

The delivery of veterinary services to the poor: a framework for analysis

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Collaborators:

The World Bank, Washington; IFAD, Rome; FAO, Rome; KARI, Nairobi, Kenya; FARM AFRICA, Nairobi
UNIVET, Bolivia; CIPCA, Bolivia; SOAS, London; INDO-SWISS PROJECT, Hyderabad, India.

Executive Message



Improving animal healthcare can benefit
livelihood security

- Until recently African veterinary services had not traditionally targeted resource poor farmers so leaving them unable to seek animal healthcare because of their lack of knowledge regarding appropriate services.
- Following the collapse of many 'free' state run veterinary services in developing countries, and thus the need for cash to pay for treatments and drugs many farmers are now effectively constrained from using these vet services.
- Despite their lack of resources poor livestock owners still have sophisticated animal health needs.
- Women and men differ in their preferences and choice of animal healthcare providers and the purchase of livestock drugs. One of the interim findings of this DFID project is that policies to

improve the veterinary services of poor people must account for both gender differences and deficiencies in farmer knowledge.

- The fieldwork also showed that how livestock are proportionally more important for the poorest of the poor and that sharing arrangements are changing. In the past, better-off farmers often loaned livestock to the poor, but the need for cash to pay school fees is rapidly degrading traditional welfare arrangements.
- This study has developed a *Livestock Poverty Assessment* methodology for identifying resource poor livestock keepers, which can be used to improve the delivery of veterinary services.

Background

In most developing countries, veterinary services have never targeted poor livestock owners. Historically, the prevailing wisdom was that poor people did not keep livestock or kept such small numbers that the provision of animal healthcare was uneconomic. This thinking has now been revised and livestock keepers are now seen as one of the largest subsets of global poor with an estimated one third of poor people rearing livestock. There is now a desire by aid organizations to identify projects that have a real impact on poor people.

It is widely thought that one of the best means of increasing food and livelihood security is through improvements to animal healthcare. However major hurdles still exist that prevent the introduction of relevant programmes that target poor people.

These include the following:

- Identifying poor families who keep livestock is difficult.
- There is a lack of information regarding the animal healthcare needs of the poor.
- Livestock share-rearing arrangements, an important form of social capital, have not been studied in a systematic manner.
- Methodologies to assess the impact of animal healthcare projects on poverty reduction are poorly developed. Many participatory techniques are either inappropriate to livestock development or biased in their assumptions having been developed for better off and better educated farmers.

Objectives

This project set out to plug the knowledge gap on how to deliver veterinary services to poor farmers. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To create a *Livestock Poverty Assessment Methodology* that enables poor livestock keeping households to be successfully targeted.
- To examine whether livestock share-rearing arrangements can be used as an indicator of human, social and financial capital for the poor.
- To assess key parameters important to the uptake of animal healthcare projects by the poor.
- To enhance policy recommendations that improve the delivery of veterinary services to the poor throughout the world by identifying perceptions of their own poverty as seen by the poor themselves.
- To critically analyse dissemination mechanisms used in participatory livestock development schemes by exploring the impact and uptake of a variety of formal and informal methods.

Highlights

The overall goal of the project was to ‘improve the performance of livestock belonging to poor people through the control of disease’. Nevertheless, as the project progressed, it was clear that animal health was only one of a variety of constraints that poor people faced with regard to their livestock. The researchers thus adopted a broader mandate with a strong animal health component which analysed the role of livestock as a way of alleviating poverty.

The research concentrated on three countries: Kenya, Bolivia & India where it collaborated directly with over 85 institutions varying from multi-lateral donors to community-based and religious organisations involved in the livestock sector on three continents. Issues in livestock-based livelihoods were investigated at national, community and household levels through stakeholders meetings, focus groups, participatory exercises and individual interviews. Over 280 communities participated covering 4,000 poor households.

The fieldwork for Kenya was completed in 1999 and a Livestock Poverty Assessment (LPA) Kenyan Country Document prepared for distribution to collaborators. The Bolivian portion of the fieldwork started in April 2000 and both it and the Indian study were completed during 2000.

An Action Research Framework was used to produce five primary outputs.

- A *Livestock Poverty Assessment Methodology*, based upon participatory methods that enables stakeholders to identify and better understand key livelihood constraints. An ancillary output was an analysis of bias inherent in the application of participatory methods.
- An assessment of the role of livestock in the livelihoods of the poor was performed to seek evidence of the importance of livestock as a form of human, social and financial capital. An additional output was the creation of a *Simplified Livelihood Framework* to assess livelihoods.
- The identification and measurement of key parameters important to the uptake of veterinary services by the poor where they are seen as real consumers of animal healthcare.
- Recommendations to enhance the poverty impacts on poverty of this livestock development policy
- A comparison of different means of disseminating research findings.

Key initial findings from the fieldwork in Kenya are as follows:

- Poor livestock keepers are sophisticated consumers of livestock services.
- Needs regarding the quality and standard of services varied according to the gender of the respondent. Indeed, the influence of gender on consumer behaviour appears to be more important than the production system or prevailing environmental conditions.
- Livestock are just one part of a diverse livelihood portfolio that the poor pursue.
- Livestock are proportionally more important for the poor at the bottom of the spectrum than for those at the top.
- Livestock share-rearing arrangements are an important form of social capital. However, the nature of these relationships is changing. The need to participate in the formal market economy and generate cash for food and school fees is limiting the role of livestock in non-market transactions and relationships of mutual assistance. This means that the ability of the poor to gain access to this form of social capital is decreasing.

Impact

The importance of this type of work cannot be underestimated if we are to understand what type of animal healthcare services are needed and how to deliver them to the poorest families involved in livestock keeping. The projects findings will be of considerable help to policy makers and farmers alike. Clients of the *Livestock Poverty Assessment: A methodology* (LPA), developed by this project to identify poor livestock keeping households are likely to include CGIAR centres, research institutes, governments, donors, NGOs and the farmers and pastoralists. They will benefit from better targeted more appropriate animal healthcare projects.

Understanding poor families perspective of livestock, as a means of both acquiring and maintaining social capital, is fundamental to improving the impact and uptake of both animal healthcare and livestock development projects. The analysis of livestock share-rearing arrangements that this research will provide is a crucial part of the knowledge that animal health care providers need, so that they can deliver appropriate services that are needed and can be paid for by poor livestock farmers.

This research also identifies key parameters of assessment that can be used to measure the uptake of animal healthcare programmes by the poor. A lack of such tools has been a weakness of monitoring and evaluation systems of previous animal healthcare programmes. Donors, NGOs and governments will gain from the improved cost-effectiveness and sustainability of programmes by creating a system that evaluates needs prior to project implementation and determines poverty impact after start up. Herders and farmers will also benefit from projects that are directly responsive to their needs.

Dissemination

As well as presenting information from this DFID funded project to conferences and workshops researchers are using a number of novel and exciting pathways for dissemination.

Web site: A web site describing the research and preliminary findings can be found at: www.livestockdevelopment.org

A series of briefing papers of preliminary findings from the fieldwork have been distributed by e-mail and via the web. Findings from the fieldwork will also be given directly to the communities via

videos. A video has been produced on *Issues in the Delivery of Veterinary Services to the Poor in India*, and a Virtual Centre on Livestock and Learning is under development.

Meetings /Presentations

UK: Development Studies Association symposium on 'Livestock and Poverty', University of Bath, Sept. 1999.

Kenya: Workshop: *Animal Healthcare Providers of North Eastern and Eastern Kenya*. Garissa, November 1999.

USA: *The Delivery of Veterinary Services to the Poor: Findings from Kenya*. International Society of Veterinary Epidemiologists conference, Fort Collins, Colorado, 2000.

Italy: A meeting of research collaborators discussed progress, inputs and a framework for a donor-led consortium to study issues in the delivery of veterinary services to the poor. Rome April 2000.

India: The Poor as Consumers of Animal Healthcare: The case of Kenya. Paper presented at the international conference: *Small Holder Livestock Production Systems in Developing Countries: Opportunities and Challenges*, November 2000, Thissur, Kerala.

Selected Publications

Several publications are being prepared including: *Livestock, Women and Poverty: A case study of gender and consumer preferences regarding veterinary services*. In *Livestock and Poverty: Issues in the Delivery of Veterinary Services to the Poor* ed. Claire Heffernan and Anni McLeod.

Misturelli, F. and Heffernan C. (2001). Perceptions of Poverty Among Poor Livestock Keepers in Kenya: A discourse analysis approach. *Journal of International Development*, 13 pp. 863-875.

Heffernan, C. (2002). Appendix II: Livestock and Livelihoods in *Investing in Animal Health Research to Alleviate Poverty*. (Ed. B. Perry) International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi, Kenya