



# **Western Kenya Mid-Term Review**

## **Impact Assessment**

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## Kenya Mid-Term Review

### Executive Summary

#### **Background**

This report presents the results of an Impact Assessment carried out as part of a Mid-Term Review of the Heifer International Kenya (HIK) Western Kenya Programme. Send a Cow (SAC UK) support to the area began on a small scale in 1995. Between then and 2001 support was limited, being confined geographically as well as in terms of staff and types of intervention. During this period 11 women's zero grazing groups were provided with 214 dairy in-calf heifers and training, with a total budget of just over US\$232,000. In this early phase, one technical staff member oversaw the Programme. Since 2002 SAC support has increased significantly, with 33 new groups in six districts being added. A new office, run by seven staff members, now manages an annual budget exceeding \$320,000. By December 2005 the Programme had provided 309 dairy cows and 88 dairy goats. In recent years SAC has placed increasing emphasis on organic farming and the self-reliance and sustainability of beneficiary groups. HIK-WP has taken these interests on board and has provided additional training for both staff and farmers.

With the two organisations mid-way through a collaboration agreement, both were in favour of conducting a mid-term review (MTR) that would examine the impact of the Programme, explore the factors contributing to, or detracting from, achievement of goals and recommend ways to improve Programme implementation in the future. This report is based on research carried out by two teams of local consultants using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The local consultants managed a series of workshops, case studies and just over 500 structured interviews with farmers. They worked independently, but in close collaboration with the HIK team and a SAC UK consultant who carried out the data analysis and reporting writing. The results of the Impact Assessment were presented to the SAC/HIK team, to SAC UK staff, to a Heifer International evaluation team, and to farmers and other stakeholders. This report incorporates their comments and feedback as far as possible.

#### **The Context**

Western Kenya Province is home to over 2.7 million people. It has relatively good rainfall and soils that are well suited to both food and cash crops as well as animal husbandry. These favourable conditions contribute to a high population density and elevated levels of poverty, with Busia district having the highest level in the country, with over 70% living below the official poverty line. The poverty is manifest in high levels of child malnutrition, unemployment, poor health, housing and inability to pay for basic services. Identified causes of poverty include poor farming practices, lack of organised markets, poor access to credit, rural-urban migration and dependence on illicit brewing. HIV/AIDS prevalence rates range from 20-30%.

#### **The Approach of Heifer International Kenya (HIK)**

HIK responds to requests from self-help farmer groups made of women, youth or farmers' associations. Applications have to be submitted on a form that is based on the 12 Heifer Cornerstones. All the information provided is verified on the ground before the process goes further. If proved to be acceptable HIK then facilitates a planning process, also based on the Cornerstones, that eventually leads to the signing of a formal agreement. Training is then carried out, in relation to the type of livestock to be provided to that group. Group members then decide who will receive the first livestock, using poverty criteria ('genuine need and justice'). Concurrent with the training, the selected farmers begin planting fodder and preparing sheds. Livestock are provided under a contract that commits the farmer not only to passing-on, but also the other Cornerstones. Monitoring is done by the project through farm visits, while farmers are expected to carry out an annual Project Self Review and Planning exercise. Farmers are given



a say in the choice of livestock, although farming conditions and farmer capacity also determine the final choice. HIK collaborates with the Government and NGOs in various ways.

### **Analytical challenges**

The Impact Assessment set out to determine the extent to which Programme inputs, including training, livestock and on-farm support, have enabled farmers to increase their productivity, generating specific outputs (such as milk and vegetables) that can be used to improve their standards of living resulting in measurable impacts. Analysis of the results show that farmers do not respond uniformly, with some making more progress than others. The analytical challenge is to determine the reasons for such variance, searching for the factors that have the greatest impacts. This is not an easy analytical task as the farmers operate in a multi-faceted environment with many connections between factors that influence their work. The analysis has attempted to untangle the web of causes and effects as far as is statistically practicable given that there are over 500 possible responses in each of the 512 questionnaires. To facilitate the analysis composite scores have been created and graphics have been used frequently. Nevertheless, a great deal of data remains unused and in a rich data base that can be further 'mined' by Programme officers and other interested parties. The focus of the analysis in this report is on the impact level of the Programme.

### **The Beneficiaries**

The area has relatively large households, with an average of seven members, half of whom are children dependent on the head. 14% of the children under 16 are either total or partial orphans, while one quarter of the household heads are widows. With regard to occupation, just over half the adult members work full time on their farms, while 20% have off-farm incomes. Just over half the children help on the farm; 10% said they work full-time.

### **Their Land**

Nearly half the households have less than 2.5 acres to live off. In one third of cases, milk sales made up for any losses experienced due to changing land use, while in most (51%) it was said to make 'no difference'. In 3% interviewees said the increase in food crops due to organic farming had made up for land being turned to fodder production. However, in 10% of cases, converting land from food crops to fodder production was said to have reduced food security (mostly, but not exclusively, when households reported they were still waiting for livestock). The results highlight the need to make farmers aware of the risks of joining the Programme. They also suggest that a more elaborate monitoring system is needed to identify situations where the Programme may be doing harm.

### **Their Livestock**

It is not uncommon for beneficiaries who have undergone training and are waiting to benefit from HIK-SAC livestock to already have some animals. One fifth already own cows; one quarter has sheep and almost all have poultry, 15% with flocks of over 20 birds. Two thirds of the cows, bulls and goats currently on beneficiary farms were purchased by farmers or are the offspring of non-project animals; one third are project animals (originals, their off-spring, and 'contract' pass-ons). While many of the farmers own few animals that yield very little, others have fairly substantial numbers.

These results highlight a potential area for misunderstandings between field staff (who see the realities 'on the ground') and fundraisers back in the US and UK who would have their supporter believe that livestock only go to households who have no animals. There is clearly a need for policy guidance in this area, which needs to be a balance between locally definitions of livestock wealth and the need for a programme that clearly targets the poor and is not open to exploitation by the rich. As better-off group members are often the driving force behind their groups, consideration has to be given to what benefits they might receive if the policy excludes them from receiving livestock.

## **Key Programme Inputs and their Impacts**

### **Level of breeding**

Milk yields vary according to the level of a cow's breeding. When in milk, local cows produce, on average 2 litres, crosses 5.9 and pure cows 7.3. Two thirds of goats supplied [cross bred so far] by the project produce less than 1 litre per day. The results do not conform to the image conveyed by the organisations' fund raising departments that expensive, purebred cows are worth the cost because they make a vast difference. Either farmers do not have the capacity to make the best of the genetics provided, or the pure bred cows are of an inferior quality, or a combination of both.

### **Training**

While the levels of training are generally high, the data clearly shows that close to 20% of those who have received livestock said they had not been trained in certain essential topics, such as animal husbandry. Farmers highly valued the training received, particularly topics covering animal feeds and fodder, soil fertility and vegetable growing. Training related to marketing, heat detection and human nutrition were not as highly ranked, possibly because many new farmers have not had a chance to put them into practice.

The application of training produced results. For example, dairy farmers with cross or pure bred cows that applied lessons on animal feed had nearly twice as much milk as those who did not. Generally, technical training increases milk production, although not always to the extent expected. Training in shed construction and soil fertility had a greater impact of milk yields than training in general animal husbandry and heat detection. Farmers who used their training to apply organic farming methods significantly increased daily sales compared to those who did not.

### **Does it pay?**

Farmers who are part of the Programme produce 3,140 litres of milk per day, enough to keep over 15,000 children out of malnutrition. The total annual value of milk produced by programme cows and goats (being 70% of the total) is \$320,640. Interestingly, this is virtually the same as the cost of the Programme itself. This, however, is far from being the only product of value to be derived by the beneficiaries. Additional material benefits include the vegetables and bull calves. Equally – if not more importantly - beneficiaries report a host of other non-material 'spin-offs' which are discussed in the upcoming sections. All of these could be considered 'profit', over and above the return derived from milk sales.

### **Non-Material Impacts**

The qualitative assessments indicate that even in cases where there were no measurable financial benefits a positive social status was bestowed on beneficiaries through their involvement, the provision of livestock and their improved nutritional status. The qualitative report notes that: "According to the farmers the project has restored dignity and self worth eroded by years of poverty and hopelessness. As one farmer observed, '...beggars have become rich overnight and farm hands have become employers.'" In a very short period of time, farmers noted better communications at home, increased sharing of tasks, more respect, return of job seekers, and greater women's empowerment. Group members were very likely to become actively involved in the wider society after receiving SAC/HIK training.

These findings are supported by the results of the household survey which found that over 90% of beneficiaries feel 'more respected', regardless of when their group first got assistance from SAC/HIK; over 80% reported being consulted by others, and between 70% and 80% reported better relationships at home, depending on the year the group was assisted. Lower, but still very significant percentages, had been elected to positions of leadership outside of their groups, with a higher likelihood of those in the older groups to have been elected.

### **Food Security**

In the farmers' workshops nutritional status of the households was said to have "improved with better food intake in both quantity and quality". Although some noted that "training on how to plant a variety of vegetables (kitchen gardens) had improved sources of dietary intake at home" and that "proceeds from the sale of milk helped to purchase other foodstuffs", farmers insisted that the gains were often "moderate" and that milk yields were "less than anticipated".

The statistic, again, fully support these qualitative observations of 'moderate' improvements. For example, in 20% of cases interviewees said there had been no change in their food situation since being supported by the project, while in 44% of cases things were 'a little better'. In just over one third (35%) the meal situation was described as being 'a lot better'. In particular the survey found that there was a tendency for newer groups to eat fewer meals than others in a day and for more of the older groups to describe their food situation as a 'lot better' (40%) than the newer groups (32%). Looking at the number of times animal proteins were eaten in the week preceding the interviews, a similar picture emerges with the mean being 3.2 for the older groups and 2.5 for the newer groups.

### **Gender**

The survey confirmed qualitative findings with regard to gender showing a very significant all round improvement in married women's participation in decision-making. The most significant areas of change are with regard to how workloads are shared (division of labour), how land and income are used and in initiating new activities. Women's participation with regard to accessing credit and using savings doubled from a 20% to 40% now reporting full participation. The older and newer groups show the most progress with regard to women's empowerment.

### **Economic impacts**

Workshop participants estimated that there had been an increment in household income estimated at an average of Ksh 200 per household per day (equivalent to 8 litres milk by 25 ksh per litre). They said this was below what they had anticipated due to lower than expected levels of milk production, and therefore the income increment was rated as average. Most vegetable production was said to go to meeting home needs. During the survey just under one third of respondents felt they were much better off than before the project (30%), and just over half (54%) felt their situation was 'better'. A minority (15%) felt no change and a very small number (1%) said they were worse off (because they had yet to receive livestock, or had experienced breeding difficulties, or because they were in groups with conflicts).

### **...and their spin-offs**

Interestingly, there was a strong tendency for those who felt better off economically to be asked for advice by others (95% of cases), although many of those experiencing no economic change had also been approached (74%). Similarly, those who felt better off as a result of the project were more likely to be involved in other groups, where they could share their knowledge. The lesson to draw is clear: to extend project impacts beyond the immediate beneficiaries, try to ensure real change in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries themselves. While this might be expensive in the short term, in the long run it is cost effective, as their increased involvement in other groups will extend the benefits gained for little further cost.

### **Banking and access to credit**

Access to bank accounts is low (23%) and only slightly higher than before the project (19%), with reported increases in savings. More significant has been the increased ability for farmers to access loans, doubling from 12% to 24% in the older groups.

### **Possessions**

Overall 48% have experienced no change in household possessions, but this ranges from 33% for the older groups through to 40% for the middle years and 56% for those who got support in 2005. This is perfectly logical as those who started as recently as 2005 would not be expected to experience many material changes quite yet, as suggested in the qualitative report. Interviewees were asked if there were any major purchases they had made since getting project support. Two thirds said they had not, but of those who had done so household furniture was the most common (12%), followed by farms implements (8%) and utensils (7%).

### **Farm labour**

Overall there were 71 people employed by beneficiaries before their groups got SAC/Hi support and now there are 181.

### **Cornerstones Training and Group Dynamics**

The analysis gives detailed results for specific variables. In summary the following conclusions can be drawn at this stage with regard to the six areas mentioned earlier:

#### **Participation By Members In Group Management And Decision Making**

67% of members participated in the group formation or constitution development

Just over half of the new members participate

78% knew at least three group objectives

New members are almost equally well informed

39% of members have participated in committees or group leadership

Participation is lowest in the groups assisted between 2003 and 2004

The mean number of meetings in 6 months is 11

Older groups meet less often, but with a higher percentage of members attending

#### **Capacity To Resolve Conflicts**

42% of groups had experienced conflicts

84% had been completely resolved

Resolution was lowest in the groups assisted between 2003 and 2004

Most groups resolved the conflicts themselves

#### **Transparency And Accountability Of Leadership**

A composite score was created which showed that:

New group members had reported greater transparency and accountability than older ones

In more recently created groups members are better informed about their funds

#### **Diversification And Assets**

20% of members reported that their groups had invested in new assets:

Crops, cattle dips and poultry were the most common

Diversification was least common in the groups assisted between 2003-2004.

#### **Alliances And Networks**

84% of members reported that their groups had established alliances and networks

These were least common in the groups assisted between 2003-2004.

#### **Knowledge of The Heifer International Cornerstones**

Ability to recall the Cornerstones is limited (mean=2.7 Cornerstones)

Individuals who joined some time ago better recall than newer members, but...

Members of groups recently assisted had the best recall.



Groups that joined the programme between 2003 and 2004 have not performed as well as others.