

It's evening in West Bengal village. Supper's over, the pots are cleaned and all is tidy. In the village square, under sheltering trees, are tables and benches from the mobile van. Womenfolk start to gather. Some are worried, others barely hide their excitement. Tonight, after the cooking demonstration, they'll begin to read and write.

It's evening too, in a village in North-East Brazil. Mothers come bringing their babes, babies that are too precious to leave. One out of every three die in the first year. The nurse will be here tonight, she's bringing the needle to keep them from getting sick. She'll talk about proper foods so they can grow healthy and strong.

It's morning in the western lowlands of Lesotho. Already the sun is trying to outdo yesterday's ninety degrees. Angeline moves briskly, getting out the supplies for the nutrition class. The road to the high mountain village is treacherous—it can scarcely be called a road—but with the landrover, she'll make it.

Now what do these three groups of people have in common? Well, they're all women, being helped by other women, who are members of Associated Country Women of the World, or as it's more commonly known ACWW. This organization represents nearly 8 million countrywomen and housewives in 69 countries.

It all began 80 years ago in Stoney Creek, Ontario, with the death of a child. The child's mother was Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. She wanted to know why her baby had died, why were there so many deaths? When she learned it was caused by impure milk, she headed a campaign to have it made clean; she began a crusade for 'domestic science' to be taught to all the girls at school, and she founded an organization which was to be the first Women's Institute.

The movement spread—nationally—internationally. Their first objective—to raise the standard of homemaking. As this became a reality in developed countries, women turned their eyes to their less fortunate sisters. They were appalled by what they saw: shocking rates of infant mortality; those that did survive becoming blind by the thousands; illiterate mothers, unable to learn new ways, clinging to the old.

Irene Spry, the Canadian economist and former ACWW Deputy President, has said, "Mother love doesn't know of the invisible dangers of bacteria; nor can inborn commonsense tell a mother how the food value of coca cola or a pot of tea, compares with the food value of the eggs that were sold to buy that cola or tea." All this must be learned.

So ACWW wasted no time. In 1971, at a World Conference in Oslo, Swedish housewives initiated a "Save Sight" resolution. And three years later at their conference in Perth, members heard the Campaign report. It had begun in Madurai in southern India where mothers brought their tiny children. They learned that just one cupful of green vegetables a day will protect their child's sight. ACWW made a further plan. With Madurai College as its base, they would take nutrition education out to the people. They bought a van, and got a driver, a cook demonstrator, a paediatrician and a nurse. With the help of the State Government and the UNICEF organization, village centres were set up. Here, mothers came every day for a three month

course. Using locally grown food to prepare the meals, they could see at the end of the course, the happy results.

This project is in operation right now. It's proved so successful that it's encouraged others in other parts of the world. Education is the key. ACWW doesn't approach problems like a 'lady bountiful' giving hand-outs, but like colleagues, working together to fulfill a common goal—the health and well being of all the peoples of the world.

LET'S PULL TOGETHER

The motto of the Kenya people and the Government is "Harambee" which means "let's (all) pull together". This word appears on their national crest along with their country's colors of black, green and red; black for the people, green for the country and red for the blood they shed for it.



Harambee is what President Kenyatta called for when Kenya gained its independence in 1963 and he became its first president.

Harambee is what most of the 14 million people in Kenya seem to be doing whether they are black (97%), Asian, Arab or European. They have all had their part in making Kenya a modern country with a healthy growing economy.

This is certainly true of the women who have joined Maendeleo ya Wanawake meaning Women's Progress which was started in 1954 and has grown to 5000 groups with a membership of half a million.

Although most MYW members are unaware of the fact, the women of Kenya have inherited a great deal from the East Africa Women's League which celebrated its 60th Anniversary in 1977. Started in 1917 by European women, the League has been over the years devoted to the welfare of women and children. It has been very active in helping to secure social legislation so necessary for the progress of women, and the protection of the rights of children and the family unit. Its motto is "Build for Kenya".

In a country where polygamy is still practised, and many mothers are single parents in need of assistance, the government is doing much to help. Through U.N. agencies and A.C.W.W. Kenyans are now in position for grants. The U.N. demands plans for specific needs and the people know what they need.

Under the self-help plans women decide what they want—schools, piped water or tin roofs for their homes and the government or U.N. agencies helps.

But the women do the work. Members have dug ditches and made reservoirs for water. For schools and hospitals they have made a countless number of cement blocks, purchased and raised livestock and contributed money from the sale of produce and handicrafts. Many groups have their own retail outlets.

One such shop is the Maendeleo ya Wanawake shop in Nairobi which many of the conference delegates visited. The most popular handicrafts at this shop are baskets, clay work, carvings, calabashes, gourds, trays and sisal mats.