families, the local employees of an UNESCO sponsored development project, the local administration officials, teachers and last some pastoralists who happened to be around. When it became clear that I could bring in a lot of experiences from West and North Africa, common ground for discussion had been found.

During the first days, the focus of discussion was mainly on international issues. People wanted to know more about the economic situation of their region when compared to other areas of the continent. I managed to satisfy their curiosity providing answers within the limits of my Swahili knowledge. During the first few days of my arrival it looked as if I was there to give them a lecture of international politics. This however did not disturb me since every opportunity to discuss meant an improvement in my knowledge of Swahili.

My host organised a crash Swahili course for me. One of the teachers in the primary school was kind enough to give me some lessons every morning and evening including many hours of conversational and reading lessons. I must