Proceedings of the Workshop on Social Aspects of Dynamic Poverty Traps in Baringo District Held at Loropili Market/Ngambo 22nd and 28th July 2003

Compiled By

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SADPT Document 2

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Feedback presentation and sharing of preliminary results on Poverty Traps- Part I

By Prof. John McPeak

The first meeting was held on 22nd at Loropili shopping centre. John McPeak presented to the farmers findings from a previous study. The presentation was based on earlier prepared notes (see appendix 1) The findings covered a number of issues:

1. Risk ranking
2. Livestock issues
3. Income
4. Development issues

Risk ranking. Farmers were asked to rank a number of risks in order of importance to their households. Their ranking was as shown in the box below.

Box 1. Ranking of risks in order of importance to the households

1. Not enough food
2. Human sickness
3. Animal diseases/deaths/raiding
4. High prices for goods
5. Lack of market for livestock

There was a general agreement with the results in the ranking except for human sickness, which had been indicated as number one, and animal sickness as number five in the results. Tuberculosis and malaria were cited as the most common and serious diseases.

Livestock issues. A number of observations from the results were discussed by the meeting and the following emerged:

1. Currently, market for livestock and prices are favorable to the farmer because of functioning livestock auctions
2. Households with off-farm incomes (salaried) are the principal owners of large stock because they have money that can readily be converted into other things. Households without an exogenous income prefer the small ruminants, which can more readily be sold for cash to access food and other daily needs.
3. In the past small stock was usually exchanged for the large stock. Currently, it is being done on a minimal scale because the Kenya shilling as a unit of exchange has dominated the transactions. Female goats are sold between households for breeding purposes and are more expensive than the male goats. Male goats are sold through public auction at Marigat. The few female goats sold through auction are usually defective (have problems) and are cheaper than those sold inter-household in the rural areas.
4. The number of female stock kept per household is more than the male stock. The females are for breeding to increase and maintain the herd/flock. There is no optimum number of livestock a household can own. The more the better.
5. Changes in livestock type and number per household were attributed to births (mostly), deaths and purchases. Deaths due to droughts have remained constant all through! This may be the proportion of livestock that dies or the proportion that remains. The point needs to be clarified since droughts differ in severity.

6. The greatest stimulant for increased livestock off-take was the presence of external buyers since they offered a better price. Other factors influencing increased off-take were: droughts and general family problems especially sickness in the family.
7. In the past, it was easier to give out livestock to a needy neighbor as opposed to now. The difference was attributed to more livestock per household in the past than now and lack of compassion over the poor as it was in the past.

Income. The distribution of income was skewed in favor of a few households. Over a period of time, the greatest source of household income was sale of livestock. Currently crop production is the greatest contributor to household income. Salaries are also becoming important especially with the education of children. Largest proportion of household income was spent on grains and then sugar.

Development issues. The amount of relief available has never been enough to meet the demands of the people. In fact the results showed that the household food needs exceeded the amount of relief food by far. Currently, emphasis is shifting from direct relief to "food for work". The development areas in need of attention were indicated as follows:

- Address human and livestock health issues.
- Need for a framework to guide use of irrigation water so that there is enough for the irrigation scheme and the outskirts
- Agriculture on the outskirts should also be given attention just like it is in the scheme, instead of emphasizing the one in the scheme to the detriment of the outskirts.
- It was also observed that the importance of education does not lie only in the power to attain formal employment but in the improvement of the quality of life of the households with an educated person.

Focussed Group Discussions on the Social Aspects of Dynamic Poverty Traps

The second meeting was held on Monday 28th July 2003. The venue was a farmer's compound where a reasonable number of trees presented a nice shade. The attendance was 21 farmers. We could not separate them into groups because they came at different times, some coming as late as 10 minutes to departure. The discussion was based only on the poverty issues. There was no time to discuss the resource management and use section. This will be covered within the group context at a later stage. Various questions were used as a guide though the discussions were very wide and covered issues beyond the purview of the meeting objectives.

1. What is poverty in this community?

- Total lack of assets
- Being orphaned as a child

2. What are the indicators of poverty?

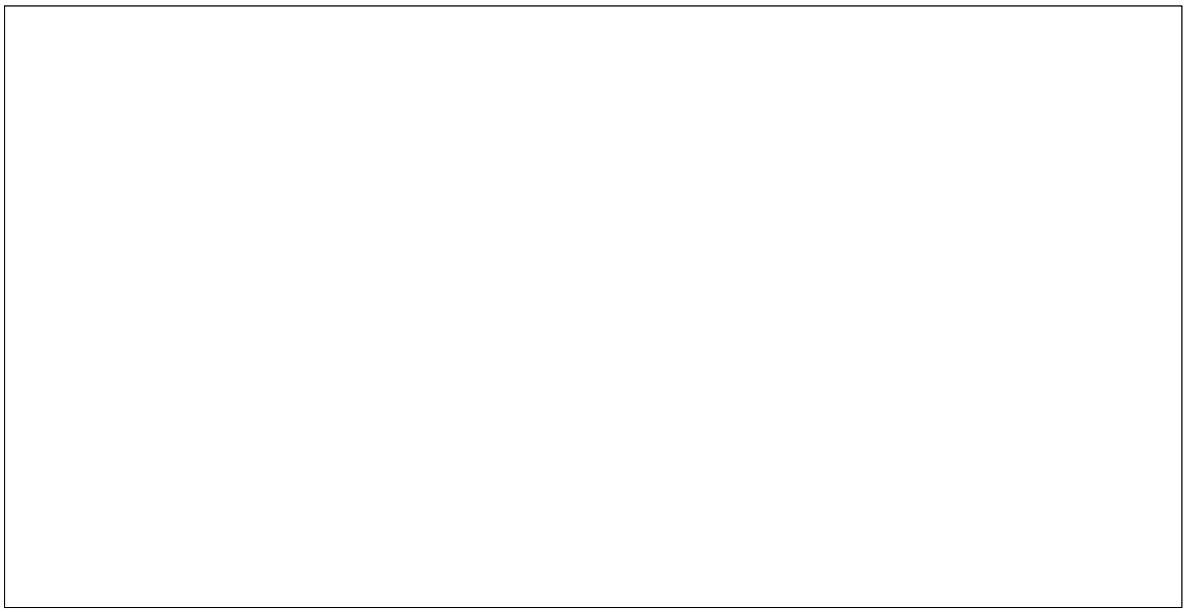
- Lack of livestock (sheep, goats and cattle)
- Persistent borrowing of everything
- Dependence on wild game and wild plants (The Ilchamus depended on wild animals and plants very many years ago when they did not have livestock. It is claimed that only the poor can now depend on wildlife since they have no livestock).
- Lack of basic farming tools and equipment
- Living around and depending on spillovers from rich homesteads

3. Poverty line

The poverty line is embedded in the Ilchamus' (Njemps') saying, 'People differ in five'. This implies that owning less than 5 head of cattle means you're poor. Similarly, having less than 5 goats and 5 sheep combined implies you're poor. This categorization does not incorporate number of children in the household. Crop farming is not considered as a wealth denominator irrespective of the amount of returns. It only makes sense when the income from crop farming is utilized in acquisition of livestock. Similarly, formal employment is not considered in gauging ones wealth status until the income is translated into livestock. Owning property like a vehicle is also not considered as a wealth symbol until the income from the same is utilized in purchase of livestock. What this means is that wealth is livestock owned and their numbers measure the wealth level.

4. Poverty now and in the past. A comparison

The figure below shows the years of drought, famine and poverty among the Ilchamus as mentioned by the farmers during the group discussions.



More than twenty years ago, droughts had more devastating consequences than now, thanks to current relief efforts, ability to move far in search of jobs in towns and diversified sources of income for households. The 1980,s was the most favorable period, experiencing only one drought year unlike the other decades. Since 1990,s there has been a general increase in general poverty levels of households within the community. Increase in poverty levels has been attributed to a number of factors:

(i). Increase in the number of children going to school, resulting in more livestock sales for school fees. Still many children drop out of school during and after droughts compounding the poverty problem.

(ii). Droughts are now accompanied with livestock and human diseases unlike in the past where they occurred solo.

(iii). Increased frequency and severity of floods that sweep away livestock (wealth) and other property to Lake Baringo. This is worsened by unexpected changes in the course of River Perkerra. The floods usually come on the heels of droughts.

(iv). Dwindling crop harvests over the years. In the 1980,s high crop harvests in the irrigation scheme coupled with availability (guaranteed) of market accounted for the booming micro-economies in the region. Currently, a fraction of the land in the irrigation scheme is cultivated annually and this implies a depressed per capita household wealth.

(v). People have diversified into other projects reducing the capital for investment in livestock, thus depressing their numbers and hence a reduction in the number of wealthy households over time.

5. Treatment of the poor by society, now and in the past

People are being treated worse than they were being treated in the past. Indicators;

a. As a poor man it is currently not easy to borrow anything from your neighbor
b. Your opinion on any issue is not valued by society if you are poor

c. The rich no longer invite the poor to feasts even when they are throwing a party.
d. Mothers no longer encourage their sons to invite their age mates to share food, especially if they know that the age mates will not reciprocate.

The reasons for this change in peoples' attitude towards the poor are:

- In the past, people feared a curse from God if they turned away a needy person; a belief that has lost relevancy in the present times.
- Peoples' actions are currently driven by economic thought unlike the past. One thinks that helping a poor person is like pouring water in a bottomless pit; you cannot expect to receive anything in return.
- Some of the poor abuse the generosity of their benefactors by either stealing from them or over-dependency and over-exploitation. This has driven the would-be benefactors into a selfish shell.

6. Number of wealthy households over time in the community

- There has been a general decline in the number of wealthy households within the community, and this was attributed to:
  - Droughts
  - Floods
  - Depression in per capita natural resource availability due to increase in population
  - Diversified investment leaving little to invest in livestock numbers, the principal yardstick for measuring wealth
  - Reduced farming activity in the irrigation scheme
  - Increased livestock sales for fees, healthcare etc, reducing the amount (or is it number!) of wealth owned in households.

7. How people used to escape poverty in the past:

- Managed their livestock through nomadism, where animals were taken to feeding areas far from home for periods of time long enough to allow the return of favorable conditions.
- Community collective preservation of some areas as dry period grazing grounds
- Sale of hides and skins, millet, sorghum and tobacco and investment in purchase of small stock that was in turn bartered for large stock.
- Barter of shoats (sheep and goats) for large bovines (cattle, donkeys, camels etc)
- Marrying off daughters for bride price (wealth or livestock).

8. Did the people really escape poverty at all?

Yes. *The group gave examples of households that were initially poor but managed to escape poverty. A case of an Ilchamus man who was initially poor, but resorted to trade in tobacco, skins and donkeys. He used to trade with the Pokots and during one of his travels came back with Pokot girls who were escaping poverty in their region. He married them off and was paid handsomely in terms of bride price*.

Some people escaped poverty more easily than others while others struggled over many years. Strategies for escaping poverty included the following:

→ Farming. Production of millet and sorghum and exchanging the harvest with small stock. Farming became improved with the presence of the irrigation scheme where crops whose market was guaranteed by the state helped the community access income that was used to acquire livestock.

→ Girls were married off and the bride price used to transform a poor household from poverty to riches.

→ Involvement in small businesses. Trade in hides and skins, donkeys etc. The income was used to purchase livestock

→ Cattle rustling where the Pokots and Turkanas were targeted. This paid off in the short run but was reciprocated by the adversaries. The reciprocation was not a major cause of poverty in the region since only a few households were affected.

→ A child would escape poverty (especially if orphaned) by offering livestock herding services to a wealthy household where payment was made in terms of livestock. These increased in size and number until that time when he was mature enough to marry and start a family. He had enough animals for a wife and spared others wealth. In addition, a child with wealthy parents received animals from the father as a form of inheritance.

→ Borrowing livestock from or being lent livestock by relatives as a soft loan. The poor man got the opportunity to care for the animals after which they multiplied and were shared with the person who loaned or lent them to him.

9. Are the strategies still the same and accessible today?

They are on the most similar but with a few variations.

→ Cattle rustling is no longer done as a way of acquiring wealth. The Pokots have got guns and the long arm of the law is too severe a deterrent for the people to engage in the vice.

→ Marrying off of daughters is no longer an automatic way of becoming rich. The girls are no longer forced to marry anybody and they stay until maturity before marriage irrespective of the household's wealth status. The bride price has also gone so low that it cannot transform a poor household into a wealthy one.

→ Besides borrowing from relatives and friends, people have formed groups where fundraisings (*harambes*) are held through merry-go-round.

→ Businesses are still a way of escaping poverty. In the past, exchanges involved physical goods. Currently, this barter system of trade has been replaced with the use of the Kenya shilling as the unit of exchange. There is an increased level of sophistication where public auctions offer exchange opportunities.

→ Education of children. This is a new phenomenon that is done as a form of insurance for the parents in old age and the whole household. It is assumed that the children will get educated, get good jobs and use their incomes to access livestock (wealth).

10. What pushes the non-poor people to be poor?

1. Droughts. These compounded by disease kill livestock. The droughts also make it impractical to cultivate crops.
2. Old age. This leaves the parents' wealth (livestock) in the hands of children who have no time for them. They mismanage them and sell most of them without a plan. The old parents have no capacity to monitor the activities.
3. Some households do not have enough labor in terms of livestock herders and this is one way through which livestock die from negligence.
4. Education for children. Children going to school mean that the household has to sell livestock to provide school fees. This results in poor households especially in the

short-run, though it is expected that after school, the children will return them by getting employed.

5. Alcoholism. People, especially men who are hooked to the bottle revert to uncontrolled livestock sales to satisfy their demand for beer. This has made some families poor. The group blamed this on industrial beers that are more costly and have to be consumed in large amounts for satisfaction. The local brews were wealth friendly!
6. Floods. These and River Perkerra that has been changing course, have been blamed for carrying stock and other property to Lake Baringo

11. Poverty coping strategies.

When poverty sets in, households had/have to survive. They coped through the following means:

- In the past, people used to eat a form of water lily from Lake Baringo as food. The *endorok* root tuber was boiled and eaten. The "millet-like grains" from the *endorok* were ground and cooked into *ugali* or porridge. This solved the problem of food scarcity during the lean years. The plant is still utilized now in cases of severe droughts, especially for people around the lake.
- Sale of animals when the *Laibon* predicted severe drought in the near future. This was dampened by low animal prices and lack of external buyers who had a higher demand than the local consumers.
- Diversification into other small businesses to enable the households' access food.
- Resettlement on raised grounds to escape floods and the raging divergent water from the Perkerra.

Appendix 1

Ngambo notes

Risk Ranking as introduction.

1-Human Sickness (2)
2-Animal Sickness (3)
3-Not enough food (1)
4-Crop failure (11)
5-Animal loss due to sickness or disease (9)
6-High prices for things you wish to buy (5)
7-Not enough pasture (4)
8-Not enough water (8)
9-Low prices for animals you wish to sell (6)
10-Insecurity (10)
11-No buyers for animals you wish to sell (7)

Human Sickness was consistently ranked as a high concern (number one in all but one period, when it was number two)

Livestock Information

The major herd loss came between March 2000 and December 2000, with the average household losing almost 50% of their livestock in this short period.

March 2000: 4 cattle, 14 sheep and 10 goats.
June 2000: 1 head of cattle, 7 sheep and 10 goats
March 2001: 2 cattle, 8 sheep, and 11 goats.
December 2001: 2 cattle, 14 sheep, 19 goats.

It appears that after suffering a herd loss, households focus first on increasing smallstock (sheep and goats). Is that a strategy? Is that because of the differences in reproduction rates alone? Will households try to move back into cattle, or is there a longer term shift to smallstock oriented herds (and if so, why?).

25% of households owned 50% of the Ngambo livestock herd in March 2000. This is about in the middle for all sites (others more equal, others less equal).

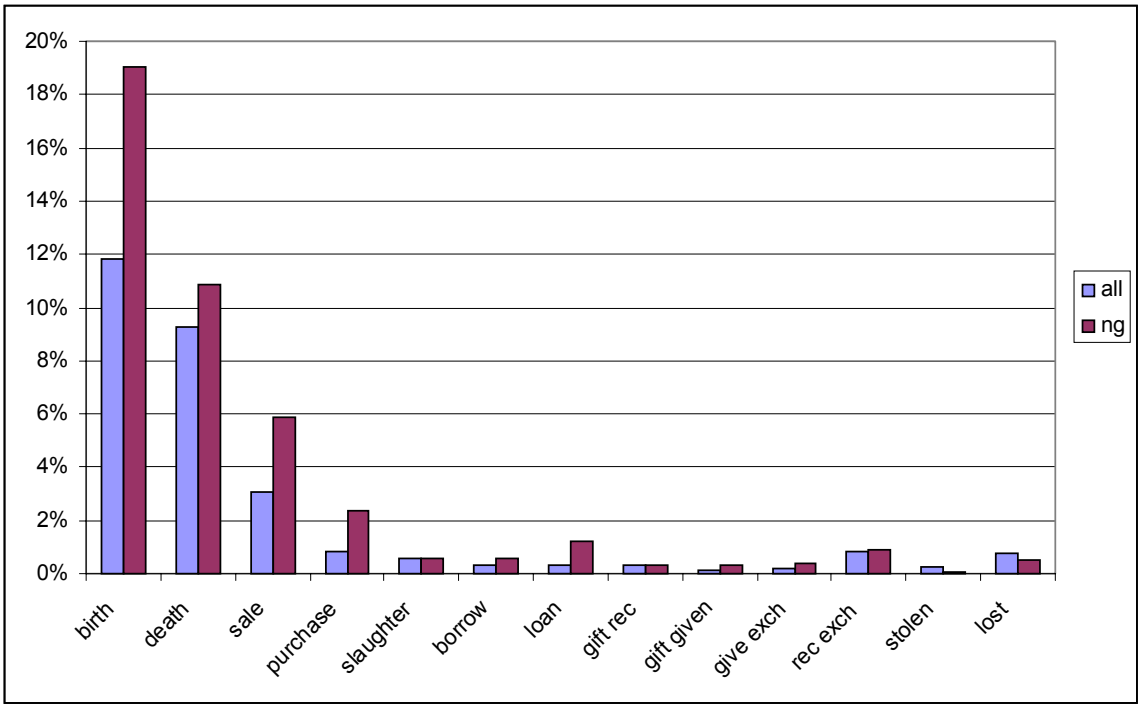
Herds are mainly composed of female animals, with the percent female being around 70%. This is about the same with the other sites.

Sales are primarily of male animals – 77% of animals sold are male. Sales are primarily of goats and sheep, and we also recorded a few cattle being sold. This is about the same pattern we see in our other sites as well.

Change in the herd comes primarily from births and deaths. Sales and purchases follow in order. Births are 10 times more important than purchases for increasing herd size, deaths are 2 times more important than sales for decreasing herd size. Exchange,

slaughter, gifts, loans, lost and stolen animals are all very small in comparison to births, deaths, sales, and purchases.

Markets seem to be better at allowing the sale of male animals than at allowing the purchase of female animals for restocking. Is there anything that can be done to improve your ability to purchase female animals? Does anyone want to? Are you able to exchange among yourselves (our data says no, but perhaps if we record longer we will see it?)



Herders here make almost no use of satellite camps, and use few water points compared to other areas. Mobility of the animals is relatively low.

Milk Production per day by season

	0600	0900	1200	0301	0601	0901	1201
Ng	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.5	1.6	2.7	1.8

There was very little milk at the start of the study period, but by the end, it had increased dramatically.

Income

Average monthly cash income was 1792 shillings per household, higher than the overall average of 1586 for all sites.

Income is relatively concentrated among a few households – 50% of income is received by 11% of the households, which is a higher degree of concentration than most other sites.

Across the sample, there is income diversification. Households in this community earn their income from a variety of sources.

Livestock related sources of income accounted for 30% of total income (compared to 47% for the total sample). However, the largest share of income from any activity was from livestock sales (25%). This was followed by salary (24%), trade contributions (21%), and wage labor (16%). All other sources (milk sales, cultivation, hide sales, water sales, firewood sales, craft sales) were less than 10%.

For a given household, there does not seem to be much income diversification. 88% of income is obtained from the most important source (one single source). This is about the same in our other sample communities as well.

Expenditure

Expenditure on grains, fat, meat and milk, vegetables, clothes, sugar, tea, beads, tobacco over a two week period.

The average household spent 1,394 shillings on these things over a two week period. 25% of households accounted for 50% of total expenditure.

If you add in the value of milk produced and consumed in the home (not directly purchased), this goes to 2303 per two week period – the highest of any site in our survey.

Expenditure at the household level is more stable here over time than in any other site as well. From the start of the repeat survey in June 2000 until the end of 2001, households here seemed to be able to keep spending about the same amount over time in spite of the crop failure and the livestock losses.

The largest share of cash expenditure on any one item is on grain, about 600 shillings every two weeks.

The average household also spent about 100 shillings a month on health care, 70 shillings a month on veterinary expenses, and 140 shillings a month on education expenses.

Most education expenses are within the household. Only 11% of households report other households have helped fund education, and 7% say they have helped other households educate. Primary is almost entirely funded by household members, while secondary is funded by *harambes* and household funds.

Food aid per household per period

	0600	0900	1200	0301	0601	0901	1201
Ng	12	56	80	53	21	6	0

The value of food aid is relatively small compared to the value of what households spend on themselves. For example, the highest food aid delivery period (1200) had a food aid value that was equivalent to 15% of what households spent on themselves.

Climate study

In Ngambo, all respondents reported they heard a forecast before the start of the long rains in 2001.

Almost all people heard a traditional forecast (87%) while only a few heard a forecast using radio or television.

Roughly 3 out of 4 people said they had more confidence in traditional forecasts than external forecasts.

Overall use of traditional methods.

Forecast method	Percent Noting
Intestine	16%
Clouds	15%
Birds	13%
Livestock Behavior	12%
Stars	10%
Trees	9%
Wind	7%
Night Sky	5%
Moon	4%
Shoes	3%
Plants	2%
Dreams	2%
Year Type	1%
Seer	1%
Lightening	0%
Frogs	0%
Butterfly	0%
Climate	0%
Month	0%

The most useful information was the start date, followed by the amount, followed by the end date, followed by the amount in other areas.

For the information to be useful, most people said they needed the forecast around 2 months before the expected start of the rainy season. This is not currently possible given forecasting technology.

More than most places, people in Ngambo said they changed herd management, cultivation, and household finances based on forecasts, (70%).

Development implication

What have you had experience with in the past?
1-Food Aid (1)
2-Human Health (2)
3-Livestock Health (3)
4-Water (4)
5-Education (5)
6-Livestock Marketing (8)
7-Conflict Resolution (6)

What has been the most helpful in the past?
1- Livestock Health (4)
2-Education (3)
3-Livestock Marketing (6)
4- Agriculture (8)
5- Food aid (5)
6-Water Development (2)

What would be most helpful for this community in the future?
1-livestock health (3)
2-water (2)
3-agricultural (8)
4-education (4)
5-human health (1)
6-livestock marketing (5)
7-alternative income (10)
8-other services (phone, electricity) (14)
9-savings and credit (13)
10-transport improvement (12)
11-natural resource management (11)
12-institutional development (16)
13-conflict resolution (6)
14-restocking (7)
15-wildlife management (15)
16-food aid (9)

Overall Interpretations of findings to check (not necessarily all to be asked in all sites)

In many places we are finding that there is not widespread degradation of rangelands, rather there is localized degradation due to concentration of stocking pressure. Is that something found here?

Household sell more animals when herds are growing faster. They do not sell many in advance of drought, or when drought hits. Is this because they worry about having enough animals after the drought so they are reluctant to sell any even if many will die? Is it because prices drop steeply when a drought hits? Why do you keep animals in the herd during a

drought even when you know there is a significant chance they will die? Why not sell them and get some money for them before they die?

Food aid distributed as it is in the shell appears to increase the use of firewood. It appears that grinding the maize first would both decrease the amount of wood used and the work load of women. Is there a reason this is not a good idea?

Increased use of wood appears related to increased consumption of grains. Has there been an increase here in the amount of grain people eat over the past 30 years, or is it about the same?

Formal savings and loans do not appear to be of all that much help here. We think that the size of the loans is too small to get into activities that have a positive return (livestock marketing for example). Is that right?

Transfers of animals between households are relatively small, and are not large enough to restock a household after a drought. Was it always like this, or has it changed over time? If it has changed, why?

When transferring animals, it appears that you seek out someone who is in need but also shows signs of being able to help you in the future. Is that right? Does this mean there is some minimum herd size you have to have before people will help you?

Having a big herd pre-drought leads to having a big herd post-drought. Are people pretty much aware of this?

It also appears to us that local markets are poorly suited for restocking. Is that in fact the case? Can anything be done about this?

Why do people not sell more animals? Is it because of the prices? Is it because there are not enough buyers? Is it that that it is too costly to take animals to market and try to sell them? Is it that you are currently selling as many as you can while still meeting your milk needs and trying to keep a large enough herd size over time to meet your future needs? What, if anything, should be done to increase the amount of livestock sold from this area?

Settling of a household does not necessarily mean that the animals have settled. In many places, households are splitting their activities, with some people looking after town based activities and others looking after livestock (or farming). It seems like this happens between brothers, or sometimes when a man has two wives. Is this a pattern you see?

Traditional pastoralism seems to remain as attractive and viable as ever, save perhaps for areas where violent raids limit access to grazing and watering areas. Is that your perception as well? Population growth and the expansion of public services like education and markets into range land towns have nonetheless meant that more people are turning away from pastoralism, sometimes because they didn't have much choice – e.g., physical handicaps that limit herding ability, lost their herd – and sometimes because they got lucky and could do something even better – e.g., won a boarding school scholarship and could get a good city job. Is this their sense too?

Town based activities seem to offer both the best and the worst options. Livestock activities are mostly for the middle group, with the really poor in town with little to do, and the rich in town running shops, working in markets …

Food aid is pretty minor compared to what people provide for themselves. The idea that people are food aid dependent is not what we are seeing.

Does a drought have any immediate impact on school enrollment rates in this area? Do more children go to school due to feeding programs? Do children drop out to help with the herds? Do they drop out because there is no money to pay fees?

What explains the relatively high (NG, SM, LL, DG) / low (KA, NH) enrollment rates here?

Appendix 2

Program

Time	Presentation	Moderator/Presenter
Tuesday, 22nd July 2003		
11.30 am.	Welcome address Introduction of Participants	Josephat Cheng'ole Ms Alice Santawan
12.00 noon	Feedback presentation and sharing of preliminary results on Poverty Traps- Part I	Prof. John McPeak Alice Santawan
1.00 pm	Focussed group discussion	Prof. John McPeak Dr. Nelson Mango
3.30 pm	Closing Remarks Lunch	Dr. Nelson Mango Josephat Cheng'ole
Monday, 28th July 2003		
10 am	Welcome address Introduction of Participants	Josephat Cheng'ole Ms Alice Santawan
10.30 am	Introducing Social Aspects Dynamic Poverty Traps study - Part II	Dr. Nelson Mango
11.00 am	Working groups on thematic issues	Dr. Nelson Mango and Josephat Cheng'ole
12.00 noon	Group presentation on thematic issues	Dr. Nelson Mango and Josephat Cheng'ole
3:00 pm	Workshop closing Lunch	Eunice Santawan

Appendix 3

List of Participants

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Ann Lebene
Mary Nabory
Symon Lekikenyi
Rodah Lepariyo
Hezron Taparakwe
Jeremiah Kipirich
Clement Nachuru
Lekipirich Lechapan
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NB/ All the farmers can be contacted through the address below

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