

EXTENSION AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT: EXPERIENCE FROM AMONG THE TURKANA PASTORALISTS OF KENYA

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses some of the reasons for decades of development failures in the pastoral area of Turkana District, Kenya. In the final analysis, the lack of local participation in development intervention, due to poor extension services, is identified as the main reason for failure. A brief description of Turkana culture and life is presented in order to map out the entry points which are suitable for development interventions.

The *awi* (nuclear family) and the *adakar* (group of families under a leader) are traditional social structures which also function as channels of communication. Some development efforts in the District have already demonstrated that these traditional channels are effective. What is needed is the commitment by extension workers to utilise these channels for active dialogue with the pastoralists.

THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS DEVISED FOR THE PASTORALISTS

The outcome of development interventions in pastoral areas has been characterised by a pattern of failures ever since colonial days. The main reason for these failures has been the tendency by the authors of these interventions to prescribe solutions to pastoralists' problems, imagined or real, without involving the recipients they intended to serve. Examples of such prescriptions and their failures are very many in literature reviews; regarding Kenya, Lipscomb (1955) claimed that the problem of livestock could be summarised in one word - "*Overstocking*." According to him, the solution to this was the then new scientific approach of controlled grazing, which could only be enforced by the availability of sufficient numbers of European livestock officers. Of course, controlled grazing schemes, using grazing blocks as in Kenya's North Eastern Province, have generally failed (Helland 1980). Overgrazing incensed other government workers, who argued that the pastoralists' tendency to keep large numbers of female animals in their herds for the sake of milk, resulted in increased livestock populations. The planned solution to this was to supplement pastoral diets with grains and fish, in the hope that these would replace milk and eventually lead to a reduction of livestock numbers which caused overgrazing (Ottley *et al.* 1978, cited in Little 1983). This plan has never worked, for the

pastoralists who cultivate and get bumper grain crops will sell some to buy more stock, preferably female goats or sheep. In the same vein, Turkana fishermen of Lake Turkana buy more sheep and goats whenever the River Omo releases more fish to the lake and their catches increase.

Therefore, ignoring the pastoralists when their own development is being decided solves nothing. Development implementors have missed the opportunity of surveying and identifying the real problems and their root causes together with the target group, within their traditional setting, and together with them charting solutions to those problems. This is the greatest weakness among development agents, who do not accept the need to change their approach, but continue to hurl abuse against "these backward pastoralists who are unwilling to welcome change." For instance, Turkana pastoralists are blamed for refusing to bring all their cattle for vaccination against rinderpest (D.V.O.'s Reports 1990, 1991); they are accused of disowning the Katilu Irrigation Scheme which was meant to be theirs (Broch-Due and Storas 1983). Fingers are pointed at the Turkana for refusing to bring fresh fish to the fish freezing plant complex at Kalokol fisheries co-operative, rendering the latter a "white elephant" (Govt. of Kenya 1985), and the Turkana are blamed for trespassing with their livestock at Lotongot Livestock Holding Ground or South Turkana Game Reserve (Govt. of Kenya 1989). This blaming only serves to further isolate the pastoralists. The underlying cause of pastoralists' isolation from the development projects is that development agents never bothered to talk to the intended beneficiaries about the interventions they were introducing. It is as if the future of the pastoralists never belongs to themselves (Oba 1991). Nobody takes the trouble to ask if these people have their own strategies for their destiny.

It is this lack of *talk* between development agents and the pastoralists which has widened the gap between the two. Lokong (1987) stated that "the real obstacle to pastoralists' incorporation into the rest of the national system has been and remains lack of communication between the pastoral society and state structures at all levels." As the two parties continue in their separate cells, each is ignorant of the other's good intention, and they remain suspicious of each other.

There is therefore an urgent need for discussion between the two; for such talk to be meaningful it must be a two-way process - which simply means dialogue - that potent tool for extension.

It is for this reason that expressions such as needing "to involve the target group in their own development" or "to encourage local participation in development" have become so popular with donors these days. Project designers and implementors have decided to judiciously use such expressions as a magic potion to spice their project proposals. Although such phrases have won the approval of many development donors, the reality is that the pastoralists have yet to participate fully in their development.

THE TURKANA PASTORALISTS

The Turkana are a group of Nilo-Hamites speaking one language, Kiturkana, and are estimated at 180,000 to 250,000 people (Ecosystem 1985). They occupy low-lying plains in the north west of Kenya, characterised by desert to semi-desert conditions receiving 300 mm or less rainfall per annum. This precipitation is erratic in distribution and timing. These harsh climatic conditions have moulded a tough and pragmatic people, who have carved out a survival strategy adapted to the scarcity of resources and the low ecological potential of the pastoral area. The Turkana are able to cope with the high level of risks inherent in this marginal environment through mobility, split herd management, keeping multiple livestock species - goats, sheep, donkeys, cattle and camels (which provide meat, milk and blood), and through supplementing income by small-scale rain-fed sorghum cultivation, fishing, trading, hunting and fruit-gathering. Circulation of livestock through mutual support networks helps to off-set risks.

But despite this ability to cushion the risks, droughts and their attendant famine catastrophes continue to be a threat to Turkana District. This calls for the designing of development interventions which enhance the drought resistance of the Turkana pastoral system.

A feature of the Turkana pastoralists is that they are still locked up in raiding hostilities with neighbouring tribes. This has forced them to move in secure groups, called *ngadakarín*, led by "Generals" in the north and protected by home guards in both north and south.

Turkana social organisation differs from that of some other pastoral groups in Kenya, such as the Rendille and Borana. Gulliver (1951) identified the nuclear family (*awi*) as the only economically viable social unit. This makes the task of an extension worker among Turkana pastoralists very difficult, since the target group for mobilisation should be higher than that of individual herd or flock master who is independent and free to disperse his livestock anywhere in the vast rangelands.

Higher social organisations than the *awi* do exist; the clans, age-sets, alternations, and sections; but since their members are often physically dispersed these social groups cannot be used for extension efforts apart from holding discussions.

Another characteristic feature of Turkana is their love for melody, group dancing and dramatic story-telling. This can be useful for delivery of extension messages.

The characteristics of formal political leadership and hierarchy of offices among Turkana is still a subject of debate. One school of thought claims it does not exist (Hogg 1986:13). But Apthorpe (1986) cited by Lokong (1987) established the existence of such effective leadership:

There is an actual or a potential state within a state, not least with its own foreign relations and policy (indeed we have seen how Turkana and Karamojong "Chiefs" negotiated their own treaty of amity at the end of the 1970s without aid from either [the Kenya or Uganda] government). (Apthorpe 1986:18 cited in Lokong 1987).

This paper supports Apthorpe's conclusion and seeks to go a step further by arguing that these leadership structures can be harnessed in extension efforts.

IMPLEMENTING A PARTICIPATIVE EXTENSION APPROACH

Purpose and definitions

The purpose of this paper is to identify the root causes hampering livestock extension work among pastoralists in Turkana District, and describe one attempt in the District to stimulate local involvement by opening up better channels of communication between the pastoralists and the livestock extension workers.

For the purpose of this description, the participative extension approach is simply defined as a method of teaching adults in which a teacher *poses* a problem affecting the participants by use of *codes* (problem-posing material e.g. a poster, song, story etc) enabling the people to identify and describe their experiences, share ideas, analyse, decide and plan what to do about their problems. This method is a very effective tool of extension work and it has been applied to great advantage by the mobile extension teams of the Turkana Rehabilitation Project.

Extension on the other hand has been defined as the means by which the local people are involved in a long-term process of increasing awareness, through a series of planned activities. The people's needs are prioritized through surveys, with the ultimate aim of helping the sensitised persons to improve their general standard of living. One of the main ways of involving local people in development is by extension.

Constraints in Involving Turkana Pastoralists in Development Through Extension

The key to local participation in development activities is the provision of an effective extension programme. For an extension programme to be effective, it must enable the target group to identify their needs, prioritise them, participate in deciding the solution to those needs and even implement the solutions.

When this concept is applied there should be in place a very effective communication link between the extension workers and the target group. This

ideal situation has not been met in case of pastoralists within Turkana District, due to the reasons listed below:

- There is poor contact between the pastoralists and the extension staff, due to the fact that very few staff are posted to Turkana District in comparison to high potential districts. Worse still, some of these staff were posted to the harsh climatic conditions of Turkana District as a *punishment*. The impact of such individuals is usually negative, as they attempt to frustrate the programmes.
- Fresh postings of staff with clean records usually consist of people from high potential areas. When they come to the Turkana environment, they feel threatened and afraid to venture out even if given that scarce resource - transport. Such extension staff join their frustrated colleagues and remain confined to the livestock development centres, thus isolating themselves from the people they were meant to serve. Naturally, the stockowners will mistrust them, calling them "*ngimoe*" (strangers).
- The access roads in the district are very poor and most are inaccessible during wet seasons.
- The unpredictable mobility of the nomads makes tracing them difficult.
- Raiding hostilities from the neighbouring Districts frightens the extension workers to death.
- The few extension staff who are committed enough to follow the nomads may have language barriers, as most pastoralists do not speak Kiswahili and are illiterate.
- Very few if any of the local pastoralists are trained in extension work. Extension workers posted to pastoral areas are trained to serve farmers and are therefore ignorant of ecological conditions in semi-arid areas.
- The most critical constraint is the extension workers' lack of knowledge about the organisational structures that could be used as channels of communications between them and the pastoralists.

TARGET GROUPS FOR EXTENSION INTERVENTION AMONG PASTORAL TURKANA

It was noted above that the only economically viable social unit is the nuclear family (*awi*). This is a very small and independent social unit characterised by

its freedom to move anywhere it finds fit for its livestock (Gulliver 1951). Other higher social organisations do exist, but they are not very important in decision-making. Other later writers have described Turkana social organization in detail, relating it to ecology, migration and development (Dyson-Hudson and McCabe 1982; Storas 1987). These writers have also recognised the *awi* as the base for decision-making. This leaves extension workers in Turkana with the problem of having to deal with small social units.

But on close examination, it was found that though the extension worker should still aim at reaching the *awi*, he can actually reach it through *adakar* (plural: *ngadakar*) groups. However, these *adakar* groups tend to be temporarily mobile during periods in the year, which is why they have eluded the attention of many extension and research workers. The weapons used in raiding have become so sophisticated that individual *awi* migration has been given up in favour of group migrations within *adakar*. The next section is therefore devoted to the description of *adakar* types and how this form of group has been used as an entry point in extension intervention. Other social groupings such as clans and sections are also discussed in as far as they relate to extension.

The Composition and Forms of *Ngadakar*

An *adakar* consists of a group of nomadic pastoral households, who have agreed to move in secure groups, with a recognized leader, in search of pasture and water.

The following types of *ngadakar* can be identified according to the leadership offered:

- led by a "General"
- led by an *Emuron* - a "Seer"
- led by a generous rich man
- led by an ex-chief
- led by both an *Emuron* and a "General"

The *ngadakar* led by "Generals" unite their groups of *awis* (households) for military strength. They negotiate for grazing rights from neighbouring tribes in other Districts or across the border with Uganda; such grazing rights are automatically granted within Turkana (contrary to the observation by Storas (1987) that Turkana have to negotiate for grazing rights even within Turkana District).

However, should negotiations with a neighbouring tribe fail, the *adakar* members will never go back, to have their stock starve to death. Instead, the *adakar* "General" will lead his people in a life or death fight. This is an example of why nomadic pastoralists do not recognise international boundaries.

An *adakar* leader may also be a traditional seer (*Emuron*) who has divine powers to foretell and warn his followers of impending bad weather or enemy attack, through communicating with the high God in dreams. This type of leader commands even elected leaders, chiefs, the rich and the poor. These *Emuron* are widespread throughout the District. The most respected and feared ones come from the Ngkatekok clan who are known to hand over the divine power to their eldest sons. "Dreaming" diviners do come from other clans but they are not very many and are not as respected as the Ngikatekok.

The most famous leader of this category comes from south Turkana. He is called Kaalinyang Lotubokin and his *adakar* is popularly known as *Adakararam*. During the course of my extension work among the Ngisonyoka Turkana (1983-1987) I have successfully used him as a very effective entry point to reach the pastoralists. He enabled the veterinary staff to vaccinate about 70% of cattle in Lokori division during the 1984 drought. Since the Turkana dislike vaccinating their cattle during droughts, this was quite an accomplishment, which could only happen because Kaalinyang's word to his followers is final.

An *adakar* can be led by both a "General" and *Emuron* (seer), whereby the seer guides and blesses the combat activities of the "General" who executes the dreams of the former. There is mutually shared leadership here. An *adakar* leader may be a rich man who has gained respect by his generosity and good pastoral conduct. An example for this comes from Lokiriana, where two rich men lead *ngadakar*. An ex-chief may wield leadership long after he has actually retired. For example, one ex-chief who now heads an *adakar* has been a very effective contact camel owner in camel project implementation. It is important to note that all those types of leaders command respect from the group of families that follow them.

Another illustration of the importance of the *ngadakar* groupings is in the initiation of peace (*ekisil*) with hostile neighbours. The catalyst for such peace processes springs from this level because these are the groups who feel the perils of raids.

Members of an *adakar* join together into a group during the peak of the dry season, when water and grazing are scarcest and the need for security greatest. At insecure dry season grazing areas, the members must be very strong and armed so as to be ready to defend themselves against invaders. During the wet season the members disperse to the plains, and as the dry conditions again set in the members converge gradually to the main *adakar*. As the Turkana pastoralists move about in the plains during the short wet season (three months maximum) they still know their *adakar* leader, while for the rest of the year they are together with or are converging towards their *adakar* leader. During a long drought, or in those *ngadakar* that have opted to graze across the national borders, members are permanently with their *adakar* leader.

Table I: Types of Ngadakarín

Name of Adakar	Type of Leader	Number of Households	Location
Lokwarasimoe	General	40 - 60	Lokichoggio
Adaku Lotonea	General	40 - 80	Lokipoto
Akadae / Apamulele	General/Seer	30 - 50	Oropoi
Adakar Aram	Seer	40 - 80	Naroo
Ikapolon Lodunga	ex-Chief	30 - 50	Napusimoru
Ngibelianga (Lochoito)	Rich Man	20 - 30	Nadikam
Lolupukongu	Rich Man	40 - 60	Lokiriama
Losikei	General	40 - 80	Kotaruk
Natuba	Seer	40 - 50	Lorengekippe
Ekalale	Seer	40 - 50	Loriu
Ngikoi (Ekatukon)	Ex-Chief	40 - 60	Lotikippi
I. Lomurukai	Councillor	20 - 30	Naremit

The Turkana Rehabilitation Project mobile team carried out a survey of *ngadakarín* in the District and found a total of 300 in number during 1986-87. The major *ngadakarín* probably number between 100 - 200. The foregoing description of the *adakar* will hopefully dispel the notion that this structural unit is transient and vague.

The *Adakarín* as Decision-making Units

Each *adakar* has its own "parliament," the *ekitoingikiliok* or "tree of men," where they usually conduct their meetings. Members of an *adakar*, who may number from 10 - 20 heads of families, meet daily under the "tree of men" after their daily management chores. Their *adakar* leader is usually present. A very eloquent orator is selected as a spokesman whenever the group wants to present a joint decision that they have made, to another *adakar* or to a government officer. The eldest person blesses the opening of meeting with a prayer.

The subject matter in these meetings consists of: when, where and how to move from the present site, routine security patrols, proper use of watering points, disease outbreaks, cases of adultery, concubines, thefts of animals and murders. These subjects are discussed and are sometimes finalised in the meeting. Each head of family takes the results of the daily deliberations to his household in the evening. They share the message with household members and

give their response, which may be further deliberated in the next meeting. The meetings are characterised by long discussions between equals and decisions are arrived at by consensus. Some cases may be referred to the chief but the majority of cases are a matter for *adakar* members only.

Use of *Ngadakar* as an Extension Entry Point

For extension work it is important to realise that *adakar* membership is dynamic, for membership requires success in pastoralism.

The *adakar* is the best place to meet pastoralists, rather than at the wells where they are busy watering their livestock. The *adakar* units are usually found in the peripheral areas of the District, which are rather remote from the livestock development centres and appear to be insecure, on the face of it, but in actual fact are not insecure for extension workers.

All efforts should be made by extension workers to exploit the *ngadakar* as a target entry point. Pastoralists' decisions to vaccinate cattle on a large scale comes at this level, and therefore the target for vaccination messages should be the *adakar* leader. The moment you convince him you have won over all the *adakar* members. As noted above, a case in point was the successful vaccination coverage of cattle in South Turkana after convincing Kaalinyang, the *adakar* leader, to vaccinate his own animals first.

For an extension worker to enter this communication channel, he can either go through the chief of the area, who will introduce him, or if the extension worker is already familiar with the *adakar*, he can go directly and join them at their "tree of men." A gift of tobacco is very appreciated by the *adakar* assembly and speeds up their acceptance of the extension workers.

However, once the extension worker has entered the "tree of men," he has to exercise patience and wait until he is invited to talk. Messages on rinderpest vaccination campaigns, tick and worm control, range management, and dam construction can be presented in this "parliament." The extension worker must allow the old people to discuss the problem. If indeed it is a felt need, it is possible for them to decide on what to do there and then. Some problems have to be left with them to sleep on and return with the decision later.

The extension worker will be assured of active dialogue, in which all the members of the *adakar* assembly actively participate.

One characteristic of the Turkana pastoralists is that if they have said "no" it is indeed "no." If it is "yes," it a big "yes"! This kind of frankness can help the extension worker to assess the situation early in the proceedings and make adjustments in his approach accordingly.

The Relevance of other Social Institutions for Extension

The Main Homestead or Nuclear Family (awi)

After the *adakar*, the next extension target group is the main homestead (*awi*), where the family head is domiciled. These main homesteads are scattered throughout the plains and along water courses that criss-cross these plains. Most able-bodied men are absent much of the year from the *awi*, managing the family livestock within *adakar* groups; residents of the *awi* tend therefore to be the old people, women and young children. The old people remaining in their *awi* also have their "tree of men." Whereas extension messages directed at the *adakar* level would mainly be concerned with cattle management, the messages to the main homestead should involve goat, sheep and camel and calf management. The target group at the *awi* level would be women, since they are the major managers of smallstock, camels and young calves, although the decision to effect the messages is made by the male head of the family. Fortunately, the old husbands allow women to sit behind the men and listen at their "tree of men" meetings, at the *awi*. This target group of women was utilised to good advantage during implementation of a recent Turkana camel development project and a CCPP (Contagious Caprine Pleuro-Pneumonia) control project.

Another feature of the *awi* which is relevant for extension is that the head of the homestead may own a known and recognised number of valuable trees along the river banks and claim these as his or her own *Ekwar*. This *Ekwar* consists mainly of *Acacia tortillis* (vernacular name = *ewoi*) trees which are jealously watched by their owners. The *awi* is therefore a good target group for indigenous tree conservation projects.

The Section (Ekitela)

The *ekitela* has been referred to above as the territorial sections of the Turkana. A number of *ngadakar* combine together to form an *ekitela* with a defined grazing pattern.

Range management development structures like dams, and other initiatives like browse development or deferred grazing must be designed according to a sound knowledge of the grazing patterns in each *ekitela*.

The Clan (Emachar)

A clan (*emachar*) consists of closely-related extended families, but their homesteads need not be located near each other. The clan cuts across the territorial sections known in Turkana as *ekitela*, so that the members of the same *emachar* could be members, for example, of the Ngikwatela section of north Turkana or of the Ngisongoka section of South Turkana.

The animals of the *emachar* have common brands that are used by the clan members to identify and claim animals if they have strayed away, been

stolen or even to eat in time of dire need. Clan members can claim a share of the bride wealth when a daughter of an *emachar* member gets married. Similarly clan members are supposed to contribute to the marriage expenses of a male relative.

It is not possible to use the *emachar* grouping for livestock development intervention as they are not localised. However, members of the same *emachar* can delay a migration schedule of an *adakar* out in the grazing areas if they have not finished their clan rituals. The *adakar* leader has to take such obligations into consideration before moving, and the extension worker will like wise take note of this.

Other Channels of Communication Relevant for Extension

It can be concluded from the above description that the *adakar*, with its "tree of men," is an important traditional communication channel that could be utilised by the extension worker. Other communication channels include the *baraza*, which is the official government channel of communication, and secondly, person-to-person communication between individual pastoralists.

The Baraza

In Turkana District, the *baraza* - public meeting - has been a very popular mode among government officers for delivering messages to the public, but these meetings mostly take place in towns. The nomadic pastoralist is only rounded up to attend the *baraza*, from the shops where he has come to buy his tobacco. All government officers who are invited to address such meetings usually do so in Kiswahili (the national language) to the intense boredom of the pastoralists who do not understand anything being said in these long meetings. The public are supposed to be on the receiving end and there is no time allowed for them to talk. They just remain passive up to the end of the meeting.

Person-to-Person Channels of Communication

This mode of passing messages is quite dramatic in Turkana. Messages can traverse the vast wilderness like bush fire; for example, news about raids, rains, and disease outbreaks travels by word of mouth very quickly. For extension work, this is the most accurate method of passing messages to the pastoral communities, because the extension worker communicates directly with them. But its shortcoming is expense, as the extension worker must move from one head of family to another, giving out messages.

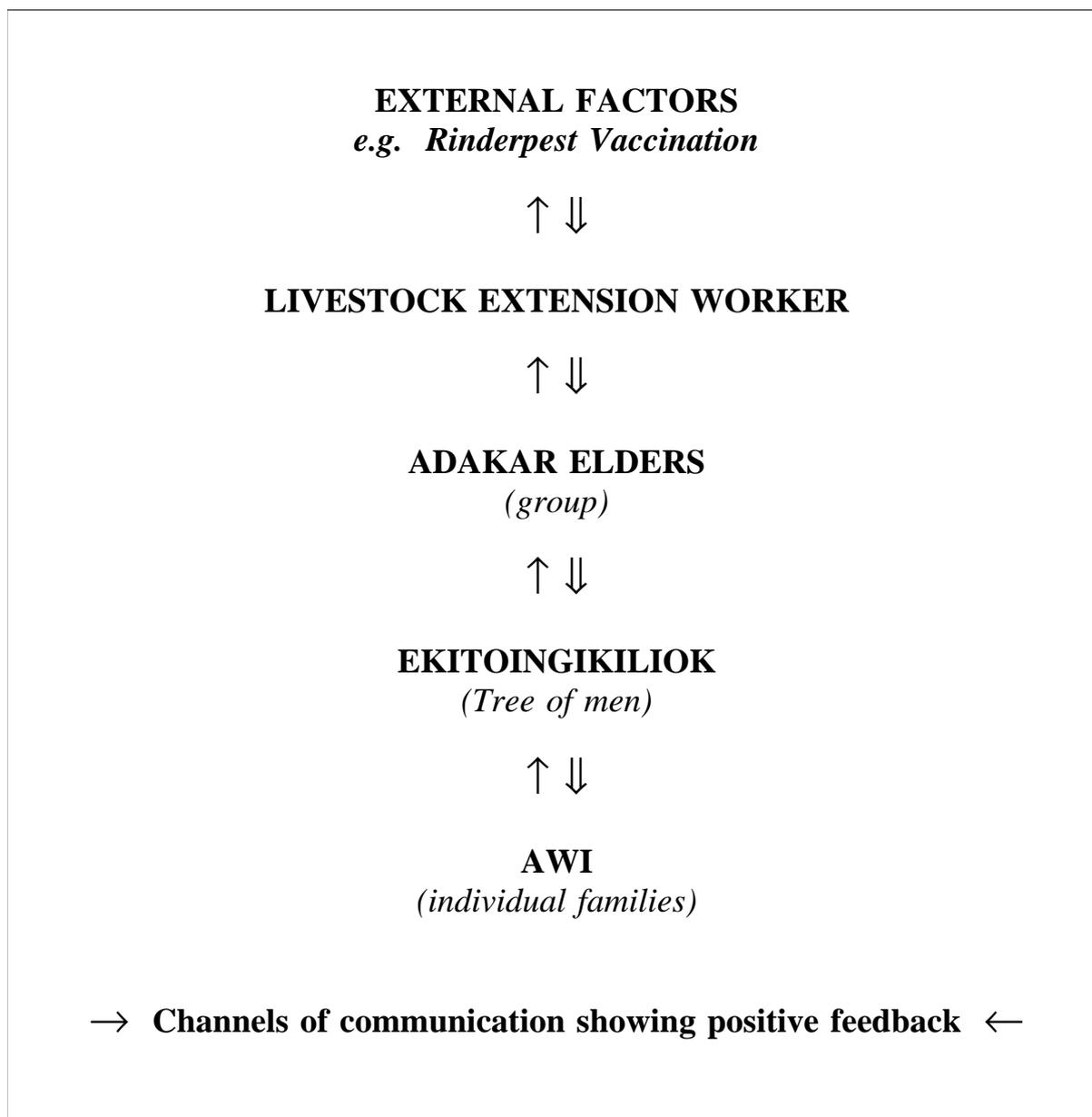


Figure 1: Channel of Communication from the Livestock Extension Worker to Elders through *Ekitoingikiliok* Assembly

APPLICATION OF A PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH: THE "TREE OF MEN" MEETING

The traditional meeting of elders at the "tree of men" (*ekitoingikiliok*) is a very effective channel of communication with Turkana pastoralists (see Fig. 1). But the Ministry of Livestock Development in collaboration with the staff of the Mobile Extension Team (Turkana Rehabilitation Project) have further improved the vigour of discussion between the pastoralists and extension agents by introducing a participative approach. Two projects within the District have been

successfully rooted among pastoralists by the use of this method; these were the Camel Development Project and the Paraveterinary Training Project. There are two alternative venues for conducting such participative meetings: one can be at the "tree of men," or else the leaders of *ngadakarín* can be invited for a residential five day seminar at the livestock development centres. The message eventually filters back to the *awi* when the elders go back home.

The details of how the participative approach has been practically applied among the Turkana pastoralists are a separate topic. It suffices to end here by noting that because of the intimacy built into the participative method, it offers the extension worker that rare chance of drawing upon the accumulated experience and knowledge of the pastoralists.

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