

Public engagement in international animal welfare

Reflections and cases

Ajoy Datta

Working Paper 339

Results of ODI research presented
in preliminary form for discussion
and critical comment

Working Paper 339

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* Disclaimer: The views presented in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI.

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| AIERP | Avian Influenza Emergency Recovery Project |
| ALLPRO | Arid and Semi-arid Lands-based Livestock and Rural Livelihoods Support Project |
| CAHNET | Community Animal Health Network |
| CAHW | Community-based Animal Health Worker |
| CaSPro | Camel Service Provider |
| COCTU | Co-ordinating Office for the Control of Trypanosomiasis in Uganda |
| DC | Dairy Centre |
| DDP | Dairy Development Programme |
| DVS | Department of Veterinary Services |
| EC | European Commission |
| ELMT | Enhanced Livelihoods in the Mandera Triangle |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FITCA | Farming in Tsetse Controlled Areas |
| GALVmed | Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicine |
| IEC | Information, Education and Communication |
| KARI | Kenya Agricultural Research Institute |
| LF | Livestock Forum |
| LSN | Livestock Service Network |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MARD | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam) |
| MIC | Market Information Centre |
| NEFSALF | Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisation |
| NRI | Natural Resource Institute |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| PA | Practical Action |
| PAP | Productivity Action Plan |
| PATTEC | Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign |
| PE | Participatory Epidemiology |
| PMG | Pastoralists Marketing Group |
| PPG | Policy Promotion Group |
| SOS | Stamp Out Sleeping Sickness |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |
| US | United States |
| USAID | US Agency for International Development |
| VEERU | Veterinary Epidemiology and Economic Research Unit |
| VHT | Veterinary Health Technician |
| VSF | Vétérinaires Sans Frontières |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Executive summary

Introduction

In 2008, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) was given the opportunity to conduct an evaluation of a diverse programme of animal welfare projects which included a variety of forms of public engagement activities. The projects endeavoured to 1) build the capacity of animal health practitioners; 2) link stakeholders to organisations able to produce and communicate new knowledge about animal health, provide training and influence policy; 3) inform best practice and support innovation in public health engagement in this sector; 4) fund activities which could be replicated by a range of stakeholders in future; and 5) support the inclusion of public engagement in future animal health programmes.

All the projects focused on animal health issues and/or diseases spread from animals to humans, but they were set in differing political and socioeconomic contexts, were of different lengths and had different implementation and governance arrangements.

Key challenges

To a lesser or greater extent, the projects faced a series of key challenges, which included:

- **Promoting diversity and inclusion:** Several projects brought together diverse stakeholders, such as livestock keepers, scientists, policy-makers, industry actors and the media to deliberate on animal health issues.
- **Supporting livestock keepers and communities to engage:** Motivating livestock keepers to get and stay involved required ensuring the issues were of relevance; tailor-made processes; information and training; logistical and financial support; effective marketing; and trust between stakeholders and in the process.
- **Supporting scientists to engage:** Support to scientists was on the whole limited. They often had skills in policy engagement, but rarely in multi-stakeholder or community engagement processes. Those without engagement experience consulted colleagues or drew on intuition.
- **Working with public institutions:** Public institutions and officials often provided key inputs and government extension workers often received training. Getting 'buy-in' was often challenging. Engaging with government required time, patience and persistence as well as solid evidence and clear messages.
- **Communicating with participants:** Clear, open and continuous communication between the project and community members avoided frustration and ensured expectations were managed and inputs were valued.
- **Promoting wider uptake:** Few took a systematic approach to communicating outputs. Some projects received media coverage. A few set up dedicated websites. Some received demand for further services and inputs.
- **Human resources for engagement:** Teams were designed to suit existing capacities and took on outside help that could be accessed easily. Most projects lacked engagement 'specialists'. Few teams were genuinely cross-disciplinary.
- **Monitoring, learning and evaluation:** Formative evaluation was often built into projects. Pilot projects were powerful – results of which could support scale-up, although pre- and post-testing proved expensive. Formal post-project evaluation was rarely undertaken.
- **Managing engagement:** Teams used proposals as broad frameworks within which an iterative, flexible approach was taken. Flexibility in grant management was appreciated.

Overall benefits and lessons to be learnt

Among the results of the programme, livestock keepers valued being involved in engagement processes. Evidence showed some improvements in knowledge and awareness of better livestock management practices. Some livestock keepers developed their capacity to better articulate their needs to professional stakeholders. Some projects helped to build linkages between livestock keepers and other stakeholders, such as researchers and policy-makers.

Engagement was also valued by scientists across all project teams. Many scientists furthered their technical knowledge while developing knowledge and skills in engagement processes. Project partners and their staff developed some capacity to engage with communities. Further, engagement projects helped teams to strengthen existing relationships and extend networks.

Government service delivery agents, in cases where they were trained, often improved their capacity to serve livestock keepers. Government agencies, impressed with results, wanted to replicate processes for different animal health issues. Some projects that demonstrated results received commitments from governments and donors to scale them up.

However, improvements can be made in planning future projects and activities by:

- Developing clear objectives that are realistic and achievable, given the contextual environment, the interests of different stakeholders, funding, time available and capacities of the team;
- Building in space to plan, learn and reflect before, during and after projects to help ensure interventions are rooted in the local context, continually adapted to changing circumstances and assessed for their 'value for money';
- Considering the in-country context very carefully and working with governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local organisations in order to build firm relationships which will help to facilitate the specific engagement strategies to be adopted and to sustain benefits beyond the end of the project;
- Improving the training and preparation of the science research teams and individual scientists to develop, implement and sustain public engagement activities;
- Ensuring the involvement of livestock practitioners and local communities and considering what might be required to educate and motivate livestock keepers and wider communities to get and stay involved in engagement processes;
- Ensuring there is effective, open and continuous communication between the project team and community members to avoid frustration, ensuring expectations are managed and community inputs are valued;
- Taking a systematic approach to communicating outputs from public engagement activities in order to promote wider uptake of interventions among governments, NGOs and donors;
- Taking a flexible approach to managing engagement, enabling projects to build on the energy of the 'system' they work in and the shifting interests of the actors they work with;
- Providing dedicated funding to allow for the planning and implementation of public engagement activities as an integral element of the project from the outset.

1. Reflections on public engagement in international animal welfare

1.1 Introduction

In 2008, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) was given the opportunity to conduct an evaluation of a diverse programme of animal welfare projects that included a variety of forms of public engagement activities. This working paper reflects the experiences of those involved in such projects and endeavours to identify some key lessons on the roles and benefits of incorporating a public engagement element into future projects.

The programme, funded by the Wellcome Trust, supported a diverse portfolio of projects, which endeavoured to 1) build the capacity of animal health practitioners; 2) link stakeholders to organisations able to produce and communicate new knowledge about animal health, provide training and influence policy; 3) inform best practice and support innovation in public engagement in this sector; 4) fund activities which could be replicated by a range of stakeholders in future; and 5) support the inclusion of public engagement in future animal health programmes.

Of the 19 projects across 22 countries, the majority were implemented in a single country and were located in sub-Saharan Africa. All projects focused on animal health issues and/or diseases that are spread from animals to humans, but they were set in differing political and socioeconomic contexts, were different lengths and had different implementation and governance arrangements. The proposals fell under one or more of the following categories: 1) stakeholder engagement; 2) education and training; and 3) policy and advocacy.

Analysis of the projects included a review of project-related literature and two rounds of semi-structured telephone interviews with project leaders and, in some cases, other team members. Although it was decided not to publish the report on the evaluation, it was agreed that ODI would produce this working paper to provide a summary of the lessons learnt, with exemplification through case studies of seven projects. The summary and case studies are based on a conceptual framework developed in a scoping study on deliberative public engagement activities (presented in a separate ODI working paper.¹

This paper is split into two main parts. Here, we provide a summary of the findings of the evaluation, split into three components: Section 1.2 describes the characteristics of the projects, Section 1.3 describes approaches to specific challenges faced by the projects and Section 1.4 provides an overview of the overall benefits and outcomes and a number of brief lessons for future public engagement work.

Sections 2-8 then present the seven case studies, which aim to illustrate some of the points made in the summary in this section. Table 1 provides an overview of the case studies presented, along with the types of engagement they illustrate. They were selected as they demonstrated public engagement at different levels (for instance community and national level); use of different forms (for instance media and policy work); and different geographical contexts.

¹ Datta, A. (2011) Lessons from Deliberative Public Engagement Work: A Scoping Study. Working Paper. London: ODI.

Table 1: Description of case studies presented

| Project | Lead institution | Type of engagement | Country |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Reducing sleeping sickness | University of Edinburgh | Media engagement | Uganda |
| Improving bird flu control measures | University of Reading | Policy work and community engagement | Vietnam |
| Giving livestock keepers a voice in Sudan | PA | Multi-stakeholder discussion platform, interest group strengthening and radio programmes | Sudan |
| Improving urban livestock management | Mazingira Institute | Multi-stakeholder discussion platform, training and policy development | Kenya |
| Tackling Brucellosis | University of Reading | Information sessions, strengthening networks and community action planning | Zimbabwe |
| Improving camel health | VSF Suisse | Participatory epidemiology | Kenya |
| Bringing farmers and researchers closer together | FARM-Africa | Promoting innovation systems approach through video podcasts and discussion platform | East Africa (Kenya) |

Again, each case study is divided into components: key characteristics; how the projects have addressed specific challenges; any benefits and outcomes; and conclusions.

1.2 Key characteristics of the projects

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of the projects in terms of their objectives, the types of knowledge drawn on, methods used, in-country context and representation.

Objectives

Broadly speaking, most projects worked with livestock keepers to enhance their wellbeing and that of their communities. Specifically, projects targeting farmers and communities aimed to improve their livestock health and management practices; their capacity to articulate their needs to those who make, shape and implement policies; and the health and productivity of their livestock. Projects targeting scientists aimed to promote more responsive and demand-led research. Projects targeting animal health service providers aimed to improve their capacity to deliver information and services to livestock keepers. And projects targeting policy-makers aimed to promote more demand-led and participatory policy processes, agendas and outcomes.

Types of knowledge drawn on

Most projects drew on knowledge that project leaders and their institutions had produced in the past. In these cases, projects enabled scientists to engage stakeholders in this work. However, several projects generated their own knowledge, to provide up-to-date evidence with which to engage stakeholders. Other projects drew on both existing and new knowledge (produced during the project). Knowledge came in three forms: 1) scientific research; 2) experiential knowledge; and 3) community-generated or indigenous knowledge. Scientific research included thematic and process-oriented issues. Thematic research featured veterinary science as well as social science issues. Process issues included communication, learning participation and engagement. Research on these issues helped in finding appropriate tools to apply during the project. Experiential knowledge was generated from the implementation of similar projects in the past, whereas indigenous knowledge featured indigenous livestock management practices.

Methods

Most projects comprised training and awareness processes, which drew mainly on 'one-way' information dissemination vehicles (mainly from scientists to community members), such as information and training workshops, computer games, radio broadcasts and videos. Fewer projects featured dialogue facilitation, participatory action planning and policy advocacy; these tended to draw on consultative and participatory vehicles. Nevertheless, many of the one-way vehicles, such as radio programmes and information, education and communication (IEC) materials, were developed using consultative and participatory means. Some projects took a mixed methodological approach, combining one-way dissemination with consultative and participatory mechanisms. Some projects

worked with multiple levels of authority in a bid to influence policy. And most engagement occurred ‘downstream’ by applying existing research findings through engagement vehicles such as training and advocacy; very few projects engaged the public ‘upstream’ through, for example, participatory action research. Box 1 below summarises the different types of engagement vehicles deployed.

Box 1: Engagement vehicles employed

Communication methods

- Dissemination of IEC materials;
- Information or awareness-raising sessions;
- Computer games;
- Video podcasts;
- Broadcast of radio/audio programmes;
- Applied drama;
- Training sessions or workshops and manual development;
- Seminars.

Consultative methods

- Research;
- One-to-one meetings.

Participatory methods

- Mentoring of ‘champions’;
- Multi-stakeholder deliberative workshops;
- Action planning;
- Participatory action research.

In-country context

The political context to a large extent determined the space available for public engagement and the form it should take. Projects had to consider wide-ranging issues. These included the political culture; existing space for dialogue; the policy framework; devolution of power to local governments; the nature of the bureaucracy; ethnic and tribal relations; the political settlement across a particular sector; and gender dynamics within communities. Projects had to respond to changes in the context, often diverging from proposed activities. On occasion, these changes were positive, providing a ‘policy window’; at other times, they were negative, helping to sever links between stakeholders. Continual monitoring of the context was necessary, as well as a flexible management process.

In-country representation

Most projects worked directly with livestock keepers, such as smallholder farmers and pastoralists, who were considered ‘poor’. While we cannot say how many people participated across the 19 projects, given the relatively limited finances projects had, generally speaking they piloted interventions in a small number of communities. These communities were often considered most vulnerable and marginalised or were selected owing to project teams’ familiarity with them. In many cases, they were chosen in collaboration with government authorities. A small number of projects worked directly with practitioners and service providers, such as extension workers, through training and education interventions. Some worked with policy-makers at local and national levels to promote policy change.

1.3 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the projects

This section summarises the variety of approaches adopted in order to address key challenges that were identified as facing projects of this kind.

Promoting diversity and inclusion

Several projects brought together diverse stakeholders to deliberate on animal health issues. Two projects set up common interest discussion platforms and in the process opened up new political spaces. The experience of Practical Action (PA), an international non-governmental organisation (NGO),

suggests that these work best if mobilised around clear problems that individual actors cannot solve themselves and if they avoid a ‘pro-poor’ tag, which can discourage key stakeholders who do not prioritise poverty reduction from getting involved. Engaging with the most marginalised proved particularly challenging in some cases as, on occasion, they lacked representatives; where these did exist, they often lacked appropriate capacity.

Supporting livestock keepers and communities to engage

Projects had to take steps to motivate livestock keepers and wider communities to get and stay involved. Engagement processes worked well when issues were demand-led. Training worked best when content and delivery methods were informed by the environment and audience needs. The delivery of key messages to stakeholders worked best when these suited user preferences – be they illiterate livestock keepers, academics or schoolchildren. Some projects provided training to enable livestock keepers to engage more effectively in, for example, multi-stakeholder processes. Engagement processes with communities in hard-to-reach areas with poor communication infrastructure had to be tailored appropriately. Participants were often compensated for the time they spent on project activities. Projects on occasion had to provide logistical support by, for instance, locating and timing activities in line with participant needs. To ensure stakeholders could engage at all, vehicles and products often had to be marketed effectively. But the importance of trust between communities and project teams, although seen as crucial in some of the existing literature,² was rarely reported on.

Supporting scientists to engage

Most scientists in receipt of funding lacked experience in the area of public engagement. There were a few who had skills in policy engagement; even fewer had experience in multi-stakeholder or community engagement processes. However, support to scientists on the whole was limited. Those without engagement experience consulted colleagues, drew on their own intuition or built their capacity through on-the-job training. Project leaders in some instances played a role in supporting team members to develop their own capacity. At a programme level, scientists would have found additional support from funders useful. On a broader level, while scientists were often interested in public engagement, most research funders, to whom scientists were often accountable, were interested, not surprisingly, in research (and not necessarily engagement).

Working with public institutions

Public institutions and actors played a key role in most of the projects. Government officials featured in the teams for two projects. In selecting and gaining access to communities, projects often had to work with and seek approval from government (and sometimes traditional) authorities. Government officials often played a key role in selecting animal health workers to undergo training and securing stakeholder participation in meetings.

Some projects tried to build institutional capacity as well as training government veterinary and extension officers. Others sought ‘buy-in’ to the project from public institutions to help sustain the project beyond its end and promote scale-up. Project teams met frequently with government officials in meetings, for example to report on project progress. Some projects cautioned against working exclusively with government as its priorities did not always coincide with those of communities.

Moreover, public institutions, especially those dealing with animal health, were relatively weak, as this issue is usually low on government agendas. As well as being overworked and underpaid, bureaucrats in these institutions suffered from high turnover, particularly in response to top-level changes. These, coupled with poor handovers meant public institutions were slow or unable to engage with projects.

Communicating with participants

Some projects raised awareness about the project objectives and activities among those involved. In particular, participatory action research projects which aimed to develop disease control measures often raised high expectations among communities involved. This called for effective, open and

² See Datta, A. (2011) Lessons from Deliberative Public Engagement Work: A Scoping Study. Working Paper. London: ODI.

continuous communication between the project and community members, to avoid frustration and ensure expectations were managed and community inputs were valued.

Promoting wider uptake

Few projects took a systematic approach to communicating outputs. Direct engagement of the media across the 19 projects was very limited. Some projects featured in the local press as well as sector-specific publications. A few projects worked with radio and TV stations to produce content. On the whole, project leaders suggested that journalists were invited to report on workshops, conferences and meetings, but they were rarely interested in animal health issues. Challenges in engaging journalists included attracting their constantly shifting attention, limited journalistic skills, especially at sub-national levels, and inadequate resources to buy airtime and/or cover journalists' costs and expenses.

Two projects reported developing a regular newsletter, which was circulated electronically. Dedicated websites or those belonging to the organisations leading the projects reported traffic around project-related links. As a result of publicity, several projects were approached by government authorities and NGOs to share training materials, booklets and handouts, deliver talks and/or run training sessions. In a few cases, manuals, methodologies and procedures created by projects were applied elsewhere. Project teams were in some instances asked to undertake further work. Work initiated by project teams was on occasion carried forward by other organisations. In other cases, project teams continued, or at least made plans (through the development of funding proposals), to work on issues emerging from the existing project, in the form of either research or further engagement.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

Almost all projects set out formal and detailed monitoring procedures in their proposals. In practice, however, these tended to be informal and low key. Some projects used basic monitoring tools such as a simplified log frame to collect information and monitor progress. Information tended to be shared mainly through emails, telephone calls and, where possible, face-to-face meetings. Some projects built in formative evaluation processes to inform design and implementation – this proved fairly costly but was worthwhile. External evaluation, if stated in proposals, tended to be sidelined.

Human resources for engagement

Teams were put together to suit existing capacities within the lead institution as well as outside help that could be easily sourced. Hence, team members had often worked together (for example those in international NGO country offices) or had similar work experiences. Few projects included communication specialists or worked with organisations with engagement expertise. One project leader suggested a lack of resources was a barrier to hiring such expertise. Many projects hired consultants for short periods to provide discrete inputs, such as research or workshop facilitation. University students played a key role in undertaking research and other project activities. Although some projects (lacking engagement specialists) were fortunate to have individuals gifted in communicating, negotiating and influencing, the lack of expertise in engagement created challenges.

If lead institutions were based in the North, they tended to work with Southern organisations or Southern-based individuals they knew and/or had worked with before. Southern-based partners and team members played a crucial role in identifying sites and audiences for engagement, collecting and analysing data and carrying out training and education activities. On occasion, teams suffered from turnover for a variety of reasons, one of them being that professional staff in many developing countries (often a scarce resource) were highly sought after by government agencies, NGOs and donors.

Managing engagement

Once grants were secured, many projects held inception workshops to revisit the project design. Teams were unable to follow proposals to the letter; these were instead used as broad frameworks within which an iterative, flexible approach was taken to implementation, enabling the project to respond to changes in the environment, the needs of target audiences and changes in the implementing team. Successfully managing an engagement project required a flexible approach to enable projects to build on the energy of the 'system' they worked in and the interest of the actors they worked with.

Managing multidisciplinary teams and strong personalities required leadership, an ability to facilitate discussion and skills in resolving conflict. Building consensus among a diverse team could be time- and energy-intensive and often called on project leaders to be decisive. Further, strong in-country personal networks helped in channelling evidence to appropriate actors, ensured the right people attended meetings and helped to influence the actions of policy-makers.

Running and maintaining multi-stakeholder discussion platforms, networks and forums took considerable time and energy. Groups (or networks) worked well when led by one or more Southern based actors. If Northern input was required, this was in the form of facilitation, which could take considerable time but also promoted ownership and better participation.

1.4 Overall benefits and lessons

This section summarises the overall benefits for those involved and identifies the lessons to be learnt.

Benefits

Those involved in the 19 projects benefited in a number of ways. Livestock keepers valued being involved in engagement processes. Evidence showed some improvements in knowledge and awareness of better livestock management practices. Some livestock keepers developed their capacity to better articulate their needs to professional stakeholders. Some projects helped to build linkages between livestock keepers and other stakeholders, such as researchers and policy-makers. Examples exist, albeit anecdotal, of livestock keepers improving their practices and livestock mortality falling.

Engagement was also valued by scientists across all project teams. Many scientists furthered their technical knowledge while developing knowledge and skills in engagement processes. Project partners and their staff developed some capacity to engage with communities. Engagement projects also helped teams to strengthen existing relationships and extend networks.

Government service delivery agents, where they were trained, often improved their capacity to serve livestock keepers. Government agencies, impressed with results, wanted to replicate processes but for different animal health issues. Some projects that demonstrated results received commitments from governments and donors to scale up initiatives. Although difficult to attribute, in a number of cases engagement informed and helped shape policy, including school and university curricula; one project helped to influence a policy process. Industry actors and international donors also benefited, through raised awareness and better programmes, respectively.

Lessons for future projects

All of the projects were successful in their own terms but, looking at them overall with specific reference to incorporating a public engagement dimension, the evidence indicates that, in planning future projects and activities, there is a need to:

- Develop clear objectives that are realistic and achievable given the contextual environment, the interests of different actors, funding, time available and capacities of the team;
- Build in spaces to plan, learn and reflect before, during and after projects to help ensure interventions are rooted in the local context, continually adapted to changing circumstances and assessed for their 'value for money';
- Consider the in-country context very carefully and work with governments, NGOs and local organisations in order to build firm relationships which will help to facilitate the specific engagement strategies that are to be adopted and to sustain benefits beyond the end of the project;
- Improve the training and preparation of science research teams and individual scientists to develop, implement and sustain public engagement activities;

- Ensure the involvement of livestock practitioners and local communities and consider what might be required to educate and motivate livestock keepers and wider communities to get and stay involved in engagement processes;
- Ensure there is effective, open and continuous communication between the project team and community members to avoid frustration and ensure expectations are managed and community inputs are valued;
- Take a systematic approach to communicating outputs from public engagement activities in order to promote wider uptake of interventions among governments, NGOs and donors;
- Take a flexible approach to managing engagement, enabling projects to build on the energy of the 'system' they work in and the shifting interests of the actors they work with;
- Provide dedicated funding to allow for the planning and implementation of public engagement activities as an integral element of the project from the outset.

We now present the seven case studies illustrating the issues highlighted above.

2. Reducing sleeping sickness in Uganda

Project details

Delivery organisation: University of Edinburgh

Location: Six districts in Uganda

Duration: 41 months

Cost: £120,000

2.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

Human African Trypanosomiasis, also known as sleeping sickness, is a parasitic disease. Parasites are transmitted to humans by tsetse flies which have acquired their infection from human beings or from animals, especially cattle, which are an important parasite reservoir. Sleeping sickness is fatal if untreated in humans; it infects animals without causing disease. Fortunately, cost-effective and proven methods involving treatment of cattle with drugs and/or insecticide are available to prevent the spread of the disease.

Objectives

The project aimed to identify optimal communication channels and develop and disseminate appropriate messages highlighting the animal and public health risks posed to rural people and their livestock from sleeping sickness in northern Uganda. The Wellcome Trust grant was combined with funds from Stamp Out Sleeping sickness (SOS) – a much larger grant. While SOS aimed to treat cattle in six ‘at-risk’ districts, the Wellcome Trust grant funded the communication to complement this.³

Types of knowledge drawn on

The project drew on research findings that highlight the animal health and public health risks posed to rural people and their livestock from sleeping sickness.

Methods and approaches

Key engagement methods comprised:

- Training and awareness raising for journalists from both commercial and community radio stations in public and animal health messaging;
- Development of an information pack, by journalists with support from the project team, to help journalists to develop media content (and messages) on sleeping sickness. The pack featured 12 short case studies, each profiling a key member of the community (such as a livestock keeper, a control officer, a nurse and a patient), describing how the disease affects them and what they do to keep safe.

Context

Working with the media was only possible as a result of political reforms over the past 20 years or so, which have seen the space for civil society grow and the number of newspapers and radio stations in particular proliferate, at both national and sub-national levels. Nevertheless, sub-national radio stations struggle to support journalists, who in turn find it difficult to produce quality content. Journalists hence required considerable funding to develop appropriate content, but securing necessary advertising revenues was challenging for commercial radio stations, given that rural communities were unattractive to key sponsors. Further, the Ministry of Health has neither the means to coordinate animal health messaging nor the capacity to pay journalists to do the messaging. Hence the long-term sustainability of this initiative was in question.

³ www.stampoutsleepingsickness.com/.

Representation

Once the project had identified radio as the main target source of information for animal and human health in the communities, it approached radio stations with an interest in animal health, human health or farming, especially those which had regular programmes.

2.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Supporting stakeholders to engage

Despite being science or agriculture correspondents, journalists often had little scientific training and often did not fully understand the facts around sleeping sickness. They were thus given the chance to meet health care providers, sleeping sickness patients, farmers and local veterinary staff to understand the disease. Journalists were encouraged to gather data to develop media content, with some able to interview patients and health officials using their own recording equipment. However, this came at a cost, with the project paying for journalists' accommodation, travel and general subsistence.

Promoting wider uptake

The information pack was picked up and used by the Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC). Radio stations developed and strengthened linkages with NGOs and medical and veterinary services. Many of the journalists went on to produce their own news reports and features for local media. In some cases, health professionals appeared on local radio to discuss the disease. In one particular case, a vector control officer and a district health official in Kaberamaido, one of the worst-affected areas, appeared on a local phone-in radio talk show where they discussed their experiences and fielded questions posed by listeners. The written press on occasion reported on project workshops, with articles appearing in some of the national newspapers.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

Formative evaluation was built into the project. During the project's initial stages, the existing knowledge base among communities and their preferred communication channels for information dissemination were evaluated. This revealed lower than expected levels of knowledge and the fact that radio was the respondents' main source of information on human and animal health.

Once the information pack was developed, it was reviewed through a workshop held with journalists and local health professionals. After messages were developed and disseminated using radio, tracking broadcasts was difficult. Aside from news bulletins, scheduling tended to be uncoordinated. Nevertheless, a follow-up survey was undertaken to determine if messaging (and ongoing cattle treatment by SOS) in targeted communities had increased levels of awareness about sleeping sickness. An impact study of the training of journalists was also undertaken. A final workshop was held to present and share survey findings with stakeholders and discuss lessons learnt from project process and impacts achieved.

Human resources for engagement

Three experts from the University of Edinburgh joined forces with two from Makerere University, (which has considerable experience of researching sleeping sickness in Uganda). The latter, with the help of the Farming in Tsetse Controlled Areas (FITCA), funded by the European Union (EU), was involved in the development of farmer and veterinary messaging. A UK-based media company was contracted to run the training workshops and help develop communication tools. A Ugandan market research company was hired to administer the survey work. The project worked with a representative of the Co-ordinating Office for the Control of Trypanosomiasis in Uganda (COCTU) – as a key partner, ensuring harmonisation of sleeping sickness activities in Uganda. Although the project team had undertaken press conferences, launched products and invited journalists to report on events, they had never worked with journalists this closely.

Managing engagement

The work plan was altered to accommodate changes in the context and target audience. The project initially aimed to work in a mixture of epidemic and endemic districts. However, during its early stages, agreeing to a request made by the Ministry of Health, it altered its focus, prioritising epidemic districts.

It was only when working with community radio journalists that the team realised their limited journalistic skills and abilities and poor access to information. As a result, the UK media firm was contracted to run more workshops with Ugandan journalists than was planned, which proved expensive. The media company team had their own ideas with regard to messaging, and the project leader had to press them to work with scientists in developing key messages to ensure accuracy and coherence.

Combining funds from SOS with the Wellcome Trust grant made project management complicated. However, the project was managed in an iterative way. Formative evaluation was built into the project design (see above). Goodwill among team members explained to a large extent why things ‘got done’ in hectic work environments.

To be involved in the future, a French pharmaceutical company wanted to have its product (to treat animals) feature prominently in messaging. Although this made the advice more action-oriented, the Ministry of Health would probably forbid this, as the World Health Organization (WHO) had not approved the drug. To add to this, the company was unwilling to pay for the messaging, despite having its product advertised. As such, the project leader suggested messages focus on how sleeping sickness was treated and stop short of endorsing particular products. But the question still remained – what should be the balance between messaging, marketing and advertising?

2.3 Overall benefits and outcomes

Most of the impacts discussed with key informants were most likely attributable to SOS activities – treating cattle in target districts – and are thus omitted here. However, journalists were said to have appreciated the opportunity to gather material that helped them to understand the seriousness of sleeping sickness, dispel any myths or superstitions they had and produce content for radio programmes.

2.4 Conclusion

This project illustrates the importance of building formative evaluation into the project design. The baseline survey revealed lower than expected levels of knowledge of sleeping sickness and hence informed key components of journalists’ training. However, it was only when journalists were trained that their limited skills and abilities became apparent. Training lasted longer and cost more than was planned. Nevertheless, journalists were encouraged to collect material for their own radio programmes through workshops and field visits. Continued messaging relied on donor funds, as the government was unlikely to have the financial capacity. Private pharmaceutical companies did have the capacity, but asking them to pay for this raised some ethical questions.

3. Improving bird flu control measures in Vietnam

Project details

Delivery organisations: Veterinary Epidemiology and Economic Research Unit (VEERU), University of Reading

Location: Vietnam

Duration: 36 months

Cost: £140,000

3.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

In 2004, Vietnam suffered an epidemic of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (bird flu), which caused the death of millions of poultry. Some humans were also affected. The Vietnamese government considered control and risk reduction strategies that involved changes in poultry husbandry and marketing systems. These would have had negative effects on smallholder and commercial backyard poultry producers.

Objectives

This project, a collaborative venture between VEERU at the University of Reading and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) aimed to improve the epidemiological and socioeconomic impact of bird flu control measures in Vietnam. It was designed to complement ongoing work under Vietnam's Avian Influenza Emergency Recovery Project (AIERP).

Types of knowledge generated and drawn on

Research undertaken during the project comprised a socioeconomic impact assessment of bird flu and current (then) and proposed control strategies, on smallholder commercial and backyard producers (drawing on perceptions data).

Methods and approaches

The project worked at two levels.

- It worked with the Department of Animal Health within MARD and provincial authorities to inform the methods used to assess and address disease risk in four high-risk provinces (around the Red and Mekong Rivers), promoting a more systemic and systematic approach (and drawing on value chain analysis). Learning from research undertaken during the project provided the basis for training and consultation workshops at national and provincial levels.
- It also worked with schoolchildren in three communities (whose parents/guardians were often smallholder commercial/backyard poultry producers) through extension work with three primary schools. The work was based on a methodology developed and tested in Bolivia. This entailed school teachers spending half a day familiarising themselves with the training material. Teachers then undertook 10-minute information sessions every day with children for four weeks guided by a specially designed booklet. The project hoped that children would pass relevant knowledge on to parents and the wider community

Context

The context in many respects presented opportunities for the project to make a real impact. The project started at a time when Avian Influenza was becoming a widespread epidemic, and countries affected, international agencies and relief organisations were desperately looking for ways to control it. Further, although Vietnam is a centralised one-party state, provincial authorities have a significant amount of autonomy, with central government playing more of an advisory role in some policy areas. And a high degree of order and hierarchy across society, within both government and communities, helped ensure activities were well executed. For instance, while community stakeholders would often feel inhibited in

the presence of government officials, the same culture ensured appropriate stakeholders attended workshops and a near 100% response rate to a questionnaire.

3.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Supporting participants to engage

Ensuring the extension material contained appropriate language was essential, especially considering that relevant material in the past had generally targeted veterinarians. The booklet designed to guide the extension work featured several drawings, although it was printed in black and white. Incentives for most-improved teachers, children and parents included cakes, sweets and stationery, as well as a prize-giving ceremony, which took place at a time convenient for parents. Payment of sitting allowances (in compensation for potential lost earnings) and reimbursement of travel expenses were essential in securing participation of stakeholders in national or provincial workshops. In the development of the schools extension work, working closely with, and valuing input from, parents and local authorities was also crucial.

Working with public institutions

Provincial authorities were more responsive if the project took a partnership rather than an extractive approach to working with them. However, this would have required more investment in time and energy, something which was in scarce supply. The project team subsequently took a more consultative approach, on occasion discussing lessons and next steps rather than working together with them through each step of the process.

The need for consensus meant decision-making processes were slow. Nevertheless, once decisions were made, implementation proceeded relatively quickly. The bureaucratic culture alluded to above explained to some extent why 'official' workshops and the processes before, during, and after, played an important role in 'crystallising' policy change.

Promoting wider uptake

Work from the project was presented in various fora organised by MARD and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) throughout the project, concluding in an end-of-project workshop bringing together stakeholders from central ministries related to animal health, rural development and education. The methodology developed was also discussed with the chief veterinary officer in Hanoi. At the time of writing, FAO had agreed to fund VEERU to further refine the method, develop a training manual documenting the methodology and conduct training of trainer workshops targeting government animal health experts at national and provincial levels.

With regard to the schools extension work, a women's union in Ha Tay province, seeing the positive results, mobilised its own resources to continue this beyond the project. Looking further ahead, the Ministry of Education endorsed the extension work and mandated all schools to undertake some extension work on bird flu. The World Bank agreed to provide funding to further develop and produce training materials for five provinces. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) also showed interest in scaling up the initiative, but said it was limited to funding human health interventions. Several primary schools recommended to their local education authority that control of infectious diseases among animals be included in school curricula. Further, communities asked for extension materials on other animal diseases, such as Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome in pigs and foot and mouth disease in cattle.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

The project took an iterative approach in developing the four provincial authorities' capacity to assess risk – working with each in turn and applying lessons learnt each time. The schools extension element was piloted in two primary schools initially, one in the north and another in the south of Vietnam, before being expanded to include a third which drew on lessons learnt. A questionnaire administered to parents and children provided baseline data, highlighted knowledge gaps and informed the

development of extension material – including preferences around format and language. To assess the effectiveness of the extension element, tests and a feedback questionnaire for children, parents and teachers were administered a few weeks after and then a year after the extension work. While the development of a robust and well-evaluated pilot was vital, considering the schools extension work was new to Vietnam. It proved relatively expensive. An external actor was to evaluate the success of the project – with two potential evaluators approached at the project design stage. However, the team felt that the need for external evaluation was superseded by the rapid uptake of the methodological approaches by FAO and other organisations.

Human resources for engagement

All team members from VEERU had worked on animal health issues and engaged with policy in the UK or overseas. The team comprised four Vietnamese nationals, most of whom worked for the Department of Animal Health (with veterinary backgrounds). Two UK-based members had considerable expertise on animal health, having undertaken significant research and a number of consultancies with agencies such as the UK Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs. The final UK-based team member had considerable expertise in communication and community extension work. A key intermediary – a local women’s union – provided an important link between the project team and school staff. Its members also helped to gather data from households, supported extension work and gave formal feedback during project workshops.

To help retain Vietnamese staff for the project, the project agreed to pay them a daily fee for time devoted to the project. This was administered via a subcontract between the University of Reading and the Department of Animal Health. This enabled staff to continue with their routine work but also to receive payment for time spent on the project. Nevertheless, with increased commitment in Vietnam and internationally to combating bird flu, Vietnam nationals saw an increase in their workload, which resulted in project extensions on two occasions. However, the synergy and cross-fertilisation were a great advantage to the project.

Vietnamese team members often had connections with a range of stakeholders, which were vital in making progress. For instance, schools chosen for the extension work were those whose directors had direct or indirect links with project team members. The whole team, particularly those in Vietnam, showed tremendous commitment to the project, often going the extra mile, responding to email requests late in the night, giving up time to work on various unplanned tasks and making efforts to channel information to key government officials.

Managing engagement

Referee concerns about the extractive nature of the research, the limited technical expertise to coordinate the schools extension element and the departure of a member of the project team to FAO early on saw the inclusion of a communications expert who had developed and tested a methodology to raise awareness about animal health among communities and with schoolchildren in Bolivia. As a result, the schools extension work expanded considerably over the course of the project.

Given its influential role, the project worked closely with FAO, with which the project team had good relations. In fact, a member of the project team moved to FAO after the project had begun, but continued providing inputs – albeit in a more limited way – serving as a key communication channel.

Given time and resource constraints, information on production, risk perception and knowledge of bird flu among smallholders was collected through schools rather than through expensive household surveys. Since primary education is compulsory, 80% of households (many of which kept poultry) had at least one child in primary school. Children were asked to take home a questionnaire for their parents to fill in. Results from this helped not only to assess disease risk and perceptions but also to identify knowledge gaps and inform the development of schools extension materials.

The proposal stated that the project would report on a quarterly basis on financial and technical matters and specific country activities. However, project management turned out to be fairly informal.

Email was the main channel of communication. UK and Vietnamese counterparts had face-to-face meetings where possible, around three times a year. A consultative approach was taken to designing and implementing the project, with no major disagreements among the team. The project built on existing work undertaken by team members who came with similar work experiences and evolved together during the project.

3.3 Overall benefits and outcomes

Pre- and post-extension tests (administered to schoolchildren and their parents) showed that raising awareness among schoolchildren was to some extent a cost-effective, enjoyable and sustainable way to reach parents (and the wider community) with information about basic preventive concepts in animal health, to improve production, minimise disease risk among animals and protect human health. Whether the extension led to changes in livestock management practices was unclear in the absence of behavioural impact studies.

The project worked with the Disaster Management Working Group to improve the way the latter addressed disease risk among provincial authorities. A 'green book' which provides a policy framework for Avian Influenza in Vietnam was due to be renewed and was likely to include this methodology. Further, FAO adopted the methodology in supporting five provincial authorities (some of which worked with the project) to develop livestock development plans, and hoped to apply the approach more widely. Application of the methodology was also evidenced in reviews of animal vaccination policies.

3.4 Conclusion

This pilot project was successful in promoting uptake of two methods at two levels: 1) a systemic and systematic approach to developing disease control measures among policy-makers and shapers; and 2) an approach to raising awareness of avian influenza among smallholder and backyard poultry producers working through and with schools and schoolchildren. Piloting new interventions placed an emphasis on monitoring (collecting and analysing data), learning and applying lessons learnt – requiring considerable investment in terms of both time and money. Nevertheless, the project did well to save money by collecting data through schools. The project also worked closely with both government authorities, such as MARD, and international agencies, such as FAO. Finally, project success was helped by its working within a bureaucratic/hierarchical culture and with a team featuring Vietnamese nationals, who understood the context and the language and had strong informal networks with more senior policymakers and communities alike.

4. Improving urban livestock management in Kenya

Project details

Delivery organisation: Mazingira Institute, Kenya

Location: Nairobi and Kisumu

Duration: 42 months

Cost: £150,000

4.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

In Kenya, livestock plays a key role in urban livelihoods, providing nutrition but also acting as insurance. However, all agricultural practices are forbidden in urban areas, including livestock keeping. To avoid penalties, livestock are kept indoors. Government veterinary and extension services are inadequate; NGO services are uncoordinated. People lack information on animal disease control and risks of livestock–human health interactions. As a result, the prevalence of many parasitic and zoonotic diseases (e.g. tuberculosis and gastroenteritis) is high. This has led to high animal mortality rates and considerable risks to human health. Authorities do not have any plans to deal with disease outbreaks.

Objectives

This project, led by the Mazingira Institute, aimed to improve livestock health, livestock management and the wellbeing of livestock keepers and their communities in urban and peri-urban areas in two Kenyan cities – Nairobi and Kisumu. To do this, it sought to influence livestock keepers to acquire a more activist approach in their quest for change; to help build technical skills and abilities among livestock keepers and community-based animal and public health workers; and to promote change in government policy and actions regarding urban livestock development.

Types of knowledge generated and drawn on

The Mazingira Institute had championed the issue of urban agriculture and livestock for over two decades, during which it had produced a range of research and communication outputs on the issue. During the project, it also generated research on levels of livestock ownership, why animals were kept, disease prevalence and levels of knowledge in urban areas, to help design training interventions, to use as a basis for advocacy with local authorities and to serve as baseline data.

Methods and approaches

Engagement methods comprised three key elements:

- Development of a multi-stakeholder discussion platform on urban livestock issues. In Nairobi, this was anchored in the Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum (NEFSALF) – a well-established discussion platform – with a new forum set up in Kisumu. The forums, based on the sectoral mix and cooperation model⁴, promoted interaction between livestock keepers, often living in urban slums, and local councillors. In Nairobi, new members – livestock keepers – were invited, as were animal and human health workers and service providers. Six meetings were convened in Nairobi and Kisumu, with 60 people attending each on average. NEFSALF also contributed to the formation of a similar forum in Nakuru.
- The training of livestock keepers and community-based animal and public health workers.⁵

⁴ See, for example, www.cipotato.org/urbanharvest/documents/pdf/policy-brief-kenya.pdf

⁵ Training comprised six modules: livestock keeping in urban areas; veterinary public health; livestock production and health; services and livestock keeping; policy institutions and livestock keeping; and market, livestock products and quality. Participants included livestock keepers, community-based public and animal health workers from NGOs and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development.

- Advocacy to local policy-makers on urban livestock issues. This entailed the preparation and deliberation of a policy paper at NEFSALF and formation of a Policy Promotion Group (PPG). This included representatives of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), the University of Nairobi, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development and was led by the provincial director of agriculture. It was convened by the Mazingira Institute. The PPG made a submission to the Minister of Agriculture which, among other things, called for the legalisation of livestock activities in urban and peri-urban environs.

Context

It was only after the National Rainbow Coalition was voted into power in Kenya in 2003, bringing an end to an arguably coercive political regime (led by Daniel Arup Moi), that multi-stakeholder fora like NEFSALF could engage more confidently with government on policy issues. Furthermore, central government commitments to devolve policy-making to local levels had brought the prospect of decisions being made closer to the 'ground'. However, long-running tensions between Kikuyu and Luo tribes had to be addressed by working in both Nairobi (particularly in the Kibera slums, where such communities live side by side) and Kisumu (inhabited predominantly by Luo communities).

4.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Promoting diversity and inclusion

Bringing together stakeholders from government, academia, the community and the private sector was crucial, as livestock keeping in urban areas presented multiple issues at several levels. The stakeholder forums opened up new political space and provided an opportunity for people, especially livestock keepers, to vent frustrations and for researchers to understand the 'real' issues. As a result, meetings were often aggressive in tone, but city councillors were largely sympathetic to the urban livestock cause. However, some stakeholders – namely, policy-makers – did not favour the forums. This group's cooperation was vital if solutions were to be found, so the project team had to construct and employ persuasive arguments to motivate them to stay engaged.

Supporting livestock keepers to engage

Training content and delivery methods were considered together from the start and informed by audience needs and preferences. Effective support went beyond raising awareness to empowering participants to employ their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Training was both instructor-centred (through presentations) and learner-centred – acknowledging participant knowledge through interactive exercises and group work, conducted (where appropriate) in stakeholder-specific groups.

Supporting scientists to engage

Scientists were seen to be courageous in taking up this work, and the project leader played a key role in facilitating and supporting them in the process. Where they lacked competence in delivering training sessions, they were encouraged to develop their own capacity through additional training and education (by, for example, working through online modules).

Working with public institutions

The project worked with government authorities throughout the project. Local counsellors attended NEFSALF meetings in Nairobi. The project trained government extension workers in Nairobi and Kisumu. Government authorities provided resource persons and a venue for the training element. Nevertheless, interacting with government and its associated hierarchy and bureaucracy required patience and tact.

Promoting wider uptake

The team disseminated findings from the project through 1) NEFSALF bulletins published quarterly by the Mazingira Institute (some funded by the project and said to be read by parliamentarians, especially those on the agricultural committee); 2) articles in scientific journals; and 3) project exposés at the annual Agricultural and Livestock Show, World Food Day and World Environment Day. The project

featured little media involvement. Journalists were not invited to stakeholder meetings as it was felt they were unlikely report on or feature the project.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

A survey questionnaire was administered at the start of the project to assess livestock keepers' knowledge of animal husbandry and thus areas where further education was needed. This confirmed the low levels of knowledge among livestock keepers and informed the development of training modules.

Human resources for engagement

The project brought together the executive director of the Mazingira Institute, an international expert from the Natural Resource Institute (NRI) in the UK, two professors from the Veterinary Medical Institute at the University of Nairobi (who conducted the training), a government anthropologist and two project officers. The Mazingira Institute had demonstrated the value of urban and peri-urban agriculture through research and advocacy since the 1980s and had a strong reputation for civil society activism in Kenya. It had been part of NEFSALF since its inception and was well networked, with a range of key stakeholders. The executive director came with an interdisciplinary background, as a trained policy analyst as well as architect. The NRI expert had spent much of his academic career in Kenya working on veterinary health. Although some members of the team had worked together at various points in the past, this project brought all members together for the first time.

Managing engagement

Running and maintaining the forum meant developing NEFSALF's profile, ensuring wide participation in forum meetings and government deliberations and writing discussion papers, reports, letters and newsletters. This required considerable staff time and energy. The training element – module design, identifying an effective mix of participants (ensuring diversity in terms of organisation, gender, age and geography), ensuring appropriate scheduling and implementation – took longer than planned. Further delays occurred when all activities were suspended during post-election violence between December 2007 and February 2008, leading to a no-cost extension to the grant. Evaluation, which was to be undertaken during the last three months of the project, was cancelled at the project's inception as the project leader felt it was more cost-effective to spend scarce resources on executing activities.

Managing the multidisciplinary team and strong personalities required a thorough understanding of the local context and skills in leadership, facilitation, support to team members and conflict resolution. The project leader was aided by his multidisciplinary background and was highly regarded, commanding a high level of respect among his team. He was particularly adept at facilitating discussions, ensuring the debate moved forward and 'did not get bogged down in the detail'.

4.3 Benefits and outcomes

As a result of the project, livestock keepers in Kenya started creating common interest groups below NEFSALF based on different livestock types (rabbits, goats, cows, etc.). Common interest field days were to be held for each. Stories of improved practices as a result of training included the marketing of organically produced fertiliser to rural farmers, the production of quality-controlled peanut butter and yoghurt and the safe breeding of rabbits. However, evidence of impact is anecdotal and not based on formal evaluation. Furthermore, impact cannot be attributed to this project alone, as the Mazingira Institute and other stakeholders have been campaigning on urban livestock issues for decades.

4.4 Conclusion

The project successfully promoted dialogue around urban livestock issues among a wide range of stakeholders, helped develop the skills and abilities of livestock keepers and contributed to the development of a draft policy on urban agriculture. Stakeholder dialogue worked well, as it was

anchored to an existing stakeholder platform. Multi-stakeholder dialogue was essential, as animal and public health issues in urban areas present multiple issues at several levels. Training entailed learning from and developing the knowledge of participants on key challenges and how to find solutions. Policy work focused on advancing the argument that development as well as regulation of livestock must be considered in urban and peri-urban livestock policy through the generation of solid research and effective engagement with officials at both local and national levels.

5. Giving livestock keepers a voice in Sudan

Project details

Delivery organisation: PA Markets and Livelihood Team

Location: Kassala state, Sudan

Duration: 36 months

Cost: £150,000

5.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

Rural communities in Kassala state in Eastern Sudan have been affected by war, droughts, famine and chronic poverty. Communities comprise mainly marginalised, nomadic agro-pastoralists who combine the rearing of livestock such as cattle, goats and sheep with subsistence cultivation of sorghum. Their linkages with markets and service providers (both government and NGO) are weak, and information and training services are non-existent or rarely tailored to their needs.

Objectives

The project aimed to contribute to the long-term improvement of the livelihoods and wellbeing of marginalised pastoralists in Kassala state by increasing their political influence and strengthening linkages between actors in the livestock market chain.

Types of knowledge generated and drawn on

The project draws largely on the experiences of PA, an international development NGO, in community-based animal health care, livestock market development, interest group development and working with nomadic pastoralists. As well as contributing to market and livelihood development, the project aimed to test whether the participation of most if not all actors involved in the value chain (both public and private) – and not just marginalised pastoralists – was required to transform market systems.

Methods and approaches

Engagement methods employed were:

- Establishment of a Livestock Forum (LF) bringing together 15 participants who play different roles in the livestock market chain, with workshops and meetings to discuss policy issues and promote collaborative working and resolve conflicts;
- Establishment of a Pastoralists Marketing Group (PMG) made up of elected pastoralist representatives to be trained to influence key actors, comprising participatory workshops to identify and prioritise issues to take to the LF;
- Development of a Productivity Action Plan (PAP) through discussion within the LF;
- Establishment of a Livestock Service Network (LSN) to help develop credit mechanisms to pay for veterinary pharmaceuticals;
- Identification and training of 'para-vets' on animal health management, particularly emergency veterinary care, in the case of sudden disease outbreaks; and
- Broadcast of local radio programmes in which panels of experts were brought together to discuss animal health topics. Communities were given opportunities to engage during the question and answer session through mobile phones.

Context

The team leader noted that policy processes were often a source of conflict rather than a mechanism for reconciling competition over natural resources, basic needs and development. Policy frameworks for livestock-related issues at the national and sub-national levels were weak, limiting the sustainability of any resultant project outcomes. And the division of power between national and local

government was blurred, which made pushing for legal changes difficult. Kassala state's aid-saturated environment made the LSN redundant, as other projects provided free veterinary pharmaceuticals. PA's facilitative approach was thus seen as less attractive than most other subsidised interventions.

5.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Promoting diversity and inclusion

The LF was more formalised and bureaucratic than interest groups in other areas (where PA has helped set them up) – that is, it had a constitution, strategies and work plans. PA was careful to ensure stakeholders were convened in response to a clearly manifested problem and that the LF was not labelled pro-poor (as this could exclude other key actors whose priority was not poverty reduction). An initial inception meeting to which a wide range of actors were invited gave participants the opportunity to provide feedback on the project and overall direction. Issues prioritised for further work included establishing effective market institutions and reforming tax laws so pastoralists would not be taxed twice when crossing the border (double taxation). Nevertheless, at the time of writing, the LF was still in its infancy. More work was needed to build its capabilities and ensure it met regularly and promoted change beyond the end of the project.

Supporting livestock keepers to engage

Several efforts were made to ensure activities were contextualised. Members of the PMG who represented the voices of pastoralists in the LF received training in, for example, negotiation and influencing. Training of para-vets was based on both scientific and indigenous knowledge and practices – drawing on ethno-veterinary treatments, vital in remote rural and pastoral regions with little or no veterinary services or products. Furthermore, radio programmes on animal health were broadcast at a time when pastoralists were unlikely to be busy.

Working with public institutions

Public institutions and actors played a key role throughout the project. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Irrigation provided technical support and helped to strengthen linkages with other stakeholders. The state Ministry of Animal Health identified trainees according to competency and experience and, through its veterinary officers, delivered education programmes. Once the double taxation issue was raised, a small group proceeded to have meetings with the state Ministry of Finance, during which solid evidence was presented highlighting the direct and indirect economic and social benefits of tax reform.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

The proposal outlined a rigorous and participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system outlining a number of tools and committed to reporting on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Whether this happened in practice is unclear. Nevertheless, a baseline survey was carried out at the project's inception to assess the political context, the policy environment, the livestock management system and infrastructure and the knowledge and skills of pastoralists. The LF also convened to develop a market map to assess the business environment, key actors in the livestock production chain and input/service providers. This collaborative exercise helped in making sense of a complex environment, designing appropriate interventions and promoting dialogue, reflection, awareness and systemic thinking among a wide range of actors. Annual reports were produced and critiqued by the PA Markets and Livelihoods Team in the UK. Moreover, to promote information sharing within the PA Sudan office and between this and the UK team, an online Microsoft SharePoint space was established. This enabled staff to generate and edit content remotely, although uptake was mixed.

Human resources for engagement

The team comprised three staff from PA Sudan – the team leader, the project manager and a project officer. Collectively, they brought expertise in a wide range of development processes and issues, including value chain analysis, credit systems, community-level animal health care systems, market development, fostering linkages between actors and interest group development, among others. In

addition, consultants (for example a retired professor) were hired for short spells to deliver training and education to pastoralists and to undertake the post-project evaluation. However, changes in the project team limited continuity and created some delays.

Managing engagement

By taking a facilitative approach, this project offered an alternative to what are traditionally donor-led, highly subsidised and pro-poor interventions to improve animal health and livestock market development. The project went some way to show that this approach works, at least in Kassala state. Nevertheless, taking a facilitative approach required a flexible approach not only to project management, but also to training and skills among project staff. Their role changed from that of leader to one of advisor whose job it is to entice actors to contribute to the process. This meant the proposal was used as a broad framework, leaving space for the project to take an iterative approach to management and build on the energy of the system and the dynamic interests of stakeholders. Some elements of the strategy were altered during the project's initial stages when it was clearer what would work and what would not. For instance, training of members of the PMG in value chain analysis was postponed to a time later in the project when it was felt that participants would be more comfortable with the content. The iterative approach also enabled the project to respond to demands from the LF for the establishment by government of a Market Information Centre (MIC), to which the project allocated (initially unbudgeted for) resources for a computer.

5.3 Benefits and outcomes

The PMG and the LF secured the participation of a wide range of actors with differing interests. Pastoralists were reported to have better skills in negotiating and influencing. There was some anecdotal evidence of improved practice among trained para-vets. Conversations between the project leader and state ministry officials revealed that para-vets reported a significant decrease in the incidence of animal disease and animal mortality. Furthermore, interviews with the project leader suggested pastoralists used the PAP to define new interventions.

The LF succeeded in persuading the state government to reform its tax laws regarding pastoralists crossing the border. In response to LF demands, the government also established the MIC and appointed an officer to operate it (the project provided a computer). At the time of writing, the MIC had been established for three months, generating price information updated on a monthly basis for pastoralist livestock keepers, thus enabling them to negotiate better terms with traders.

5.4 Conclusion

The project worked well in a challenging context. PA's facilitative and all-inclusive approach is counter to more traditional, subsidised, pro-poor and NGO-led approaches. It proved, albeit in the short term, that promoting the participation of both public and private actors within the value chain can help to improve market access for pastoralists and other livestock keepers. The LF, through the development of the market map and periodic meetings thereafter, promoted systemic and systematic thinking and dialogue among a wide range of actors in the resolution of a number of issues. The facilitative approach required flexible management – allowing the project to build on the interests of stakeholders and the energy of a dynamic system – and appropriate skills among the project team.

6. Tackling Brucellosis in Zimbabwe

Project details

Delivery organisation: University of Reading

Location: Three communities in Zimbabwe – Marirangwe (Central Mashonaland), Umzingweni (Matabeleland South) and Rusape (Mashonaland East)

Duration: 48 months

Cost: £150,000

6.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

Brucellosis among cattle was controlled in Zimbabwe until 2001 when government veterinary services discontinued free vaccinations and disease surveillance owing to financial constraints. Initially, this was not a problem, as Brucellosis was absent from small-scale farming areas. Later, uncontrolled cattle movements following the invasions of commercial farms resulted in animals with unknown disease status interacting with unvaccinated cattle. As a result, Brucellosis became a serious problem among cattle. It also became a potential zoonotic danger for livestock handlers, and a public health issue as a result of the consumption of unpasteurised milk from infected cattle.

Objectives

The project worked directly with a range of actors – small-scale farmers who were members of dairy centres (DCs) within the Dairy Development Programme (DDP); DC staff; veterinary health technicians (VLTs); meat processors or butchers; nurses; teachers; and community elders and other opinion leaders – to promote Brucellosis prevention methods

Types of knowledge generated and drawn on

The project drew on a body of knowledge on prevention (and treatment) of Brucellosis infection among cattle and humans.

Methods and approaches

Engagement methods included:

- Strengthening (by working with and through) the DDP – an established parastatal network of small-scale dairy cooperatives with 15 functioning dairies, servicing small-scale dairy farmers throughout Zimbabwe;
- Information sessions for communities covering a range of issues, including prevention and treatment practices. In addition to the stakeholders mentioned above, farmers from surrounding areas, as well as local councillors and village heads, were in attendance. Information sessions were almost always led by the project leader. Project enumerators were trained to deliver Brucellosis information sessions and were often called to provide information during farmer interviews;
- Production and dissemination of IEC materials, including included handouts distributed to participants at information sessions;
- Development of community action plans to combat Brucellosis and support to help put them into action. Action planning usually took place after information sessions. Plans often included testing of cattle for Brucellosis and calf vaccination, for which the project provided expertise, transport and cold storage. Test results were given to farmers in confidence and DCs and government veterinary services were informed only of the areas where positive samples had been collected;
- Training of dairy cooperative staff on conducting tests to assess the quality and safety of milk. This was not in the proposal but was introduced on demand.

Representation

DC committee chairpersons agreed to pilot the project in communities traditionally marginalised by donors, which were remote and suffered from weak infrastructure.

Context

Early on in the project, the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) issued a ban on private organisations and NGOs working in communities. This severed what were good links with senior government officials at the DVS. Fortunately, the DDP was registered with the Ministry of Agriculture. But in any case the project kept a low profile; being part of a university also helped to provide some 'protection'. Later, the project leader had to reassure government authorities after they had become agitated on hearing that cows were being tested for Brucellosis. Several meetings with officials were required to resolve the issue, with the project leader promising not to publish aggregate statistics (and potentially present the authorities in a 'bad light'). To add to the tense environment, information sessions were reported to have been attended by government informants monitoring what was said.

At one point, the project team withdrew from the field as a result of political unrest. The threat meant the project leader had to pay her university a considerable sum of money to ensure appropriate insurance cover. To compound this, the DDP faced challenges in continuing the work started through this project, as workers whose incomes had declined (owing to difficult economic circumstances) were looking to supplement these by growing vegetables and subsequently had less time to focus on improving cattle health and the quality of milk.

6.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Supporting livestock keepers and communities to engage

To promote ownership, a management committee made up of local farmers, VLTs and government agricultural extension workers was formed to help make decisions about the project. To promote sustainability beyond the project, the team left equipment at DCs, so vaccinations together with photographic recording could continue in the absence of the project. During the on-farm surveys, enumerators (accompanied by DC staff) informed farmers about information sessions. Invitations were often made to those other than heads of household to encourage wider participation. The project leader and enumerators stayed on several weeks after the initial planning phase until the information sessions started, in order to build trust between DC members, communities and the project team.

Information sessions were generally held at venues convenient for the majority of participants. This was often the local DC, but also included schools and village halls. The project leader usually worked with an interpreter in delivering information sessions. Diagrams and pictures drawn on flipchart paper helped those who were illiterate. Importantly, as Brucellosis among humans originates in cows, project staff ensured during information sessions that they did not imply farmers were at fault, which would have had the potential to spark off conflict between patients and farmers.

If participants had difficult questions, these would be relayed to experts in South Africa by cell phone. Answers would later be delivered through representatives of the DC. Participatory techniques were used in developing community action plans. Farmers were reported to have enjoyed this element, which gave them the opportunity to consider and select options available to them and learn from experiences elsewhere to produce Brucellosis prevention plans.

Working with public institutions

From the start, the project was careful to strengthen and not deplete the capacity of existing institutions – working with and through the existing DDP, a parastatal utilising existing channels and stocks of social capital. Local animal health technicians and extension workers together with DC staff were at the forefront of project activities.

Communicating with participants

Clear and regular communication was a key tenet of the project. For instance, communities were informed early on in the process what costs would be covered by the project (serological testing of cattle, photographic recording of vaccinated calves) and what farmers would have to pay for themselves (vaccines). This helped to manage expectations throughout the project.

Promoting wider uptake

The project promoted country-wide uptake of the approach by offering the material produced to various training institutions. Media work in Zimbabwe was delayed owing to political unrest, but comprised the development of TV programmes presented by a VLT (and not a journalist, as was initially planned), which was to be aired by the state-owned broadcaster. Targeting global academia, the project leader presented findings at the International Symposium of Veterinary Epidemiology and Economic held in August 2009 in South Africa (where the project leader was based). The team had planned to present a completed impact analysis and lessons learnt report at the Association of Institutes of Tropical Veterinary Medicine meeting in 2010, a forum that included practitioners and researchers on sustainable health behaviour interventions. Nevertheless, finding funds to present learning further afield was challenging.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

Monitoring and learning played a central role in the project. The project consulted DC committee chairpersons at DDP central offices who suggested where to pilot the project and how best to reach farmers. Confidential on-farm surveys were undertaken by enumerators to understand farmer knowledge levels, attitudes and practices regarding Brucellosis. This provided baseline data and informed the content presented during information sessions. Where appropriate, content drew on indigenous knowledge and practices, once they had been verified by virologists and toxicologists at the University of Pretoria. Since DC staff in the first community were keen to get going, the project leader had to develop information sessions and serological surveys earlier and faster than planned. Although somewhat rushed and underprepared, this enabled the team to 'pre-pilot' some of the material. To help capture learning, team members kept diaries of information sessions and stakeholders visited.

Human resources for engagement

The project leader, a white Zimbabwean, had considerable experience working with small-scale livestock farmers in Zimbabwe. She worked with a Zimbabwean team of enumerators on the project. Working with local staff enabled the project to tap into local networks and work more efficiently. Two Northern-based academics (one an expert in health behaviour research and the other an expert in veterinary epidemiology) had an advisory role but were unpaid. This yielded mixed results, as contacting them from the field was difficult given the weak communications infrastructure and (not surprisingly) they tended to prioritise paid work over that which was unpaid.

After the pre-pilot, an additional team member was hired when it became clear that, owing to large distances between two pilot communities and local preferences for dedicated staff, each pilot area would need its own VLT and public health nurse. Further, the project leader's new employer, the University of Pretoria, was reluctant to let the project leader (who was responsible for much of the implementation) spend time in the field. However, she was unable to delegate responsibility because of perceptions of insufficient expertise among the enumerators

Managing engagement

The nature of the project emphasised the need for a flexible approach to management. In particular, the project suffered from a number of disruptions. Finding an institution to host the project which would not charge overheads delayed the start. The project team had to withdraw from fieldwork between elections owing to political unrest. And the leader gained new employment during the project, with the transition taking longer than expected. Huge and unforeseen demand from communities around dairy cooperatives meant additional information sessions were held. Further, the project introduced training for dairy cooperative staff to help improve the quality of milk and expanded the

information sessions to include meat processors (butchers), who were among those at risk of contracting Brucellosis.

The project did its best to contribute to the local economy by sourcing supplies locally where possible. But the laboratories testing the serological samples often delivered poor quality services, suffering from staff turnover and lack of supplies. The project hence continually ‘shopped around’ for decent laboratories. Further, the project leader was careful to control expenditure, preferring cost-effective interventions where possible. The use of microchips to identify cattle – considered too expensive as well as invasive – was replaced by a system in which each cow was assigned an ID and had its picture taken in front of a blackboard. However, the unplanned activities and additional staff requirements involved created unplanned expenses. As a result of delays and budgetary pressures, at the time of writing it was unclear whether work in the third pilot area would go ahead.

6.3 Benefits and outcomes

Farmer interviews and questionnaires conducted before and after information sessions in the two communities targeted suggested that interventions led to increased awareness about Brucellosis and how to prevent and treat it. Medical staff and farmers from the project areas were aware that Brucellosis in humans displayed similar symptoms to malaria (and hence should not be confused), and that acute human cases were treatable. Increased awareness in turn led to changes in disease management practices, evidenced by the increase in the sales of vaccines.

Correspondence with the project leader suggested that small-scale farmers were now more likely to purchase animals from known sources with a record of previous vaccinations and disease histories, as evidenced by an increasing demand for vaccinated cattle. Farmers seemed to understand the concept of having the majority of the cattle vaccinated for the intervention to be effective and were exerting pressure on their farming neighbours to have their calves vaccinated. Furthermore, local leaders and politicians were considering including disease control measures as part of local farmer competitions and agricultural shows.

6.4 Conclusion

This pilot project, keeping a low profile and being careful not to antagonise a sensitive government undergoing political transition, contributed to combating Brucellosis in two districts. The project confirmed that, if farmers were given sufficient information and training, they could decide what, if any, action they should take. The information for farmers had to be contextualised, especially with regard to whether Brucellosis was present or not in the area. On-farm surveys conducted as a baseline and at certain times throughout the project enabled the team to improve the way information was presented and to develop content on additional priority issues. Operating within an existing institutional network (the DDP) enabled the project to work through established channels. Employing local people enabled it to draw on their existing work and social networks and deal with unexpected circumstances. Further, letting communities know early in the process what the project would pay for and what they were expected to pay for helped to manage expectations and fostered trust.

7. Improving camel health in Kenya

Project details

Delivery organisation: Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (VSF) Suisse Kenya

Location: Five districts in northern Kenya

Duration: 24 months

Cost: The project combined £140,000 from the Wellcome Trust with funding from a range of other sources: the Arid and Semi-arid Lands-based Livestock and Rural Livelihoods Support Project (ALLPRO) (funded by the Kenyan government and the African Development Bank (AfDB)), the Kenya Arid and Semi-arid Lands Research Programme (KASAL) under KARI (funded by the European Commission (EC)) and the Enhanced Livelihoods in the Mandera Triangle (ELMT) programme (funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) East Africa).

7.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

In Kenya at the time of writing, conventional methods had failed to identify the cause of Haemorrhagic Septicaemia (HS) in Camels. Moreover, approaches to investigation had been extractive. Despite HS vaccines being used in camels by relief and development agencies in Sudan and Somalia, their efficacy had never been assessed. But camel owners had considerable knowledge of the disease, which had gone untapped. At the same time, new diagnostic tools had become available for testing the bacteria.

Objectives

This project, led by VSF Suisse Kenya, aimed to develop control measures for HS in camels in five districts in northern Kenya.

Methods and approaches

Research and engagement methods comprised:

- Participatory epidemiology (PE) through stakeholder workshops, meetings and interviews, to collect information on disease prevalence and mortality in addition to classical scientific methods, drawing on sampling and laboratory analysis to improve understanding and causes of HS in camels. Results were fed back to camel owners to help improve the management of their livestock;
- Training of 19 government veterinary professionals (often known as camel service providers or CaSPros) from 19 of the arid and semi-arid districts in northern Kenya on participatory techniques to help them engage more effectively with camel owners. Those trained undertook a week-long field study on camel HS in their respective districts. Data collected contributed to an epidemiological dataset that was analysed and contributed to overall learning;
- Development of a community of practice made up of the 19 district veterinary professionals who were trained to share information and learning about disease outbreaks;
- Development of a training manual for CaSPros.

Types of knowledge generated

Findings from traditional scientific methods suggested that HS vaccines for cattle were unlikely to protect camels against HS. PE data confirmed clinical features of HS in camels and the occurrence of camel HS during different seasons and in different age groups. Data also underscored the negative economic impact HS in camels can have on the livelihoods of their owners. However, the project was unable to identify the cause of HS in camels and subsequently could not develop a set of disease control measures for camel owners to apply.

7.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Supporting livestock keepers to engage

Workshops employing PE techniques with camel owners helped promote ownership of the project among camel owners and allowed them to comment on project plans and raise concerns about their camels. Communities showed a high level of interest in the project. They were familiar with participatory tools such as double sampling, proportional piling, seasonal calendars, disease ranking and matrix scoring for economic impact, given the number of NGOs that had worked with them in the past. As well as listening to their views, the project enabled pastoralists to attend a camel forum, giving them the chance to present their perspective to government officials, scientists, donors and NGOs.

Working with public institutions

Working with and through government authorities throughout the project helped to promote wide reach and better sustainability. For instance, they guided the camel sample selection. However, it was often traditional authorities that were key entry points to working with communities and camel owners.

Communicating with participants

The action research approach taken to the project raised expectations among the community that effective treatment for their camels would be found. Further, some pastoralists were suspicious about having their camels tested. The project team managed both issues through clear, continuous and open communication with camel owners and village elders, explaining the logic behind decisions made.

Promoting wider uptake

Project objectives, activities and preliminary findings were presented to the Kenya Camel Forum – a multi-stakeholder forum made up of representatives from government, NGOs, pastoralists and scientists. Findings were also presented to a more academic forum – the 2nd International Conference for the International Society of Camelids Research and Development in March 2009. An academic article was due to be published too. VSF Suisse also communicated results to projects and organisations working with the same camel-keeping communities, as well as donors who funded these activities, through meetings and written proposals.

The Wellcome Trust grant helped to kick-start a number of other initiatives. With funding from the Kenya Camel Association, KARI, ALLPRO and ELMT, the CaSPro training manual was used to conduct two training of trainer courses and two training workshops for community animal health workers with authorities across the border in Ethiopia. The Veterinary Association of Ethiopia trained 35 veterinary professionals using the manual. KARI, impressed by the combination of PE and state-of-the-art molecular diagnostics, agreed to continue work started under this grant (on HS in camels) in areas around the greater Marsabit district in Kenya's Eastern province. KARI also agreed to fund the international camel workshop hosted by the Kenya Camel Forum in June 2011.

The project helped to develop a research network comprising government officers and the Kenya Camel Association (resulting in the aforementioned work by KARI). CARE International and Save the Children, through linkages with the project, successfully lobbied local and national authorities in Ethiopia for the development of a camel forum. This brings together national and international camel researchers, national and local government officials and representatives from Woredas and pastoralist groups.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

The M&E plan outlined in the project proposal was rigorous, committing to quarterly monitoring visits and related reports. However, interviews with the project leader suggested that, in hindsight, this may have been overly ambitious. In practice, M&E was low key and informal. Furthermore, the project team, which was small, mostly based at VSF Suisse, met regularly to share information.

Human resources for engagement

The project team, mostly made up of VSF Suisse Kenya staff, was multidisciplinary and comprised a project manager, a government microbiologist with PE skills, an epidemiologist, an M&E expert, a field assistant and a translator. The team also worked with a private veterinary laboratory based in Nairobi, as well as the Institute of Microbiology and Epizootics at the Free University in Berlin, Germany.

Managing engagement

The outbreak of an unknown disease – now referred to as Camel Sudden Death Syndrome – meant the project was suspended for six months while the project team was asked to investigate it. When the team returned, there were very few outbreaks of the kind the team was researching. However, the team leader agreed with KARI that they would take this work further through an EC-funded project (see above).

7.3 Benefits and outcomes

District veterinary officers and other CaSPros were better equipped to identify and treat camel diseases which, according to interviews with the project leader, had led to improved service delivery. However, several organisations were training CaSPros, and assessing the extent to which these improvements could be attributed to the project would require further research.

The project yielded several benefits for the project team. VSF Suisse's knowledge of camel health in northern Kenya had expanded. The research team updated their knowledge of the complexity of the Pasteurellaceae group. The microbiologist in particular knew more about molecular diagnostic tools and genetics. Technical specialists had a better appreciation of community engagement methods. Field assistants were better at designing and implementing participatory approaches to collect data. And the grant was the first opportunity for the VSF Suisse Kenya scientific programme manager to manage a complex research project with activities in the field and laboratory work in Germany.

7.4 Conclusion

The project combined PE and state-of-the-art testing techniques to investigate HS in camels. It drew on indigenous knowledge and tried as much as possible to apply learning in target communities. Although the project was not able to find treatments for HS in camels, it did confirm that current treatments were ineffective. More importantly, it set in motion a number of other initiatives, which have helped push camel issues up the political agenda – with donors and government aware of the need to do more camel-related research.

8. Bringing farmers and researchers closer together in East Africa

Project details

Delivery organisation: FARM-Africa

Location: Four countries in East Africa

Cost: FARM-Africa combined almost £120,000 from the Wellcome Trust with its own resources

Duration: 24 months

8.1 Characteristics of the project

Background

Community-based animal health workers (CAHWs) and the livestock keepers they serve tend to lack access to the latest research findings that could help improve the health and productivity of their livestock. At the same time, many animal health researchers tend to practice top-down planning, often not consulting livestock keepers and CAHWs. Where livestock keepers are involved, research is often used in an extractive manner. As a result, researchers tend to lack sufficient understanding of the environment and the challenges livestock keepers face. Such an understanding could promote more demand-led research offering more practical solutions. But an additional problem sees researchers often lacking the capacity to package and communicate their research in ways that could be understood and acted on by livestock keepers and CAHWs.

Objectives

This project, led by FARM-Africa, aimed to improve animal health research and to make it more demand-driven and relevant to rural livestock keepers. The project worked with and brought together livestock keepers and researchers.

Types of knowledge generated and drawn on

Material for dissemination was drawn from field research undertaken by Farm Africa, an international NGO, and that of its partner research institutions.

Methods and approaches

Engagement methods comprised:

- Dialogue between rural livestock owners and animal health researchers through the production and dissemination of video podcasts. A total of 19, 20-minute podcasts featuring livestock development technologies were produced and shown to more than 1,300 livestock farmers and CAHWs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, through 11 FARM-Africa farmer/herder centres based in the organisation's existing field projects at three-month intervals. Videos featured technologies on sanitation and phyto-sanitary requirements, combating tick-borne diseases and fodder conservation, among others. Formats included demonstrations, answers to frequently asked questions and documentary elements. Five 'from the field' podcasts were also produced, highlighting farmers' responses to the technologies.
- Podcasts were used to train farmers and CAHWs and were often incorporated into existing FARM-Africa activities. They were also sent to radio and TV companies with agriculture development programmes and to research institutions, and were made available for download on the Community Animal Health Network (CAHNET) website.
- Strengthening of CAHNET, an existing discussion platform established by FARM-Africa for key actors in the livestock sector to share learning and best practice. CAHNET had grown its membership from 60 to 110 members by the end of the project. Membership comprises researchers, livestock keeper groups and NGOs, as well as interested individuals. In an agreement with CAHNET, the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicine (GALVmed) agreed to provide relevant information to the CAHNET membership. CAHNET held annual

workshops in 2007 and 2008 bringing together over 80 participants to share progress and learning from the project.

8.2 Approaches to specific challenges faced by the project

Promoting diversity and inclusion

The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders – researchers, livestock extension staff, community animal health workers, farmer associations, community members and livestock keepers – gave the project legitimacy, credibility and acceptance and provided a basis for future project work in the target areas. However, owing to their key role in the value chain, the evaluation suggested the need to expand the dialogue to include key private sector actors, such as private vets, agro-veterinary providers and livestock marketing agents.

Supporting livestock keepers to engage

Livestock keepers saw videos as a more effective medium than classroom teaching. But the evaluation report suggested podcasts needed to be contextualised to reflect the learning needs of specific communities. Although podcasts were often translated from English into three East African languages – Kiswahili, Amharic and Luganda – these languages were less likely to be spoken in the rural areas the project was targeting. Livestock keepers also felt the videos on occasion featured animals that they did not keep. For instance, pastoralists in Tanzania felt that high-grade exotic animals used in one video were not representative of their own livestock. Meanwhile, farmers were often dismayed by videos featuring mainly foreign (European) researchers. They suggested they would have preferred seeing local (African) researchers demonstrating technologies, which would have instilled in them a sense of pride and patriotism.

The project utilised robust TV screens rather than the more sensitive laptops, powered by solar panels and batteries. However, such equipment proved difficult to move between countries in the region, and at times limited sunshine delayed proceedings. Further, the limited bandwidth in the East Africa region forced the project to substantially reduce the quality of the videos they posted to their website. Meanwhile, the podcasts posted to the FARM-Africa website were poorly marketed and hence received fewer ‘hits’ than hoped.

Supporting scientists to engage

Researchers had mixed feelings about the approach the project adopted. They felt more comfortable publishing research papers in scientific journals, and were reluctant to engage with NGOs. Further, research institutions were initially unwilling to release research findings, even after they had signed an official agreement. Persuading researchers to share their findings with FARM-Africa and produce videos for livestock keepers and CAHWs took considerable time and energy. FARM-Africa argued that research institutions’ involvement in the project would help promote wider uptake of their technologies and promote better technologies. Researchers’ reluctance coupled with their inexperience in producing videos meant only 19 out of the intended 28 videos were produced. Moreover, persuading research institutes to listen to livestock keepers ‘from the field’ comments proved challenging, putting further strain on the livestock keeper–researcher dialogue the project was trying to foster.

Working with public institutions

Government extension services were passive throughout the project, but structural changes internal to FARM-Africa did not help matters. The resultant delays meant project members created few opportunities to engage with government extension staff.

Promoting wider uptake

According to Webalizer and then Google Analytics (which both count the number of people visiting a web page), the CAHNET website received over 2,000 visits and downloads of its podcasts throughout the course of the project. Further, the project featured in an article entitled ‘FARM-Africa – Bridging the Animal Health Service Delivery Gap through Community Animal Health Care Approach’ in the June 2008

edition of *The Community Eye* – a monthly newspaper on development issues in East Africa. It also featured in an article called ‘Good News for Owners of Livestock’ in an edition of *The Sunday Standard* (also in June 2008) – one of Kenya’s mainstream Sunday newspapers.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

Podcast content addressed priorities first identified during a CAHNET consultation workshop in Kenya with livestock owners and CAHWs. These included knowledge of dairy goat management, fodder improvement, ethno-veterinary medicine and models of animal drug supply in isolated areas. Priorities were reviewed through twice-yearly visits to interview livestock keepers and CAHWs, which also assessed podcast relevance and monitored subsequent impacts.

The FARM-Africa evaluation of the project comprised a desk review, field visits and interactions with key audiences and other stakeholders. However, it faced a number of challenges. First, some respondents in Kenya and Uganda felt they were sidelined by the ostensibly participatory process. Second, the timing of the evaluation in Kenya and Uganda (during planting or harvesting) meant that few respondents were available. Finally, the country-specific nature of project dynamics meant the absence of Ethiopia (on the grounds of cost) detracted from the final evaluation.

Human resources for engagement

The team was comprised of FARM-Africa staff in the Kenya office, who had considerable experience working together. Significant contributions were made by a project coordinator (recruited for the project); an information and communications officer; and training and advisory units in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. This formed the core of the project team. The FARM-Africa Kenya country director provided managerial support. Long-standing partner institutions which provided content for podcasts included the Tegemeo Research Institute at Egerton University, Nairobi University, the Livestock Fodder Production Project of the International Centre for Research in Agro-forestry, the International Livestock Research Institute, Serere Agricultural and Animal Research Institute at the Uganda National Agricultural Research Organisation, Tufts University (Boston), Natural Resources International, pharmaceutical companies and NRI at Greenwich University (UK). Consultants were hired to conduct a baseline survey and an evaluation. An East African regional media company was hired to produce content for the podcasts.

Managing engagement

Implementing the project in four countries created a great deal of complexity. To address this and promote the democratic management of the project, FARM-Africa set up an advisory panel of 14 members. They comprised the project officer, the CAHNET coordinator and three people from each of the four countries involved (one FARM-Africa staff member, one representative of partner organisations and one government representative). The group met twice a year to review the project and document lessons learnt.

The final evaluation report suggested that FARM-Africa failed to promote sufficient ownership among key actors (research institutes and farming groups) in the project’s initial stages, owing in part to limited skills in and tools on participatory approaches among FARM-Africa field staff, which resulted in partners remaining passive.

According to the FARM-Africa evaluation, the memorandum of understanding drawn up between FARM-Africa and research organisations to govern the production and use of video material served only to create conflict and constrain the process. It was hence abandoned, in favour of loose agreements between FARM-Africa and research institutes. As a result, research institutes reserved the copyright to videos, even though content underwent substantial editing and repackaging.

Border authorities in the East Africa region were suspicious of admitting a Kenya-based camera crew. Hence, a regional media company with offices in each of the project countries was selected to film and produce the podcasts. Although videos proved expensive to produce, costs for multimedia were

starting to come down. Nevertheless, in future the project would prioritise the production of audio outputs.

The platform developed by the project, comprising actors from the research, government and service provision communities in East Africa, was at a rudimentary stage of its development at the end of the project, and required further nurturing, strengthening and managing.

8.3 Benefits and outcomes

Livestock keepers in East Africa suggested the improved link between themselves and researchers had in one case reduced animal mortality following the playing of a podcast which highlighted the importance of animal vaccination and spraying for tick control. As one respondent to FARM-Africa's evaluation said,

‘During those days when our communities had not embraced spraying of their livestock, we would not be sitting outside here now because of tsetse flies. But today we all appreciate the fact that tsetse flies have been almost eradicated from our rangelands. Thanks to the [...] project for opening up our eyes.’

Communities in target areas acknowledged increased levels of knowledge and awareness and changes in practice around livestock disease control and fodder management. However, showing videos to rural livestock keepers on occasion made certain technologies look easier than they were. For example, some farmers (wrongly) administered antibiotics without the assistance of a qualified animal health practitioner.

As a result of project activities, farmers were able to do their own advocacy and felt more comfortable presenting to camera. Farmers initially feared this, with those in northern Uganda mistaking a video camera for a weapon. Livestock keepers also better understood the role and functions of animal health researchers and their institutions.

Research institutes were better at producing and capturing content for videos. But podcasts were more effective in disseminating technologies than enabling researchers to appreciate the needs of farmers. Nevertheless, researchers suggested involvement in the project was an ‘eye opener’ and appreciated the need to promote livestock keeper participation during the research process. They were starting to include dissemination and engagement components in research proposals. Furthermore, having not produced multimedia tools in the past, FARM-Africa developed its own capacity to produce and use educational videos and engage the media. Finally, FARM-Africa suggested the project's activities could have played a contributory factor, albeit minor, in the government commissioning videos demonstrating the use of agricultural technologies in order to train farmers.

8.4 Conclusion

The project piloted the use of video podcasts to strengthen links between livestock keepers and animal health researchers in East Africa. However, the podcasts served to disseminate technologies rather than promoting genuine dialogue and enabling livestock keepers to articulate their needs. Key learning related to the existing incentive structure, encouraging academic researchers to target their funders primarily and not necessarily livestock keepers, and the time, energy and, importantly, the political will required to change that. Further, the project highlighted the need to contextualise both the content and mode of delivery of communication materials and to practise participatory principles throughout the project in order to promote uptake by targeted audiences.



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