

# Senator Barack Obama Visit Stirs University of Nairobi



Senator Obama Listens to the VC Prof. George Magoha (2nd left) together with the US Ambassador Michael Ranneberger (left), Council Chairman Mr. Alfred Simba (3rd left) and Chancellor Mr. Joe Wanjui.

**A USA Senator of Kenyan descent, Barack Obama of Illinois, spoke to students and staff at the University of Nairobi on Monday August 28, 2006. The Senator, a son of a Kenyan economist told the audience at Taifa Hall to re-ignite the independence spirit by re-dedicating themselves to protect freedom.**

In a speech punctuated by memories of his father's childhood and struggle to make a livelihood in Kenya, Obama said the country risked a crisis situation should corruption and ethnic-based politics be left to guide governance. He said the country needed to consolidate the freedom and economic development that guided its independence.



Calling on Kenyans not to make corruption

a way of life, Obama warned that Kenya needed to assert itself in the community of nations through aggressive economic opportunities that were available. Saying no country owed another its development, Obama said a strong economic base, alleviation of poverty and a just political system could help Kenya stand tall among other countries.

Globalisation, he said, affected everyone and it is countries that took opportunities it offered that succeeded. He said that as a representative of a farming constituency, he saw no direct competition between farmers in Illinois and those in Africa. However, said the Senator, unequal terms of trade made it difficult for African countries to compete favourably in the international economy.

At question time, Senator refused to commit himself to running for the US presidency anytime soon. However, an October issue the US-based *Time* magazine predicts that Obama is poised to make history as America's next president.

Senator Obama was accompanied by the US Ambassador to Kenya, Mr Michael Ranneberger. He was introduced to the audience by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. The Chancellor, Mr. Joe Wanjui gave a vote of thanks.

Senator Obama plants a tree at the University of Nairobi. With him (left to right) DVC Academic, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, VC Prof. George Magoha, UON Council Chairman Mr. Alfred Simba, and UON Chancellor, Mr. Joe Wanjui.

## IDS Staff Retreat Charts New Commitments

**All IDS academic staff gathered at a retreat from July 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 for a review of the Institute's activities. On the table for assessment were the teaching, research and training programmes. The Strategic Plan 2005-2010 of the Institute and due for publication was also reviewed.**

In enthusiastic discussions, the staff reassessed challenges, opportunities and the internal operating environment. At the sublime level, the staff examined the status of development research in Kenya and how to create demand for research in the policy and development arena. In this context, the staff appraised the teaching programmes;

publications, dissemination and networking with other institutions.

Staff proposed ways to shorten the publication process, but without compromising quality of publications. More pressing were central procurement procedures which all agreed need streamlining to facilitate timely publications.

On networking with other institutions, it was resolved that an IDS guideline on development, implementation and evaluation of collaborations be put in place.

Among the administrative challenges highlighted included lack of office space. It was noted that "sharing" of offices was

exhausted as an alternative.

Issues on the IDS Library with over 19,000 volumes of books, 39,325 journal volumes and over 4,405 research publications were extensively discussed. With the growth of current collections, the library has become popular with users from other departments, and increased usage calls for protection of the collection, the meeting resolved.

Clarity of the rights and obligations between the IDS and the University Library System regarding the IDS library was sought and relocation of the IDS library proposed.

# IDS Staff Re-dedicate Service Commitment

Administrative staff of IDS held a retreat August 16 to 18 2006 at which they reiterated their commitment to excellent service to make IDS a better research and teaching institution. The three-day retreat was an examination of staff performance against stakeholder and client expectations, and teambuilding for best results.

In the three-day retreat, the 15 members of the administrative staff examined their own performance and resolved to become a stronger team.

The theme on the need to reposition the Administrative Staff at IDS dominated discussions. Speakers called for changes in attitude in the promotion of harmony and team work. The staff vowed to discharge their duties affectionately, counting what they did as an important contribution to the overall performance of the IDS.

The Director, Prof. Dorothy McCormick set the mood in her opening remarks when she called for a common identity for IDS staff. The Director said the University of Nairobi Service Charter stresses the importance of excellence in service delivery, a goal that can only be achieved if the Administrative Staff walk together with the Academic Staff. "To be able to achieve the goal of excellence in service delivery, it is the little things done by everyone that contribute immensely towards institutional productivity and growth", she said.

Taking the cue from the Director, the staff noted that for the efficient delivery of service, equipment and facilities must be readily available. This would create efficiency and improve relations between the Academic and Administrative staff. Staff called on reduction of University's red tape in procurement procedures.

Staff said that effective internal communication was an important factor in service delivery; each person constitutes a building block at IDS and it is important that all are aware of IDS activities. Such communication would also profile IDS, especially in cases where external publics made enquiries, they said.

With ever-growing demand for services, and staff made smaller by recent retirements, the readiness of each person to perform a variety of tasks has become essential. In return, the university needs to recognise and reward good performance.

The occasion was also used to bid farewell to Mr. Nahashon Nzambu who retired in June 2006.



*Above: Ms Ann Gatende (back to camera) stimulates a teamwork exercise with staff at the retreat held at the Kenya Cooperative College, Nairobi. Below: IDS administrative and some academic staff at the end of the retreat.*



*Above: Ms. Mercy Nyagah and Ms. Rose Asekwa present gifts to the Nzambus. Below: Mr. and Mrs. Nzambu cut the cake assisted by Prof. Patrick Alila (3rd right) as other staff applaud.*



# Development Journal a Reality

**Title:** *East Africa Journal of Development Studies* (EAJDS) Vol.1 No.1. 2006.

**Publisher:** Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi .

**Annual Subscription:** Africa Institutions US\$90 and others US\$130; Individuals in Africa US\$20 and Others US\$40.

The inaugural volume of the *East Africa Journal of Development Studies* (EAJDS) published by the Institute for Development Studies' (IDS), University of Nairobi and jointly sponsored by Trocaire and Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI) is in circulation. Published twice a year, the EAJDS combines two main aspects; as a refereed journal devoted to scholarly analysis of current development issues, and a practitioner's reference on practical lessons in development in the Eastern Africa region.

The journal comes into the market at a time when there is debate on the role of research in policy formulation, and more so the role of development studies in actual development. The Journal is expected to bridge the gap between development research, policy and practice. It aims to be a vehicle that engages researchers, policy makers and development practitioners in meaningful "development agenda dialogue".

It has often been argued that policy formulation fails in Africa because it is rarely informed by research and that where such research is done, it is rarely used to benchmark policy. Instead, such research becomes part of "accounting documents" filed in cabinets by public and civil society bureaucrats. But the practical nature of the content presentation in the Journal makes the issues accessible and leaves little excuse for disability in decoding. Indeed, the Journal could set the pace as the "monitoring barometer" on how much research decision makers use in designing policy.

The maiden issue has three interdisciplinary empirical articles from academics and three development practitioners' articles, all from the East Africa region. An article titled "Bagamoyo: From a Slave Trade Port to a Tourist Destination" by Dr. Bertram Mapunda of the University of Dar es Salaam examines the economic relationship between slave trade and tourism from a historical context. In it, the tourism policy maker is informed that the two commercial forms are similar but only separated in time.

In "Towards Food Security in Africa:

Theories, Images and Realities", Dr. Mary Omosa of IDS University of Nairobi casts a critical eye at the inadequate conceptualisation of the food security and hence the persistence of hunger in Africa. She argues that for food security to be achieved and sustained, "There is need to bring into the picture people's experiences and in particular, how they conceptualise and interweave aspirations as they search for adequate food".

Dr. Robert Kabumbuli and Prof. Edward Kirumira of Makerere University examine the challenges and implications faced by local governments in managing the environment under decentralisation. The discussion in "The Challenges of Environmental Management under Decentralisation: Lessons from Kampala" concludes that local governments are in weak positions to effectively achieve the objectives of decentralised environmental management. The authors recommend environmental cost-effective studies that would provide guides to environmental decisions and actions by local authorities.

The development practitioners are represented by two hands-on presentations. First, Fr. Gabriel Dolan who until last year was in charge of Justice and Peace within the Kitale Catholic Diocese, brings a development activist practitioner's perspective to issues of land reform. In his refreshing "Organising Local Struggles for Land Reform in Kenya: A Practitioner's View", Fr. Dolan gives lessons in organised activism and explains it using the struggles for land reforms.

Second, Susan Armstrong, the head of Medical Emergency Development International Committee (MEDIC), the longest operating NGO in Southern Sudan brings to the fore a strong gender dimension of development. In "Women Empowerment in Southern Sudan", she weaves together a mosaic that reveals a set of issues that show the devastation that conflict can do to society. However, in the context of an area recently dominated by politics and power over the peace agreement, there is optimism for the success of interventions that promote sustainability and livelihood security for women of Southern Sudan. The input is a good lesson on how income generation from local resources can empower women.

The Journal is edited by two IDS researchers, Prof. Njuguna Ng'ethe and Dr. Karuti Kanyinga. The editors are soliciting articles for the next volume due early next year.

## ACFRN Looks at New Research Approaches

**The African Clothing and Footwear Research Network (ACFRN) held its '2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Clothing and Footwear in African Industrialisation' at Muldersdrift, South Africa on May 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2006.**

The conference programme included 14 papers based on research funded through the Network and 9 solicited through a call for papers. At the Country Coordinators' meeting following the Conference, plans were made for further work by the network. This will include following up on recent studies and exploring new themes such as the impact of China and India, innovation in clothing and footwear, and their role in poverty reduction.

Participants felt that network research capacity would be enhanced with restructuring to form multi-country and multi-disciplinary teams. In this way, researchers in two countries would be working on one problem thus enhancing a comparative and exchange exercise where each is able to understand similarities and differences and put them in proper contexts. Restructuring would also help integrate researchers from BLS (Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland) countries.

## Research on Rural MSEs

**Title:** *Mary Kinyanjui: Overcoming Barriers to Enterprise Growth: The Experience of MSEs in Rural Central Kenya*, unpublished paper, IDS, Nairobi, 2006.

**Research undertaken by Dr. Mary Kinyanjui, Senior Research Fellow, IDS on growth-oriented rural MSEs in Kenya's Central Province** found that the businesses "are not founded by chance but are established to fulfil entrepreneurs' desires and to a lesser extent are driven by social and market factors". The survey also confirmed King's findings that "previous occupation" was the main source of business knowledge, and that levels of education were also correlated with business success. Her findings also suggest that the "can do" attitude is reflected in "unique strategies for running businesses such as ability to communicate, patience, working long hours, use of market principles for pricing, giving credit, and advertising".

The research sample confirms a widely held belief based on the work in the 1990s of the USAID GEMINI studies on African micro-enterprises that about one third of MSEs are growth-oriented. Relationship between age, education and business growth were found to be significant with entrepreneurs in their mid-thirties performing particularly well. A majority of those who had taken business risks also reported growth.

**Reviewed by Sunita Kapila**

# Alumni Debate Role of Development Studies at Work

Alumni of IDS-Sussex and IDS-Nairobi held debate on the impact of development studies at the workplace during the recent a roundtable discussions. The alumni cited the conflict of training and the world of work, but were categorical that “IDS training explicitly gears you to think you’ll change the world while prospective employers tell you you’ll apply what you learnt”.

Most said that training on issues of women empowerment, health and capacity building gave them a leverage to handle field challenges. The need for an interface between communication and training was the key link: “To have flow of information to the grassroots, there is a need to train the media to interpret academic writings”, they said.

A participant related the experience of the interface in training, communication and disaster management; “I joined an international NGO and was given supervision over a number of CBOs in a very remote area. The CBOs had no communication network. I had a language barrier when working with these communities. It meant that an integrated approach to development was not going to be achieved”.

They said training emphasis should be on how to use theory and research which results in interventions. This called for searching questions: “From my experience, development recipients are more dynamic to development. They have capacities often taken for granted by development workers. One is left wondering who is developing who? Is development really desirable for these people?” The following are extracts of the debate:

**Wanjiku Muhato: IDS Sussex alumna, USAID Regional advisor on Gender issues, Kenya:** “Development studies theories learnt in class are not used in the real world. The reality is different. I have found myself working on strategic plans, focusing on



*Some of the IDS alumni during the discussion at the roundtable in Nairobi. (From right) Jeremiah Muthoka, Basra Ali (student), Samuel Kiiru, Njeri Muhoro, Joan Kariuki, and David Njuguna of the University of Nairobi Alumni Association.*

achieving results and dependent on available finance and shifting priorities”.

She was concerned about who should be informing who in development? “Should we be coming out of research institutes and informing policymakers in clearer terms than we are doing?” Apparently, those working with development agencies are the ones defining what development is and their work is not necessarily informed by research. “There is little research in practice to support development work. Accordingly, university research is not informing development practice and therefore The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are unlikely to be achieved”.

**Njeri Muhoro: Alumna IDS-Nairobi, University of Nairobi (UON), Kenya:** “Training in development studies is relevant. It has helped me acquire project management skills. It enabled me to participate in the revitalisation of UON, for example, in drafting my department’s strategic plan”.

**Jacqueline Mbogo: Alumna IDS-Nairobi at IFAD Nyeri, Kenya:** Mbogo says the most useful skills in development studies include programming skills, project appraisal and capacity building. However, challenges were experienced in the field when working with communities due to communication failures. She is doubtful that theory taught

is really practical: “The recipients of development are highly diverse hence converting theory to practice is a challenge. There is need for a practical approach to the training”.

The participants formed an IDS Chapter of the University of Nairobi Alumni Association has been formed. The IDS Alumni Association (IDSAA) will be a forum for the exchange of ideas. The membership of IDSAA is IDS MA graduates, academic staff, administrative staff, Research associates, IDS retirees and former staff, and any other honorary members.

Mr. David Njuguna, the Administrator of the UON Alumni Association said that Alumni are an asset to the university as they are a crucial link with the outside world. Alumni also offer a forum for networking, exchanging and updating skills. Alumni also lead fund-raising campaigns for their institutions.

Other IDS alumni present included Mr. Stephen Mutiso (Trocaire), Mr. Milton U. Alwanga Kenya School of Professional Studies (KSPS), Mr. Sabastian G. Muthoni (Plan International), Mr. Wilson Kaikai (Participatory Development Centre) Ms. Linet Misati, (IDS-Nairobi); and Dr. Jonathan Caseley, an IDS Research Associate. ■

# Njeru: Unique Scholarship From Research Fellow

**Geoffrey Runji Njeru**, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) has been with the University of Nairobi since October 1985 when he joined the teaching staff as a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Government. He had just left the civil service where he had served for only four months as an Administrative/District Officer in the Office of the President. Three years later he joined IDS as a Graduate Research Assistant and became a Research Fellow in 1991.

Njeru, who holds an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Sussex, UK and an MA in Government/Political Science from the University of Nairobi, is finalising his thesis, and could be the first one at IDS to hold a PhD in Development Studies. The PhD dissertation is on agricultural entrepreneurship and poverty reduction in a rural setting.

“When it came to choosing my topic for the PhD, it was no coincidence. Right from my undergraduate days in the early 1980s, one of the sub-disciplines for Political Science that I studied was Political Economy of Agriculture and Industrialization in Africa which opened up, broadened and sharpened my intellectual horizons a great deal. My MA Thesis was on ‘The Impact of Commodity Production on a Marginal Subsistence Rural Economy: A Case Study of Cotton in Mbeere’. The issue was doing agriculture as business, which is a subject matter of Entrepreneurship and Development. When I joined IDS Sussex, I studied Development Studies with a bias in Entrepreneurship, Agriculture and Rural Development”, he says when asked about his devotion to the study of rural economies.

Njeru believes research has to have a functional purpose and he is pursuing the “Mbeere Angle” out of desire to transform the Mbeere peasants into entrepreneurial farmers. He sees it as a possible route to poverty reduction and/or wealth creation. “I have had to revisit the Mbeere peasants among whom I had identified some innovative farmers. I had the inkling to investigate what had happened to the innovating cotton farmers that I had come across in the 1980s. Had they graduated from simple innovators into agricultural entrepreneurs, had they stagnated or were



*Mr. Njeru (right) with colleagues Dr. Mary Kinyanjui (left) and Mr. Paul Kamau when they attended a conference in South Africa.*

they still stuck to their traditional agricultural practices?”

Njeru’s inquiry is being rewarded with promising research findings: “I found out that among the most successful entrepreneurs in Mbeere today are some of the innovative farmers I had come across earlier. There is evidence of considerable non-farm investments with profits generated from improved fruit and dairy farming and these have in turn fostered forward and backward linkages.

Some of Njeru’s most recent and on-going work that will run into 2010 is on Food Security and Livelihoods Programme in Beletweyne District, Hiran Region of Somalia, funded by the European Commission (EC), and a national survey on *Entitlements, Access and Competition: An Analysis of Political Patronage, Poverty and Development in Kenya*, supported by the Kenya Episcopal Conference. He has just finalised research on Governance, Civic Engagement and Transition in Kenya, supported by the Great Lakes Universities of the USA and UNESCO; and on the Impact of Irrigated Horticulture on Social Systems and Economic Development in East and Central Africa, supported by UNFPA.

Other projects he has consulted on are on Child Labour in Micro and Small Enterprises in Kenya: Policy Issues and Suggested Solutions towards the Elimination of Child Labour; a project supported by ILO/IPEC; Political Processes and Chronic Poverty in Kenya, at the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), at IDS; and a National Baseline Survey for the re-launching of the Safina party towards the 2007 General Elections and Beyond.

Njeru’s political science base has seen

him handle regional projects on ‘Improving Irrigation Performance in Africa (IPPIA)-Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso’, funded by the French; on Developing “Best Practices” for Prevention of HIV/AIDS among the Youth in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, supported by SOMA-Net and SIDA/SAREC; and

developing Indicators of Good Governance in African Countries, a study commissioned by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), for the NEPAD Peer Review Mechanism, Kenya Chapter.

Njeru’s inspiration may be the peasant rural experiences as a student at Karangare Primary School and Kanyuambora Secondary School in present Mbeere District. It is fulfilling that his current findings show that household welfare in Mbeere has improved, particularly for the entrepreneurial farmers. Courtesy of farm incomes, multiplier effects are being translated into job creation and other forms of macro-level development. A predominantly peasant society could as well be on its way to establishing the rudiments of an achieving society predicted upon entrepreneurial behaviour.

Njeru teaches such diverse courses as Theory and Methods of Political Inquiry, Basic Concepts in Government, Political Sociology; Public and Development Administration; Public Policy Analysis, Agriculture and Rural Development and North-South Relations to Undergraduates; and Entrepreneurship and Development, Rural Societies and Change, and Small and Medium Enterprises to graduate students.

His published works include the most recent co-authorship of *Theory and Practice of Governance in Kenya: Towards Civic Engagement* (University of Nairobi Press, 2006); “Ideology and Governance in Kenya: Reflections on the Theory and Practice, 1963-2005” in Omosa, M., Wanyande P. and Chweya, L. (Eds.); *Governance and Political Transition in Kenya* (University of Nairobi Press) (Forthcoming) ■

# Research Agenda in Eastern Africa to be Reviewed

IDS is set to take a leading role in shaping new dimensions and focus of development research in the Africa region. This emerged at an IDRC-sponsored IDS Academic staff retreat in July to review issues in development research and the evaluation of the role of IDS as a development research institute.

The same idea had been the subject of an IDS-Nairobi and IDS-Sussex Roundtable in June 2006 where it emerged that evaluating the impact of research on national policies did mean the re-thinking and re-defining development research agenda.

The retreat in June 2006 was a prelude to a forthcoming international conference to deliberate on the challenges of research to be held in Kenya.



Prof. I. Mbeche (Principal, CHSS) speaks as Prof. L. Haddad (Sussex) (left) and Prof. D. McCormick (right) listen at the IDS-Nairobi and IDS-Sussex Roundtable where development research and policy agenda convergence was discussed.

The “**Re-thinking Development Research Regional Workshop**” will focus on the East

Africa Region.

Other issues that emerged and will form the highlights at the workshop include the relationship between research and the proliferation of consultancies; and the need to create demand for development research.

This would mean aligning consultancies with institutional research; the evaluation of the content of development studies; closing the gap between academic and demand oriented research; and establishment of a data bank on who is doing development research in the region, for whom and for what purposes.

It was noted that IDS impacts greatly on



Prof. John Humphrey (Sussex) (left) and Prof. I. Mbeche (Principal, CHSS) listen to Prof. N. N'gethe (IDS-Nairobi) (right) at the IDS-Nairobi and IDS-Sussex Roundtable in June 2006.

## Alumni and Student Briefing

### CPRC Awards

The Chronic Poverty Research Centre-Kenya (CPRC-K) at IDS has awarded two full scholarships to IDS MA students; **Geoffrey Otieno** and **Vincent Opondo**, as part of its capacity building mandate. At the same time, CPRC-K has awarded three student research fellowships to **Aggrey Baraza** to study causes of common property resource depletion and the effects on the chronically poor in Kakamega District; **Martha Wanjuki** to study determinants and effects of income diversification strategies among households in Nyeri District; and **Obadia Okinda** to study participation in the Constituency Development Fund projects in Kisii District.

**Martha Wanjuki**, a second-year MA student is at the Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, Belgium. With other 12 students from Africa, she is attending a two-months training course on “Engendering



Martha (left) with colleagues on campus at the University of Antwerp.

Development Policy, Projects and Organisations”. The training aims at strengthening actors’ capacities for gender-sensitiveness in interventions.

• **Ms. Esther Makau**, who expects to graduate in 2006 is an intern at Trocaire. She was among 40 young scholars who recently



Ms Makau presents at the Addis training.

completed a two-week OSSREA research methodology training in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since inception of the **Research Methodologies**

Training Institute in 2000, OSSREA has trained 286 young scholars from the East and Southern Africa region.

• **Ms. Linet Misati**, IDS 2005, is now the Programme Assistant at the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Kenya (CPRC-K) based at IDS. • **Mr. Jeremiah Muthoka**, IDS 2005, is Project Assistant on a Ford Foundation-sponsored project on higher education at IDS.

### IDS MA Intake 2006/7

Daniel N. Kamande,	Lilian Kayaro
Maristella M. Okioma	Evelyn Awino
Linda Okola	Samuel Ngigi
Mary M. Mwakai	Geraldine N. Makau
Geoffrey Otieno	Vincent O. Opondo

national policy through direct engagement of IDS researchers in government policy making processes and also through imparting skills and knowledge to MA students who become practitioners in the field. The institutional challenges include determining whether IDS should endeavour to influence policy and induce development, or remain as an academic “ivory tower”, and budget constraints■

### Conferencing Diary Notes

#### November 2006

- Trade & Justice Workshop for Small-scale Tea, Tobacco and Coffee Farmers in Nairobi.
- Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC-Kenya) Network Meeting in Nairobi.
- IDRC-sponsored Workshop on “Re-Thinking Development Research in the Eastern Africa Region” in Nairobi.
- CASELAP/ILEG: Symposium for Magistrates in Naivasha.

#### January 2007

- CASELAP: Colloquium for Kenya Court of Appeal Judges in Mombasa.

#### March 2007

- Launch of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC-Kenya) at the University of Nairobi.

# Message from the Director

**Re-thinking Development. How relevant is Development Studies? Whither IDS? Celebrating 40+ years of development research.**

Reading through this *Newsletter*, I can't help but notice that we – and others in the development community – are at a moment of soul searching about our discipline and its impact on the lives of very many ordinary people throughout the world.

The specific questions being raised touch on development theory, key issues, practical approaches, and appropriate policies. They also challenge old categories and ways of thinking. What is a global issue and what is local? Can we any longer categorise policies neatly into “domestic” and “foreign” when local responses to these policies are often beamed around the world? Who are the “objects” of development studies? What is the meaning of separating the world into “developed” and “developing” countries when places like China and India are becoming major

players in world trade and information technology, while remaining poor by many other standards? When rich countries like the US are devastated by natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina? Who, then, are we studying? Should we focus on processes rather than places or peoples? How do we make our research more interactive and iterative? There are no easy answers to such questions, but we will be pursuing them and others at our own upcoming conference on “Re-thinking Development Research in the Eastern Africa Region: What Should We Be Studying and How?” scheduled for 27-28 November in Nairobi. Together with colleagues from Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya, we shall examine the theories, the questions, and the methodologies of development research in an effort to live into the next 40 years of development research. We expect



**A Happy Family:** The Director, Prof. Dorothy McCormick in a teamwork building exercise with administrative staff at a retreat.

a lively discussion!

IDS had an important “first” recently: the first retreat for administrative staff (see p. 7). It was hard work, but as you can see from the adjacent photo, it had moments when serious pursuits turned to pure fun. Walking in each other's shoes, we learned, is not easy. The retreat was a good reminder of the need for teamwork. Administrators, messengers, secretaries, project assistants, drivers, clerical and technical staff, professors and research fellows all have unique roles to play in ensuring the high standard of our research and teaching programmes.

## IDS Conducts Market Research for KWFT

IDS is currently conducting a market research for the Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT), one of the pioneer micro finance institutions in the country. A team of IDS researchers led by the Director, Professor Dorothy McCormick, and consisting of Prof. Patrick Alila, Dr. Rosemary Atieno and Dr. Alfred Shem Ouma is working on the project.

The research addresses the implications of changes in the micro-finance sector, KWFT institutional structures, client composition, policies and products, and access to its services. The research covers all the seven KWFT operation regions of

Nairobi, Mt. Kenya, Eastern, Coast, Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza.

The research involves a survey of 1, 200 sampled KWFT clients using a structured questionnaire, two Focus Group Discussions per region, interviews with group leaders, and KWFT staff consisting of regional and unit managers and accountants. In all the regions, non-KWFT clients were also interviewed.

The research is intended to help KWFT change its organisational structure to enhance its efficiency and profitability, and enable it to fit in the changing financial landscape without losing its vision.

## Joint Degree Programme with Leipzig Possible

**IDS is working on a collaboration that could lead to a joint masters degree programme with the University of Leipzig in Germany. As part of the on-going consultations, Prof. Mohamud Jama and Dr. Rosemary Atieno visited the Small Enterprise Promotion and Training programme (SEPT), at the University of Leipzig, between 4<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The two held discussions with the SEPT staff in Leipzig, as well as heads of the programme and the Institute responsible for the collaboration.**

The discussions led to a tentative

understanding that the immediate phase of the collaboration should focus on a sandwich masters programme between the two institutions as the modalities for long term collaboration are worked out. The collaboration is expected to culminate in a joint degree programme between IDS and University of Leipzig. IDS and SEPT will develop a curriculum for the joint degree programme.

Prof. Jama and Dr. Atieno also took time to meet Mr. H. Kinyua and L. Mwamba, two Kenyan masters students at SEPT who are beneficiaries of the collaboration.

*IDS Newsletter* is published semi-annually by the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. Correspondence with full address telephone, fax and e-mail addresses should be sent to:

### The Editor

IDS Newsletter  
P.O. Box 30197-00100  
NAIROBI, Kenya  
Tel: 254-020-247968  
Fax: 254-020-222036  
E-Mail: [idsdirector@swiftkenya.com](mailto:idsdirector@swiftkenya.com)  
[director-ids@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:director-ids@uonbi.ac.ke)  
URL: [www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties2/ids](http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/faculties2/ids)

### Editorial Committee

Dorothy McCormick - Director  
Kibisu-Kabatesi - Editor  
Mohamud Jama - Member  
Mary Kinyanjui - Member  
Mary Omosa - Member  
Rosemary Atieno - Member  
Joseph Onjala - Member  
Charles Njuguna - Member

### Contributors

Peter Ligulu  
Martha Wanjuki  
Esther Makau  
**Photographs**  
IDS Publications  
UON Public Relations Office  
**Typesetting**  
Ms. Judith M. Ndirangu

© IDS December 2006

