



Making a Living

Investment in pastoralist areas has been inadequate. Instead of helping pastoralists to make a living, governments and aid agencies have in many cases made it harder for pastoralist families to survive. Assistance programmes have focused too much on the short-term. As a result they have handicapped the traditional resourcefulness of pastoralists and have failed to offer alternative ways to make a living.

Short-term assistance has undermined the adaptability and resourcefulness pastoralists have developed to cope with extreme events. Instead of supporting mobility or careful herd management as a response to extreme weather events or local conflict, aid programmes have focused on emergency food distributions. As a result not enough money or energy is invested in protecting people's livelihoods and preventing future crises.

Seasonal challenges are rarely a surprise to pastoralists themselves. Hunger usually follows periods of drought or other shocks to the pastoralist way of life. But all too often drops in income and restriction of trade surprises aid agencies. They wait for the emergency warning systems to tell them there is a problem and then they respond with the same inappropriate food aid. But the EWS (Early Warning System) and short term programmes fail to look at the reasons behind the problems

In Uganda 20% of the population are pastoralists, occupying 51% of its land area, owning 55% of the national herd

WISP: Review of the Literature on Pastoral Economics & Marketing

Estimates of the contribution of pastoralism to the Kenyan and Ugandan economies (2004)[1]

Factor	Kenya	Uganda
Contribution of agriculture sector to GDP	16%	32%
Contribution of livestock to agricultural GDP	50%	19%
Significance of pastoralists as livestock owners	N/a	90%
Significance of indigenous cattle in national herd	75%	95%
Significance of milk production from pastoralism (% of total national milk production)	24%	85%
Pastoralist population	6 million	2+ million

[1] IIED Issue Paper no.142

Recommendations

- Governments should ask donors to fund projects that protect livelihoods as part of

all emergency responses. Longer-term, development-orientated investment that protects livelihoods should be planned alongside emergency-relief or food-security projects.

- Governments should encourage aid agencies and donors to integrate analysis of livelihoods into emergency preparedness, early warning systems and planning. If the relationship between a shock and its impact on livelihoods is well understood livelihoods can be protected and crises prevented.
- Governments should agree with donors and the UN a coordinated assessment methodology and should streamline the information systems. Livelihoods analysis should be part of the new, streamlined system. This should build on the 'Integrated Phase Classification' work being done by the UN and NGOs. A single system that everyone uses and includes predictive analysis will cut delays and improve the appropriateness of response times. At the moment aid is too resource driven: "the food aid solution is easier and ready to go...so that's what you're getting."
- Regional bodies (IGAD / AU) should promote regional contingency planning and should call on aid agencies for any support needed.

Background

A failure to recognize the true value of pastoralism means long-term investment in pastoral livelihoods has been inadequate. It is now well documented that protecting livelihoods is a cheaper way to save lives than emergency food aid. Investing in pastoral areas helps pastoralists increase their contribution to the national economy.

Food shortages are a repeated problem because aid programmes fail to deal with their true cause: If the cause of malnutrition is poor health or bad hygiene, food aid will not solve it but investment in health care might; If the cause of hunger is poverty because the meat price is low, food aid will not solve it but better infrastructure for meat processing might. Addressing the symptoms rather than the cause stacks up problems for the future.

Short-term food aid without long-term livelihood assistance can make poverty worse: farmers often need to sell their staple crops to pastoralists so that they can make enough money to buy livestock products. If pastoralists have been given food, they will buy less of the farmers' crops. The farmers in turn cannot afford the pastoralists' animal products such as meat and milk and pastoralist livelihoods are threatened further.

