fabricated in rural villages and purchased by city-based artisans and

⁴ For in-depth information about the producers' social reality, see "Safari ya Ndoto (Journey of Dreams): A Teenager's Life in Kenya" which is found in appendix.

entrepreneurs. Other materials were constructed long ago and have since passed through many hands.

As their link to craft tradition grows weaker, traditional materials become scarcer and the demands of the market become stronger, artists have incorporated new materials. For example, earring ear wires—originally constructed of wide gauge wire for the pierced ears of African women—have become thinner to accommodate the standard Euro-American pierced ear. The original brass wire, produced and shaped by hand, was replaced first by mass produced wire, and most recently, by imported, hypo-allergenic "french hook" style ear wires.

This evolution was largely due to the volume of consumer complaints about the sharp-edged, hand-cut brass wires which posed dangers to sensitive ears. The new wires also give the earrings a more refined, less "rustic" appearance and differ slightly in color and lustre from the brass body of the earrings.

There are other materials which have been recently incorporated into Kenyan handicrafts: mass produced wire from Germany has become commonplace in making metal bangles (price and availability of African-made wire cannot compete); and necklaces are strung on strong nylon cord from Asia. Zinc and aluminum, from beverage cans and newspaper printing plates provide

lightweight material for earrings and necklaces. (One can actually read Kenyan news on one side!).

Another example of this phenomenon is the popular sisal tote bags called cionodos. These bags, originally woven by rural women in central Kenya have a undergone tremendous evolution in materials and design. At first, the bags were constructed of earth-tone colored sisal and leather (carrying straps). Later, responding to consumer preference and market forces, the producers added synthetic fibers, colors from artificial pigments, and leather top flaps which could be closed by means of a conventional metal zipper. In each case, the producers were required to purchase factory-made materials, some of which are imported.

Design

As mentioned earlier, many African artisans are no longer producing for ritual or for local utilitarian purposes, but instead for a market where products hold a different value--financial, functional and symbolic--for the end user.

However, some authentic designs with continuing cultural significance have managed to persist. For instance, spirals are worn as surutia—pendants—by married Maasai women. When their sons go through rites of passage into manhood, they give them their surutia to wear for good luck.

However, as mentioned earlier, material culture is a product of the social, economic, political, spiritual and environmental milieu of its producers. When any part of this milieu changes, there is often a simultaneous or diachronic shift in the meaning and use of the product, both for the producer and the user. The incredible rate of change in Africa, particularly in urban centers, has created both cultural anomie and new cultural identities. This latter is essentially a creole, made up of indigenous culture (which, in Kenya, with numerous ethnic groups, languages and geographic diversity, is hardly uniform) and imported cultural values, materials and beliefs.

Seen in this light, some handicraft production can be viewed as an attempt at what Canclini has called "cultural self-affirmation." (Canclini, 1988: 486). By producing art, artisans are invoking the experience of their ancestors. This is particularly true for city-based artisans who are often cut off from their cultural heritage and immersed in western-inspired urban culture.

There are limits, however, to this process. The international and tourist markets, for example, have to a growing extent dictated design. (The "exotic," after all, must not be too exotic!) With few exceptions, the object must somehow blend with contemporary Northern norms of fashion. For example, Kenyan necklaces which incorporate miniature metal reproductions of traditional masks are sometimes considered distasteful by consumers.

Next we will turn to the process undertaken by Twiga in developing its marketing strategy and materials.

4.4 Twiga's Marketing & Education Process

The ATO serves as both an economic and cultural intermediary between producer and consumer. On the one hand it facilitates the exchange of products and capital, and on the other it provides a channel, albeit an indirect one, for cross-cultural communication.

As a partner in the company with full responsibility for the U.S. market, I perform the dubious role of mediator. I transmit messages to Kenya via fax and airmail and likewise receive them. The messages include logistical business information, e.g., shipping schedules, financial records, etc., as well as suggestions culled from consumers and market research which influence product design at the source. And likewise, the source responds with its needs, suggestions and ideas. This communication pattern is the basis upon which Twiga has developed its marketing ideas.

With an understanding of the specifics of Twiga's work in Kenya and of the larger picture (gained by visiting Kenya, working as the company "mediator" and by extensive research about East Africa and alternative trade), the next step is to more fully understand the characteristics and needs of our customers

so that this understanding can be shared.

The Consumers

Who buys Twiga's products and why? We have approached this question often in our efforts to help market the company's products in North America.

Understanding the interests, background and needs of the consumer is key to any successful marketing campaign. And, in the case of alternative trade, knowledge about the consumer is vital to developing effective educational strategies.

There are many factors which influence the purchase of a product, including its marketing location, presentation, price, aesthetic and functional appeal as well as its timing, e.g., in relation to seasonal and stylistic trends.

Even after extensive market research, it is often difficult to separate out which factors influence buying behavior--especially if the products serve a largely aesthetic/symbolic function. And we have observed that the majority of our sales are based on stylistic factors, such as color, material, content and size. Pricing also plays a crucial role.

We have come to a few general conclusions about Twiga's consumers. They are typically women, ages ten to sixty. Items are purchased primarily by the end

user, though at times as a gift for friends or relatives. Occasionally men in this age group will purchase bangles for personal use, or earrings, bangles or necklaces for use as gifts.

Granting these basic characteristics of Twiga's consumers, there are others, more specific, which we have identified through careful observation and informal interviews. The classification below (listed in no particular order) offers a more detailed portrait of consumers and explains why, perhaps, they buy our products.

Customer Typology

1. Culture Vultures: they are intellectuals, patrons of the arts, and museum-goers. They demonstrate an interest in anything international, high-minded or finely crafted. Most are well-read, well-traveled, multi-lingual.
2. Worldbeat Hipsters: precocious teenagers or university students who possess manifold appreciation for "world" music, clothing and accessories. Appreciation is derived from attitudes and beliefs such as: the rejection of things Western, personal solidarity with the South, the youthful quest for identity, and the desire to stand out from society.
3. The Benevolent Set: consumers who, propelled by their compassion or pity for the poor, purchase products to help make a difference.
4. Pcers: activists, organizers, development workers and others who "do the right things." When there is money to spend (or invest), they vote with their dollars to right the wrongs of the world.
5. Ethnic Exhibitionists: consumers who are interested in things which are unmistakably "ethnic." They select items from their own ethnic backgrounds or from others.
6. Gift Hawks: consumers who are on the hoof for that last minute gift. They

are most numerous during holiday seasons. Gift hawks look for products which are distinct and reflect their own uniqueness.

7. Eclectics: folks who worship the "cult of uniqueness." They select items with shock value or one-of-a-kind products which reinforce their persona.

8. Memento-mori's: consumers who buy to remember: a trip to Africa, friends from Africa, friends or family who lived or traveled there.

9. Naturalists: people who prefer products made from "natural" materials.

10. Ecologists: folks for whom ecological factors determine what they buy. For some, cruelty to animals is an issue, for others deforestation or pollution is of concern. They want to ensure that their purchase does little or no harm to nature.

11. Atavists: consumers who enjoy products which embody the past, items which are rustic, primitive, simple or traditional.

12. Collectors: a rare breed of consumer who usually frequents antique shops, second-hand stores and yard sales in search of items to enrich their collections. Collectors typically focus on objects from particular time periods, regions, ethnic groups, materials, technologies, or artistic genres.

13. Africans & African-Americans: for members of these communities within the U.S., the purchasing of Africa-related products is often a significant statement of personal identity, solidarity with Africa, and an appreciation for and pride in their heritage.

14. Aesthetes: consumers who are concerned primarily with appearance: colors, materials, shapes, sizes. They often select items which match their physical attributes or wardrobe.

15. Pop Culturales (late adopters): these consumers follow popular trends carefully, but resist participation until the product or behavior becomes socially acceptable.

16. Bargainers: folks who want a product which is of high status but low-priced (either fixed or bargained for).

17. Early Adopters & Innovators: these consumers set the trends by being the first to purchase a particular product or use a product in a unique way.

18. Medium-range Adopters: folks who follow the lead of early adopters; they

want to participate in a trend early on.

19. Afrophiles: People who are passionate about Africa and anything African.

20. ATO Supporters: these folks buy products to support the efforts of an ATO.

21. Personal Supporters: these consumers buy primarily because they are friends or relatives of ATO personnel.

As one can see, Twiga's consumers are a diverse group. (And that's not including the fact that most consumers fall into more than one category!) Such diversity makes developing a marketing and educational strategy extremely challenging. In the following section, we will discuss this challenge and present its outcome.

Twiga's Marketing Strategies

One of Twiga's objectives has been to create a more direct and meaningful relationship between artisans and consumers. To accomplish this, we try to introduce the consumer to the producer through our marketing materials. The challenge lies in drafting materials and plotting sales strategies which are educational, culturally appropriate and effective in communicating to the consumer the mission of the company, the reality of the producers and the significance of the product itself. Considering the company's clientele, the marketing environment, marketing/educational budget and abilities, Twiga has opted for the strategies below.

1) Product displays, labels and packaging which help communicate information about the product's maker and its contents, production technique and cultural significance. A brief description of how the producer and his/her community will benefit from the sale of the product is included. Brochures are also used to provide such information (see brochure in appendix).

2) Dialogue between a salesperson and consumer about producers and their products at craft fairs, shops or other retail outlets helps "contextualize" the products. Other venues for dialogue include speciality outlets such as the "One World", "third world", and "South-North" shops in Europe. These are community-based, volunteer-run shops which sell products on behalf of producers in Southern countries. The shops typically carry publications and promote activities which educate consumers and their communities about North-South issues. This strategy requires the education of the salesperson him/herself.

3) Supplementary educational materials: for example, Twiga Trading Co. is developing a storybook, Safari ya Ndoto (Journey of Dreams): A Teenager's Life in Kenya, geared toward young North Americans. It portrays Kenya as experienced by Hastings Makau, a character drawn from the letters to the author of a composite of young rural migrants in Nairobi. "Safari ya Ndoto" also touches on Hastings' involvement in the production and trade of jewelry. The storybook includes photographs, a map, folktales and basic Swahili vocabulary. There are several concluding questions to stimulate discussion and further thought on issues raised. Twiga hopes to distribute the storybook along with its products in retail stores, wholesale trade shows, public schools and community organizations. (see appendix)

4) Pen pal club: Twiga hopes to offer interested individuals in the U.S. and Kenya the opportunity for exchange through a "pen pal" club. A common language—English—and a precedent in Africa for "pen friend" exchanges would help expedite this. This activity could be used also as a school-to-school exercise whereby classes could write letters, compile stories, photographs and other items from their social environment.

5) Partnership for development: Providing the consumer with suggestions for helping producers and others in the South is essential. Twiga is developing a list of NGOs and PVOs which work toward justice and development in Africa (see appendix).

4.5 Outcomes

Most of the above strategies have not been fully developed and as such are difficult to evaluate. The primary reason for this is that Twiga, as an organization, has had several flaws. First, the company tried to expand too fast. Its product line was too diversified to allow for the full development of any one product. No one product was marketed to its potential within any market niche and the company's marketing strategy was somewhat haphazard. Second, the cost of such diversification and the premature expansion of the company's activities to Canada and Germany absorbed time and capital which could otherwise have helped its U.S. operation. Third, Twiga attempted, unsuccessfully, to create a sheltered workshop for its artisans and others which also took time and finances from the operation.

Consequently, the company was unable to develop a solid, on-going platform for its educational ideas and materials: most tags never got beyond the prototype stage; brochures were never numerous enough or well distributed; "Safari ya Ndoto" has not yet been published; the pen pal club was not introduced to the schools; and finally, the pamphlet for consumers about development-related action was not completed.

While we had some success with our educational displays and dialogue with customers when retailing our products at "third world" shops, public venues and

bazaars, we failed to find ways to pass on materials and information to other retailers. This was due both to a inconsistent policy on retailer and consumer education, to lack of funds for materials and their distribution, and to insufficient research about the actual needs and opinions of retailers and consumers. Thus, like the companies criticized earlier in this paper, Twiga's products sometimes reached the shelves with no contextual information (e.g., tags, brochures, displays).

These problems were due mostly to my business inexperience and limited time commitment (i.e., I devoted most of my energy to my school-related activities). They are also the result of difficulties in communicating with the artisans and the Kenya-based partner (who also lacked certain expertise, capital and time). In sum, Twiga Trading Co. has had limited success in meeting its commitment to public education about Africa and development issues.

5. Conclusion

Perhaps it is overoptimistic to expect most consumers to be interested in the issues raised here. Notwithstanding our individual concerns, there is an overarching precedent of "anonymous" trade; the majority of us seldom pause to consider the origin of our purchases and the vast web of relationships which placed a product in our hands.

Furthermore, the world trade system is continually shrinking the volume of products which require human-scale artistry. Sadly, such products hold the most promise for awakening in us an appreciation of and concern for producers and their struggle within the dominant economic system.

But there are hopeful signs. Schools, the media, and greater access to international travel and communications, are all contributing to an increasing awareness of the world. Not all of this awareness is accurate and "to the good", but it has helped create an environment in which consumers and citizens with an interest can further their knowledge about the global community and its development.

The task for U.S. ATOs now is to make further inroads into the marketplace by seizing the opportunity that such public awareness has generated. This can

lay the groundwork, as Freundlich (1992: 2) envisions, for "shifting a growing proportion of the billions spent in the U.S. on imported crafts, clothing, food and household goods into the fair trading sector..."

The example of the environmental movement of the last decade--with its emphasis on recycling, energy conservation, etc.--is instructive in this regard: a relatively small contingency of businesses and organizations were able to develop sufficient public awareness to transform the marketplace. Large corporations and government policy became "greener" and, at the same time, a whole host of small companies emerged to meet a growing demand for environmentally-sound products and services. This phenomenon suggests that market-based approaches offer the best opportunity for lasting and meaningful change.

For alternative trade to likewise succeed, several opportunities must be tapped. First, ATOs can "piggyback" on the environmental movement. According to Pauline Tiffin of the third world Information Network, "Growing numbers of consumers want to hear more than 'Boycott this! Avoid that!' They are starting to see that it is possible to trade positively" (1990: 15). By selling products made from environmentally-sound materials and produced in an environmentally-safe manner in Southern nations, ATOs have a "captive audience" of consumers concerned about the global environment.

Second, the U.S. ATO movement, like its European counterpart, could benefit by being further coordinated. With the recently created National Association of Alternative Trading Organizations (NAATO), ATO importers, wholesalers and retailers are combining their resources to expand their production capacity and marketing reach. NAATO and other U.S. organizations, such as the Fair Trade Foundation, Aid to Artisans, and the Crafts Center, are conducting market research and bringing together many of the marketing and educational techniques and strategies mentioned in the chapters above.

Finally, with respect to this last point, ATOs must keep the consumer clearly in focus to discover what products (types, colors, styles, materials) will best meet their needs. Once this is established, ATOs can increase their share of the U.S. market and, consequently, increase their ability to bring their educational messages and activities to consumers and others throughout the nation.

This paper has attempted to show how alternative trade offers a unique opportunity to enhance public knowledge about the world. By bringing together artisans and consumers in a more direct and equitable fashion, such trade can make a solid contribution both to transforming the global economy and to fostering cross-cultural understanding and development.

APPENDIX

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**Safari ya Ndoto (Journey of Dreams)
A Teenager's Life in Kenya**

Note:

Safari ya Ndoto is a semi-fictional biography. Where necessary, names, places and events have been changed so as not to endanger those portrayed in the story.

Introduction

A biographical story, "Journey of Dreams" was developed to provide teenage readers in the U.S. with an up-close account of the lives of their counterparts in Kenya. I met "Hastings," the story's main character, in Nairobi in 1987. With 11 American co-workers, most of us fresh out of college, I was waiting in this East African capital city for a visa to travel to and work in neighboring Tanzania. During the three week wait, I spent my days exploring Kenya's capital.

One day I visited the Nairobi city market to buy some fruit. As I entered the building, a young man approached me and asked if I would like to buy a bracelet from him. I picked a shiny brass and copper bracelet which he quickly pressed onto my wrist. So began my friendship with Hastings.

I visited the market almost every day until I departed for Zambia. (The Tanzania government denied our visa application, forcing us to work instead in this southern African nation.) Hastings and his friends would talk with me when business was slow. He also invited me to his small room for a meal and enjoyed showing me around whenever he wasn't at the market.

We kept in touch while I was in Zambia working at a rural health clinic. Six months later, I stayed with Hastings for two weeks before returning to the U.S. Since then, we've shared a lot with each other through the many letters, postcards, faxes and photographs we have exchanged. We've also started a small business together, marketing his Kenyan jewelry in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

I got the idea for the story in the summer of 1991. Although I found Hastings' life fascinating, I realized that in many ways, his story typified the life of a young person coming of age in the Third World. His letters, written in rough-hewn African-English, painted a vivid picture of a sensitive and talented young man trying to find his place in the world. By his own admission, he seemed a life of contradiction between the rural, African traditions of his childhood and the urban, Westernized city where he now lives. Here, I thought, is a story that needs to be shared, particularly with his peers in the U.S., who don't often get the opportunity to "meet" their African counterparts.

I began by sifting through the materials I had collected about Hastings and his country. Through these and my own recollections, I wrote, over the course of a year, his life story, set within the story of Kenya. I decided to adopt the role of narrator to describe the context of the story and the characters and their activities. Into this narrative I wove, wherever possible, quotations in the active voice of the main character and others. The quotations were from my primary materials, particularly letters I had received from Hastings.

I didn't work alone, however. I sent several drafts to Hastings for him to comment on and add to. He also shared the story with his family and friends. Their input has been invaluable in making the story accurate and more interesting. What follows is the result of this collaboration.

It is my wish that the story will add to a better understanding of Africa by Americans. I also hope that it can bolster the kind of cross-cultural education process that has come to characterize the relationships I have been privileged to enjoy with young Kenyans and their families.

Hastings Kamau yawns while stretching his arms in the warm morning sunlight. Carefully threading a needle, he begins a long day of stringing bead and brass necklaces at a soko¹, or open-air market, in Nairobi, Kenya. The soko is already teeming with early morning bargain-seekers.

In his stand made from corrugated metal sheets and wooden poles, Hastings' jewelry is displayed next to his Aunt Wangui's collection of second-hand clothing. The slender, young artist-businessman looks up from his work as his first customers approach.

"Hamjambo, dada zangu?" Hastings calls in greeting to the young women. "Hatujambo," they reply. "We are fine." "Ninataka kununua koti" one says, spotting his Aunt's imported denim jackets. "How much for this one?" she asks, and then, with hardly a pause, "What's the discount?" After 10 minutes of bargaining, the women choose a couple of jackets. Hastings smiles with relief. Business has been much too slow lately.

"It's the inflation," Hastings explains of Kenya's economic woes. "It drives up food prices so people have less money to spend on other things here at the market." Kenya is a nation the size of Texas, with a population of 25 million people. Lying on

¹ A glossary of Swahili and Gikuyu words and a pronunciation guide may be found at the end of the text.

the mid-eastern coast of Africa (see map), Kenya's diverse landscape includes deserts, grasslands, mountains, forests, lakes and abundant wildlife.

17 year-old Hastings spends almost 10 hours a day, six days a week, peddling his jewelry and Aunt Wangui's clothing. He says the most popular items are denim jeans and jackets, and sweatshirts from major American universities. His jewelry caters largely to foreign watalii, or tourists, who wander off the beaten path to visit a "real" African soko. But even the watalii, says Hastings, are few and far between, due to recent political unrest in Kenya and an ailing global economy.

Looking like a city-slicker, Hastings wears pleated trousers and other trendy clothes from the stall's collection, and a shiny brass and copper bangeli, or bracelet, on his wrist. A tall, slender young man, with a relaxed manner and an athlete's build, Hastings cuts a handsome figure. His hair is cropped short, revealing in his face attractive qualities from a mixed ancestry; the rounded features of his Kikuyu father's and the more sharply defined countenance of his mother, who is Maasai. It is a confident face, and when matched with his ready smile and the smooth inflections of his voice, Hastings is a person one immediately trusts and feels comfortable with.

Forced to grow up fast, Hastings comes across like a

streetwise adult. But underneath this sophisticated exterior is a sensitive young man concerned by the difficult conditions in his country. By day, in the midst of this modern city, Hastings often feels that anything is possible. But his troubles and homesickness sometimes haunt him in the evenings when he returns to his home on the outskirts of Nairobi.

The Journey Begins

Two years ago, Hastings left his mother, Alice Kamau, and his three sisters, Faith, 14, Wambui, 12, and Joyce, 10, at their ancestral village home near Murang'a, 50 miles north of Nairobi. Like thousands of other rural Kenyans, he hoped to find a job in the city to help support his family.

Hastings, whose father died twelve years ago, was used to shouldering responsibility. Long before his initiation into manhood at 14, he was helping his mother maintain their wattle and daub dwellings and tend the family's crops and poultry. He also worked after school picking tea on a nearby estate. "In those days, we were very poor," Hastings recalls. "My mother and I made only 50 shillings [about \$2.00] a day, so we ate mostly what we could grow on our small shamba. We were lucky if we had anything left over to sell." He speaks in English with the twang of his native Gikuyu, one of several dozen languages spoken in Kenya. Gikuyu is the language of the Kikuyu tribe. In some ways, Hastings' story parallels the history of his people and

their land.

Kikuyuland

The Kikuyu, Kenya's largest ethnic group, have for centuries lived in the highlands surrounding Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya), a snow-capped mountain of 17,000 feet. With dense vegetation, a moist climate and rich soil, the highlands are the most productive agricultural region in Kenya. In former times, most Kikuyu grew grain and vegetables on their shambas. In times of peace, they also traded crafts and surplus crops with neighboring tribes, like the Kalenjin and the Maasai, for cattle and other necessities.

But the arrival of the British in the late 1800s--first as missionaries and traders, later as settlers--changed all this. European settlers began by seizing the most fertile land in the area to grow tea, coffee and other cash crops for export. Soon Kikuyuland was transformed into a Europeans-only area, the "White Highlands." For the Kikuyu, the loss of their land was the loss of everything meaningful to them: their way of life, their connection to sacred places.

Family farmers like the Kamau's were forced onto "Native Reserves," lands too steep and soil poor to produce sufficient food. The colonial government also imposed a "hut tax" on every African residence, to be paid in cash money, which Africans did

not possess. So most had no option but to work for wages on European-owned estates or emigrate to towns in search of newly created factory jobs.

The extreme injustice of the British colonial system in Kenya sowed seeds of rebellion among Africans. Several tribes, including the Kikuyu, launched a lengthy guerilla war in the 1950s against the British. Known as Mau Mau, this rebellion sought to drive the wazungu from Africa. Though eventually put down by the British and their conscripted African troops, Mau Mau was an important factor in winning Kenya's eventual uhuru, or freedom, from British rule in 1963.

Uhuru, however, did not end the troubles of most Kikuyu. Though many British settlers reluctantly left Kenya for places such as Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia) and South Africa, the estates and factories continued to produce under the ownership of remaining wazungu or politically powerful Kikuyu families. Few ordinary Kikuyu families ever regained their land.

Today they grow their crops on the poorer soil of small, often rented, plots. As large estates grow larger and small family-owned plots are divided among ever more family members, the pressures on the fragile highlands environment are increasing. The countryside is being scoured for firewood and, unlike former times when Kikuyu farmers allowed the land to

"rest," every acre is being farmed almost continuously. The forests are disappearing and the depleted topsoil is washing away. With dwindling opportunities for survival in the highlands, a growing number of people pin their hopes on finding a job in the city.

Hastings Leaves Home

By age fourteen, Hastings' family could no longer afford his public school tuition and books because the rent of their small plot had increased when the landlord sold the property to Lawngo, a large foreign corporation. The Kamau's decided that Hastings should leave the village to find work. They learned from relatives that Hastings' uncle, Godfrey, needed help with his electronics repair shop in Mombasa. Godfrey hadn't been feeling well for several months, and needed someone to make deliveries, serve customers and assist with repair work.

It was a difficult time for everyone. Hastings particularly regretted having to quit school. As he explains it, he was only two years away from his high school diploma. "My headmaster [principal] always encouraged me to study, hoping that I might be able to go to the university on scholarship. But now this dream is quite impossible!"

Mombasa

Mombasa is a port city of 400,000 on Kenya's southeastern coast

(see map). It's architecture and people reflect a long history as an international trading center. The city was visited by Arabian and Asian traders a thousand years before the arrival of the first Europeans. This constant blending of diverse peoples over the years gave rise to a rich Afro-Islamic culture and a language, Swahili (meaning "coastal").

Arriving in Mombasa after a gruelling 450 mile bus ride, Hastings was immediately awed by the sights and the people he encountered: Asians, Arabs, Africans of other ethnic backgrounds, tourists, even U.S. sailors. He had never encountered such diversity in Murang'a. Here he also had his first real chance to use his school-learned English, and Swahili, Kenya's national languages.

Godfrey met Hastings at the bus depot and led him to his home, a one-room bachelor's apartment they would share in the old part of the city. The next morning, after a good night's sleep and some breakfast, they went together to Godfrey's shop, "Everyone's Electric," just around the corner.

Everyone's Electric was a stone-walled room squeezed into what had at one time been a holding cell for enslaved Africans. Here they had waited, said Godfrey, anxious and terrified, for Arabian dhows, or ocean-going sailboats, to take them across the sea to the Saudi peninsula. There they would be

servants-for-life to the Sultan of Oman and other Arabian nobles. They would never see their homes and loved ones again.

When Godfrey took over the space some 400 years later, in the early 1980s, he did his best to brighten up the room. He painted two walls but left the others uncovered as a reminder of those unfortunate prisoners once held here. As his business grew, however, the shop walls disappeared behind stacks of televisions, radios and other items waiting for repairs. Some waited months for spare parts, which needed to be imported from Europe or Asia. Items beyond repair became a convenient source for recyclable parts.

Godfrey had a reputation for turning "junk" into treasure. He taught Hastings his secrets. "Uncle could fix anything" Hastings recalls:

He could take a used coffee tin and some wire from an old TV and make a perfectly good radio. He would sell such radios to people who hadn't the shillings for a factory-made item. He actually kept the business going with these kinds of things.

The work was challenging and usually so absorbing that Hastings forgot his homesickness. In spare moments he found pleasure in taking strolls on the white sand beaches of the coast. At home, he often enjoyed long, passionate discussions with his uncle. Godfrey, 42, a high-school dropout, was an avid reader and had a critical mind when it came to politics:

We can't keep blaming the whites for our country's problems. When I was your age, I was optimistic.

I thought uhuru would bring Kenya real freedom, real prosperity. We had the resources, the people. But we inherited a foreign style of government and way of thinking. Uhuru was mostly about our brothers stepping into the shoes of our old wazungu masters. ...And the mess they have made of this country!

You know the old saying: "The master's tools never dismantle the master's house"? Well, for all these years they have been telling us that we need to be more like the wazungu... with automobiles, televisions, even straight hair! I'm not saying, Hastings, that we should run to the past. We wouldn't find it--it's gone! But there are things our elders can teach us. Together, we can find a new way. That's the responsibility of your age-group [generation].

In six months, Godfrey had taught Hastings all he knew about running a business. But suddenly Godfrey's illness took a bad turn. For weeks he hadn't been able to leave his bed, complaining of fever and weakness. And he had been steadily losing weight. Hastings, meanwhile, looked after the shop.

Finally, despite Godfrey's protests, Hastings closed the shop and brought him to a local clinic. (The hospital waiting list was 2 days long!) But he was too late. Within hours, his uncle passed away. Hastings was crushed. He blamed himself for not realizing earlier why Godfrey refused medical care. "Godfrey had sina [AIDS]. I guess he was too ashamed to tell us...he probably thought we'd abandon him." The stigma of AIDS is just one of many tragedies created by this modern-day plague.

The AIDS Epidemic

AIDS has hit Africa harder than anywhere else on earth. Godfrey

was one of at least 5 million African men, women and children to become infected with the virus. AIDS in Africa is spread largely through heterosexual contact and tainted blood supplies.

(Hastings later learned that Godfrey had probably contracted the illness from a dentist's unsterilized needle the previous year.)

Alongside the loss of loved ones to the disease, the socio-economic blow to the continent is staggering. Health care facilities, already inadequate, cannot even begin to provide appropriate care for those who suffer. And, because AIDS tends to strike young and middle-aged people (farmers, workers and parents) less food is harvested, fewer shillings are earned, and millions of children become orphaned.

Godfrey was perhaps luckier than most. He had no dependents, except, that is, for Hastings. As it turned out, Godfrey had borrowed large sums of money to pay for his special, imported medications. So after he died, Everyone's Electric was confiscated by his creditors. Hastings was left with nothing, not even a job.

While seeing to his uncle's funeral and belongings, Hastings corresponded with his mother by mail. She replied that it would be best for him to make a new start. "Staying alone in Mombasa," she wrote, "would be too painful." So Hastings packed his bag and set out--this time to Nairobi.

Nairobi

People are everywhere on the street; on foot, in speeding cars, in buses. Sidewalks are crowded with pedestrians, begging children and small businesses: shoe shiners, booksellers, food vendors. From shops and taxis the vibrant strains of African pop music blare from outdoor speakers to attract business. And, in the midst of car exhaust fumes, the fragrance of spicy tropical food looms in the air.

Nairobi, because of its mile-high elevation, enjoys a temperate climate with moderate rainfall. The hottest periods are seldom above 80 degrees. The coolest days are seldom below 60 degrees.

Nairobi is Kenya's center of business, industry and government. Found here are Parliament buildings, government ministries, United Nations offices, the African headquarters of numerous corporations and the embassies of nations from throughout the world. Nairobi is also a major transportation center, connected to the East African region by road and rail and to the world by the open-air Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, named after Kenya's widely beloved first president.

With its skyscrapers, wide boulevards and dense traffic, it's difficult to imagine that less than a century ago there was little to be found here, except muddy footpaths and a few simple

dwellings. Colonial architects designed the city in the 1890's for a projected population of 250,000. They wouldn't recognize it now, with over 2 million people calling it home.

Nairobi's population has doubled in just the last decade, mostly due to the influx of rural migrants like Hastings. In recent years there has also been a constant stream of refugees, fleeing war and famine in neighboring Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia (see map). Skyrocketing population growth--over 3.5% a year--is causing big problems for Kenya, especially in Nairobi. The city's economy is unable to create jobs fast enough and many are unemployed or underemployed. The lack of housing has caused its shantytowns to expand. And health care and other social services are woefully inadequate. Drugs, prostitution and crime have also become major problems, primarily associated with the rise in poverty and hopelessness.

Unfortunately, there's no relief on the horizon for the city--the nation's economy is crumbling, rural poverty is worsening and Kenya's population is increasing at one of the world's fastest rates. Experts predict that Nairobi's population will more than double in size again by the year 2000.

A New Beginning

Hastings' first few weeks in the capital were exciting but filled with frustration. He spent many long days pounding the pavement

in search of work. Some employers, he recalls "just looked down at my education and said 'Boy, what you have in your brain is too little!' Asians turned me down, I think, because I'm black."

Many of Nairobi's businesses are owned by Asian families, a legacy of the apartheid policies of the British colonial government. The British brought 32,000 indentured workers from imperial India to East Africa in 1896 to help build the Kenya-Uganda railroad. About 25 percent of their number ultimately decided to remain on the continent. Before uhuru in 1963, laws encouraged the Asian population to engage in trading and shopkeeping (laws which denied black Africans the same "rights").

While black Kenyans, with a majority advantage, took control of the government at Kenya's independence, Asians continued to dominate the nation's economy. Little has changed since. This, combined with the very different cultures of Asians and black Kenyans, have created a racism which is more subtle than violent. Asians complain of political mismanagement and bureaucratic discrimination, while black Kenyans charge the Asian community with economic self-interest. Today, the two communities share a peaceful, but separate co-existence.

The City Market

Unable to find a job, Hastings joined the jua kali, the estimated

5 million Kenyans who earn their living through small-scale trade and services. These men, women and children work and survive on the fringes of the official economy, outside the reach of laws on wages and working conditions. The jua kali, however, plays an important economic role, employing much of the urban workforce and meeting the needs of Nairobi's cash-poor for low cost goods and services.

Hastings began selling handmade bracelets, made from scraps of copper and brass wire, to watalii on the steps of the city's famous indoor market. Here he befriended youths from throughout Kenya. They too had left their rural homes and ended up working on the streets of the capital.

It wasn't an easy time for Hastings. For one thing, street vending without a license is illegal in Nairobi. "Policemen," he recalls, "would threaten to arrest me if I didn't hand over a bribe. They even took my bracelets! Sometimes I had to stay away for days at a time, until things cooled off."

But the street sellers looked out for each other. They shared food and pooled funds to buy their wares. With their help, Hastings survived his first year in Nairobi. (He won't admit it, but his expert salesmanship and fluency in English and four African languages helped too!)

During this time, Hastings considered himself very lucky to share a cramped but cozy room close to the city market with a distantly-related uncle, Tobias. A truck driver, Tobias, 35, was seldom at home. When he wasn't traveling the dusty, bumpy roads of East Africa or resting up in Nairobi from his safaris, he stayed with his wife and four children at their home near Kirinyaga.

Hastings slept in comfort on a foam rubber mattress in Tobias' room. His friends from the soko, however, enjoyed no such luxury. Some dozed uneasily on sidewalks in constant fear of the police. Others stayed with relatives in small cardboard and metal huts in Mathere Valley, an illegally settled shantytown of 100,000 people, about a mile from downtown Nairobi. They kept their ears open for the roar of the government's bulldozers which could arrive without notice to destroy their makeshift homes.

Thinking back, Hastings' recounts some of his early memories from the city market. He tells of the time that a group of high school students purchased a custom-made bracelet with the inscription "Shhhhhhhhhh!" It turned out to be a retirement gift for their school's librarian.

He also remembers his encounters with some of 700,000 tourists who visit Kenya each year from around the globe. "Most of them come for sun soaking and to see our wildlife and scenery.

But they also like to come to the city market to buy curios [souvenirs]. Once I met a very nice couple from France, Gilles and Marie they were called. They lived on a shamba outside of Paris. We exchanged addresses and have kept in touch. Someday" he jokes, "I'd like to learn their language and go to France to surprise them!"

Thoughts About Cities

Hastings was at first impressed by Nairobi's skyscrapers, luxurious restaurants and expensive, imported cars. He believed that it was just a matter of time before he would get his share of the wealth. But the glamour of these symbols of "progress" soon wore off and Hastings began to understand the old Swahili saying Jogoo wa shamba hawiki mjini, or "The country rooster does not crow in town."

"Uncle Godfrey used to say that cities are like magnets," Hastings recalls.

They pull all the coins out of the farmers' pockets, so we have to chase our money into the city. But we always arrive too late. By this time, our coins have built tall buildings and paved streets, purchased [Mercedes] Benzes, or traveled across the sea to bank accounts. We'll never see our coins again, though now that we are here, we need them!

Hastings frequently asks himself about this predicament. "Back on the shamba we could at least eat what we grew or trade for what we needed. But here, without money, we can't even eat.... And what about the millions of needy in our society who

have no land or money? What do they do?" he asks. Like many of his friends, Hastings' solution came from his family.

Aunt Wangui's Offer

With the assistance of his Aunt Wangui (who he located through Tobias), Hastings shifted from hawking bracelets on the street to selling second-hand clothing from her stall in the soko. Aunt Wangui, a short, jovial woman who wears traditional clothes, such as a kanga, or colorful, wrap-around skirt, is a determined and talented businesswoman. She was only too happy to expand her business with the help of her nephew. She also offered him a better place to live.

So Hastings moved from his cramped quarters--which were later demolished to make room for a shopping mall--into his Aunt Wangui and Uncle Joseph's three room home in Nairobi West. Uncle Joseph, a soft spoken man who always dresses in his three-piece suit, works as a clerk at the Nairobi general post office.

Sharing a room with two cousins, Florence, 12, and Nyina, 8, he sleeps on an old spring mattress. On the wall next to his bed Florence has written, "If you find our room in a mess, do feel okay. It's not always in that state--sometimes it's even worse!"

A Day with Hastings

Hastings gets up at sunrise, 6 a.m. When there is water

available from the neighborhood faucet, he showers in an roofless concrete stall using a sponge made from stone, a bar of soap, a plastic cup and a pail of cold water. He emerges fresh for his day in the dusty heat of the soko.

After a leisurely breakfast of mandaazi na mayai and chai (with lots of sugar!), Hastings and Aunt Wangui make the one hour walk to the soko. Their journey takes them through a maze of shantytowns, upper-class neighborhoods (where houses are surrounded by security fences and watchmen), and industrial zones.

Arriving at the soko by 8:00 a.m., they immediately begin unpacking their items for display. This is the busiest time of the day, as shoppers prefer cool mornings to the heat of the afternoons.

Long workdays leave little time for Hastings to socialize outside the soko, so in free moments he enjoys talking with his Aunt and the other vendors. His best friend is Marley Muendo, 18, a colorful young man who sells jewelry, masks, drums and other crafts from a stall across the alley. Marley, whose nickname is borrowed from late Jamaican reggae musician, Bob Marley, is a ready source of amusement, telling stories and jokes almost nonstop. He and Hastings enjoy a friendly rivalry, each trying to lure customers to their stalls.

Two years ago, Marley moved here from a village near Machakos, a town 30 miles southeast of Nairobi. A Kamba by tribe, he grew up in a large farming family. Like Hastings, Marley quit school to help take care of his family's medium-sized farm. "I tended our cattle and looked after the maize and other crops," Marley says. "But one season we had a terrible drought. It destroyed most of our harvest." The famine which followed drove him and many others off the land and into Nairobi in search of work. After two years of odd jobs, with most of his earnings going to help restart the family farm, he saved enough money to open his business in the soko.

At noon, Hastings usually eats lunch at a local cafe, often bringing a book to read while he enjoys his chapati na maharagwe. Today he's reading a dog-eared, coverless copy of "Matagari," a novel written in the Gikuyu language by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. It had been Godfrey's favorite book.

Like many of Ngugi's books, "Matagari" ridicules the Kenya government's shortcomings and pokes fun at the excesses of the nation's wealthy. Ngugi was jailed in the 1970s for his opinions and now lives and writes in exile in the U.S. Meanwhile, books like "Matagari" are banned in his homeland and circulate illegally from person to person.

After lunch, on his way back to the market, Hastings stops at a sidewalk stand for a bite of chilled pineapple and a bottle of orange Fanta soda. Sometimes, when sales are very slow (and if there's enough money), Hastings and Marley take an extended lunch hour and sneak around the corner to watch a matinee at the local movie theater.

Fifteen shillings (about 75 cents) admit them into the dimly lit wooden stalls of the theater. Theaters in the capital city offer little variety, showing mostly action-packed American features (which don't need much translation), or Indian films which cater to Nairobi's Hindi-speaking Asian community. Once seated, Hastings and Marley wait quietly as a half dozen commercials flicker on the screen, advertising everything from hairstyling products to furniture.

Finally, the featured film, "Terminator II," is presented. For the next two hours the two friends journey from their work-a-day lives into the dreamworld of cinema. They, and the rest of the audience react with comments and exclamations. "Hey, Hastings!," says Marley, laughingly nudging his friend, "how is it that man [Arnold Schwarzenegger] can have a metal body and not rust?"

At the end of the day, after locking up the stall, Hastings and Aunt Wangui usually decide to take a matatu rather than make

the long trek home by foot. Converted minivans or pickup trucks, matatus are the favorite mode of transportation among Nairobi's commuters since the public buses are often unreliable and cars largely unaffordable. The brightly decorated matatus follow the regular bus routes and are usually packed with passengers travelling for a few shillings' fare. Their musical air horns and flamboyant conductors attract passengers while powerful stereo systems provide a festive travelling atmosphere.

Aunt Wangui and Hastings arrive at home by dusk. But for Wangui, the day's work is not finished. She immediately begins to prepare dinner for the family. She cooks with a kerosene stove on the small kitchen's concrete floor, stirring the ugali constantly to prevent it from burning.

When it's time to eat, the five family members gather in a circle in their living room. The food is in two large bowls placed in the middle. Every meal begins with saying Grace--the family is devoutly Christian--and washing hands in a bowl of water passed from person to person.

Forming bits of ugali into spoon-like shapes with their right hands, they dip into the bowl of stew in clockwise order. Each takes a scoop to their mouth without losing a drop. Mealtimes are filled with storytelling, jokes and discussion of the day's events. Today Uncle Joseph brought bad news to

everyone:

"Well, what we feared is true. The government ran short of funds again, so there's no paycheck for me this week. And we all know IOU's won't buy our ugali! Wangui, I hope business picks up for you. And Hastings, could you possibly sell more of your trinkets [jewelry]? Maybe your old friends from the city market can help. I'd not like to see us out on the street next month. But let's not spoil our appetite! After all, 'thunder is not yet rain'!"

When people are finished eating, they wash their hands and take the cooking and serving pots into the courtyard for washing. Aunt Wangui boils a pail of tap water on the stove and then joins Nyina and Florence at the neighborhood faucet. As they wash and rinse, the women catch up on news with their neighbors and sing a few favorite songs. Their strong, melodic voices fill the air.

Wangui and her daughters are part of a new generation of African women. Although women are generally considered the most productive members of African nations (doing an estimated 85% of the work), their efforts haven't always been recognized and rewarded by the men of their societies. Wangui believes that education and economic empowerment are the tickets to respect and freedom for women:

Before I had my shop, I felt sometimes powerless. My husband--and God bless him--didn't share responsibility for the family in the way he does now. He changed when he saw that my contribution [money from the business] was large. I have more say in family matters now. My big hope is that my girls can finish their studies. I want them to have their own businesses someday, too!

By 10:00 all is quiet in Joseph and Wangui's house. Hastings, exhausted, has collapsed into his bed. Before falling

asleep, he likes to read, write a short letter home, or think about his girlfriend, Beatrix. Someday, he hopes he'll marry and return to his shamba to stay. But until then, he has much to do.

Hastings Stretches His Shillings

Hastings now clears about \$30 a month at the soko, making him fairly well-off by rural African standards. Though the cost of living is low when compared to the U.S. (a bottle of Coca-Cola, for instance, costs 20 cents) the average Kenyan earns far less than \$360 a year. Living in the city, where everything is expensive, Hastings barely manages to scrape by. After he's paid rent to his aunt, bought groceries and sent money home to his mother and sisters, he has just enough money to see a movie and buy a second-hand book or two.

For several years, Hastings hoped he could save sufficient money to return to school to pick up where he left off. But his former headmaster said that he would have to repeat at least two years of classes to stand any chance of passing the college-entry examinations. "In any case," the headmaster told Hastings, "you're too old to fit in."

"I guess my time [for school] has passed," Hastings says sadly. "But like they say," he adds with a sudden smile, "'Kuishi kwingi kuona mengi!' [Experience is the best teacher] And, unlike school, experience asks for no fees!" Besides, he's

pursuing his newfound passion, making jewelry.

Crafting a New Life

It was through his bracelet supplier, Gitutu, that Hastings first became interested in the art of jewelry making. Gitutu, a tall, slender man of 45, who walks with a limp due to childhood polio, is one of Nairobi's leading artisans. He is devoted to training aspiring young artisans and preserving Africa's craft traditions. In colonial days, crafts were suppressed by the British and today they are threatened by imported factory-made goods.

During his free time, Hastings visited Gitutu's workshop to watch a small group of men and women as they shaped metal and other materials into bracelets, earrings and necklaces. The whole shop would come alive with the sounds of hammering, drilling and cutting. "The artisans told stories about their designs," Hastings says, "and about the ancestors who created them."

"You see this surutia?" said 21 year old Alice, pointing to a brass spiral she had just finished. "This is a Maasai design. It's usually worn by married women. It symbolizes motherhood. When their sons are initiated [into manhood], the women give them their surutia for good luck."

The artisans enjoyed Hastings' company and appreciated his

interest in their craft. After a while, they asked him to help string necklaces and piece together earrings whenever the shop received more orders than they could handle.

Under the watchful eyes of Gitutu, Hastings learned how to work with tools and the many materials of the craft: seeds, wood, glass and clay beads, cowrie shells, and various kinds of metal. Hastings was a quick study, he says. "I guess it comes from when I was a kid. M friends and I used to make our own toy cars, from wire and other scraps we found lying in Murang'a. And, of course," Hastings adds remorsefully, "Godfrey taught me a lot about using my hands."

Hastings' specialty is making earrings from aluminum, which he finds, in quantity, at a nearby dump. The large sheets were used to print newspapers before winding up on the scrap heap. "This is a very fine material," he says, holding up a piece of silver metal.

It's very easy to work with because its soft. I can cut it, bend it or carve designs into it. It's also unique, because very little [Kenyan] jewelry is made from this color of material. Real silver is just too expensive. And, if you look carefully, you can even read part of the newspaper which was printed with this plate!

The initial deal the artisans made with Hastings was an easy arrangement: Hastings received a few shillings for each piece he helped them finish. Soon Hastings was selling the group's jewelry at Aunt Wangui's stand and was amazed at how popular it

was with his customers.

But for Hastings, jewelry-making has become more than just a way to increase his income. Using both ancient and contemporary designs and materials to create his art, he has, amidst the city, found a link to his village roots. "The work is so satisfying," Hastings says.

"It often makes me think about my grandparents, how they lived, their beliefs and values. Sometimes there's a strange feeling that they're in the shop with me.... It's also interesting to think that today people all over the world are wearing bits of our history and my imagination!"

Urban Life

The capital city is a feast for Hastings' curious mind. Growing up, he rarely read newspapers or listened to the radio. But today, he reads The Standard, one of Kenya's two independent English-language newspapers. Hastings also listens regularly to the radio, which plays music by Kenyan performers such as Mombasa Roots, Lady Issa, and Them Mushrooms, as well as by international stars like Madonna, Michael Jackson, and Queen Latifa.

"Sometimes I watch MTV," he says, but adds that, "even if I had a stereo, most of the music they play isn't available yet in the record shops, so I find the songs I like on the radio."

Through CNN world-radio, he also heard about the Gulf War and the sweeping political changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Such exposure to world events is causing problems for those African governments which have resisted

democracy, including Kenya's. It took years of citizen protests and international pressure to convince its dictator-like president, Daniel arap Moi, to hold a multi-party election, which he finally did in 1992. Moi had said that multi-party democracy would only divide the nation along tribal lines and result in civil war, as it has in the past in countries like neighboring Uganda.

Moi, who was re-elected in the recent election, has been in office since the death of Kenya's first president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta in 1978. A member of a minority ethnic group, the Kelenjin, President Moi is the leader of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), until recently the only legal political party in Kenya. Critics charge that he has used intimidation of opposition parties and voting fraud to keep himself in power.

His government has also come under increasing pressure from citizens and foreign governments to end the media censorship, human-rights abuses and corruption which have plagued the country for years. Even the European nations and the U.S., which for decades had supported the anti-communist Moi regime to thwart Soviet influence in Africa, has demanded change.

How Things Came to Be...

In the bustling city, Hastings' life is vastly different from that of his parents and their ancestors. In less than three

generations, centuries-old African ways have been challenged, first by colonialism, and later by "westernization," and "modernization."

In the late 1800s, national boundaries and foreign laws and institutions were forced on Africa by the colonial powers: England, France, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain. Missionaries converted Africans to Christianity, capitalism destroyed African economic systems, and European-run schools taught Africans the "superiority" of European culture. Kenyans, like Africans throughout the continent, slowly began to lose their way of life and their identity. Western individualism began to challenge ujima, or collective responsibility. Competition and consumerism threatened cooperation and ujaama, or cooperative economics, as central themes in Kenyan society.

These foreign institutions and values, combined with the high rate of migration within the country, have taken a heavy toll on people's sense of community in Kenya. But families (which include relatives outside the nuclear family), still form the backbone of Kenyan society. Families take care of children, the sick and the aged, and pool funds for education, emergencies and other expenses.

When family troubles arise or loneliness strikes, Hastings is often reminded of the Zimbabwean story his mother used to tell

him about the need to harambee, or pull together, as a family:

A man had four quarrelsome sons. About to die, he did not want to leave them in a state of hatred for each other. So he called them to his bedside and gave each of them a stick. Without any explanation he asked each of them to break his stick, which they easily managed. The old man then tied together a bundle of sticks and asked them to break that. None of them could.

In a weak but calm voice the old man told them: 'I'll soon be gone and I want you to remember this. You can't face the hardships of life if you are divided the way you are. If you cannot live in harmony as brothers, your enemies will break you as easily as you broke those single sticks I gave you. But if you remain united you will be as strong as the bunch of sticks I have just given you which none of you could break. There is strength only in unity.' The old man then died.

His four sons remembered and followed the wisdom of their father's last words and lived happily ever after.

Despite his strong family bonds, Hastings still finds himself at the confusing crossroads between the ways of his rural, Kikuyu childhood and his urban, Western-influenced manhood. He wants, for instance, to make his own decisions about marriage, an idea which causes tension among his relatives. His mother maintains that a marriage must be arranged, or at least approved, by parents and that the groom's family offer an acceptable brideprice, or payment, to the bride's family. Hastings, while respecting his elders' beliefs, thinks otherwise. "Marriage," he says "is about love, not economics!" His opinions mirror those of a growing number of teenagers, particularly those living in urban areas, Hastings' girlfriend, Beatrix Makau, for

example.

Beatrice

Unlike Hastings, Beatrice grew up in Nairobi, one of two children in a prosperous Kikuyu family. Her mother works for the Ministry of Tourism and her father runs a successful automotive importing company. The family lives in a spacious western-style home in Adams Arcade, a Nairobi neighborhood formerly the exclusive domain of Europeans.

At 17, Beatrice is finishing her studies at a private high school in Nairobi and hoping to follow in her older brother, Milton's, footsteps. "I am applying to universities in the United States," she says confidently in English, "and hope to get a track scholarship. Eventually, if there's money, I would like to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics."

Aside from their academic achievements, Beatrice and Milton are part of the growing number of Kenyan runners receiving international attention. Milton is a member of Kenya's national track team and Beatrice, whose career is still young, dreams about winning a 200 meter sprinting medal in world-class competition. In a society where most young women never leave their villages, Beatrice has already traveled throughout Africa and to Europe, where she finished fourth at a recent Junior World Championships meet.

While Beatrix has mastered the physical challenges of running, she has not been as successful in dealing with sexism among sports officials and the public. "Just a few years ago, this country only trained the boys," Beatrix explains.

Girls were discouraged from competing at all--we were supposed to prepare for marriage and motherhood. Women athletes are still receiving less financial support than men. But we're proving our ability. They're gradually coming to respect our potential.

When she's not training, doing homework or dressed in her blue school uniform, Beatrix dons a t-shirt and jeans and leads an active social life. "On the weekend I like to relax with my friends. My favorite club is the Wild Tops Disco [in central Nairobi]--they've got the latest hits." "Yeah," Hastings once chided her, "she's crazy over Michael Jackson. He's all she wants to listen to." "Not true!" responded Beatrix. "I think you're jealous! I like all kinds of music, rafiki yangu, like you!"

Beatrix and Hastings met at Wild Tops about a year ago. They've become romantically involved since, spending most of their spare time together--which usually means Saturday evenings and a few hours on Sunday afternoons, after church. Since they both enjoy sports, the two often attend soccer matches at the National Stadium. Sometimes they run together at the local track, but as Hastings explains, he usually ends up watching her

stride through her laps while he catches his breath on the sidelines. "I used to be a boxer in school. I was in good condition," he says with a grin, "but there's no keeping up with her!"

They have discussed marriage, but with Beatrix's plans to study abroad they've made no firm plans. "Maybe when we're in our twenties," Beatrix says.

When I finish competing we would like to raise a family, have two or three kids" she says. "We're still deciding where to live. Hastings wants to move back to his shamba in Murang'a. But I think I'd be bored there. I would prefer Nairobi because I'd be closer to my parents and to the track, of course. And anyway, my career will probably keep me here.

As for Hastings, he's worried about his financial situation. "I want to be secure with money before starting a family," he says. "As I am now, I'd not be a proper husband and father... I'm too broke!" But there are other issues in their relationship which need to be resolved. Perhaps the most difficult are their class differences.

While Hastings is glad for Beatrix's opportunities and financial security, he is angered by and frustrated with Kenya's socio-economic system. The system, he says ensures that "a few become very wealthy at the expense of the many" through exclusive access to land, social services, education and political influence. He likes to quote Godfrey's quip, borrowed jokingly from the U.S. Constitution, that Kenya's was a government "By a

few people, for a few people and of a few people."

Needless to say, Hastings' opinions sometimes don't sit too well with Beatrix's parents, whom he identifies as members of the wabenzi, or elite class (so called because many drive Mercedes Benz automobiles). And although Beatrix's parents are fond of Hastings, often enjoying his relaxed rural charm and sense of humor, they would prefer that their daughter marry someone of higher social standing.

Beatrix, however, is intent on overcoming her own prejudices, even if it means losing some of her less understanding friends.

Sometimes when Hastings and I go to a party, my classmates look down at us. They ask me how I can be with someone who didn't even finish school! Can you believe such people? I can understand Hastings' feelings. He's had to struggle against many odds. But I can't help my own background or do much to change it. Fortunately for us, we are learning to accept each other for who we are, and that's the important thing.

Things Look Brighter

One of Hastings' plans to improve his standard of living was given a boost when he befriended two customers, young Americans who were stranded in Nairobi. He had often wondered if his jewelry would be as popular in North American stores as it was with the watalii in Nairobi. After discussing the idea with his new friends, they decided to establish Ajabu Trading Ltd. (Ajabu is the Swahili word for "wonder.") Within a year, the small company began marketing in North America items made by Hastings

and other Nairobi-based artisans.

With the help of a childhood friend, Ezekial Thika, a 20 year old shipper and exporter, Hastings learned about the complex world of international trading. "I never guessed that doing business could be so confusing," he says. "There are lots of regulations and paper work, which make it a bit of a puzzle. I also had to open a bank account and a post office mailbox." Later, at Ezekiel's office, Hastings had his first encounter with a using a computer and a fax machine: "Amazing devices...", he remembers thinking at the time.

With Hastings as a go-between, the artisans are gaining access to a larger market for their jewelry. That's a good thing now that there are fewer watalii visiting Kenya and buying their products. Ajabu earns the artisans a good price for their handiwork and channels over half of its profits back to Kenya which compensate Hastings for his efforts.

Though these activities add to his busy schedule at the soko, he says his work with Ajabu is too exciting to go without:

With Gitutu, I once visited villages in the north looking for beads and the other things we need to make our jewelry. That was a fun trip... one of the few times I've left Nairobi since coming here.

He also enjoys corresponding with his business partners abroad: "It gives me a chance to practice my English and to know

something about the kinds of lives people lead there [overseas]."

Hastings knows that Ajabu won't make him or the others wealthy. As long as Aunt Wangui's clothing stall remains profitable, he doesn't mind. "A certain wise person said, 'Man goes around looking for a loaf when a slice is enough!' What a beautiful observation.... Anyway, the work is very satisfying," and, he adds, important. "If we hadn't created Ajabu, how else would we have sold our jewelry? And how would the beadmakers in the villages and Ezekial earn their livings?"

Hastings' Dreams

When asked about his dreams for the future, Hastings looks up from his work stool toward the glass-covered skyscrapers which loom over the city. As he looks into the sky, which is cloudless today, he says, "Sure,"

I would like to be doing better--have a shamba and family of my own, a good house for me and Beatrix and maybe another for my mom. But for now, my goal is to buy a sewing machine for my mother's new dress-making business. She shouldn't have to work in the fields at her age. I want her years to be comfortable. I also must make sure that my sisters and nephews have books and uniforms for school. I don't want them to have to drop from their studies like I did!

Are these dreams possible? Hastings shrugs his shoulders in his usual manner. "Why worry? After all 'penye nia pana njia!,' -where there's a will, there's a way!"

Glossary of Swahili and Gikuyu* Words

<i>bangeli</i>	bangle
<i>chapati na maharagwe</i>	a round, flat bread served with beans
" <i>Hamjambo, dada zangu?</i> "	"How are you, my sisters?"
<i>harambee</i>	to "pull together"
" <i>Hatujambo.</i> "	"We are fine."
<i>jua kali</i>	those who work outdoors as well as outside the official economy, e.g., street vendors, literally "fierce sun"
<i>kanga</i>	decorated sarong cloth, often worn as a wrap-around skirt
<i>Kirinyaga*</i>	Mt. Kenya
<i>mandazi na mayai</i>	scrambled eggs mixed with fried dough
<i>matatu</i>	a mini-van or pick-up truck taxi
<i>Mau Mau*</i>	(its meaning remains a Kikuyu secret)
<i>safari</i>	journey
<i>soko</i>	outdoor marketplace
" <i>Ninataka kununua koti.</i> "	"I want to buy a coat."
" <i>rafiki yangu</i> "	"my friend"
<i>shamba</i>	farm
<i>ugali</i>	a stiff cornmeal porridge served with vegetables and occasionally meat
<i>uhuru</i>	freedom
<i>wabenzi</i>	Kenya's upper class
<i>watalii</i>	tourists
<i>wazungu</i>	white people (esp. Europeans)

About Swahili

Swahili, Kenya's national language, emerged centuries ago as an international trading language. Today it is spoken throughout East and Central Africa. Swahili (properly known as Kiswahili) combines the Bantu languages of Africa with English, Arabic and Hindi. Most Swahili words are derived from Bantu, but below are some that come from English. Notice how Swahili spelling and pronunciation differ from English.

In Swahili, vowels are pronounced as follows:

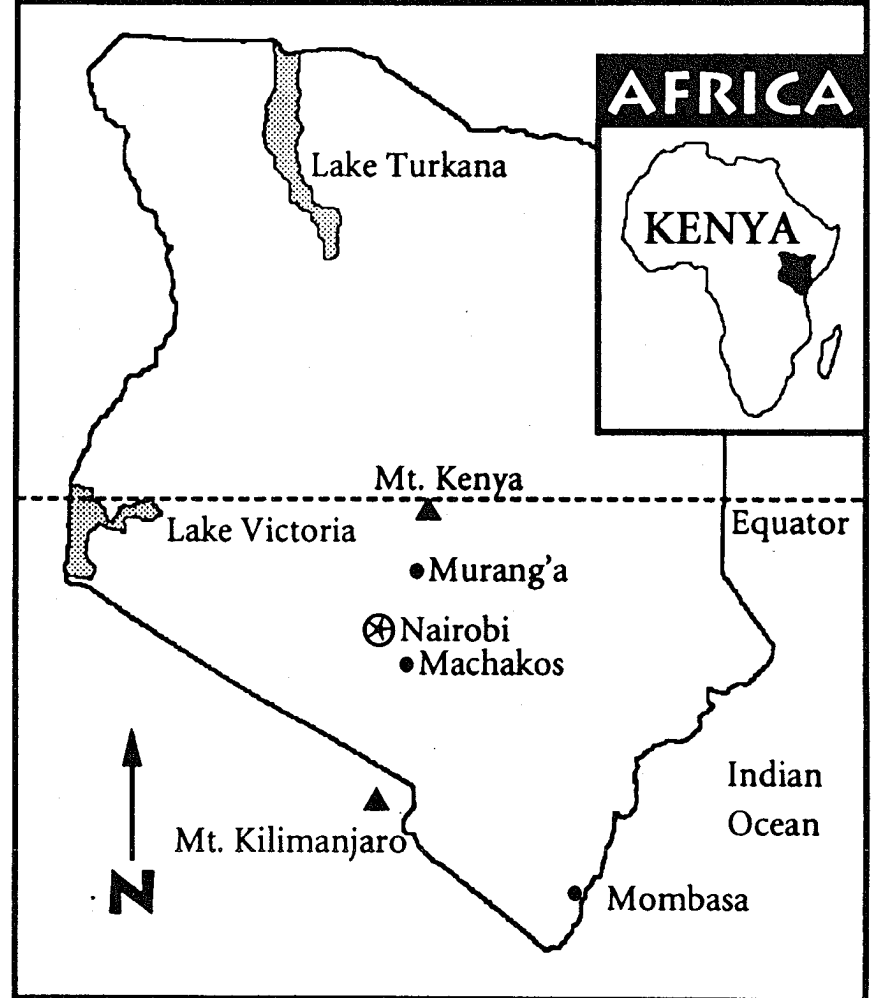
a = ah	o = oh
e = ay, as in "say"	u = oo, as in "shoo"
i = ee, as in "bee"	

Each syllable is accentuated (spoken clearly). For example:

polisi = *po-li-si* *dimokrasi* = *di-mo-kra-si*

<i>skuli</i>	school
<i>posta</i>	post office
<i>klabu</i>	club
<i>redio</i>	radio
<i>motokaa</i>	car
<i>teksi</i>	taxi
<i>dola</i>	dollar
<i>dimokrasi</i>	democracy
<i>voti</i>	vote
<i>picha</i>	photograph
<i>sinema</i>	cinema
<i>filmu</i>	movie

KENYA



Map by Mitchell Linhart © 1992

Photo captions for *Safari ya Ndoto*

▲NAIROBI CITY MARKET: *A favorite stop-off point for tourists, the market sells fresh flowers, fruit and vegetables inside, and a wide selection of handcrafts outside. Hastings earned his living here for a year, selling bangles on its steps.*

▲CHILDHOOD IN MURANG'A: *Hastings is pictured here (top right) at age 10, with his mother, two sisters and his cousin in downtown Murang'a.*

▲HASTINGS AND GITUTU: *"In our background, what can you see?" Hastings and his mentor relax in the soko.*

▲THE SOKO: *A schoolboy and his father, a vendor of the famous "Kenya" bags. The bags, called kikapu, are woven by Kikuyu women from sisal—one of Kenya's chief crops—and leather.*

▲MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT, 1933: *Most European colonies served a largely economic purpose—to provide Europe with cheap raw materials and products. But Kenya (formerly called British East Africa) was also a favorite spot for vacationing and settling. Prior to independence in 1963, thousands sought adventure, health and fortune here. Today, tourism remains one of Kenya's largest industries.*

▲MARLEY: *Hastings' fun-loving friend, Marley, stands in front of his "curiosity shop" in Nairobi.*

▲UHURU PARK, NAIROBI: *Hastings showing off his acrobatic ability. Behind him is Nairobi, the city which turned his life "upside-down."*

▲HASTINGS AT HOME

▲HASTINGS READING AT A CAFE

▲HASTINGS AT HIS STAND IN THE SOKO

▲HASTINGS' HANDIWORK: *Bangles, earrings and necklaces produced in Nairobi by Hastings and the other artisans of Ajabu Trading Ltd..*

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What choices would you have made if you had Hastings' options in life?
- 2) What would you find most difficult if you were Hastings?
- 3) How is family life in Kenya different from your own? Are there things about Kenyan culture which you would enjoy or find particularly challenging?
- 4) What do you think about the role of colonialism and modernization in Kenya? What role should the United States and other rich countries play in Kenya's affairs?
- 5) As we have seen in the story, Hastings' life has been seriously affected by the economic conditions in Kenya. As the economic situation in the U.S. becomes increasingly difficult, many families are being forced to change their lifestyles. Have you noticed such changes in your family?
- 6) In Nairobi, as in other large cities, population growth has caused many problems. If you were a Kenyan policy-maker, how might you deal with these problems?

APPENDIX 2

"What Can I Do to Help?"

The problems of the poorer countries in the world sometimes seem overwhelming. But in reality there are many positive examples of people in these countries working together successfully to improve their living conditions and to gain more control over their lives. There are also many examples of people in the United States working towards assisting people in other parts of the world, either by helping them directly in their efforts to develop themselves, or by working to remove some of the obstacles to their development.

Everyone in the United States has the potential to work towards making things better for people in other parts of the world. The first step can be self education--going beyond regular newspaper coverage, which usually does not give in depth information about the rest of the world.

Public Libraries

Choose a country you want to know more about, and find relevant books and periodicals through the card catalogue of your local library.

Educational Resources

Danaher, Kevin (1991) *Beyond Safaris: A Guide to Building People-to-People Ties with Africa*, Africa World Press, Inc. and Global Exchange.

Benjamin, Medea and Andrea Freedman (1989) *Bridging the Global Gap: A Handbook to Linking Citizens of the First and Third Worlds*, Seven Locks Press.

Organizations

Listings of organizations which need your help may be obtained by contacting Global Exchange, 2940 16th St. #307, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Although education is necessary it is important not to feel that you must be an expert on all of the problems of the world before you can do anything about them. Indeed, sometimes the best way to learn more is to get involved. "Getting involved" can mean anything from donating money or fundraising for an organization, to volunteering in an office or even traveling overseas to work on a development project.

Opportunities for Travel/Study/Work Abroad

For opportunities to travel/study/work abroad, see books by Danaher and Benjamin above, or contact Global Exchange for more information.

Vacations

Many people from the U.S. take their vacations in Mexico, the Caribbean, and other parts of the developing world. If you have an opportunity to do so, make an effort to learn the local language. Wherever you travel, make an effort to talk to people, and go out of your way to learn from the poor about their lives.

Participate in Democracy

The United States has great power to influence the rest of the world, and could potentially give assistance to the developing countries to help themselves develop. Unfortunately, much of the assistance we currently give is military. By electing representatives with a progressive outlook on foreign policy, we can help to change the US international role to a more positive one. In addition, we can write to our representatives about legislation.

Learn From Other Cultures

Though we do have many resources to share with people in Africa, they also have much to share with us, such as their music, art, the ways they organize their communities, and even their attitudes towards life. In our travels, by searching out immigrants in our communities, by watching performances from different cultures, even by reading about life in other parts of the world, we can find that people from the developing world can help us develop ourselves.

(adapted from original piece by Joan Heckscher, 1988)

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