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OXFAM'S KENYA RESTOCKING PROJECTS

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ARID LANDS WORKSHOP

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OXFAM'S KENYA RESTOCKING PROJECTS

1. WHY RESTOCKING?

The four projects described in this paper were all aimed at "restocking" destitute pastoralists in the very dry areas of northern Kenya (in Wajir, Isiolo, Samburu and Turkana districts). The approach adopted was to supply each recipient household with a nucleus herd of smallstock (mostly female goats) sufficient it was hoped for each family's continued livelihood. To ensure donated animals would not be sold or eaten immediately, recipients continued to receive food rations for varying periods of up to one year. Usually the recipients in a given community were restocked at roughly the same time when the programme was active in their area. The two larger projects,

in Turkana and Samburu, dealt in sequence with nine or ten different communities¹. In these cases a central office was established and a team of monitors employed for a year or more. The giving out of a substantial number of smallstock (30-70) animals to several families at once can be contrasted to the alternative of giving only a few animals to each family in sequence spread out over an extended period. The former policy was adopted for herd reconstitution in Kenya because there were many destitute families eager to resume a pastoral way of life, and because it allows families to move away from a restocking centre as rapidly as possible.

The case for supporting restocking when large numbers of pastoralists have become destitute rests upon several arguments.² First, scientists now realize that the productivity of indigenous systems for livestock keeping while low is at least as good as that of alternative options for use of the same resources. For a long time this fact was obscured because comparisons were done on a per animal basis. Now that measurements are available instead on the total biomass sustained per hectare, it is clear that indigenous technologies were (and are) relatively efficient - giving, for example, a higher output per hectare than uses of comparable drylands in Australia or western United States.

Second, in East Africa when dry lands are left unused they revert to dense bush thicket (a trend observable in under-utilized parts of Turkana and Pakot subject to armed raiding). This represents a net loss of productive resources available to support people and their herds.

¹ When visited (January 1987), OXFAM'S Samburu project was nearing the end of its first phase. It has since been revived under Kenyan leadership and is said to be quite successful. A complete field evaluation including these second phase activities is currently underway (mid-1988) through OXFAM's Kenya office.

² For Oxfam, the restocking concept originated in Brian Hartley's earlier experience of the Ethiopian drought in the mid-1970s. The case for restocking has been put by Richard Hogg for Isiolo and Turkana, by White (for Niger), and by Swift and Maliki, also for Niger (see reference listed at the end of this paper).

Third, much of the conventional wisdom about "overstocked" dry lands has been derived from grasslands. The dry areas of Kenya are, instead, bushlands where indigenous browse species are fed by surface drainage - a widespread example of natural "water harvesting". Goats and camels make a relatively efficient use of such resources, even though the land appears "overgrazed" to the grassland ecologist. Relevant bushland management regimes are just now being worked out.

Fourth, at times of drought the absence of efficient livestock and food marketing institutions in Africa's marginal lands leads to "asset stripping", the loss by pastoralists of large investments at salvage prices. Since this loss is often unrelated to pastoralists' managerial skills, being instead a general consequence of strongly adverse terms of trade during a drought, the sooner families can be re-equipped to enter the pastoral system the better. A major objective of large-scale restocking would be to avoid the loss of productive skills and attitudes which can occur when people remain totally dependent upon outside aid for an extended period (Moris 1988).

2. WHO DOES IT?

Even granted that there may be need for restocking after a major drought, there remains the issue who should do it. An obvious criticism is that these pastoral systems might have restocked their own members gradually through existing arrangements. All the social systems dealt with by Oxfam's Kenya restocking projects have indigenous mechanisms for assisting destitute families. This makes it a valid question why external intervention was needed at all.

One answer would be that the mere existence of such mechanisms does not guarantee they are widely employed. As Richard Hogg pointed out when justifying Oxfam's initial pilot project, there were Boran in Isiolo with more than a thousand head of stock who had not re-equipped friends and relatives in dire need. It seems that a severe drought may corrode earlier traditions of reciprocity and sharing; it can also strip nearly everyone of animals so that there is insufficient breeding herd to permit effective restocking. Furthermore, Kenya's pastoral societies are experiencing increased

individualization associated with commercialisation. Even though elders remember traditional arrangements for sharing stock, they admit these customs are being abandoned in the most drought-affected communities (if not universally). Traditional restocking mechanisms seemed to work more effectively for isolated instances of stock loss (from disease or raiding) than for district-wide disasters.

A second important reservation is that even when operative, restocking arrangements were not generally available to everyone in need. Among these societies (as among the Maasai to the south), it was not common for herdowners to share out animals to be tended elsewhere by poorer families - a hedge against localized disaster seen in some other African societies. Instead, families with surplus labour shared their children by sending them to live with those who had animals surplus to their immediate consumption needs.

In addition, the opportunity to restock arises when a man has friends or relatives with substantial herds or when a family has marriageable daughters and sufficient social standing to insure that bridewealth is paid when they are married. Neither mechanism is of much use to those in small, poor families, who in any event may be forced to sell or consume any animals they might receive. Older women who have been abandoned or widowed and who have several dependents find themselves stranded, without the social ties necessary for activating stock exchanges. The fact outsiders can target restocking assistance to those who do not qualify within their own entitlement systems is an important justification for external intervention (though not yet fully acknowledged in the selection of stock recipients).

Should, however, Oxfam undertake such projects directly as it did in these four cases? The NGOs active in northern Kenya were mostly religious organisations. Their own, small-scale restocking efforts appeared to have a close link to the sponsor's proselytizing activities. This appears to have been a principal reason for Oxfam's reluctance to play its traditional role as simply an enabling organisation working in partnership with a local NGO which would carry out the programme. A further reason was that restocking was a novel and as yet unproven concept in East Africa. Proponents of Oxfam's

involvement saw it as a pilot venture, designed to develop an operational approach which might then be replicated much more widely in response to future droughts.

Strong as these arguments seem, they neglect a crucial aspect of all restocking projects: the fairly large amounts of money or food which the sponsoring agency must handle routinely during the restocking exercise. For example, a single payment to one transporter working under Oxfam commission on one of its smaller projects was for 116,400 K shs. The sheer volume of animals to be purchased or food distributed constitutes a perpetual temptation for local employees who are not highly paid but whose job makes them responsible for disbursement; it can become an equal temptation if a local committee is given this function. Anywhere in the world, disbursement of food relief can become a corrupting influence, but the pressures in this direction are particularly strong within remote locations of northern Kenya. In the event, Oxfam minimized this problem by relying largely upon expatriate consultants to lead each field team³, and by leaving other organisations (such as TRP in Turkana) to organise the storage and transport of food rations in its larger projects. These tactics appear to have been effective, but they must be recognised in any assessment of the general replicability of the restocking model.

3. PROJECT ORGANISATION

When Oxfam does decide to implement a project itself, it becomes responsible for a range of organisational matters beyond those otherwise encountered. These are summarised in Table 1 overleaf, and include:

- a. numbers and composition of animals supplied
- b. selection of recipients
- c. buying arrangements
- d. conditions at transfer
- e. rations and equipment

³ Up to early 1987 in Wajir and the second phase of Samburu, Kenyan staff have taken the lead.

- f. grouping of recipients
- g. monitoring
- h. technical support
- i. timing

a. Numbers & Type of Animals Supplied

Determining the number, age, sex and species of animals to be given out is critical to project success. Smallstock are preferable to large stock because of their faster reproduction rate and the lessened degree of risk in holding many small animals vs. a few large ones. In the northern Kenya environment, goats are preferable to sheep, females to males, and camels to cattle. The numbers given out varied in Isiolo. For a household to survive on only its livestock it needs from 70 to 100 or more smallstock, depending on family size. Giving out less than this to each family implies that they will receive rations to tide them over for an extended period and that most of their animals will be females of a suitable age when purchased. The Isiolo pilot project was probably mistaken in giving out mostly sheep rather than goats - an understandable reaction to the scarcity of goats in the local marketplaces. Availability of sale stock for purchase by a restocking project emerges as a major problem, particularly if the objective is to buy in the immediate area (to minimize disease risks and to stay within pre-existing stocking rates). Also, the purchase of female animals may reduce the viability of seller's holdings. Transport animals provided to each recipient were generally one or two donkeys: any delay in this arrangement (as happened in Turkana) limits families' mobility; it would have been preferable to issue female donkeys in all instances. The unresolved question (because not yet tried) is whether in a dry environment camels might have served as the transport animal.

b. Selection of recipients

How to screen applicants quickly and fairly remains a major difficulty in restocking projects (as it does in any form of food relief). The Wajir and Isiolo cases relied upon expatriates with several years' prior acquaintance with the immediate area. Turkana was perhaps the most problematic, with accusations that some of those restocked were not genuinely destitute. It should be noted, however, that long-term, completely destitute families make

poor candidates for restocking, having lost the necessary managerial skills. Samburu employed advice from local restocking committees, a well-received innovation but one facilitated by the presence of the project team at an organisational base for over a full year. Also, it was apparent in the field interviews that the administrative Chiefs and sub-Chiefs tended to dominate in the affairs of these committees.

c. Buying arrangements

The original intention was to buy smallstock in the very communities being assisted. This would minimize disease risks and leave overall stocking rates unchanged; it also buttresses the terms of trade for other pastoralists who may be forced to sell (see discussion below of benefits). In practice, Oxfam's field teams found to obtain a hundred or more animals at a time usually meant dealing with livestock traders (or alternatively holding flocks under project control for an extended period, also a risky practice). Livestock traders in northern Kenya are often Somalis, from outside the local community and this practice led to public accusations of favouritism in Kenya's national press. Another difficulty is that the very young animals which are easiest to buy locally are more vulnerable to drought and not yet ready for breeding. Buying teams required training in the selection of animals, and had difficulty obtaining sufficient female goats to meet project quotas. The first project bought mostly sheep because of their lower price and greater availability, but the policy was changed when it became clear that in a bush environment goats have a higher value and give more milk for household use.

Once purchased, animals require inoculation, branding, and protection until families come in to take charge. Where several families are to receive stock on the same day, it is advisable for them to draw lots, allowing each to pick only a few animals in turn.

d. Conditions at transfer

In Kenya, one is told that in the initial Isiolo pilot project the livestock transferred were treated as an outright gift, but in the subsequent projects as loans. In practice, all of Oxfam's restocking projects attached several conditions to the animals given out. At later stages these included:

- i) acceptance of monitoring,
- ii) no sales or slaughter in first year,
- iii) some sales of males in second year with monitor's approval,
- iv) exchanges to be approved and recorded,
- v) all animals marked and periodically checked,
- vi) movements of family to be recorded,
- vii) family to acquire full rights after two years "but may be required to return the original stock", and,
- viii) "a family will be expected to return to a full-time pastoral life".

These rules were signed and witnessed for each recipient. Those interviewed were quite unclear if and when repayment might be required. Though the transfers were described as a loan, as far as we could ascertain in early 1987 no animals had yet been repaid in any of the projects. Subsequently some repayment has begun in Samburu, where OXFAM retains a Kenyan supervisor, and where 'restocking committees' at the local level continue to function. By calling the transfer a loan, the projects helped families resist claims for animals from relatives (in payment of past obligations); they also assist those refusing to pay "voluntary" contributions to each local chief's Harambee fund.

e. Rations & equipment

Accompanying its small stock, each recipient household also got a pack animal (donkey or camel), plastic jerry cans for carrying water and an axe or panga. Equally vital was the continuation of food rations. For the initial Isiolo project, Oxfam undertook this supply directly by giving each family two, 90 kg bags of maize - supposedly to last six months - followed by a second issue of the same amount. Several of those interviewed said actual consumption was roughly one bag every 4-6 weeks, so that obviously families relied on other food sources. In the Turkana and Samburu projects, recipient households continued to receive food rations (one bag of maize every 45 days) from the administration (the TRP) for between 9 and 12 months.

f. Grouping of recipients

It was at first suggested that households receiving animals might be organised

into mutual assistance, herding groups: Oxfam "olalas" or "adakars" as the case might be. Where particular families were short of labour and without relatives, they did sometimes join together; most, however, chose to reside with other, already established groups.

g. Monitoring

In contrast to the short period needed for giving out livestock, a relatively long period is required to monitor the degree of success achieved by recipients. The information desired relates both to operational difficulties and to evaluating socio-economic impacts.

Operationally, somebody must monitor animal health to alert outsiders and perhaps organise assistance if large numbers of animals are lost from disease, drought, or raiding. In all four projects, Oxfam's local staff became involved in protecting recipients's animals, either directly by treatment or indirectly by ensuring drugs and veterinary help was available. Monitors were usually engaged by Oxfam on a salaried basis, for a year or more. They would visit restocked families each month to record herd performance. In Samburu, they were assisted by local committees, but otherwise they dealt with families directly. There was a tendency for monitors to cluster around the project office, becoming brokers for the supply of external assistance. To counter this tendency, most monitors were posted into the communities being restocked and made responsible for following up anywhere from 30 (Wajir and Isiolo) to 50 or more families (Samburu and Turkana).

A basic difficulty the Kenya projects never fully overcame is the precision and comprehensiveness of data which either livestock specialists (looking at herd performance) or sociologists (evaluating family survival) require. Either a senior supervisor must be resident with the field team (if not permanently then at least while baseline data are being collected), or else one must be willing to accept only the most rudimentary data. Oxfam's projects chose something in between, paying monthly salaries to school leavers who sometimes worked unsupervised and whose data is of suspect quality. Unreliable data is simply not worth collecting and analysing, and it needs to be recognised that to ensure data quality requires a highly skilled field

supervisor. A possibility not tried within Kenya would be to do away with monitors entirely, by relying instead upon local committees for surveillance. In any event, how to best provide monitoring remains an open question.

h. Technical support

There are three areas where restocking projects require technical support:

- i) in deciding the number and type of animals to provide;
- ii) the selection and treatment of animals on purchase; and,
- iii) the supply of drugs and health care for livestock subsequent to restocking.

Kenya's Oxfam projects initially supplied this technical input directly, by hiring an experienced livestock consultant and by advancing funds so project staff could hold drugs and do treatment as required. (One of Oxfam's Kenyan staff has technical training in animal health and range management.) This approach infringed on the veterinary department's domain. It is notable that with one exception the projects did not work closely with each district's veterinary services. The veterinarians, in turn, saw little reason for supporting an activity in whose planning and implementation they were not involved. From the standpoint of replicability, this is a potential weakness. Unless a restocking project can safeguard animal health, the whole programme can be put into jeopardy if restocked families lose many animals.

i. Timing

Accidents of timing can have a great deal to do with the success of a restocking project. If recipients get animals which will produce young quickly and at a time when there is ample forage, the flock/herd size can increase rapidly. If, instead, animals are bought when prices are low (usually during the dry season or when a drought looms), purchasing will be easy but survival imperilled. Offering of food rations, as Oxfam did, somewhat reduces the seasonality constraint but it is still significant. For example, the fact that the Isiolo pilot project weathered a severe drought in the months following restocking was a major accomplishment. From the standpoint of meeting people's needs and giving herds the best chances for survival, projects might consider paying more to get animals in good seasons.

Timing also impinges on the field team doing the restocking. Some of the operational difficulties experienced in Turkana were of Oxfam's own making, because of a target set of restocking 500 families. Attempts to move rapidly into a mass programme may cause poor screening of recipients and may strain purchasing arrangements.

4. COSTS AND REPAYMENT

The Isiolo pilot project was estimated at its conclusion to have cost a total of just over a million shillings (1,109,509) for the first year's effort in restocking 70 families. This worked out at the then current exchange rate at £792.50 (K shs 15,850) per family. Subsequently Richard Hogg prepared a draft budget for a six month continuation of the project to include a further 100 families (to receive 70 smallstock each). This was estimated to cost £863 per family (1986 prices). Both estimates omit certain supervisory costs, such as visits by Oxfam's Nairobi staff or assistance from technical consultants, but nonetheless provide a rough figure for deriving likely direct costs for an expatriate supervised 3-6 month project. (Cost figures on Oxfam's two larger projects are as yet too incomplete to be used as a basis here.)

There is little doubt, then, that restocking projects tend to become expensive quickly when compared against the usual small-scale programme for farmer training, shallow wells, etc. The main cost components to identify include:

- 1) salary, transport and housing for the project leader;
- 2) cost of animals x number of families;
- 3) cost of rations x families x months;
- 4) any other provisions or equipment given out; and,
- 5) monitors' salaries x months of monitoring.

The first and last elements are quite variable depending upon the design of a particular project, and bear close watching. Had Oxfam not enjoyed World Food Programme assistance, its operational costs for storing and distributing rations might have been substantially higher.

However, we should bear in mind that restocking projects are a type of entitlement programme, designed to equip households to re-enter the pastoral

economy. Entitlement programmes of any kind - whether giving farmers plots in an irrigation scheme, blacksmiths equipment to produce, or pastoralists the herd to manage - are far more expensive than most non-entitlement measures. For example, the Ewaso Ng'iro Irrigation Cluster from which the first restocked families came spent about 33 million Kenya shillings to "develop" 162 ha (between 1972 and 1981). This represents K shs 203,704 per hectare (one family's allotment), and yet as of 1986 probably two thirds of the developed area was not being irrigated at all. Restocking projects appear fairly attractive when compared against the alternatives in their same environment. An even stronger case could be made if one assumes the animals provided will be repaid eventually to permit restocking of still other families, but to date no repayment has occurred and the projects lack the kind of continuing organisational presence which would be required.

5. BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES

The main benefit from a restocking project occurs when destitute households rejoin the pastoral economy. If they do, the local administration is relieved from the continuing supply of food rations in this sense, restocking constitutes a regularised and phased means for breaking a household's dependence upon external food aid. And, of course, during the time when the project is accumulating smallstock by exchanging maize or supporting recipient households with food rations others in the community continue to benefit and the terms of trade for livestock are reinforced.⁴

Achievement of the primary goal occurs gradually, as a household obtains young stock and as it becomes more mobile. Even then, disaster can wipe out the gains and force a family back into external dependency. For example, two families in Isiolo during the drought had their flocks drop to 13 and 20 respectively; now each after two good seasons are nearly back to where they started (50 animals) with 47 and 48 left. Crude indicators of success include: (i) whether the household is, in fact, surviving without further food

⁴ Among the few public criticisms made of Oxfam's Kenya projects, one was that they inflated the prices for goats in the local markets - a complaint advanced by traders used to obtaining animals very cheaply.

aid; (ii) the gross size of the household's herds/flocks; and, (iii) if they have been able to resume a semi-nomadic existence by moving away from the initial restocking base. Since this process may take three or four years to achieve, some type of monitoring of restocked families is desirable (see above).

In their current form, Oxfam's Kenya restocking projects have been very popular. As one woman whose family had experienced considerable sickness exclaimed, "Without these sheep, we would be finished." The immediate incentives include not only the prospect of becoming self-sufficient again - the major goal among most recipients - but also the access to a transport animal (which can be used for carrying wood and water for sale to others in the vicinity) and rudimentary equipment as well as continued access in the short run to food rations. The projects differed in how much food they allowed and for the length of time it was continued; the initial pilot project erred in under-estimating household needs. Access to rations is essential to free people from the necessity of selling or slaughtering the animals they receive.

6. PASTORAL INSTITUTIONS

Any short term intervention should not aim at establishing new socio-economic institutions. Of necessity, Kenya's restocking projects have had to rely upon existing pastoral and administrative mechanisms (probably to a greater degree than recognised).

A fundamental precondition for success has been an "open range" situation where grazing, browse, and water are a common property resource. So far, those receiving stock under the four projects have been allowed the necessary access to grazing and browse; there have been a few, isolated problems over access to water (usually the first common property resource to come under individual control). However, in Samburu district the lands being used have been divided into group ranches. While not yet finalised, these claims could result in the exclusion of all non-members from grazing presently used by restocked families.

Within the recipient socio-economic systems, there are different arrangements concerning owning, managing, and using livestock. While there are recognised herding groups, these tend to have a fluid composition depending on immediate convenience and also may differ between the wet and dry seasons. Herding groups usually do not have any power over entitlements: they do not as such own animals, and they cannot reallocate livestock or their progeny. This the initial hope that Oxfam might save itself administrative expenses by simply allocating a quota of animals to each herding group (i.e. "adakar" in Turkana) appears unworkable. People in interviews admitted that local leaders knew who were in greatest need, but pointed out that actual allocations were a very sensitive matter and already led to conflicts within families over accusations of favoritism.

The same argument applies to the proposal that an external donor might simply hand over livestock to existing entitlement groups. Among both the Turkana and Samburu, it is the senior males in each kinship group (or extended family) who control its stock. One reason for the prevalence of raiding is that this is nearly the only way for younger men to acquire their own livestock - a clear indication that the present entitlement system does not meet everybody's needs.

Providing a household with smallstock allows it to participate in a network of social transactions linked to or symbolised by livestock transfers. Actually, pre-existing claims of this nature can even threaten a family's retention of animals after having been "restocked" - a powerful argument for terming the transfer a loan rather than a gift, since in the traditional system the circulation of loaned animals to pay off social debts was usually restricted. Thus there does seem to be an advantage in employing indigenous terms for stock-sharing if these are already seen to involve restrictions upon the use of the loaned animals. It also regularises the transaction by putting it in a familiar context (important if a loan). Where destitute households are being restocked, it may be important to increase the control women exercise over the animals received, given the high rates of divorce and prevalence of female-headed households (see discussion under item 7 below).

There is a larger, philosophical issue at stake: whether as a matter of principal interventions should encourage the effective operations of larger social groupings within the community: clans, committees, etc. Those accustomed to village life where people accept common obligations within a corporate entity may find it disturbing that the Kenya restocking projects did not facilitate such ties. However, in East Africa pastoralists generally do not live and move as clan members and clan ties are perceived as being inherently corrupting. Nor is residence in compact villages such as are found in North Africa or the Sahel common. Experimentation with new institutions such as owners associations, etc., still may be desirable for other reasons, but it will require a high degree of organisational support and thus is not an appropriate goal for a short-term intervention.

Administrative institutions also become relevant when a restocking project is being considered. Most of those given animals had already been receiving food relief through existing arrangements involving the chief's or sub-chief's committees or, in Turkana, the Turkana Rehabilitation Project. The restocking projects benefited from being able to rely on other organisations to distribute food rations, and in this sense were supported by the larger institutional system. Any large-scale restocking programme will necessarily require linkages of this kind.

7. WOMEN

Since possibly over half the destitute families still on food relief in pastoral areas are headed by women, restocking is potentially of major significance to them. The interesting finding from the field visits was that the Wajir project, where most of the recipients were women, appeared quite successful even though the Somali recipients got the lowest numbers of smallstock each (30 per recipient). Women with dependent children have a high incentive to keep their herds in good condition, since there are fewer alternative livelihoods open to them. It seems also that by equipping a woman with animals she becomes more marriageable within a pastoral system where stock ownership is important. On the negative side, where selection of recipients is controlled by men there appeared to be a bias towards restocking male-headed households (given the preponderance of women on the food relief

lists). Here the complicating factor is the possibility those receiving relief have been left there deliberately by spouses as part of a family survival strategy. It is extremely difficult for outsiders to judge which are the genuine cases of abandonment and true destitution. In any future projects, more attention should be devoted to learning how existing entitlement systems work (see "pastoral institutions" above).

An interesting feature of the Isiolo pilot project was the stipulation that each married man receiving stock would give 10 ewes and 1 ram to his wife (or 5 each if he had several wives). Should a divorce occur subsequently, these animals and their progeny would remain the wife's property. As the donor of animals, Oxfam encountered minimal resistance to this condition - an important precedent for future projects. It seems, however, that Oxfam's subsequent Kenya projects did not retain this feature for reasons that are as yet unclear.

One other gender-related issue might arise in some groups if restocking were based on camels. Among the Somali, it is said that only men may milk camels. Since, however, even among the Somali women do take camels to water and one of the best camel trainers in Kenya is a woman, there is nothing "natural" or inevitable about this practice. The Somali women interviewed who came from camel-keeping groups admitted camels require close supervision but said they could find ways to mobilise the necessary help.

8. REPLICABILITY AND SIMILAR PROGRAMMES

After Kenya's 1984 drought, many NGOs became temporarily involved in some kind of restocking exercise to give ex-pastoralists a temporary boost during the period when they lost most of their assets. In Samburu District around Baragoi, for example, the Catholic Church, World Vision, and the Lutherans were all doing some restocking. The Catholic mission estimates they assisted up to 150 families, given between 5 and 30 goats each (but usually ten or less) as an outright gift. World Vision has distributed 3,500 goats to 600 families (thus averaging slightly over 5 per family). The Lutheran Mission restocked 16 families with between 16 to 18 goats. In this instance animals were lent rather than given: the terms being that the female provided

remained the property of the mission and could not be killed. Any male progeny would belong to the family, but the second female kid would be repaid to the mission in exchange for the family acquiring full rights over the original goat.

It is clear that in most instances the NGO restocking efforts were aimed at immediate relief rather than getting households back into semi-nomadic pastoralism; and, with some exceptions, little attention was paid to how families managed the animals received. Oxfam's projects appear to be the only fairly extensive programme which gave recipients sufficient smallstock to be the nucleus for a viable livelihood within a year or two of the transfer. As such, these projects are extraordinarily important - possibly the single most important thing Oxfam has done for East Africa's pastoralists. This implies the need to document and evaluate this experience carefully.

Kenya's restocking projects have been very popular at the local level. Oxfam's files in Nairobi bulge with requests for more aid of this nature. In most of the communities visited, there are still many families depending on food relief - sometimes up to six or seven years after they became destitute (e.g. in Turkana). At over half the stations visited, one could have easily doubled the scope of the restocking project. From the standpoint of need and the fairly encouraging results achieved to date, it seems the original four projects could have been replicated much more widely than they have. Oxfam, Kenya, has also talked of hosting a country-wide review by NGOs of the restocking experience (and it is unfortunate this did not occur when interest was at a peak). The constraints appear instead a general uncertainty about how to proceed in organising such efforts, and a shortage of external finance for doing such "experimental" projects.

9. IMPACTS

The project recipients visited in compiling this review were at various points in the degree of their recovery. Only a few have been unable to resume a livelihood based mostly on livestock, and in this regard at least the projects can be viewed as a "success" (particularly if the record is contrasted against achievements of other entitlement programmes in the same areas). Even so, one

could see unresolved problems serious enough to threaten this achievement. In Isiolo, there had been a virulent outbreak of cerebral malaria after many families returned (temporarily, one was told) to the original restocking site at Malka Daka. In Samburu and Turkana, some families still awaited animals promised to them even though restocking has been brought to a close in both districts (mostly donkeys or camels not yet obtained). In some Turkana communities, losses of goats to disease after restocking have been high. One came away from Turkana and from Samburu with a sense that those who had been restocked in both districts were still quite vulnerable, and might well require additional technical support in the future.

It is unlikely that these projects led to any appreciable increase in local stocking densities, given the small number of families assisted in any one place and the goal of encouraging households to resume seasonal migration. By the same token, however, the relatively small scale of the restocking efforts has meant that many potential recipients could not be included. People in some of the communities visited remain in dire need.

Perhaps the most important impact of Oxfam's restocking projects is the demonstration that such an approach is operationally feasible and is cost-effective in comparison to alternatives. The advocacy of a restocking approach by Richard Hogg and Brian Harley, both former Oxfam consultants, had a great deal to do with popularising the concept in East Africa. But operational success needs to be demonstrated by full documentation and careful assessment, particularly if the projects prove only partially effective. Unfortunately, the things one would like to know - how many smallstock constitute a viable flock/herd, which categories of households are left out of existing entitlement, and how families survive over the longer run - are not easy or cheap to learn. For the Kenya projects, this task remains to be completed, though it is hoped this small case study provides some assistance.

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