

**A Decade of Development: Zimbabwe 1980-1990** By *Diana Auret*. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1990, vi, 161 pp., ISBN 0-86922-485-9 (pbk), Z\$19,50.

Diana Auret's book gives a lucid description of how the rural people of Zimbabwe have taken part in the development process in education, health, agriculture, housing, transport and water resources.

The author approaches the theme of development from a Shona perspective, noting particularly that the Shona value the philosophy of 'togetherness'. To the Shona, *musha* does not only mean a 'home' but also 'the community, who reside in a common geographical area, share common interests, common traditions, a common way of life, and common values' (p. 2). This philosophy sets the agenda for development which takes into account the cultural background of the people. Auret makes the point clear when she reminds us that Western development programmes have, to a large extent, ignored the cultural aspirations of the societies for whom the programmes were intended.

Without burdening the reader with complicated theories of development, the book shows very clearly what the people of Zimbabwe have managed to do since the attainment of political independence in 1980. The author observes that the people of Zimbabwe have been able to avoid most of the pitfalls which have bedeviled the development process in many Third World countries, particularly with regard to decision-making. Zimbabweans have, by and large, made their own decisions.

Of particular note are the author's suggestions for improvement: for example, she suggests that the social services enjoyed by the rural population and provided by government must be balanced against the overall economic situation in the country (p. 152). In this regard, the government is advised to raise direct taxes from the communal farming and resettlement areas. The author writes favourably on the resettlement programme, but points out that this policy alone will not solve the problem of overcrowded communal areas. Positive steps must be taken to develop the growth-points by providing the necessary infrastructure which should attract primary industries to the communal areas thereby creating employment and relieving the pressure on the land.

The importance of international aid to the development process is acknowledged but the author wonders whether aid is not 'one means whereby the West seeks to maintain control over the activities of the newly independent nations' (p. 153).

*A Decade of Development: Zimbabwe: 1980-1990* is a welcome addition to the existing literature on Zimbabwe's development. Its findings should enable all those interested in development issues to understand and appreciate development as an instrument of peace and unity. It should also be read by those who want to know how Zimbabweans have used available resources to improve their standard of living. The challenges for further improvement which the author proposes are important and should be carefully examined, particularly by government officials who should find the suggestions for improvement challenging.