

The chapter gives a brief account of Kenyan rural communities, followed by a detailed discussion of Kabras villages. It is suggested that an understanding of rural communities should provide an effective basis for planning and implementing rural community development work. The discussion is based on a follow-up study of 22 household heads interviewed in a previous participatory action research (PAR) study in Kabras area. The follow-up study concentrated on 4 PAR villages: Lunyu, Matete, Butali and Mukavakava, and sought to generate data that would provide a detailed understanding of the villages. Characteristics of the villages are described. Development facilities and services within the communities are then outlined. Villagers' awareness of development facilities and services is commented on, as are their aspirations and whether these have been met. It is concluded that participation of people in rural development activities is emphasized in Kenya. Villages are made up of dispersed homesteads, comprising in some cases members of one ethnic group, and sharing such facilities as schools with neighbouring villages. For purposes of planning and implementing rural development projects, it is argued that national and development agency policies need to concentrate on rural villages where there is usually intensive interaction between members and where a sense of belonging of people to the area is well developed.