On 17th January 2004, we visited the village of Dembwa. The village chief was contacted earlier and he was informed of our visit and its purpose. On our request he gathered ten men and ten women, but unfortunately only six women were able to come for the interview. Interviewers introduced themselves at first and explained what the project was about. After that, some basic data on the interviewees was gathered.

**Basic questions**

The basic questions gave us a rough idea about the group and its demographics. The women were between 33 and 49 years old, all of them had from five to seven children and one had a grandchild. All considered their jobs being a “house wife” or a farmer, except for one who was a divisional women leader. Two women had an education level of standard seven, one had completed form two and one had gone to a secretary school. All of the women were originally from villages other than Dembwa, namely Ilole, Kidimo or Kaya Kikoro, and had moved to Dembwa because of marriage. They all owned some land (between half and seven acres), and all except one owned the land in Dembwa. One owned her land in Kaya, because she was born there and had inherited the land. In most cases their husbands were the legal owners of the land and not the women themselves. The way they used their land was mostly by cultivation or farming. The favoured crops included maize, beans, mango, cassava and sugarcane. One women owned cattle, one owned sheep and two owned chickens. None of them had any plans of moving from Dembwa.

The men group were aged between 34 and 72 years old. They all had one wife and from four to six children, two had grandchildren. Occupations included farmer, teacher and house builder. One hadn't gone to school at all, others had gone to primary school and four had gone through secondary school. Education level affected the occupation, since all those who had gone to secondary were now teachers or builders. One man was already retired. All the men in Dembwa owned land plots between one and seven acres, some owned land also in Kidimo, Ilole and Kaya Kikoro. The land was cultivated, mostly with maize, cassava, mango, banana, beans, sugar cane and sweet potato. All owned some cattle, including cows, goats, sheep and chickens. They were mostly born in Dembwa and Kaya, but some were born in Kikoru, Ilole and Kidimo. Men owned their land in the village they were born in.

**Village map**

The plan was to let the villagers draw a village map on top of a base map. The base map was made for orientation use only, including only the major roads and the small river flowing on the southern side of the village. Vector layers digitized earlier from the topographic 1:50,000 maps were used in the sketch map, which was prepared with ArcMap software in order to preserve the map scale.

Each person was invited individually to mark his/her home and fields (shambas) on the map, as well as the number of people living in the house (Figure 2). Houses were numbered according to the numbers given to people when personal information was gathered. Some of the people didn’t understand English so well, so the village chief functioned as a translator, too. It has to be noted, though, that the village chief was very intensively involved in the map drawing process, sometimes showing the right position of a person’s house, not letting him/her make their own choice. Keeping this in mind, the positional accuracy of the map cannot be guaranteed – it is only a representation of the village by the 16 interviewees.

According to the chief, there is no village called Dembwa – to the locals it means the central market place only. The Dembwa village area thus actually consists of six villages: Ndembonyi, Mbale, Mgombenyi, Kidimo,
**Kikoro and Kombolio.** Each of these villages was represented in the interviews. The chief drew the approximate borders of villages onto the map.

The following places were also drawn onto the map: primary and secondary schools, marketplace, church, village chief’s offices, and the old cemetery and church (now obsolete). The main source of income in the village is agriculture; each family having their own *shambas* usually attached right next to their houses. Only one interviewee had his *shamba* further away from his house. Because there are no major forested areas left around Dembwa, firewood is gathered from farmers’ own *shambas* where, among other crops, trees are grown especially for this purpose. There are no irrigation systems and all household water is gathered from the river. There is a health centre in the Dembwa marketplace, which also hosts a couple of shops, kiosks and a bar.

There are no sacred places and no cemeteries; dead people are buried in their own yard. The drawn village map was then digitized with a scanner in order to keep the map scale the same as the original sketch map. Map objects were then digitized with CorelDraw software for final visualization purposes (Figure 2).

**Matrices**

In this part men and women were divided into two groups. Both groups were asked to consider the main issues that affect their every-day lives. After this, these topics were written to a matrix (see Figures 3 and 4), each topic to a different piece of paper. With beans it was figured out how important the issues were compared to other issues. Interviewees were also asked to think how the issues had changed during the last ten years, and if the change had been positive or negative.

**The women’s group**

Women started to list the topics in very dynamic way right from the beginning. Everyone was participating actively, probably because there were only six women and they all seemed to know themselves very well. The topics were written down very quickly and everyone seemed to agree with them. The divisional woman leader, Mrs. Monica Mwadime, who was one of the participating women, introduced the topics. She said that there is one main topic which subtopics all the others: *poverty*. She explained the reasons and causes of how everything is related to the poverty of the village people. There were very many topics, and parts of them...
were overlapping. We connected the topics together and reduced their number to nine.

Women started to put the beans to the papers right after they were given to them. They all worked at the same time, and very intensively too. After this, the beans were counted and women seemed to agree with the result (Figure 5). Then two sets of beans were given, black and white indicating positive and negative change. In this part the group misunderstood the directions and started to think how the issues will change in next ten years instead of last ten years. Because they weren’t speaking English with each other, we understood this mistake only when they started to explain their results to us. Anyway, we saw this point of view as very interesting; it was actually even more interesting to know women’s thoughts of the future than of the past.

After the official interview was over, women kept talking about the issues for a long time. They seemed to be very active and wanted to affect the development of the village. As a whole, women seemed to enjoy the interview, even if many were in a hurry to go back home, and I think they also got something from it.

Figure 2. The village map over Dembwa.
Current issues in Dembwa according to women

10. Lack of Jobs (added later)
9. Early Marriage / Pregnancy
8. Many Children
7. Poor Ownership of Land
6. Lack of Health Centers
5. Little Education
4. Lack of Irrigation
3. Lack of Forests
2. Lack of Rain
1. HIV/AIDS

Importance (no. of beans)  □ Change to better (in next 10 years) □ Change to worse (in next 10 years)

Figure 3. Village matrix made by the women of Dembwa.

Current issues in Dembwa according to men

11. Poor Dairy Market
10. Bad Feeder Roads
9. Poor Telephone Facilities
8. Unemployment
7. Poor Education Facilities
6. Lack of Rainfall
5. Invasion of Baboons
4. Power Supply Problems
3. Poor Water Services
2. Expensive Medical Attendance
1. Transport for sick

Importance (no. of beans)  □ Change to better (after last 10 years) □

Figure 4. Village matrix made by the men of Dembwa.
Women thought that the lack of rain (20 beans) and HIV/AIDS (20 beans) were the biggest problems (Figure 3). Every woman considered that the rainfall wouldn’t improve or would get worse in ten years time. An interesting note was that the HIV/AIDS problem got evenly 11 beans both for the improvement or worsening in the future, so this difficult issue was seen quite differently among women. In the male group, HIV/AIDS didn’t even get mentioned, or at least it didn’t end up in the paper. It is obvious that the males must be aware of it, but for some reason or another didn’t want to mention it or just didn’t consider it as a problem worth mentioning. Further problems that the women raised were the lack of forest, the lack of irrigation, the lack of health centers (especially for the care of malaria disease) and poor ownership of land. The situation with the forests was seen to improve over time, because they hoped to get more land ownership. The irrigation problem was seen to stay the same and the situation with the health centers and malaria was seen as getting better.

Women thought that in ten years time the number of children would get smaller and education level would increase. Women added later the lack of jobs to the list, but considered that it wasn’t that a big problem among women.

The men’s group

The three biggest problems the men raised were transport for sick (29 beans), expensive medical attendance (24) and poor water supplies (21) (see Figure 4). Men thought that the medical transport is worsening and that medical attendance would get more expensive and harder to get. On the other hand, two interviewees considered that water services had improved, but four interviewees saw it had worsened. In general, the problems raised by men were strongly related to occupation, money and technical issues, while health and family were the main concerns of the women.

Power supply problems, lack of rainfall and invasion of the baboons were the next problems that men raised. Eight men thought that the supply problem had got worse and one that it had got better. Lack of rainfall was thought to have got worse, but one person thought it had got better than before. Invasions of the baboons had got worse – one reason to explain this, as we were told, was that there existed one plot near the other shambas whose owner didn’t take care of it. The wild baboons mostly lived there and invaded the nearby shambas, eating and destroying the crops. Much effort has to be put on keeping a “baboon guard” in the shambas.
The men rated bad feeder roads to be a problem now, but they admitted that the situation was even worse in the past. The education facilities were seen to be getting worse and the dairy farming supplies market was seen to be getting worse as well. Unemployment was seen to have got worse and telephone facilities had got better and worse with four beans each. A noticeable improvement in communication has been the construction of a mobile phone network, although network coverage is not so good in Dembwa because of topographic conditions. In addition, very few people can afford to buy a mobile phone in the villages.

Conclusions

As a conclusion, it can be said that the division of the interviewees into two groups according to their sex was a good decision, because in this way totally different issues were brought up during the discussions; as can be seen in Figure 3 and 4. The difference over issues that are considered important is overwhelming when comparing the two groups, as noted earlier. One might even get the impression that the traditional division of labour between sexes is still very strong: men are responsible of commerce, labour and money, while women are responsible of children, family and working in the shambas.

After the day’s work we took a group photograph (Figure 6).