The Mobile Outreach Approach

best practices from FARM-Africa's
Pastoralist Development Project in Kenya

Booklets in this series

Animal health
Camel husbandry and production
Microenterprise development
The mobile outreach approach
Natural resource management

Much of the material for this series of booklets came out of a workshop held in Nanyuki, Kenya, 2002. It was attended by the following people, who had been part of the Pastoralist Development Project: Dima Bonaya, Chris Field, Brian Heath, Peter Ihuthia, Felix Kipchirchir, Prame Lesorogol, Robert Masibho, Dominic Mbuvi, Mary Miningwo, Ali Hassan Mohammed, Emmanuella Ole Sambu, Piers Simpkin, Chachu Tadicha, D'enge Tullu, John Waita, Isaac Wamugi.

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About FARM-Africa

FARM-Africa (Food and Agricultural Research Management) is a British-based non-governmental organization initiated in 1985 whose goal is to reduce poverty by enabling marginal African herders to make sustainable improvements to their well-being by managing their renewable natural resources more effectively. The Camel Improvement Project, which later became the Pastoralist Development Project (PDP), was its first undertaking. The project began in Kenya in 1988 and ran for 12 years. This booklet is one of a series documenting how the project progressed and the lessons it learned along the way. It presents the best practices that evolved from the work. FARM-Africa hopes that by recounting the good practices that came out of the project, by listing its points to consider of practices that worked and those that did not, it can be of aid to others who are planning to work with pastoralists in northern Kenya or in a similar environment.

The original PDP strategy

The Camel Improvement Project set out to promote the camel—its husbandry and production—because the camel was seen as being drought tolerant and environmentally friendly, well suited for conditions in northern Kenya. The camel had been neglected or at least underused, and the thought was that with a relatively small input a development project with the camel as its focus could render great benefits. Helping the communities improve this one resource could also act as an entry point for tackling broader development issues.

The project, built on 12 years of research by the UNESCO Integrated Project in Arid Lands (IPAL) in the 1970s and 1980s, was conceived at a time when nomadic pastoralism was considered an archaic form of life by many development agencies and administrators and the camel was considered an unimportant livestock species. Nomads had been encouraged to give up their lifestyle and settle near towns and centres so they would have access to basic services such as health and education. But these policies and uncontrolled water development had led to considerable degradation around settlements and exacerbated the effects of drought. Through education and creation of awareness, the project influenced change of those attitudes and it is now widely accepted that nomadic pastoralism is the most

effective and efficient form of land use in arid pastoral areas. The challenge was, and still is, to provide sustainable services to a society that is constantly on the move.

The next step for the project was to decide how to reach the remote nomadic pastoralists and put in place sustainable means of broadening their management and development capability. FARM-Africa approached this through mobile outreach—taking the project to the nomads rather than establishing sedentary headquarters.

The project's start-up phase involved community dialogue and planning. Local community members agreed with project staff that the project would set up a mobile outreach camp. Staff then gathered information through household questionnaires, range transects and aerial surveys to determine the present situation and later, to record project impact. Initially the project provided its services directly to the selected contact herders and at the same time it encouraged communities to form camel improvement groups (CIGs). Gradually the project's scope broadened to undertake work in other major aspects of pastoralist life—natural resource management, microenterprise development, human health care. (See FARM-Africa booklets 'Animal health', 'Camel husbandry', 'Natural resource management' and 'Microenterprise development'.)

The area

The project area extended from Samburu to Marsabit and Moyale Districts, which are part of the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). These lands comprise approximately 80% of Kenya's land area and about 75% of its livestock.[1] Soils are characteristically low in fertility, shallow and highly erodable, often coupled with areas of high salinity. Climatic conditions for the districts vary between lowlands and highlands. Rainfall, generally below 200 to 300 mm per year, is usually erratic in season, duration and distribution. Productivity is dependent on rainfall and varies greatly between areas and seasons. The inherent production systems adopt strategies aimed at mutual coexistence between humans and the livestock they depend on, often as their sole means of livelihood.

The project worked with different ethnic groups—the Ariaal, Samburu and Turkana communities in Samburu District and the Borana, Gabra, Rendille, Sakuye and Somali communities in Marsabit and Moyale Districts. The Gabra, Rendille, Sakuye and Somali are primarily camel

keepers; the Borana and Samburu are traditional cattle owners who have increasingly adopted the camel in recent years.

The general problem and how to approach it

It has long been recognized that development interventions in the ASAL regions have often been inappropriate or unsustainable. Because pastoralist areas and issues had been marginalized, the project first needed to identify key priorities. Originally the project, with a fairly strong emphasis on research, had the following objectives:

- to demonstrate the true economic importance of the camel and improve its productivity in milk, meat and transport
- to improve long-term economic security of pastoral communities and their capacity to survive in harsh arid areas
- to bring together the Kenyan pastoral tribes to encourage a unified development strategy and to link this to the Kenyan scientific community and government policy
- to contribute to a more appropriate model of development among pastoral people, centring on camel productivity improvement and education tailored to survival in arid lands

Renamed the Pastoralist Development Project at the end of phase 1 (April 1992), the new name reflected that the project had now integrated education, range management and health components.

Principles

Establish networks

- Plan only after exhaustive discussion with all other organizations and agencies working in the area. Religious organizations have been long in some of these areas and have a wealth of knowledge, even if their philosophies, ideals and outcomes may be very different from those of a development organization.

Ensure sustainability

- Avoid creating dependency. Look for possible consequences of any intervention before implementing it.
- Make sure that communities buy into a project and pay full, unsubsidized costs for services. Alternative methods for dealing with emergencies or the poorest of the poor should be found, for example, vouchers for drugs.
- Build the capability of local personnel to deliver services rather than rely on direct project implementation.
- Help set action plans and review progress regularly with those who set the action plans—at all levels including the grassroots.
- Share training costs. This may slow down the implementation rate of the training, but it ensures better quality training because those attending demand good service.
- Remember that follow-up and refresher courses are as important as the initial training.
- Identify a realistic exit strategy right at the project planning stage.

Pastoral development takes a long time and the priorities of development agency, donor and implementer may change while the project is being implemented.

Use participatory methods

- Plan interventions with ministry officials and with the pastoralist groups themselves. Where possible use community-based planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Build on the knowledge and experience of the local people.
- Include communities in quarterly project reporting and planning meetings.
- Set out a clear strategy for all project components and adopt a logical framework approach.
- Draw up a seasonal activity calendar with the community and the agencies involved and plan activities in accordance with that calendar.

Ensure equity

- Take into account differences in gender roles, wealth distribution, age sets, ethnicity, religion and cultural values.

The mobile outreach approach to pastoralist development

'Novel . . . unique . . . marvellous . . . a community like ours'—'boring . . . a white elephant . . . a development fad . . . just a holiday camp'.

All of these comments have been used to describe the mobile outreach camp—the hub of the FARM-Africa Pastoralist Development Project's extension service. It may be all of these and more, but what have been some of the best practices that came out of this approach?

In arid and semi-arid areas where the people migrate seasonally, it is imperative that the development agent migrates too. Sedentary development structures that are stationary and interact infrequently with pastoralists are unlikely to appreciate the temporal and spatial variation in their problems or needs. It is even possible that they can intervene in a way that is detrimental to the system and subsequently to the people's welfare.

Mobile outreach approaches

Mobile outreach camp

The mobile outreach camp (MOC) was the centre of operations for FARM-Africa's pastoralist development project. The camp itself consisted of staff houses built in traditional round Somali-style *tukuls* (huts). The houses were made of local materials—an interlaced frame of flexible sticks (usually *Grewia bicolor*) tied together with camelskin rope. Mats made from woven fronds of doum palm (*Hyphaene coreacea*) were tied on top of the lattice of sticks. In the wet season, a tarpaulin or plastic sheet was tied over the top of the mats to reduce leaking.

Each staff member occupied a tukul and was responsible for its upkeep and protecting it from termites. Most staff members could dismantle and reassemble the houses when moving camp. With experience the houses could be dismantled within 1 to 2 hours and rebuilt in 2 to 3 hours.

In addition to the tukuls, there was an office (sometimes in the form of a canvas tent to protect the VHF radio from dust), a store tent, and a mess tent or meeting tent with camp tables and chairs. Larger tukuls made by the local community occasionally were substituted for the meeting and other tents, either as part of the community contribution towards cost sharing or occasionally as a welcoming gesture by the community. When services were being delivered, some of the tukuls acted as dispensaries or waiting rooms for sick patients. Pit latrines, shower tents (sometimes made from local materials) and rubbish pits were also put in place.

Water was obtained from local wells, pumps, springs, rivers or dams and transported either by vehicle in 200-litre drums or by camel in 20-litre jerrycans. In the camp the water was stored in drums and siphoned out as required. The community's permission and provision of water and grazing was again considered a community contribution to the project. Solar lighting or single bulbs run off a car battery provided light at night. Food was prepared by a cook and staff made monthly contributions to cover food costs.

The houses were built around a camel *boma* (pen) where the demonstration herds were corralled. When conditions were dry or if grazing was in short supply the herd was sent to *fora* (communal grazing lands) or to form a more mobile mini-MOC.

Leaking tins for washing hands were hung at the latrine tents and in the mess area. The kitchen area used locally made drying racks. Fuel-saving fires were built using stones, sand and clay from termite mounds combined with the clay linings of improved *jikos* (charcoal-burning stoves).

In most aspects the camp resembled a local traditional *manyatta* (encampment) and tried to have minimal negative impact on the environment.

Site selection for the camp was very important. The MOC needed to

- be close to the community it was accompanying
- have adequate forage for the demonstration herd
- have reasonable access to water
- have sufficient security
- preferably provide shade and protection from strong wind, dust, predators

The local administration and community helped select the site. As the need for follow-up increased, it was necessary to locate the MOC more centrally in the working area and use it as a base from which to launch follow-up activities.

For the first few years FARM-Africa staff provided medical and veterinary services from the MOC, but as the communities became capable of delivering the services they needed themselves, the need for these services from PDP decreased.

As the area of operations increased, two MOCs were established. One MOC served the needs of the Samburu and Turkana communities in Samburu District, the other covered the Gabra areas of Marsabit District and the Somali and Boran areas of Moyale District.

Workshops were held right in the camp, often using the demonstration herds in the morning and evening for practical hands-on training. Most course participants were accommodated in the mobile camp; others who lived nearby returned home and came early the following morning to attend. It was generally more effective if participants stayed in the camp overnight as workshop activities were often delayed by having to wait for people to walk in each morning after they had finished their domestic chores. An added advantage of having participants stay overnight was that it provided the opportunity to watch slide shows or have informal discussions late into the evening. It also afforded an opportunity for social and cultural interaction.

Moran talk

The mobile outreach camp at Loodua was cool under the huge Acacia tortilis *trees. My hut was at the corner of the camp. In the afternoon, when livestock came home after grazing and I from my manyatta visits, the morans would pass by my hut on their way home.*

Five tall morans, who accepted me as a woman of their age group, would stop over for a chat. With three of them looking forward to marrying, we mainly discussed issues such as whether to marry educated girls or not, STDs and AIDS. In low tones, we would ponder on these sensitive issues. The morans would not have talked about these things so easily had it not been for the camp.

Emmanuella Ole Sambu, PDP social development facilitators, Samburu

Since training was done on site, it was essential that the MOC, the demonstration herds and staff themselves acted as good examples of what FARM-Africa was trying to promote.

When the MOC arrived, the local community was invited to a 'community day' in the camp where the projects aims and objectives were explained and local priority needs identified through participatory rural appraisal (PRA). The MOC was also the base for launching mobile outreach services (MOS) and special outreach services (SOS), described in the following sections.

Because of the remoteness of the camps, project field staff operated on a schedule of 10 weeks on and 2 weeks off. They worked a 6-day week, from Monday to Saturday. By working on Saturdays a staff member accrued days that over 10 weeks totalled 2 weeks' worth of 'off-days'. Thus every 10 weeks the whole field team took a break of 2 weeks to visit families and rest. The disadvantage was that staff members were not always in the field but the advantage was that every 3 months there was the opportunity to get all the staff from the two MOCs together to report on progress, discuss mutual problems and make plans for the following 10 weeks. Vehicles could also be serviced and equipment repaired during the off period. These quarterly reporting and planning sessions were very important to maintain project staff identity and plan effectively, thereby reducing strain on the limited resources. Staff were also able to receive short in-service training just before or after these periods.

With an initial staff of seven people, a camp was small and easily movable. When it came to time to move, all of the tukuls and some of the equipment were loaded onto camels and transported to the new site. A

site was often more than 70 or 80 km from the last site and would take up to 3 days to reach by camel. As the number of staff increased, the number of houses and structures grew accordingly. In later years a mobile camp had more than 13 tukuls and moving camp required a lorry or several pick-up loads.

The map (inside front cover) shows the areas the mobile camps covered and table 1 shows the frequency of movement for the Samburu District MOC over the project period. As the team increased in size its frequency of movement decreased until in 1999 the average number of moves per annum had decreased to one.

Table 1. Movements of the mobile camp in Samburu District

Year	Area	Months in area
1988	Kisima	4
	Ilkiloriti	2
1989	Sura Adoru	2
	Barsaloi	3
	Suiyan	2
	Soit Naibor	4
	Mbukoi	1
1990	South Horr	6
	Tuum	3
	Sura Adoru	3
1991	Suiyan	4
	Barsaloi	4
	Soit Naibor	4
1992	Lbendera	6
	Ngurunit	6
1993	Baio	4
	Lbaa Lolgoto	4
	Lolkunono	4
1994	South Horr	3
	Suiyan	3
	Mbukoi	3
	Ewaso Rongai	3
1995	Lbendera	6
	Latakwen	7
1996	Naikasie	4
	South Horr	8
1997	Arsim	6
	Sererit	7
1998	Loodwa	6
	Nachola	6
1999	Logetei	6
	Kowop	6

Mini mobile outreach camps

As the inertia associated with a larger MOC increased it became more difficult to manage the combined requirements of both camp and demonstration herds. The demonstration herds were forced to move more frequently to maintain body condition and to remain as a valuable demonstration of good management to local camel owners. This prompted the formation of a mini-MOC, where the herd and herdsmen moved an average of every 8 weeks to a satellite or fora camp located in areas with better pasture where the local herds grazed. The mini-MOC was accompanied by a veterinary assistant (and occasionally a human health assistant), who monitored the FARM-Africa herds and provided preventive and treatment services for the local stock and gave extension advice to the local herdsmen.

The areas reached by the mini-MOC were often more remote than those reached by the MOC. Because of its size, the main MOC became very reliant on vehicle transport for water and moving camp whereas the mini-MOC made wider use of camels to transport tukuls, water and supplies and needed to link up with the main camp or other project staff only to receive salaries or stock.

Mobile outreach services

Mobile outreach services (MOS), launched from the MOC or nearest town, were undertaken independently. These units served many purposes. Initially the outreach service was short—a day or two, such as a community day for a demonstration on health care, or for a medical or veterinary clinic or a vaccination campaign. As time progressed and more and more follow-up workshops were required, the MOS lasted longer, for 5 to 7 days, with staff staying in the villages, camping or sleeping under the stars. On such occasions the personnel travelled in one or two vehicles with all their basic requirements and equipment and did not return to camp until the workshop or job was completed. Services were made available mainly to permanent but remote homesteads, water points, meeting places or settlements where there was road access.

Special outreach services

Finally, as the MOC became more and more sedentary and the follow-up input became more village based it became virtually impossible for the mobile camps (now increasingly immobile) to reach the remotest pastoralists and their herds, although the need to do so was identified. In 1993, a special outreach service (SOS) was established where project staff travelled on foot with camels, carrying food, water and equipment, to visit nomadic populations many miles from the nearest roads or communication lines. In 1996/97, the community-based animal health workers (CAHWs), community health workers (CHWs) and traditional birth attendants (TBAs), who had been trained by FARM-Africa and other projects, were supported to carry out these special outreach services. The foot safaris lasted 7 to 10 days and could cover up to 210 km in a radius as far as 50 km from the mobile camp. The trained personnel treated both humans and animals when necessary and provided extension advice in the evenings.

Points to consider

- With SOS, the project identified closely with the local pastoralists and vice versa.

BUT . . .

- The main drawbacks to SOS included security, adverse weather and time required. The weather, particularly heavy rain or prolonged drought, physically affected movement of the SOS staff and that of the pastoralists.
- Trying to treat livestock or human patients early in the day or late in the evening affected travel time and forced the teams to travel in the heat of the day. Or the team might arrive at a nomadic camp to find the inhabitants ready to migrate.

Other problems included the lack of suitable hiking and camping equipment, and how to provide a service for people who did not have cash at hand. All services were to be paid for, and yet it was common in a remote camp to find a person or an animal needing treatment but without available cash to pay for drugs or services. Although the owner was often willing to pay in goats, the team had no means of recuperating the cash. Staff had to decide whether to refuse treatment or to treat for free and risk creating an attitude of dependency.

Most staff identified SOS as an arduous but rewarding intervention.

Mobile extension tools

Demonstration herds

The demonstration herds were used in teaching and for supplying milk and transport. As the project diversified into other disciplines, herd usefulness diminished. Although the herds were costly to establish and manage, they did generate income if managed economically. In retrospect, the herds played an important role in establishing rapport and a common ground with pastoralists and in gaining their trust. But after the emphasis diverged from camel development and the amount of follow-up and refresher courses with communities that had already been reached became greater, the role of the herds diminished.

One advantage of having project-owned demonstration herds was that they provided the opportunity to carry out research and monitor potential changes in production. Attempts at using locally owned camel herds as demonstration herds failed because of local taboos and unpredictable migration patterns.

Appropriate technology

In the camps and on extension safaris appropriate tools or teaching aids were used. Simple solar cookers, fuel-efficient wood and improved jikos were used and demonstrated. Pruning trees rather than cutting them to make thorn enclosures was emphasized. Improved harnessing and tethering techniques of livestock were practised. The design and manufacture of the tukuls themselves were examples of appropriate technology transferred from the Somali pastoralists to other pastoral peoples. In areas where camels had only recently been introduced, even the procedure of siting the camp was a teaching exercise in what makes a good or bad boma site. Condensing camel's milk, establishing stone or live fences, pit latrines, rubbish pits; making dish racks, using leaky tins (perforated tins for washing hands) in the mobile camps were all practical examples of appropriate technology.

The transfer of technology was not one way. The MOCs and mini-MOCs used camels for transportation and some staff preferred locally made wooden stools and beds to modern camping equipment.

Since many of the audience were illiterate, participatory and psychosocial methods of training were encouraged. PRA methods, puppets, flash cards and drawings were widely used.

Development agents, contact herders and adult education teachers

Another method that PDP used was to work with local development agents. Since PDP originally started working with groups rather than individuals, using local development agents had been given low priority.

The project revolved mostly around contact herders[2] and functional adult literacy teachers. PDP started using contact herders in 1989 but by 1991 the effort had failed as there was not enough follow-up or monitoring. The contact herders were not paid but their herds received some input (normally veterinary or breed improvement) from the project. Although the method failed in this project, this approach is recommended. It does, however, require careful planning, contact herders must understand their role, and the project must allow for the amount of support required and the time and resources necessary for training and follow-up.

The use of functional adult literacy teachers again was limited to the functional adult literacy curriculum itself and was largely town based. These

teachers could have been used to provide broader training courses in animal health or microenterprise management if they had been trained to train trainers themselves.

An initiative begun in 1999 was to train community-based enterprise trainers. The first 22 trainers were each expected to train a further 10 entrepreneurs each per year. Their impact has yet to be determined but there is potential for broadening their role beyond purely enterprise training. CAHWs, CHWs and TBAs were also being trained as facilitators to help disseminate knowledge. Members of community-based environment and natural resource management committees also could act as good trainers if given the right training and support.

The projects' employees, especially the camel herdsmen and camp labourers, learned a lot of new techniques while working in the project. Perhaps they could have been encouraged more widely after they left the project to act as disseminators or development agents.

Advantages of the mobile outreach approach

Mobile outreach is a good entry point to pastoralist communities. It appeals to the pastoralists. They do not find it threatening, disconcerting or distracting. Its open-gate policy simulates the traditional African welcome and attracts more visitors for conversation and dissemination of information than do the closed doors of town-based NGO and government offices.

It provides plenty of time to meet and discuss with pastoralists both formally and informally. By living among the communities, project staff can hold discussions that are relaxed, unhurried and not constrained by time and the need to return to base before nightfall. Meetings can adjust to times that fit in between pastoralist activities of herding, milking and praying. The amount of time working with the pastoralist group is maximized. In the MOC, facilitators get more time to interact with participants. In towns, people tend to disperse after the session ends each day.

Including government staff and staff of other NGOs as workshop facilitators held in the outreach camps brought government and pastoralist closer together. On occasion, the government operated vaccination campaigns from the MOC.

The camps provide many opportunities to demonstrate with appropriate practical examples. In livestock management the siting and size

of the livestock boma can be discussed in situ; handling animals can be done without traditional taboos or customs restricting activities; equipment such as improved jikos and solar-powered cookers can be demonstrated; improved hygiene and sanitation as well as tukul design and manufacture can be experienced. Cooking food for the workshop participants with the new technologies not only shows how it is done but people actually taste and eat the food themselves.

The mobile camp at Dukana

The MOC moved gradually northwards from Maralal to the Ethiopian border. The first community we visited at the border was the Gabra at Dukana. When we arrived, conditions were dry and most of the livestock and their owners had moved about 25 km to the north-west, near the border. Even the sheep and goats had moved. This was possible because the Gabra used camels to carry water for the lambs and kids to drink when their mothers were away watering at Dukana.

If we had tried to meet with the pastoralists when they came to water, we would have failed, as they would have been too busy to pay attention to us. But because we made the effort to go to the people, the Gabra showed tremendous interest in us and cooperated with us fully. They even assured us of security, although the area was considered relatively insecure.

The Gabra explained, however, that if it rained in Ethiopia before it rained in Kenya, they would have to go across the border, and we would not be able to follow them. This did happen. We were separated and went to work with another community near Maikona.

The Gabra at Dukana always remembered our initial effort to reach them and regretted that they had to leave us to follow the pasture into Ethiopia. We promised to return, but although we did individually visit, it was never with the mobile outreach camp.

Chris Field, former PDP team leader

Being based within the community means access to all community members. True pastoralists—men, women and children of all ages-are able to visit or attend training at convenient times. Inconvenience to the disabled is minimized. Holding workshops in town centres away from the home instantly limits the range of those who can benefit from them. Often those available to attend 5-day training workshops away from the home are those not fully active in the pastoral system or perhaps those who have fallen out of it entirely. Some male pastoralists prefer to have their wives attend training locally rather than have them travel to distant towns. Providing

training on site also avoids the risk of dealing only with habitual conference goers.

Living the real pastoralist existence and working under the same conditions as the pastoralists makes project staff more sympathetic to their actual situation. Staff can thus identify more realistic solutions, plan and implement more practical interventions. Demonstration herds under similar environmental and daily management conditions suffer the same risks and problems as pastoralists' herds. Therefore project livestock managers have to at least equal and try to better the management of local stockowners—or the demonstration herds will look poorer than local herds. This keeps staff commitment high and challenges them constantly. Drug or breed trials are carried out under typical conditions and therefore the herders themselves can see if new breeds or different drugs really do affect performance in their local area. This means project plans have to be carefully structured. Poorly planned or inappropriate interventions are quickly exposed.

The problems that staff face make them look for new and innovative solutions rather than standard textbook responses, thus providing an environment that encourages experimentation and new discoveries. Facing these problems in the remote and often isolated MOC environment encourages staff to work as a team.

A mobile camp is a flexible response to migration. While the scale of the operation eventually limits the frequency of moving the camp, it is nevertheless more mobile than brick and mortar structures.

The mobility factor also affects project security. Because staff are living among the community, local people tend to regard it their responsibility to look after the 'visitors'. Incidents of theft have been remarkably few despite most tukuls having no doors or locks. Staff are also kept better informed of possible incidents of insecurity and are able to move away from an area of high risk when necessary, and to return again when conditions improve. The lack of permanent structures means that nothing is left behind to be vandalized or destroyed.

Distractions are few during workshops and discussions. No unexpected telephone calls or urgent faxes or emails interrupt the sessions—although the unplanned arrival of snakes or scorpions has been known to cause entertaining diversions or serve as local energizers.

A timely warning

At Soit Ol Kokoyo, cattle rustlers attacked Rendille herdsmen from Marsabit. People were caught unawares and 17 were killed and 500 animals taken away from the Rendille through the Suguta Valley, where life is difficult. The community attacked transmitted the message to the mobile outreach camp. Staff were able to alert surrounding communities about the incident. The local traditional authorities passed on the message and mobilized their people, who were able to take their animals away to safe sites in South Horr, and then to the Komandi and the Arsim Hills. The mobile camp warning gave the communities enough time to drive their animals to safe areas.

Later, when the mobile outreach camp moved from the Samburu community to the Turkana, it organized joint workshops for members of the two communities. These workshops helped cool down the animosity. If it had not been for the existence of the camp in the district, this animosity might otherwise have totally changed the living status of these communities.

Felix Ngelese, mobile camp supervisor, Samburu

FARM-Africa staff believed that the participants' concentration was better at MOC workshops as there were fewer distractions. Furthermore, the information learned at an MOC or MOS workshop was better disseminated upon their return home as they passed on 'workshop news' rather than 'town news'.

The houses made out of cheap and renewable local resources are environmentally friendly and durable. Houses made of palm or sisal matting are durable, wind resistant and insulating; they provide warmth at night and remain cool throughout the day; they are simple to repair or replace. Traditional huts were found to cost a third the price of canvas tents and lasted four times longer. Accommodation costs for staff, workshop participants and visiting consultants were considerably lower than those incurred in towns or centres.

The operation of a mobile outreach camp invites participation by the local people. Siting the camp, selecting grazing areas and access to water are all discussed and planned with the local community. Erecting huts and building bomas for the camp often involves members of the local community (either paid or on a voluntary participatory cost-sharing basis). In so doing, local people instantly learn methods of establishing a camp with minimal destruction of the local environment.

Raising awareness that the camp will not be permanently stationed reduces the risk of creating dependency. Participants are aware that services

or unplanned spin-off benefits (transportation, local market for produce and so on) are for a limited period only. Thus they do not base their long-term planning on outside help.

The mobile outreach camp can act as neutral ground for negotiation. In Ethiopia it was possible to get antagonistic Afar and Issa pastoralists to sit down together and discuss camel development and animal health without fear or threat. In Samburu District, the MOC helped ease tension between the Samburu and the Turkana. Without this neutral ground it would have been very difficult to break down the prejudices and for both parties to make significant progress discussing issues that could help mitigate conflict.

Serving remote locations

The Samburu mobile outreach camp was located in Nachola in Baragoi Division of Samburu District from October 1998 to March 1999. The area is inhabited by the Turkana, who are traditionally rivals of the Samburu, and fights between them were common. Our objective was to deliver services to the Turkana.

First, the community was surprised but very happy to get development services from an NGO based in Samburu as other NGOs and government departments had been reluctant to serve them. They were surprised and impressed that PDP staff from the Samburu tribe were serving them.

The camp, located in a Turkana area, provided an environment where the Samburu tribe could come and interact with Turkana and they could participate together in training workshops. Because of the camp, hostilities between the two tribes began to decline; people started talking to each other and sharing resources. That the two communities could sit together was significant and it assisted in solving the tribal conflict that had been there.

Isaac Kamau Wamugi, PDP natural resource management facilitator, Marsabit and Moyale Districts
Mary Miningwo, PDP animal health facilitator, Marsabit
Dominic Mbuvi, district agriculture and livestock extension officer, Marsabit

Travellers passing through the area often used the MOC as a place where they knew they could find safe shelter. The camp provided a local market for milk and meat. It was often viewed as a neighbour or a friendly resource centre. Local inhabitants benefited from the possibility of transport (lifts from A to B), medicine, advice, cash or change, and an informal source of information. The project radio network was extensively used for communication between relatives of hospitalized or sick pastoralists, as well as to inform friends and family about grazing conditions, water availability and security.

Staff found that one advantage of living in a remote mobile outreach camp was that they managed to make considerable financial savings from their monthly salaries. There were few opportunities to waste money in hotels and restaurants or to spend frivolously in towns.

The presence of the demonstration herd provided practical research and teaching aids. Differences in productivity between different camel breeds in the various MOC sites were clearly seen by staff and pastoralists alike.

Cost benefits

There has been much discussion on the cost effectiveness of a mobile outreach approach. Undoubtedly staff costs are high, as compensation has to be paid for the hardships endured. Maintaining demonstration herds also increases labour costs and incurs veterinary overheads. These can, however, be offset by lower transport requirements if the camels are used to transport water and food.

A full cost and benefit study of the mobile approach[3] found it difficult to measure or value the quality of life benefits such as feelings of empowerment (especially among women), food security provided by a small business and better absorption of information through training in a local environment. Much of the calculation relied on estimating and valuing the time saved to pastoralists and their stock by obtaining services locally rather than travelling long distances to the nearest service source.

A study was carried out to compare the costs to FARM-Africa of workshops held in MOCs with those held in towns. The budgets of 17 PDP workshops held in MOCs and 28 workshops held in town were studied and compared with figures for 48 workshops provided by 10 other NGOs working in the same districts.

To try to determine the more important costs for comparison between workshops in town centres and the mobile outreach camps, it was assumed that facilitation, stationery and miscellaneous costs would be the same or similar across all NGOs and all venues; thus these costs were eliminated from the analysis. It was also assumed that transport costs were the same, although if the MOC was strategically placed in the target communities, then transport costs should be lower. However, since much of the data on transport costs was missing, these costs were also omitted. The results are in table 2.

Table 2. Total and selected costs of workshops held in MOCs and by FARM-Africa and other NGOs in towns

	Duration (days)	Participants (no.)	Selected costs per workshop (KES)[a]	Cost per person per day (KES)[a]
FARM-Africa in MOCs (*n* = 17)				
Mean	3.6	43	10,554	111
Minimum	2	9	3,206	12
Maximum	5	140	31,171	304
FARM-Africa in towns (*n* = 28)				
Mean	3.3	18	12,532	272
Minimum	1	5	2,699	27
Maximum	6	48	37,700	540
Other NGOs in towns (*n* = 46)				
Mean	3.4	39	32,637	295
Minimum	1	15	5,100	42
Maximum	6	120	105,220	1093

KES – Kenya shillings, valued at about 75 to 1 US dollar
[a] food, accommodation and venue only

To summarize, selected workshop costs were KES 111 per person per day for MOC workshops, KES 272 for town-based FARM-Africa workshops and KES 295 for workshops of other NGOs.

What could not be valued is the sense of security the MOC afforded to local pastoralists. They knew that in the case of a medical emergency, such as snakebite, qualified personnel and transport were there in the immediate vicinity.

Disadvantages of the mobile outreach approach

Operating a mobile outreach unit, however, has several drawbacks. Conditions are often harsh and uncomfortable. The traditional houses provided no deterrent to dust, snakes, centipedes or scorpions. While the houses themselves did provide good protection from wind and heat, outside in the general mess quarters and training areas, the heat, wind and dust could constitute a very difficult working environment. But many of the local villages or towns and alternative project headquarters sites were no different in this respect.

Moving camp was arduous and uncomfortable. Often male employees had to help build the tukuls—a task that broke with tradition.

No hardship allowances were paid, but staff did receive a housing allowance and a fixed monthly field per diem.

The project was forced to employ extra support staff such as cooks and watchmen, which increased costs. As the camps grew in size, a vehicle had to be committed to camp duties to ensure sufficient water and firewood.

Some staff found the remoteness and lack of facilities or entertainment lonely or frightening. Some felt that they were not keeping abreast of current development philosophies or technical changes occurring within their profession. There was some concern that they were becoming out of touch as communication and opportunity for exchanging ideas were limited.

Social relationships and sexual harassment can become concerns in small teams in remote areas. Boredom can lead to indiscipline and alcoholism or friction with the local community. Relationships can both develop and break down when a mixed team, separated from their spouses for long periods, works in remote areas. Family life was disrupted.

To start with, the mobile units attracted criticism and suspicion from some politicians and government officers. This ‘new approach’ caused concern that the project would be unaccountable and no one would be able to contact project staff when necessary. To overcome this apprehension, some time was spent showing politicians and government officers around the operation and explaining the benefits. The project also built an office complex in Baragoi in Samburu District and rented office space in Marsabit and Moyale as contact points for the more sedentary and town-based government services.

For security, mobility could be both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantages have been discussed earlier; the disadvantage is that when the camp is located in a remote locality it can become a target for raiding. The presence of livestock in the demonstration herds could also attract unwanted attention.

The MOC approach requires high staff commitment. The challenging conditions meant that staff had to be innovative and experimental to respond to local conditions and to prove that some of the technologies the project was promoting were suitable to the local environment. For some, the lack of modern facilities led to frustration, disenchantment and low output. Strong leadership and good teamwork skills were important. Having many staff members living in close proximity to each other for long periods may occasionally lead to character clashes with little opportunity for 'getting away from it all'.

Some workshop participants from rural areas prefer being trained in towns or urban centres as it provides them with a rare opportunity for travelling, shopping or renewing friendships. Similarly, town dwellers find the MOC environment monotonous and boring.

Study tours and exchange visits have advantages that may not be obtained by training pastoralists in their own local environment.

There was some criticism that having demonstration herds of camels overshadowed other aspects of the project such as natural resource management and community-based health education; however, it was thought this could be simply overcome by improving the methods of sensitizing communities. The camels attracted much interest; perhaps providing practical clinical services or tree-planting demonstrations would have attracted more interest in the other sectors.

During stress periods the demonstration herds may compete for grazing with herds of the local community and for water, for both humans and livestock. While this can be a potential problem, during the 12 years of operation there was never a serious clash between the mobile outreach camp and a local community regarding resources. This could well be an indicator of the popularity of the approach among pastoralist communities. Occasionally careful dialogue and negotiation were required to site the camp, and at times the demonstration herds had to go out from the main camp to fora or satellite camps, which became mini-MOCs.

Many pastoralists benefited from the herd by bringing their females for breeding with prime stud bulls in the demonstration herd. Some bulls were also left with communities to improve the bloodstock.

The initial emphasis on camels tended to exclude women from the programme as camels were very much associated with male ownership rights. As the programme broadened to incorporate other development ideas the gender balance in beneficiary terms improved.

Constraints to the mobile outreach approach

Some of the constraints identified using the MOC approach are that as the staff and camp became larger, mobility was compromised. While a small team of livestock trainers, for example, could move frequently to keep up with the migrating herds, all the staff involved in human health, environment and water development, education, and so on required more planning and logistics to move. The camp could no longer be transported on camelback but required several pick-ups or a truck to translocate. With different training sessions and interests some team members completed their commitments earlier than others. They had to wait until the work schedule had been completed to move on, or they needed separate transport to move ahead and start working in a new community, or to retrace their steps and carry out refresher or follow-up courses.

It became apparent to the team that it was impossible to keep up with the Gabra nomads' frequent movements. Mobility of the MOC decreased as disciplines or development sectors increased. Small mini-MOCs were more capable of moving with pastoralist herds. The larger MOC became increasingly suitable for working with semi-nomadic pastoralists such as the Samburu and Turkana. Table 1 shows how the frequency of MOC movement declined over the years; table 3 shows how the number of workshops held in the MOCs also declined.

Comparable data from Marsabit and Moyale Districts show that in 1998, out of 98 workshops held by FARM-Africa only 4 were held in the MOC. In 1999, 92 workshops were held in towns, and none in the MOC.

Locating MOCs and setting work plans requires skill and forethought. The site of the MOC is not automatic but must be strategic. Following are some of the stages in siting a camp.

Table 3. Number and venue of workshops held by FARM-Africa PDP in Samburu District

Year	MOC	MOS	Town	Total	Workshops held in a mobile environment (%)
1988	2			2	100
1989	8		1	9	89
1990	3		4	7	43
1991	9	7	12	28	57
1992	12	5	14	31	55
1993	7	5	13	25	48
1994	9	8	7	24	71
1995	13	6	17	36	53
1996	5	4	16	25	36
1997	10	2	40	52	23
1998	11	2	34	47	28
1999	8	3	40	51	22

MOC – mobile outreach camp; MOS – mobile outreach services

Decisions and activities involved in moving MOCs

- Ensure logical framework analysis goal and purpose will be met by moving.
- Decide on target area.
- Have reconnaissance visits with local elders and leaders and with project herdsmen to confirm presence or absence of livestock forage; select MOC site, negotiate for water rights and access.
- Hold a meeting to sensitize the community.
- Hold a disengagement meeting with the community at the present MOC location.
- Plan logistics for moving, for example, veterinary permits, vehicle condition, fuel, time, staff welfare.
- Implement move and ensure there is sufficient transport, water, labour.
- Establish MOC at new site.
- Hold a community day at the new site to raise awareness and state estimated duration of stay.
- Hold an introductory workshop with the new community; identify problems and assess needs.
- Make a timetable of the programme of events for the following months with the community.

Views on mobile outreach approaches

A survey of 20 pastoralists and 10 NGOs and government officers was carried out in each of PDP's working districts to ascertain their views of the MOC approach. The majority were favourable to mobile extension methods, and although few of the development agencies had adopted mobile extension many of them would have done so if they had had the resources. Lack of funding and of suitable staff were their major constraints to operating their own mobile approaches.

In Samburu District, all the pastoralists and development agents who responded to the survey were positive regarding the benefits of a mobile approach to extension. All knew of FARM-Africa's mobile outreach camps but fewer pastoralists (60% and 20%) were aware of the MOS and SOS services, respectively.

All the development agents interviewed had visited the camp, and 20% had spent at least one night in the mobile outreach camps; 80% favoured their continuation, the remaining 20% recommended that the approach continue but that MOS should be increased and community development agents should be trained rather than having MOCs. Sixty per cent of the development agents were dissatisfied with the impact of their own extension

methods, but although 100% recommended the use of mobile extension none were planning any such methods because of funding and logistical problems.

They also identified capital costs and staff hardships as being major disadvantages of mobile outreach camps. Pastoralists quoted competition for pasture as being the major disadvantage.

One NGO interviewed had a mobile extension component in their programme; in government the only mobile approaches were cited as vaccination campaigns and 1-day PRA exercises within the communities.

Nearly all the pastoralists felt that the MOCs should stay longer in each location and that the duration of the MOS outreach was too short and nearly always rushed.

Conclusions

- The project had significant impact in gaining access to remote pastoral communities and training its members without creating dependency. Much of this was due to the mobile and non-permanent nature of the method used.
- Mobile outreach approaches were suitable for delivering extension, training and service, particularly when newly starting with a community. As the number of communities increased and the amount of follow-up activities became greater than 'new contacts', the role or effectiveness of the MOC reduced. Staff spent less time in the MOC and more on MOS and follow-up activities as time progressed.
- The original idea was to reach remote, isolated nomadic pastoralists. However, over time the MOC operations moved closer to small towns and villages. Although still providing services and training to remote areas, MOC was no longer serving the most remote people and it began to duplicate some of the activities implemented by existing organizations or structures such as churches, missions, dispensaries and government departments.
- The mobile facility discouraged sedentarization and dependency. It was cost effective but required careful and strategic planning.
- The mobile approach made FARM-Africa widely recognized by pastoralists. It became FARM's identity in the working areas.
- The project's activities showed that mobile outreach can be more effective than traditional sedentary methods.

- Mobility of the MOC decreased as the project took on more activities. Mini-MOCs were capable of moving with nomadic pastoralists; larger MOCs were more difficult to move.
- SOS was a very effective way of reaching remote pastoralists far from any accessible routes.
- Staff commitment, morale and welfare are important factors in determining the success of the mobile approaches.
- The mobile outreach approach minimized the risk of ethnic conflict. PDP managed to continue operating throughout the period of insecurity while many NGOs were forced to withdraw. The question arose as to why FARM-Africa's MOC had not been targeted during the raiding. The following suggestions were provided:
  - The camp was neutral.
  - There was a good, close and trusting relationship with the community.
  - The community always forewarned PDP staff of pending insecurity or the presence of raiding parties.
  - FARM-Africa was seen to be fair and non-partisan. It helped conflicting communities equally.
  - The raiders themselves may have attended various training workshops during the more peaceful times.
- As resources are limited in arid areas, they must also be carefully controlled in operating MOCs and other mobile approaches. For example, water had to be rationed in the MOC to restrict transport costs.
- Constant communication with the community and involvement of it is essential in any development programme. Hence, the longer an organization or development agent is in close contact with a community, the greater the likelihood of having impact. MOCs are a major contributor to obtaining close, unhurried contact.

All extension methods have their advantages and disadvantages. While mobile approaches to development in general are recommended, no single method can be recommended over others. Priorities and emphasis change over time and a combination of the methods described, together with other methods such as exchange visits and study tours, is likely to provide an effective and relevant training and learning environment.

Lessons learned

- Mobile outreach systems can be cost effective and can respond well to local priorities and conditions.
- MOCs are popular with pastoralists and provide a close environment for two-way learning with little distraction.
- As the MOC grows in size its mobility is reduced.
- MOCs have great impact initially, do not create dependency, but the time of their usefulness is limited. After initial phases, MOS and SOS can replace MOCs when follow-up work outweighs primary input.
- Practising mobile extension methods requires careful planning and a clear strategy.
- MOS workshops are good for training homogeneous communities; MOC workshops are better when training mixed communities.
- MOCs can play a big role in conflict mitigation and peace building.
- Technology transfer or uptake is determined by the intended audience or community, not the implementing agency.
- General promotion of appropriate technologies is ineffective. A project must address the immediate needs of the community; otherwise much time, energy and resources are spent on promotion but uptake is minimal. Although many appropriate technologies were advocated and demonstrated by PDP, many were not adopted by the communities. Often, even MOC's immediate neighbours did not build pit latrines, dig rubbish pits or buy improved jikos.
- Mobile approaches frequently force staff to 'go that extra mile' and require strong staff commitment.

Abbreviations and terms

boma	pen
CAHW	community-based animal health worker
CHW	community-based health worker
fora	communal grazing lands
jiko	charcoal-burning stove
manyatta	encampment
MOC	mobile outreach camp
MOS	mobile outreach services
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDP	Pastoralist Development Project
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
SOS	special outreach services
TBA	traditional birth attendant
tukul	hut

Notes

[1] Kenya Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 'Policies and strategies for the delivery of veterinary services in Kenya', draft paper, February 2002.

[2] Contact herders were existing camel owners whose herds were initially used as local demonstration herds. They were often the leading and richer herders in the area.

[3] A. McLeod and C. Heffernan, 'Economic evaluation of the mobile outreach approach to pastoralist development as applied by the FARM-Africa Pastoralist Development Project' (Pan Livestock Services, 1999, unpublished).