

## EDUCATION FOR NOMADS NETWORK - KENYA

Highlights of the last twelve months include several publications, a highly successful inter-ministerial workshop, and the drafting of Africa's first national strategy to provide formal education to nomadic communities through distance learning.

This bulletin is an update on progress to date, but for more information on the programme, please visit our web page at:

<http://www.iied.org/climate-change/key-issues/drylands/education-for-nomads>

### WORKING TOGETHER

In January 2009 the Ministry for Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands (MDNKOAL) invited a team of pastoral education specialists to help in the process of assuring that the new policy for nomadic education meets the expectations of mobile populations without interfering in their pastoral livelihood.

The Education for Nomads (EfN) team has been working closely with the Government of Kenya, through both the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the MDNKOAL, in developing a specific strategy for 'getting to the hardest to reach'.

In October 2009, the role of co-ordinating the EfN programme shifted from SOS Sahel UK to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

### LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE

During 2009, at the request of the MDNKOAL, the EfN team met with four different pastoral communities across Kenya to hear their ideas on how education might reach nomadic herders. Discussions were held with small herding groups within Gabra, Turkana, Borana and Somali communities.



These consultations with nomadic pastoralists pioneered a new use of scenario planning. This approach is designed in such a way as to strengthen the existing pastoralists' skills in analysis and strategic thinking.

So far this has resulted in pastoralists talking directly to their leaders about education, and in bringing their opinions to inter-ministerial policy debates. In the longer term, such initiatives will help to address the disadvantages suffered by the respective communities over a long period which have resulted in major gaps in education compared to the rest of the country.

A DVD is in the making that highlights the opinions of those nomadic communities who were consulted about education provision for pastoralists. Formal education via distance learning was recognised as important, in combination with boarding and mobile schools, if the

state is to reach the pastoral producers. Pastoralists are very interested in a form of distance learning that does not compete with herding.



## WORKSHOP ON NOMADIC EDUCATION

The research carried out in 2009 culminated in a high-level inter-ministerial workshop in Nakuru (26-28 January 2010). The meeting consolidated and refocused all research findings to date and helped refine a strategy document on distance learning for nomadic pastoralists.

The workshop achieved close to 100% attendance. Key government representatives were present, including the Minister for Northern Kenya Hon Mohamed Elmi, his Permanent Secretary Mary Ngari, and the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Professor Karega Mutahi.

The agenda was driven by a strong spirit of collaboration between the two Ministries, technical specialists, education specialists, academics, and national and international organisations.

The debates were lively and produced concrete recommendations that have been incorporated into

the strategy document and will affect ministerial plans over the next three years.

Enabling this shift in government perspective is the biggest success of the programme to date. Government officials, Kenyan academics and retired educationalists are now proactively pushing for a new distance learning approach that will reach scattered herders.

“Every child should get a basic minimum of literacy and numeracy. This should not be at the risk of being forced to choose between this and their livelihood.”

### Honourable Mohamed Elmi

Minister of State for Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands  
26th January 2010



‘I think this is a very good workshop, not only because there are so many people from the North, but also because of the cross-section of experts present: technical practitioners, outside experts. I am grateful for this opportunity.’

Amina Ibrahim UNICEF  
28th January 2010



## Getting to the hardest-to-reach: a strategy to provide education to nomadic communities in Kenya through distance learning - the official summary.

1. Kenya has committed itself to the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, and other education targets, but although its achievement in this respect is perhaps the best in Africa, it is unlikely to achieve these goals on present performance. The difficulty now is getting education to hard-to-reach children, especially nomadic pastoralists. The Government of Kenya needs a new strategy urgently if the goals are to be met, and herding and education reconciled. Such a strategy is outlined here, together with a three-phase programme to implement it.
2. The Government of Kenya is in the process of establishing a National Commission for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK). Its critical mandate will be to serve as the driving force for nomadic education. Research and experimental work on nomadic education will however continue while NACONEK is being set up.
3. The main target group are the hardest-to-reach children out of school. The strategy proposed here is concerned mainly with nomadic children, but other hard-to-reach children, as well as adult pastoralists, are also targeted. The strategy stresses family involvement in education, by encouraging parents to enroll with their children, and by providing learning materials for adults.
4. An educational strategy for nomads will combine different delivery methods (boarding and mobile schools, radio broadcasts) together with new approaches to the way education relates to pastoral livelihood concerns. The Government will continue current experiments with a variety of delivery mechanisms while recognising the contradiction between pastoral livelihoods and conventional schooling. There should be major evaluations of the impact of these approaches in two to three years.
5. The educational use of radio has great potential but little progress has been made so far in harnessing it for nomadic education. In the immediate future, priority should be given to developing and piloting a distance learning (DL) system for arid and pastoral areas based principally on use of radio, together with mobile teachers and printed materials. Community radios may be a suitable model for a radio-based distance learning system. The distance learning system and accompanying materials should be available to adults and children, and integrated where useful with existing boarding and mobile schools.
6. A plan should be elaborated through NACONEK to recruit, train and reward teachers for involvement in radio-based education in the unique conditions of the arid and pastoral areas.
7. Effective procedures should be developed for enrolling and keeping track of nomadic DL students.
8. The nomadic education strategy should use the national curriculum to ensure equivalence with the rest of Kenya. Adaptation of material to the specific conditions of pastoral livelihood systems should take place at the stage of design and production of radio learning modules, supported by a teachers' handbook developed for each district.
9. An evaluation/examination system should be developed which enables children to move back and forward between the DL programme and the conventional formal education system, and to acquire the same qualification at the end of their course (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education).
10. The government should closely monitor the implementation of the strategy and evaluate it in as much detail as possible upon implementation. An M&E system must be developed which generates adequate data (on capital and recurrent costs, and wider costs and impacts) for a full evaluation of the distance learning process and how it compares to other ways of achieving the same objective.
11. A nomadic education strategy must be based on a positive attitude towards nomadic pastoral livelihoods. The strategy must incorporate as far as possible the views and opinions of the clients, that is to say the adults and children who are the students and for whom the educational system is designed.
12. Any outstanding legal issues raised by distance learning must be resolved.
13. The government should explore how to capture potential economies of scale created by a radio-based education system through collaboration across international borders where the same language is spoken on both sides.
14. The government should set up a scholarship fund to encourage outstanding nomadic students, especially girls, to continue to secondary school and university.
15. The proposed distance learning strategy for nomads should be fully costed in order to understand the implications of such a strategy and how it compares to other ways of achieving the same objective of education for all.
16. Kenya has made excellent commitments to nomadic education. The existing national policy framework is an optimistic and forward-looking agenda which sets out the main features and challenges of nomadic education. It calls for a new approach, able to go beyond forcing pastoralists 'to choose between herding and schooling'. The task is now to make this policy framework operational by filling critical research gaps and through experimental and pilot projects, and thus finally realise Kenya's education commitments to nomadic children and adults. This strategy proposes a three phased distance learning programme to accomplish that goal.

## PUBLICATIONS



### **Mobile Pastoralists and Education: Strategic Options, Saverio Krätli and Caroline Dyer. 2009**

**IIED.** A review of the literature on providing education to nomads and other hard to reach communities, with a focus on identifying obstacles and alternative strategies. The paper addresses a critical set of fundamental issues, and offers a comparison of approaches specific to Africa and Asia.

### **Planning with Uncertainty. Scenario Planning with African Pastoralists, 2009, SOS Sahel & IIED**

A general introduction to the approach that guides EfN community consultations in Kenya. A DVD is included. Published in English and French.

### **Scenario Planning with African Pastoralists: A 'How To' Guide, Sue Cavanna and Dauod Abkula 2009, IIED.**

Complements 'Planning with Uncertainty', describing the process in more detail and providing a step by step guide for field workers

### **Getting to the Hardest-to-Reach: A Strategy to Provide Education to Nomadic Communities in Kenya through Distance Learning.**

Written by Jeremy Swift, this document is based on all the research carried out in Phase 1 of EfN, including the outputs and the consultation through an inter-ministerial workshop on nomadic education. The official summary is provided on page three of this Bulletin.

### **Workshop on Nomadic Education, Nakuru, 26-28 January 2010.**

A detailed report of the workshop including annexes with all presentations.

## WHAT NEXT?

The next few months will be dedicated to designing a pilot to deliver distance learning to nomadic pastoralists in two or three districts.

A key focus is to complete the mapping of technical options and challenges in using radio communication for distance learning in light of the Nakuru discussions.

This is being done through several rounds of interviews with Kenyan and international specialists, leading to a wrap-up workshop in Kenya at the beginning of June.

Look out for more news in the next bulletin!

## CONTACT US

The mailing list for this programme is moderated but open. If you know of somebody who is interested in this work and want to suggest a contact, please let us know through any of the following contacts

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