

Kenya: dates and events

50 BC: First written record of life on the East African coast.

8th century AD: First contact with Muslim traders from Arabian Peninsular and Iran.

14th and 15th centuries: Flourishing of Swahili coastal towns on Indian Ocean trade routes.

1510: Portuguese sacking of Swahili coastal towns.

1698: Mombasa and other coastal towns captured from the Portuguese by Arabs, who remained in control until the 19th century.

1840–90: The slave trade at its height in the Kenyan interior.

1885–86: The Congress of Berlin divided East Africa between Britain and Germany.

1895: Kenya declared a British protectorate

1896–1901: Building of the Uganda Railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria; British conquest of Kenya.

1903–14: Settlers began to acquire land in the Highlands; eviction of Maasai and Kikuyu.

1914–18: Thousands of Kenyans conscripted into the World War I campaign against the Germans in Tanganyika.

1920s: Beginning of political struggles.

1939–45: Thousands of Kenyans fought in World War II, as far afield as Burma.

1944: Formation of the Kenya African Union (KAU).

1946: Jomo Kenyatta returned from England, having left Kenya in 1931; became President of KAU in the following year.

1952: State of Emergency declared. Start of the Mau Mau uprising. Kenyatta arrested, tried, imprisoned.

1953–55: All political parties banned.

1954: Swynnerton Plan to consolidate land holdings.

1960: Formation of Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU).

1961: Kenyatta released from prison and became President of KANU.

1963: Independence achieved on 12 December, with Kenyatta as first Prime Minister.

1964: Kenya became a Republic, with Kenyatta as first President. KADU dissolved itself.

1978: Death of Kenyatta; Daniel arap Moi became second President.

1982: Attempted military coup by the air force.

1987: Constitutional changes gave greater powers to Moi.

1989: Tea overtook coffee as Kenya's main export earner.

1991: Ethnic clashes over land broke out in the Rift Valley.

1992: First national multi-party elections since Independence. Moi and KANU defeated divided rivals.

1997: Second national multi-party elections preceded by widespread violence, in which many people died. Daniel arap Moi won third term of office.

Kenya: facts and figures

Area: 582,646 sq km

Proportion of arable land: 8%

Population: 32 million (1996 UN estimate)

Main ethnic groups: Kikuyu 21%, Luhya 14%, Luo 12%, Kalenjin 11%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 5%, Mijikenda 5%, Maasai 2%. Plus c. 30 other groups, including Asians, Europeans, and Arabs, totalling 12% — figures from 1989 census (regarded as controversial).

Official languages: English and Swahili

Religions: Christian 70%, Animist 19%, Muslim 6%, Other 5%

Population growth rate: 3.4% per annum

Urban population: 26% (1995)

Adult literacy: 78% (1995)

School enrolment: 92% primary, 29% secondary (1993)

Average life expectancy: 55 (female), 52 (male) (1994)

Child mortality: 73 per 1,000 live births (1996) (UK: 9 per 1,000)

Currency: Kenya Shilling (KSh) = 100 cents; KSh20 = 1 Kenya pound (K£)

Exchange rate: KSh56: US\$1; KSh92: £1 (average rates January–August 1997)

Gross domestic product: US\$9bn (1996)

GDP shares: agriculture 30%, tourism 19%, manufacturing 10% (1997)

GDP per head: US\$285 (1996)

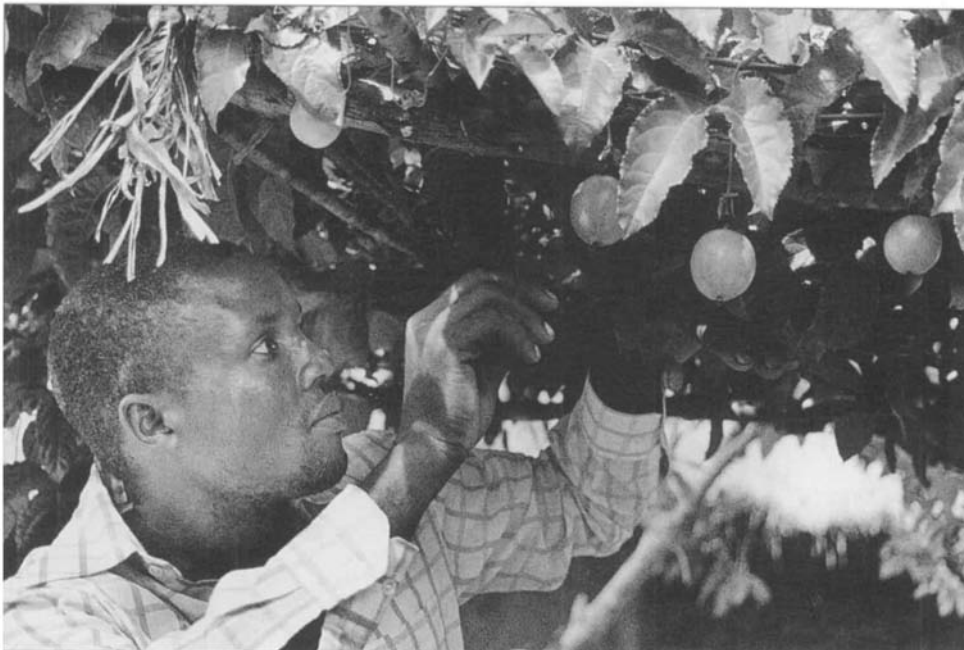
Average annual rate of inflation: 11.7% (1984–94); 22.5% (1992–96)

Source of principal exports: agriculture (tea, coffee, horticulture); petroleum products

Main trading partners: UK, South Africa, Germany, Japan, Uganda, Tanzania

Foreign debt: US\$7.2bn (1997)

Debt service ratio: 20.8% (1997)



left Amos Njeli picking passion fruit on his organically farmed plot in Emaloba village, Vihiga

Sources and further reading

below A mobile school in Dambas, Wajir District: children with their *loh*, the wooden boards from which they learn the verses of the Koran

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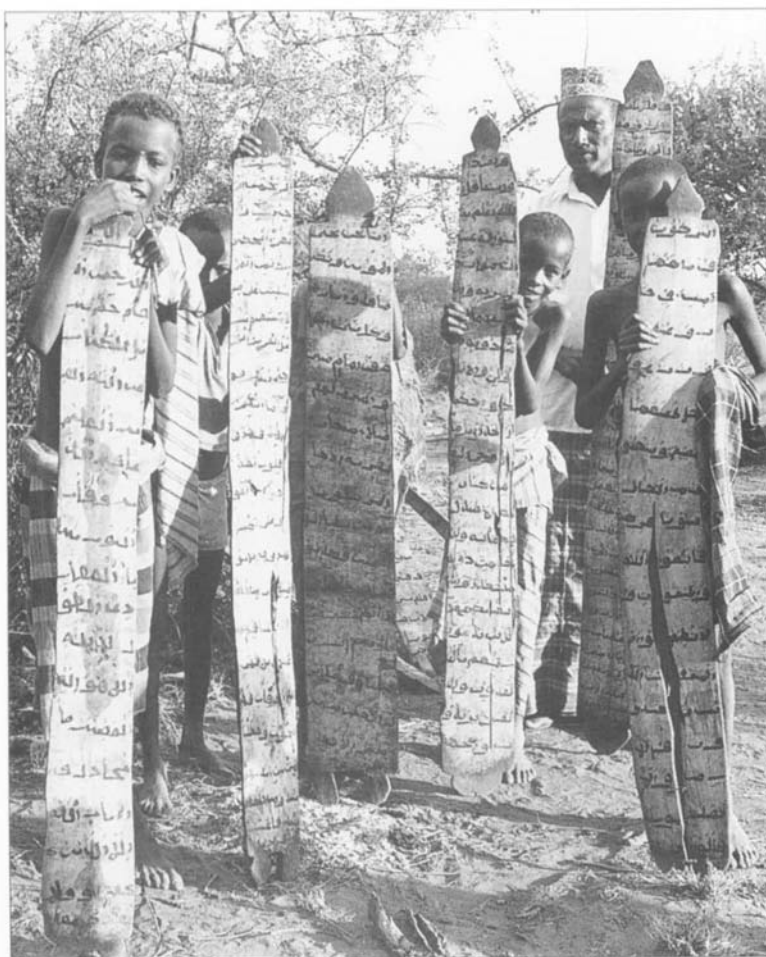
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Asanteni sana.

Geoff Sayer



right Wajir Town: Araba Derow experiments with the author's camera

Oxfam in Kenya

Some of the individuals and communities featured in this book receive support from Oxfam GB. Oxfam has been associated with Kenya since Independence and has worked there for over 15 years. During major droughts in the early 1980s, emergency relief programmes were established in northern Kenya, providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of people in pastoralist areas.

Working with local organisations and through its own activities, Oxfam is helping poor people in rural communities to acquire practical skills and so become self-sufficient. Poor households in farming communities are encouraged to adopt low-cost and environmentally sound agricultural methods to improve food production. Nomadic pastoralist communities are helped to get access to veterinary services and water sources for their livestock. Practical support is also given to community health activities, and the improvement of rural water supplies, with a special focus on the needs of women. Several organisations receive support to create outlets for products that are traded fairly and earn a decent income for the producers.

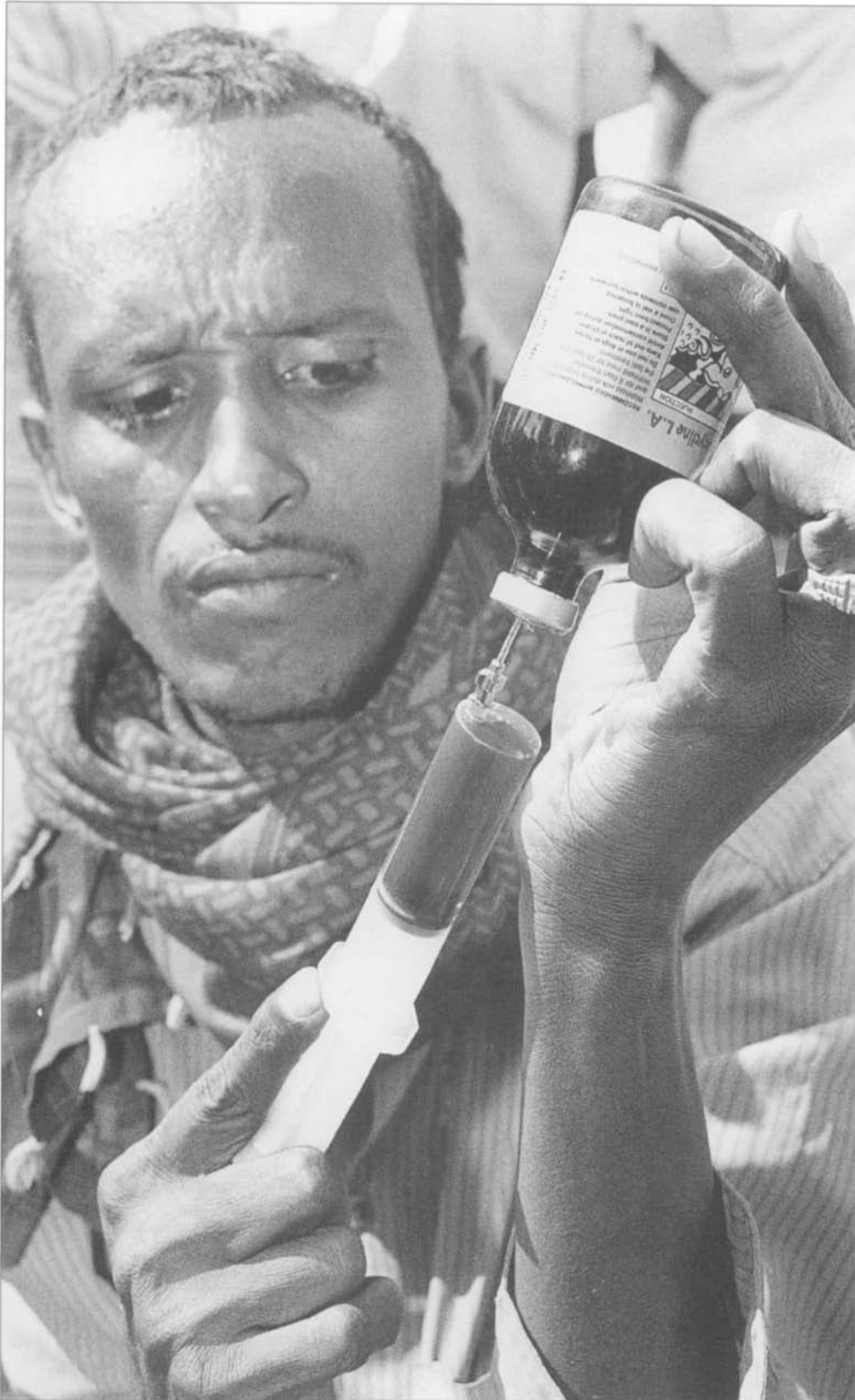
The long-term security of people's livelihoods depends partly on support from government and other institutions, so Oxfam has helped poor communities to acquire organisational skills and take advantage of opportunities to represent their needs.

Oxfam continues to work closely with local communities and government to provide food relief in response to droughts and other disasters in arid areas. Emergency assistance is provided in ways that ensure that supplies of food and other items are distributed fairly, in a manner that is accountable to local people.

Since the early 1990s, Oxfam has helped displaced people to rehabilitate themselves following the political instability and ethnic conflict which have affected large numbers of people throughout Kenya. Oxfam and other organisations have provided them with household materials, agricultural equipment, and practical advice on food production and income generation. Oxfam also supports practical work to resolve conflict and help local leaders to restore peace between pastoral communities, both within Kenya and across the border with Uganda.

In urban areas of Kenya, some of the worst consequences of poverty are felt most acutely by women and children. Oxfam funds a range of projects which provide practical support to very young children employed as domestic workers in Nairobi; training and education on the rights of girl children is offered to local groups, and support for women's small-scale businesses. Oxfam supports organisations which provide legal advice and assistance to help poor people find shelter in low-income urban areas.

There is a growing awareness about the nature and causes of poverty in Kenya. With Oxfam's help, local organisations are taking action to tackle the vulnerability and destitution of very poor people. Women's groups are working to increase awareness of the nature and level of violence against women, and to promote ways of challenging it. Action is also being taken by local communities and by Oxfam and other agencies to improve security of land tenure, especially in urban slums; to help ensure national food security; and to represent the needs of poor pastoralist communities.



left A community paravet prepares to treat a camel with oxytetracyclin antibiotic in Wajir District, where Oxfam has supported the development of Pastoral Associations

