

**Research Project on Improved Food Crop
Marketing through Appropriate Means of
Transport for Poor Farmers in Uganda**

Institutional Histories

By

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1 Introduction

Rural transport has been identified as a major problem for poor farmers in Uganda. The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture which is one of government key economic reforms that is aimed at increased agricultural production, acknowledges that the questions around the transportation of agricultural inputs and produce marketing and how its improvements benefit the poor and contribute towards poverty eradication should be high on the priority.

The *Improved Food Crop Marketing through Appropriate Transport for Poor Farmers in Uganda* project was about how to manage successfully the introduction of Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs) to poor farmers. It was an action research project on introducing and validating IMTs in three districts of Kasese, Katakwi and Iganga districts. A credit system for IMTs was created and indicators to show impact and quality of the credit system were designed to look at lessons to learn from the process during the project duration. The project process involved understanding further the farmers' response on the introduction of IMTs towards their livelihood. One way of understanding this is by closely monitoring this process through quarterly meetings of project partners sharing experiences.

2 Project Conceptualization

This project was conceived at the East African Agricultural Stakeholders Workshop that took place in Thika, Kenya in 1997. It was supported by the DFID. It was realized that farmers require appropriate means of transport to reduce on the transport burden arising from household and livelihood activities. This burden could be reduced largely by use of intermediate means of transport (IMTs). Use of IMTs in form of donkeys, oxen and animal drawn carts is important for the success of agricultural development. There was also a concern of affordability of IMTs by the poor farmers especially women, who would need financial assistance in acquire them. The women's access to IMTs services is insignificant because only a small percentage of women own productive assets and the majority are still incapacitated in participating in acquisition of IMTs. It is worth noting that women form the majority of the population (51%), and practice most of the agricultural roles.

The Ugandan team to the conference developed a proposal soon after the conference entitled *Improved Food Crop Marketing through Appropriate Transport for Poor Farmers in Uganda*.

3 Project Implementation Process

The project commenced with the signing of the contract with the CPHP in April 2002. A Kick-start workshop was held in Jinja with the purpose of enlightening the stakeholders with the main objectives of the project. The purpose was revealed as *"to develop and promote strategies that will improve food security of poor households through increased availability and improved quality of food and better access to markets"*

A baseline study was carried in this period to establish the extent and magnitude of the transport needs and access issues in agricultural marketing process. This formed an improved appreciation and understanding of the poor farmer's transport needs. It also provided a basis for establishment of the IMT credit scheme.

The second year commenced with a Milestone workshop that took place in June 2003. A review of the project was done and project management was requested by the project reviewers to take on partnership building as one of the objectives of the project.

In addition to partnership building there was a request from reviewers to promote Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) methods. This was to enable the beneficiaries (farmers) to participate in monitoring and evaluating the project process themselves rather than having

external monitors and evaluators. The CPHP Region office assisted the TFG in application of PM&E.

3.1 Partner Inventory

The Project implementation involved a number of coalition institutions working together. These were both local and international. The National Resources Institute of University of Greenwich holds the contract with the CPHP. The Transport Forum Group (TFG) is the local partner of the project. The Transport Research Laboratory and Silsoe Research Institute both based in the UK provided specialist input to the project. During the Mid-term Review of 2002, the CPHP Team advised greater role of the local partner (TFG) in the implementation of the programme. There are a number of intermediary organizations that are working in the coalition, these include: Multi-Purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association (MTCEA) in Iganga, Karughe Farmers in Kasese, and Youth With a Mission (YWAM). The specific roles of the partners are shown as below.

Partner	Roles
Transport Forum Group, Uganda	• Coordinating the project • Supervising the facilitating the training programmes for the poor farmers • Supervising the donkey credit system • Preparation of periodic reports • Quality assurance • Developing the partnership between stakeholders
Natural Resources Institute	• Managing partner • Contractual obligations • Knowledge transfer
Transport Research Laboratory	• Transport Economics and Rural Transport input
Silsoe Research Institute	• Animal traction and Ergonomics
Kenya Animal Draught Network	• Lesson learning on animal traction and networking
Multi purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association	• Daily coordination between the farmers and the action research project • Facilitating the training programmes for the farmers • Managing the IMT credit system • Monitor the community uptake the project
Karughe Farmers	• Daily coordination between the farmers and the action research project • Facilitating the training programmes for the farmers • Managing the IMT credit system

	• Monitor the community uptake the project.
Youth With a Mission	• Daily coordination between the farmers and the action research project • Facilitating the training programmes for the farmers • Managing the IMT credit system • Monitor the community uptake the project. • Provision of animal traction knowledge.

3.2 Validation of IMTs

One of the major project objective was to validate the technology for intermediate means of transport. The project team wanted to establish which IMTs were suited for the different farming systems. Following the baseline study, it was realized that the mountainous farming system (Kasese) needed donkeys for the highlands and oxen for the lowlands, oxen for Iganga & Katakwi districts. As the project continued, the Katakwi farmers realized that donkeys are not rustled by the Karamajong cattle rustlers, it was therefore found useful stock donkeys instead of oxen. At the first partnership meeting Kasese farmers convinced Iganga farmers that donkeys are loving working-animals and consequently Iganga requested for introduction of donkeys in their area. The following were the key lessons in regard to the validation of IMTs:

- (i) Farmers are reluctant to take on a new technology unless they prove themselves that it is useful to them.
- (ii) Farmers IMT need change with time. In Kasese for instance, whereas the PRA revealed that the farmers did not want the bicycles, in the second year of the project they demanded for the bicycles.
- (iii) Animal care is crucial for IMT uptake. Many donkeys died due to lack of sufficient veterinary care.
- (iv) Artisans who were trained under the project had a strong backup role for the uptake of the animal-carts. This is because the animal-carts require back-up services.
- (v) IMT introduction requires significant investment to ensure a critical mass. The involvement of the private sector, and political leadership sympathy are important.
- (vi) The project registered some difficulty in optimally utilizing the IMTs. In Kasese for instance ox-carts lay idle due to their poor designs and lack of training of farmers. IMT utilisation for some IMTs has therefore not been optimized.

3.3 Partnership Building

Though partnership building was not one of the original plans of the project and was conceived in the second year, it became an important objective of the project. Partnership building was seen as a tool for sustainability of the project regarding the uptake of IMTs even after the expiry of the project. In order for the project team to develop action research capacity especially regarding the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), experts were drawn from NRI to help the team in this function. Another method used in achieving the partnership building process, quarterly partnership meetings where the stakeholders and farmers would meet to share their experiences and agree on the way forward were introduced. This proved successful. In addition to networking between the above project management team, there was strong partnership building with the following external stakeholders below:

Partner	Roles	Sector
Kasese Local Government	Local Government leadership	Government
Katakwi Local Government	Local Government leadership	Government
Iganga Local Government	Local Government leadership	Government
Triple W Engineering Ltd, Kenya	Animal Cart Artisan Training	Private
First African Bicycle Office	Bicycle Credit scheme	Non Governmental
Serere Agricultural Research Institute	Agricultural Research	Governmental
Technology for Rural Animal Power, Kamwenge	Animal Traction Training	Non Governmental
Sasakawa Global 2000	Networking	Non Governmental
Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture	Networking	Government
Ministry of Agriculture	Animal health	Governmental
CPHP Regional office	Technical backstopping	Donor/Research

The TFG found out the following lessons as crucial in partnership building:

- (i) There is need to enter into agreement with a partner by specifying the areas of partnerships. This could be in many forms like contracts or informal agreements.
- (ii) There is need to have resources in order to effectively network and partner with other stakeholders. The resources do not necessarily mean money; however, human resources, logistics and communication are crucial.
- (iii) In order to promote partnerships, TFG realized that it was important for the partners to have the commitment of working together. The commitment could take various forms including voluntarism, correct decision-making, visioning, and teamwork.
- (iv) Partnerships with government agencies were weak and lacked commitment from the Government officials. The civil servants on many occasions would provide an impression that they wish the project well but in practice there was nothing on the ground to show this. For instance, Veterinary officials let the project down by not providing the much-needed animal care in Kasese District.
- (v) Despite having agreements with some NGOs, some are not cooperative, as they have wished. The TFG contract with Technology for Rural Animal Power (TRAP) in Kasese did not succeed despite having paid the agency to provide training services.

3.4 Credit Scheme for IMTs

The credit scheme targeted farmer groups although some individuals accessed the scheme. Introduced IMTs were made available to farmers at 60% of their cost price excluding transport and initial animal care costs. The Project covered the remaining 40% cost, and the other associated costs such as transport, training and initial animal welfare. Given that there were very few IMTs currently in use in the villages (with the exception of the bicycle) it was deemed

appropriate that a certain amount of subsidy was required in order to stimulate villagers' interest in the technology, and reduce the risk involved with making a substantial investment. There were two lending windows. One option was for farmers to give an offspring of a donkey (foal) to another poor farmer; and the other option was to pay 60% of the cost price of the IMT in four installments over one year. **Table 1** shows the IMT distribution in the project area.

Table 1: Distribution of IMTs in the project area.

IMTs	Iganga	Kasese	Katakwi	Total
Oxen	30	2	6	38
Donkeys	17	47	24	88
Ox-ploughs	17	1	5	23
Ox- Carts	12	2	-	15
Donkey Carts	5	3	5	13
Bicycles by FABIO	-	80	70	150
Total	81	135	110	329

The lessons learnt in credit system management are as follows:

- (i) Poor people are reluctant to pay back credit despite subsidies. For instance, Iganga had 51%, Kasese had a 38% and Katakwi had a 52% repayment rate over the two-year action research period. However, some farmers received their IMTs late.
- (ii) The demand for IMTs takes long to be generated, as farmers have to learn the benefits of the IMT from fellow farmers. Once this was achieved then the demand rose remarkably beyond the capacity of the project.
- (iii) A credit system needs to run for a long period usually longer than the project term. There is therefore need to introduce the credit scheme to either the private sector or Local Government for uptake purposes. In this respect, intermediaries have taken over management of the remaining payments for further purchase of IMTs in the project area. However, TFG will have to give a no-objection to the use of the fund.
- (iv) Intermediary agencies are effective in managing the credit scheme. This however requires the supervision of the higher institution like the way the TFG had been monitoring.
- (v) Repayment is dependant on the agricultural production output. In case of drought or famine the repayment rate is low and the repayment period longer.
- (vi) The credit scheme is successful in case it has no political intonation. In case of political interests, it is unlikely for farmers to pay back the money.
- (vii) Women were better credit settlers compared to men.
- (viii) Credit system was not as efficient as we had planned it to be.

3.5 Lessons Learnt

During the term of the project a lot of lessons have been learnt. Already some of the lessons learnt have been provided in the preceding sections. Below are some of the general lessons learnt.

3.5.1 Role of Local Government in Research Information Flow

The local government leadership was seen as a major partner for the framework for the poor farmers to access agricultural research information. It was seen as a vital linkage between the researchers on one hand and the users on the other.

The local government system was seen as a more durable and sustainable intermediary institution compared to both NGOs and the private sector especially after the project expiry date. For research information to be effectively adopted and uptake by the farmers achieved, it requires time, which is usually longer than the research or project duration. It also requires a framework for monitoring the progress, and local governments are best suited to perform this function.

Secondly, the leadership can help connect farmers to researchers by voicing out the farmer's needs. The leadership can play a potential role in up-scaling best practices, or sourcing researchable issues from their local communities for the researchers thereby articulating supply and demand for research.

However, this project realized that though the local government has a high potential for research information flow, it became apparent that there are some constraints within the local government system that need to be addressed if it is to play effectively its role in the research information flow framework. For instance, though the Local Government officials were involved in the project process right from the beginning, the team saw the leadership reluctance to promote the project best practice both at the higher local government level and for replication purposes elsewhere. Farmers in Kasese, for instance wanted more donkeys to help in marketing their crops, the local leadership was not willing to respond to this demand despite having resources and realizing their role in contributing to increased production. It was realized that the local government reluctance was due to fact that the project was not owned or initiated within the District Development Plans under the local government development programmes.

From the project outcome, it was also realized that research information flow issues are not a priority within the local government system. The local government leadership has generally not clearly recognised that research information flow is one of their local leadership mandates. They are yet to relate research outputs as an important ingredient of local level planning. A review of local government's district development plans (DDP) reveals that research information is currently not used in formulation of district agricultural planning processes and there are researchable issues that are not being brought to the attention of researchers by those in leadership. The local government agricultural planning process does not integrate research outputs into the District Development Plans and Sub-county Development Plans.

The research team spent considerable effort trying to integrate the project of animal traction within the respective local government programmes with no success. The key lesson here is that understanding research information flow issues in the local government system is crucial and we suggest that further investigations is required if research demand and supply issues are to be articulated.

3.5.2 Experience of the Project With National Programmes Like PMA and NAADS

Though the PMA documents highlight the importance of rural transport and animal traction and officials from the PMA secretariat used to attend our meetings, there was no direct appreciation of our project by the programmes. In Iganga where NAADS was active, the project components were not included neither in the District nor sub county development plans. It is unlikely that the national programmes despite the heavy demand by the poor farmers will up-scale the research project components and/or replicate the project as best practices for poverty alleviation programme. The programme leadership has not made any commitment for uptake purposes.

3.5.3 Appropriate Means of Transport as Facilitators of Agricultural Marketing

Transport was confirmed as a critical marketing problem. IMTs were seen not only as facilitators of cost-effective crop marketing leading to higher prices for the products but had also impacted the health and income status of the poor farmers especially the women. The following were the benefit seen in the project according to users:

- (i) Time and cost saving
- (ii) Reduced workload and head loading
- (iii) Better health
- (iv) More income generating opportunities
- (v) Greater feeling of well-being
- (vi) Increased food production
- (vii) Children miss school less
- (viii) More local development

Use of IMT has therefore been seen as profitable as Table 2 illustrates.

Table 2 Profitability of IMTs, Annual Net Benefits (Total Income in Ug Shs)

	Ox Cart Plus Plough (2 Oxen)	Ox Cart (2 Oxen)	Donkey Cart (1 Donkey)	Donkey As Pack Animal (1donkey)
Annual benefit until loan is paid (labour costed)	193,925	-296,113	-54,560	-134,900
Annual benefit until loan is paid (Labour NOT costed)	558,925	66,887	127,940	47,600

Source: Kleih: Discussion Paper on the Utilisation and Profitability of IMTs, NRI, December. 2004, CPHRP Project R8114

Despite the impressive profitability shown above, it was realized by the team that IMT Transport is yet to be integrated into mainstream agricultural research. In other words, transport does not receive the priority it ought to be given by the agricultural researchers.

3.5.4 Ability of the Project Team to Respond to the Reviewers' Comments

The project team especially after the first year of implementation had to respond to the reviewers' comments, which were not part of the original project output design. However, the team developed the capacity to meet these requirements in a relatively short time. The main concepts the team responded to were to learn how to develop the following:

- (i) Partnership Building;
- (ii) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation; and
- (iii) Institutional Histories.

This would not have been possible without the assistance of the NRI and the Regional Office of the CPHP in Kampala.

3.5.5 Concerns About the Poor

There were concerns whether our project targeted the poor. It was realized our project could not cater for the poorest of the poor. The poorest of the poor could not afford to pay back for the IMTs. It was realized that the poorest of the poor benefit indirectly by borrowing the IMTs from the beneficiary farmers, and/or being employed as animal tenders or IMT operators.

3.5.6 Dissemination and Publications

We have shared our project experiences with a number of stakeholders. This has been in a number of ways:

- (i) Study Tours;

- (ii) Partnership Workshops;
- (iii) Trainings; and
- (iv) Courtesy visits.

We have published a number of issues papers both locally and internationally. However, a local journal entitled the Forum News was abandoned due to too much work at the TFG Secretariat. The following are the key publications undertaken:

- (i) Improved Food Crop Marketing through Appropriate Transport for Marketing for Poor Farmers in Uganda, NRI Report No. 2734, Project A1046, United Kingdom, May 2003.
- (ii) Rural Transport and Livelihood, Uganda Journal of Agricultural Sciences, Volume 9 Issue 1, September 2004.
- (iii) Building Partnership for Sustainable Rural Transport Development: The Case of Introducing IMTs in Kasese, Iganga and Katakwi Districts of Uganda, Forum News, IFRTD Update 4, IFRTD Secretariat, UK October 2004.