



Animal Health Care in Kenya A Teaching Case Study (Mock Up)

This case study explores attempts to legalise paravets in Kenya, who were for many years running decentralised, community-based animal care in various regions of the country. The Organisation of African Unity/International Bureau for Animal Resources Pan Africa Rinderpest Campaign (OAU/IBAR) was one of the central agents pushing for a change in policy. Given a brief history of the context and progress towards policy reform, we want you to place yourself in the year 1998, when those working to legalise paravets faced a critical fork in the road. Your task is to imagine how OAU/IBAR responded and with what impact.

Teaching Purpose: To explore the relationship between research and policy-making, and consider ways that, in the Kenyan context, the eventual policy shift in favour of paravets providing community-based livestock services could have been speeded up.

The story so far...

In the colonial era, and immediately after Kenya gained independence, most clinical vet services were provided by private practitioners and by 'Vet Scouts' who were informally trained and provided care across the regions. These Vet Scouts were phased out in the 1970s, when 'African Socialism' instituted free livestock services for all, provided by the government. Private practitioners went out of business. The reforms created more professional, accessible care in many areas, but those living in the arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya had almost no access to the new service.

It was this problem that paravets – men and women trained to administer basic animal care - hoped to address, through decentralised, community-based animal care. From small pilot projects in the early 1980s, expansion came in 1986 with the arrival of a UK-based NGO, the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG). They set up a programme of training paravets, with the intention of testing the approach and (if it proved successful) promoting it to policy-makers. But all the while the work of the paravets was illegal. The policy-making arena at that time looked unsympathetic: two policy papers aiming to liberalise paravet practices had failed in the planning and implementation stages, and the Director of Veterinary Services (DVS), Dr Wamukoya, appointed in 1990, was highly conservative.

In this climate, the development of further paravet schemes went on quietly, unbeknown to both the DVS and the Kenya Vet Board (KVB). The numbers of trained paravets continued to rise but many of them, unable to work legally without the supervision of a qualified professional vet, were becoming disgruntled and opted to work for private practices that were springing up as a result of the DVA's privatisation scheme in 1994. By 1997, there were a number of paravet schemes throughout the arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya, meeting annually at the ITDG vet workshops. One participant who had been lobbied to attend was Dr Kajume, a Regional Director of Veterinary Services, who became convinced of the approach and began to support the legalising of paravets. But the rest of the DVS chose to turn a blind eye. Eventually, OAU/IBAR started to negotiate with DVS directly on the potential development of a new programme, just as DVS and the KVA were beginning to acknowledge the scale of paravet programme nationally, and regarding them as a threat to both veterinary professionalism and their budding private practices. ITDG had stopped running training workshops, having run out of money.

A turning point...

In 1998, the KVB published a full-page advertisement in the Kenyan national newspapers pointing out that it was illegal to train community animal health workers, and saying that any vets doing so risked being struck off the register.

Your challenge, as members of the OAU/IBAR, is to consider how to respond. Discuss...

What happened next?

The KVB's advertisement alarmed everyone who work on community animal health schemes. ITDG had no money with which to bring the interested parties together. OAU/IBAR, still waiting for approval from DVS on their co-operative paravet scheme, were very keen to find a solution, and came together with the Netherlands Development Agency to fund a workshop to bring all stakeholders together. Dr Kajume was made responsible for developing the workshop, and he advised ITDG that representatives of all key parties should be present in the planning committee as well as the actual workshop event. A number of research studies on livestock services which had previously been obstructed, were unblocked following the KVB's advert. A comprehensive study of each region, which included stakeholder workshops and wide discussion of findings emerged.

In 1998 the DVS eventually signed a Memorandum of Understanding allowing PARC-VAC (an OAU/IBAR programme) to establish a paravet scheme, and established an international workshop bringing together knowledge on schemes from Uganda and Tanzania as well as Kenya. Acknowledging the shift in times, the ITDG workshop was renamed the Decentralised Animal Healthcare Workshop, which reflected the perspectives of all main stakeholders. The workshop endorsed the paravet approach and established multi-stakeholder groups to develop guidelines and standards for paravets in Kenya. It recommended a review of legislation and policy on animal health care. ITDG obtained funding for three years further work with a renewed commitment to specific outputs relating to policy reform.

The Director of Veterinary Services was supportive of the process of policy review. In the following years, many new NGOs tried to set up further paravet schemes. Most of these were implemented them too quickly and most collapsed, attracting significant criticism to paravets as a whole. Changes in the KVA executive committee undermined support for paravets, and a motion to ban paravets programmes altogether was only narrowly averted. Tellingly, the issue was not at all discussed at the following KVA annual general meeting. Finally, the KVB and DVA approved minimum standards and guidelines for paravets in early 2001. Since then, the animal health policy review process has continued and at the OAU/IBAR anniversary party in November 2001, the Minister of Agriculture promised to push the new policy through cabinet if it could be completed by February 2002. Although it was completed on time, it was poorly drafted, and was rejected by the KVA at their annual general meeting. The KVA has recently petitioned the DVS to withdraw the document so that their input can be included. It seems that the story of legalising paravets in Kenya may have several chapters more yet.

For more information, see the GDN case study:

http://www.gdnet.org/rapnet/research/studies/case_studies/Case_Study_01_Full.html

Questions

- How could the move towards legalising paravets been brought about quicker?
- What could have been done in 1998 by OAU/IBAR to make the process smoother?
- What are the lessons for bridging research and policy?