

**THE ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS PROGRAMME IN KENYA,  
WITH A FOCUS ON WEST POKOT, KEIYO-MARAKWET AND  
KAJIADO DISTRICTS**

**Ton Dietz**  
**University of Amsterdam**

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**Wiegert de Leeuw**  
**Former programme advisor West Pokot District**

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## **The Arid and Semi-arid Lands Programme in Kenya**

### **SUMMARY**

The ASAL (Arid and Semi-arid Lands) programme in Kenya started in 1978 and the approach of the Government of Kenya did appeal to basic ideas in Dutch development circles at that time: concentrated attention for poor, marginalising people in isolated, fragile areas; a flexible approach; and long-term, 'programmatically' commitment to a variety of sectors in a framework of integrated rural planning at the district level. Among a rather large number of donors each adopting one or more ASAL districts the Netherlands became the most important donor to the ASAL programme, with district-level programmes in West Pokot (1982), Keiyo-Marakwet (1982), Kajiado (1987) and Laikipia (1993). The choice for the first two districts was a result of the policy in the early 1980s to concentrate Dutch assistance to Kenya in western Kenya.

The objectives of the ASAL programme were a combination of basic needs goals (improving water, health and educational facilities), productive and income goals (improve local income-earning capacity; sustainably intensify the use of natural resources), strategic goals (better integration in the Kenyan economy and society; better participation of the population in development activities) and institution-building goals (support for decentralised planning and implementation capacity at the district level). Most of the support would go through the government agencies at the district and lower levels, but support through NGOs and local-level grassroot organisations was also a possibility. There was a deliberate attempt to avoid the construction of a parallel structure.

The four districts selected by the Netherlands for long-term ASAL programme support are very different from each other. West Pokot in the northwest is in the process of being opened up by a large variety of development projects, with many foreign actors involved. Its drylands are both the home of pastoral Pokot and of agricultural Pokot part of whom practice age-old irrigation practices for local consumption purposes. The security situation in the lowlands is at times very bad. The livestock situation is very much fluctuating due to droughts, diseases and insecurity. There are also extensive highlands in the district, where immigration of non-Pokot and rapid landscape changes are causing both social and ecological problems. Keiyo-Marakwet's drylands in the Kerio Valley are a relatively minor part of that district, which highlands are much more integrated in the Kenyan economy than in West Pokot. The valley combines meagre forms of dryland cultivation and small stock raising with age-old irrigation for home consumption and with recent large-scale mining. Kajiado is the home of the eastern groups of Kenyan Maasai. With some exceptions its area is mainly dryland, with a lot of livestock and increasing patches of cultivation and increasing non-agricultural activities. Its location is much more favourable: near Nairobi and Mombasa and near major tourist attractions, including the Maasai themselves. On the other hand its location so near densely populated areas in the more humid parts of Central Kenya also causes major immigration movements and a rapid change to individualised forms of land ownership. Laikipia is mainly a settlement area for immigrant groups, rich and poor trying their luck in livestock ranches and dryland cultivation. Due to its recent start as a Dutch-supported programme, Laikipia was left out of the analysis.

Together the districts of West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kajiado have 600,000 inhabitants. During the period 1982-1996 these three districts received 37 million Dutch guilders through the ASAL programmes. To put this in perspective it is important to state that this is probably below 15% of all development expenditure in the drylands of these districts by government agencies and NGOs, with a very large majority of all these development investments provided by foreign donors. The financial contributions of the Kenyan government to these areas has been dwindling and many donor-supported projects started to pay recurrent costs, often in disguise. The ASAL programmes have always tried to minimise this, although it could never be avoided completely. The core of the ASAL approach was to use its project money to work as catalysts of improvement; strengthen the weak parts of a chain; and to influence styles of approach (e.g. on participation) among other agencies. No big designs or major pretensions, but small steps forward.

Politically the three districts potentially belong to the favourites of the political elite that came to power after President Moi became president in 1978. With the growing importance of the 'ethnic factor' in Kenyan politics, for Kalenjin groups (like the Pokot, the Keiyo and the Marakwet) as well as for the Maasai the close ties with the most influential political leaders are an asset. This has had a shielding effect with regard to the economic crisis that hit Kenya from the late 1980s onwards. The relative improvement of the livestock prices vis-a-vis other goods (although with a lot of ups and downs) also had a positive impact on those who depend on the livestock sector, rich Maasai in Kajiado in particular. However, the influence of the political and economic context, and of project interventions by the ASAL programmes and others probably shrinks in importance compared to the impact of climatic variability and - in the pastoral areas of West Pokot and in Marakwet - the insecurity caused by armed cattle rustlers.

All three programmes show a very wide-ranging scattering of projects, over a large area and in many sectors. The ASAL programmes had a clear impact on the improvement of the domestic water and educational situation, for women in particular, but less so on the human health situation. The programmes put a considerable and growing emphasis on the improvement of the conditions for livestock, small-scale irrigated agriculture and dryland agriculture and on land and vegetation management. Production for home consumption and local-level trade was probably made more productive and more reliable, while the market integration in the wider Kenyan and international economy was less directly influenced (a lot of it taking place beyond the influence of government anyhow). It is doubtful whether the programmes resulted in a long-term reduction of poverty. With a dramatic deterioration of the overall economy in Kenya the programmes at best resulted in a much less dramatic decline than would otherwise have happened. Based on research in West Pokot it can be suggested that the pastoral areas that were not much disturbed by violence experienced an improvement in the overall wealth level. It is argued that the approach of the ASAL programmes (a lot of small-scale projects, spread widely, among very many other initiatives and influences) does make any attempt at impact analysis futile or even nonsensical, with the problematic result that a down-to-earth request to 'show results' by the donor or others is virtually impossible to answer if it regards income or productivity levels.

However, it is possible to conclude that the programmes had a major influence on the overall quality and capacity of district-level government agencies and on the orientation of the government services towards the drylands and towards the isolated areas. It

certainly resulted in better information, better and more integrated planning and better implementation capacity at the level of the district and below and it certainly succeeded to integrate popular involvement much better in government activities. At the level of programme management the programmes were very much donor driven, with Dutch staff in crucial positions. Nairobi-based Kenyan leadership was lacking. The ever-changing Dutch personnel at The Hague and Nairobi (Netherlands Embassy/SNV) level and the growing unpredictability of donor whims and ideas of evaluation missions resulted in a lot of confusion and in a lacking 'long-term programme strategy'. But it is wrong to say that the programmes as they were implemented were donor-driven. The ASAL programmes mostly had strong roots in district ministries and lower-level staff and 'brokers' from the local populations at district, divisional and local levels played important roles in planning and implementation. In practice there was a remarkable flexibility, based on a lot of 'autonomy' on the ground, not in the least enabled by a system of 'direct payment' with the Dutch programme advisor often in a key position. In fact the ASAL programmes worked as pseudo NGOs strongly linked to the government departments at the lowest levels. There were major risks involved, though. Programme staff had to try and avoid projects that were sensitive for interference by national or local politicians. In a political situation where corruption has become a way of life, the ASAL programmes all got their share of 'financial meandering', theft, and bribery. Especially when the influence of the Dutch programme advisor was sidetracked (by illness, or in between advisors, or due to political pressure) or when the programmes were handling (or forced to handle) more funds than could be monitored, the risk of corruption was high, with a result of programme disruption, temporary closure and undermining of trust among the local population. Throughout the history of the ASAL programmes there was a remarkable lack of interest in 'Nairobi' and 'The Hague' in the establishment of feasible, sustainable and joint accounting procedures and in the very difficult position of the Dutch programme advisors in this respect. In the eyes of the civil servants the ASAL programmes became the 'oil in the district machinery', in the eye of the donor the oil regularly became rancid, and in the eyes of the local people the programme became 'the human face of government', and for some a possibility 'to eat from projects'. Its lack of major breakthrough solutions, of 'giant steps forward', has, since 1993, resulted in attempts to disqualify the type of approach and the philosophy of the ASAL programmes, either by forcing it to become huge investment programmes, with parallel structures outside the government set up, or by restricting it to a few local-level sectors (e.g. water, or land management), alongside nation-wide sectoral programmes (e.g. in education or health care) or simple budget support. If at all the current situation in Kenya will enable a continuation of development assistance.

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# 1. THE ASAL PROGRAMME IN KENYA

## 1.1 History

With over eighty percent of Kenya's land area regarded as drylands ('low and medium potential land' or 'agro-ecological zones IV-VII'), with twenty percent of Kenya's population and half of its livestock, the semi-arid and arid lands of the country are of more than marginal importance. In pre-colonial times the pastoral, largely nomadic inhabitants of the arid and semi-arid areas were the predominant force in Kenya, even controlling large humid areas in the Kenya highlands alongside the Rift Valley. According to Van Zwabenberg (1975, p.80) "The economic geography (...) has been described as a sea of pastoralism surrounding a few islands of agricultural production". The dominance of Maasai, Nandi, Orma/Boran, Turkana, Pokot and other pastoral groups was seriously threatened, though, by dramatic droughts and diseases (rinderpest, smallpox) between 1880 and 1900. When the British established their colonial rule, they found territorially concentrated groups of Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo cultivators in parts of the humid zones in the central Mount Kenya and western Lake Victoria part of the area. The Rift Valley and its surroundings were described as generally empty. Impoverished, scattered groups of pastoralists roamed in the vast dryland area. White settlers were attracted to the highlands. The Kenyan agricultural groups were integrated as labour migrants on the newly established 'White Farms'. The pastoralists were generally regarded as an unruly lot that had to be pacified. With the exception of a few initiatives in the late 1930s and again in the late 1950s, the colonial government's attention for "development" of the drylands was very minimal (see Dietz, 1987, pp. 51-55).

After Kenya became independent, in 1963, and until the late 1970s, the large majority of the strongly increased development initiatives focussed on the humid areas of Rift Valley, Central and Eastern Province. The dry zone only got a meagre share of the development budget (see Wiggins, 1985). The droughts of 1971-73 and 1976 had a shock effect on the Kenyan bureaucracy and on foreign donor countries. In 1976 the Division of Land and Farm Management of the Ministry of Agriculture established a 'Marginal Lands Committee'. Supported by FAO/UNDP and by USAID, projects were started in dry areas, labelled 'integrated rural development'. The IRD approach had gained popularity in Kenya after rather successful pilot programmes in six mainly humid areas, called the Special Rural Development Programme, from 1969 till about 1975 (e.g see IDS, 1975). After USAID-sponsored studies of land potential and development problems were carried out, experimental IRD projects in the drylands were started in Machakos, Kitui and Baringo Districts. In Machakos, an all-embracing 'Machakos Integrated Development Programme' was launched in 1978.

In 1979 the Government of Kenya declared its intention to start integrated development programmes in all dryland districts, the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Programme, in short, ASAL. Among donor organizations, USAID took the lead and supported the general strengthening of the national administrative capacity to deal with ASAL areas. In the Ministry of Agriculture an 'ASAL branch' was established. In the (then) Ministry of Economic Planning and Development a specific senior officer was made responsible for

inter-ministerial coordination. The ASAL branch in the Ministry of Agriculture concentrated on research, an approach that was later strongly criticised in an official evaluation as very expensive, too much time consuming and not enough planning oriented (Hook, 1983). As a result the ASAL branch in the Ministry of Agriculture was resolved in 1984. From then onwards, the ASAL activities were almost completely under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development<sup>1</sup>. In 1989 a separate Ministry for ASAL was established, which became a Department under a new Ministry for Land Reclamation, Regional and Water Development in 1993.

It was the intention to have an ASAL programme for each and every district with ASAL areas, and to get separate donors for all these ASAL districts. With the Machakos Integrated Development Programme continuing as a pseudo-ASAL programme, sponsored by the European Development Fund, and the Baringo Pilot Semi-Arid and Arid Programme directly under His Excellency, the 'real' ASAL programme started in 1980, with the United Kingdom willing to fund the Embu-Meru-Isiolo Programme and the Norwegian development organization NORAD sponsoring the Turkana ASAL programme<sup>2</sup>. USAID followed with an ASAL programme full of expensive research consultants in the northern part of Kitui District in 1981, while the Danish started a pseudo-ASAL project in the southern part in the same year<sup>3</sup>. The Netherlands accepted involvement in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet Districts in 1982 and in a tiny dryland part of Kiambu District<sup>4</sup>. Switzerland committed itself to Laikipia District in 1984 (it would be taken over by the Netherlands later). IFAD accepted the Coastal Districts (mainly Kwale and Kilifi) in 1984 and part of Siaya District (near Lake Victoria) in 1986. Denmark's Danida extended its ASAL involvement to Taita Taveta first (1985) and to the southern part of Machakos later. The Dutch organization SNV (with funding from the Dutch government) was asked to start an ASAL Programme in Kajiado District, among the eastern Maasai, which started in 1987. Later the same organization was requested to take over the Keiyo- Marakwet programme (from 1991 until 1994) and the West Pokot Programme (in 1996) and to start a new ASAL programme in Narok District, among the western Maasai<sup>5</sup>. It can be concluded that the Netherlands provided the most continuous and after 1993 the most important support for the ASAL

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1. Which became the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and later the Ministry of Planning and National Development

2. Until the Norwegians were criticizing the human rights situation in Kenya too much and were kicked out in 1990.

3. The 'Mutomo Soil & Water Conservation Project'.

4. The Ndeiya Karai area, constituency of a then powerful Minister. It functioned from 1982-84 and it never was a success. When the Minister concerned lost his position after the 1982 'Coup-that-failed' it was terminated.

5. That was aborted, because the proposed programme advisor was not accepted by a powerful Minister, and political leader of the area, ("I can't guarantee his safety"). Later, the German GTZ started an ASAL programme in Trans Mara District, formerly part of Narok, but under the Ministry of Agriculture.

programmes at the district level. In 1987 the stage was set. Of all the districts with arid and semi-arid lands most had a donor for an ASAL Programme<sup>6</sup>.

In 1988 the overall policy was revised, after technical assistance provided by UNDP and IFAD. In 1990 a separate ministry was created, the Ministry of Reclamation and Development of Arid and Semi-Arid Areas and Wastelands. The World Bank established a think tank at the World Bank Office in Nairobi (partly funded by the Netherlands), which a.o. produced Environmental Action Plans for all ASAL districts. In 1992 a new ASAL Policy Document was finalised and it looked as if the ASAL areas would get even more systematic attention. However, in the early 1990s quite some donors became frustrated by the lack of impact, and by 'irregularities'. In 1993 the separate ministry was history again, as it was forced to merge with the Ministry of Water Development and the Ministry of Regional Development, to form a Ministry of Land Reclamation, Regional and Water Development, which severely undermined the ASAL orientation. Donor trust in the new set up dwindled and most donors either stopped their support for ASAL programmes (e.g. the European Union, the UK), or transferred it to other ministries (e.g. Danida). The Dutch remained the only donor under the MLRR&WD. For the time being.

We will concentrate the analysis of the ASAL approach and impact on three Dutch-sponsored ASAL projects, those in West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kajiado. Due to its recent start as a Dutch-supported programme, Laikipia was left out of the analysis.

## 1.2 Goals

When the ASAL Programme was established, four major aims were formulated (Kenya, 1979, p. 16):

- improving the human resource base, providing basic needs through better water, health and educational facilities,
- exploiting and improving the productive potential of ASAL areas, including the creation of local income-earning opportunities,
- conservation of resources, and
- a better integration of the ASAL areas in the Kenyan economy.

In 1993, the major aims had been reformulated. In the terms of reference for a major review of three Dutch ASAL programmes (MDC etc. 1993, annex 1, p.1) it was stated that "The goal of the programmes is the realisation of an integrated development within the framework of the District Focus for Rural Development Policy. The programmes

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<sup>6</sup>But the north and northeast of the country did not get a donor until very late (or the Kenyan government found it wise not to start ASAL programmes there). In the Somali districts Garissa, Mandera and Wajir the security problem was the major issue; Marsabit District had some research-related activities funded by the German GTZ and GTZ also funded a Livestock Development programme in Samburu district, but both under the Ministry of Agriculture. Recently the World Bank started to fund a new 'Arid Lands Resource Management Programme', for the arid districts in the north and northeast, under the Office of the President.

can support all key sectors relevant to development. The long term objectives of these programmes can be formulated as:

- intensifying the sustainable use of natural resources;
- the raising of the living standard of the local population by promoting more efficient use of natural resources;
- integration of the ASAL areas in the mainstream of national economic development;
- support to decentralised planning and implementation of development activities, reinforcement of the district's capacity for planning, implementing and evaluating of development;
- promotion of participation of the target communities in planning, implementing and evaluating their development".

The different words not only show the change in 'development jargon' between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, but also a shift in opinion or basic development philosophy. 'Basic needs' are no longer mentioned, nor is there separate attention anymore for 'the human resource base' (operationalised as improving facilities for drinking water, education and health). The 'productive potential' and 'local income-earning opportunities' should now be developed by making more 'efficient' use of the natural resources. No longer 'conservation' of these natural resources was mentioned, but 'intensification', as long as it is 'sustainable'. No longer 'better integration' in the Kenyan economy, but all-embracing 'integration' was to be promoted. The concept of 'decentralisation' was not yet mentioned in 1979.

These goals were formulated for ASAL programmes in all districts with arid and semi-arid areas. If we focus on the three ASAL programmes in West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kajiado the district context in each of these districts is quite different and this of course influenced the operationalisation of the general goals to more area-specific objectives. A short description is necessary to understand these differences. But before doing so it is important to say that all three districts have humid areas, and are not at all completely arid and semi-arid: in Keiyo-Marakwet the wet highlands even cover much more area than the dry Kerio Valley, in West Pokot the humid southern highlands and those of the Sekerr massif and the Karapokot hills are a quarter of the district and in Kajiado the humid Ngong hills and the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro are six percent of the district area. For the district bureaucracy (in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet having their headquarters in the humid highlands) it was not always easy to accept that there was considerable ASAL programme attention for the drylands and sometimes far less government or NGO attention for the high-potential areas, which, in the eyes of many civil servants at headquarters deserved much more attention than the drylands.

## **2THE PROJECT AREA**

### **2.1West Pokot**

West Pokot District is situated in the northwestern part of Kenya, and it borders Uganda. Its main inhabitants are Pokot (sing. Pochon), who form part of the Kalenjin ethnic group, although reluctantly. In 1970 an area that was administered by Uganda since 1932 (the 'Karapokot' area) was incorporated in the district. West Pokot consists of

humid highlands, escarpment zones and dry lowlands. The lowlands have always been the home of the pastoral Pokot. Besides having zebu cattle, goats and hairsheep (and some camels and donkeys), the pastoral Pokot have a fluctuating involvement in marginal agriculture (sorghum and millet, recently maize as well), gold panning, trading of arms, miraa and precious stones and there is a long history of raiding and counterraiding with their neighbours, the Turkana in the northeast, the Karimojong in the northwest, the Sebei in the southwest and the Marakwet in the southeast. The pastoral Pokot of West Pokot are closely connected with the pastoral Pokot of northern Baringo district and with those in Upe, Uganda. There are also many links with the agricultural Pokot.

The humid highlands consist of various areas, the Cherangani, Mnagei, Sekerr and Karapokot highland areas. The Cherangani 'uplands' are originally the home of a different Kalenjin sub-group, the hunter-gatherer Sengwer. Nowadays they and Pokot immigrants have started sheep farming in the highest zones and maize, potato and pyrethrum agriculture in the (former) forest zone. Since the 1960s the Pokot (and other Kalenjin) elite have acquired large properties there, and non-Pokot (often Kikuyu) squatters and land labourers became pioneer cultivators. In the Mnagei highlands, around the district headquarters Kapenguria-Makutano small-scale farmers, many of them non-Pokot coming from outside the district gradually occupied the area from the 1930s onwards. Ethnic turmoil in late 1993 resulted in a massive flight from the area. The Sekerr and Karapokot hills are the refuge areas for the Pokot during disaster periods. Part of this Pokot refuge area was opened up in the second half of the eighties by a multi-million hydro-electricity project, the Turkwell Gorge Dam.

The humid highlands generate a lot of streams that plunge down from the escarpment and flow towards the lowlands. Most of those join the Suam-Turkwell river, which originates from Mount Elgon and flows towards Lake Turkana. Part of the streams are tapped for indigenous irrigation, that already existed in the 19th century. It is an ingenious system that enables a food-secure system of mainly sorghum and millet production by the 'agricultural Pokot'. These agricultural Pokot have always been part of an exchange alliance with their pastoral colleagues (see Porter, 1963, Conant, 1965 and Dietz, 1987).

West Pokot had approximately 225,000 inhabitants in 1989, of whom 190,000 were Kalenjin (Kenya, 1994, I, 6-45). We estimate that there are 170,000 Pokot in the district, and 80,000 in the neighbouring districts and Uganda. There are very few Pokot in the rest of Kenya, and hence migrant remittances are minimal. About 70% of the population in the district lives in the ASAL areas. Half of them would claim to be 'pastoralists', even if livestock no longer forms the backbone of their livelihood; the others are agriculturalists. The District headquarters, twin city Kapenguria-Makutano had 14,000 inhabitants in 1989 (Kenya, 1994, II, p. 535), but that was before the 'ethnic cleansing' that chased away considerable numbers of non-Pokot in 1993/94.

In terms of employment most labour in the lowlands is nowadays devoted to arable farming, and to mining of gold and precious stones and no longer to livestock herding. However, in terms of income (cash and non cash combined) livestock income still

dominates. A lot of livestock wealth is being exchanged for grains. Grains now provide a dominant part of the food needs, and no longer milk, let alone meat. With a persistent, although fluctuating, downward trend of livestock per capita, the perception among many Pokot is that poverty is on the increase. During periods of disaster (1979-81, 1984-86 and 1988) many barely survived. The fact that most children now attend school, that the service situation improved considerably and that in monetary terms far more money is circulating than before 1980 does not undermine a feeling of despair.

Although poverty is currently rather widespread, the area's potential is better than in many other Kenyan drylands. Near the escarpment, where indigenous irrigation is important, further improvements in irrigation and crop yields are generally thought to be possible. In other areas adapted forms of water harvesting technologies could be developed. The livestock economy could be much improved, and if there would be a reliable commercial outlet for cattle, livestock income could be higher. Finally, the fallback possibilities of mining are and will remain an important survival insurance during bad times. Cattle-theft related violence, though, undermines the economy. A meagre network outside the home area does not result in good prospects for remittance income or political 'cloud', feeding a mentality of isolation and feeling marginalised, and a victim of forces beyond their control. History taught the Pokot a deep mistrust in 'outsiders', who can easily become 'enemies' and are treated so.

## 2.2 Keiyo-Marakwet

Recently 'Keiyo' and 'Marakwet' were formed as separate districts, but for a long time they were administered together as 'Elgeyo Marakwet'<sup>7</sup>. They were the home of two groups of Kalenjin, Keiyo and Marakwet, who had been pushed to the lower part of the Kerio Escarpment, as victims of droughts, and of more powerful pastoral and agro-pastoral neighbours, like the Maasai, the Pokot, the Nandi and the Tugen. Around 1900 the Marakwet were confined to an escarpment zone in the northern part of the Kerio Valley, where they used a lot of streams coming from the Cherangani uplands for forms of irrigation that were and are even more ingenious than those of their neighbours, the agricultural Pokot (see Dietz, 1991 and 1992). They had few cattle (as most of the ones they had would occasionally be stolen by the Pokot<sup>8</sup>), but they had a lot of goats and heavily relied on their irrigated sorghum, finger millet, bananas and other fruits.

Around 1900 the Keiyo were confined to the southern part of the Kerio Valley, including the escarpment zone from where the Kerio River originates, before it flows northward, towards Lake Turkana. With a few exceptions the Keiyo did not develop irrigated agriculture. They eked out a living by making use of escarpment ledges for sorghum and

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<sup>7</sup>Throughout the text we will use 'Keiyo-Marakwet', also for the period when the district was still united under the district name of 'Elgeyo Marakwet'. Even then the County Council referred to its area as Keiyo-Marakwet.

<sup>8</sup>The Pokot regard their Marakwet neighbours as miserable, *chebleng*, the poor ones, who could never defend themselves properly against cattle theft.

millet cultivation, and by using the valley floor (and - if their enemies allowed - the highland zone towards the west) for their zebu cattle, goats and hairsheep. When the British occupied the area, the Keiyo were soon forthcoming as labour migrants at the nearby White Highland farms, and in particular on those of Boer farmers, originating from South Africa. From the 1930s onwards many Keiyo settled as 'squatters' on these farms and they started to occupy the forest zone on top of the escarpment. 'Climbing the cliff' became a possibility for upward social mobility. After 1970, many of them became relatively affluent small-scale farmers, producing maize, wheat, dairy, pyrethrum and wool. Other Keiyo farmers as well as some Marakwet started to migrate to the Cherangani area, and mingled with the original inhabitants there, the Sengwer. From 1976 onwards the southern part of the Kerio valley was transformed rather drastically by the start of a fluorspar mine. The northern part was opened up in the early 1980s by experimental farms and other activities of the Kerio Valley Development Authority.

The 1989 population census showed that the district of Keiyo-Marakwet had 220,000 inhabitants, of whom 200,000 were Kalenjin (Kenya, 1994, I, p. 6-34). Half of them are Keiyo and half Marakwet. In addition maybe 30,000 Keiyo and 10,000 Marakwet were living elsewhere in Kenya, mainly in the neighbouring highland district of Uasin Gishu, part of the former 'White Highlands'. These nearby people still maintain a lot of ties with the valley. Many remit money and send food and other consumer goods to their relatives in the valley. Many still have an ownership claim to land there, and quite a number have multiple farms: one in Uasin Gishu, one in the Keiyo or Marakwet highlands and one in the valley. Valley farms are often taken care of by (grand) parents, or other family members. Probably 80,000 people are currently living in the valley and escarpment zone, the ASAL area proper. In 1989, Iten, in the central highlands had 5,000 inhabitants and all other central places had less than 1,000 inhabitants (Kenya, 1994, II, p. 392). Nowadays Iten is the administrative centre of Keiyo District and also locates the ASAL office. Marakwet is administered from a tiny centre, called Kapsowar.

In the last thirty years, population growth in the Kerio Valley has been rather low, compared to other parts of Kenya, due to massive migration to the highlands<sup>9</sup>. Only the area around the fluorspar mine, in the south of the valley, experienced net immigration. Poverty is widespread; in the north people with only a meagre access to indigenous irrigation channels are worse off; in the centre people without major remittances from the highlands have a very low level of living; in the south households without a direct or indirect share in the fluorspar employment possibilities are very poor. The northern part of the valley, with its fascinating old irrigation practices, would have a high development potential, if there would be a fast outlet and nearby market for its fruits and vegetables. There isn't. The development prospects of the central valley are meagre; those of the southern part very much depend on the fluorspar mine. Arable agricultural prospects are bad, with very unreliable rainfall, no realistic irrigation possibilities and severe erosion risks. Livestock prospects are a bit better (goats in particular), although erosion hazards are everywhere and in the north cattle has no chance to survive the occasional raids by Pokot cattle rustlers.

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<sup>9</sup>Both Keiyo-Marakwet and West Pokot experience population movements which are unlike those of most of Kenya, where poor people move from overpopulated highlands to dry lowlands.

## 2.3 Kajiado

Kajiado is one of the two Maasai districts in Kenya, the other one being Narok. Kajiado Maasai have eight rather autonomous cultural sections, called *il-oshon*, between whom still occasional hostilities occur, including cattle theft (Rutten, 1992, p. 133). Although close to Nairobi, and separated from the metropolis by Nairobi National Park, most of Kajiado is still a huge cultural distance away. The District consists mainly of rather flat, savannah lowlands, where Maasai pastoralists live with their zebu and 'improved' cattle, and with goats, sheep, and recently camels as well. Part of the lowlands has been declared a national park, Amboseli, attracting many tourists from abroad to the scenic beauty of abundant wildlife in a diverse savannah landscape, against the background of the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro. During the mid 1960s part of the Maasai lowlands was acquired as private land by Maasai leaders of the time, until the Kenya Government supported by the World Bank started Group Ranches (1969-79) in the remaining parts. In the early 1980s there were 51 group ranches, covering 75 percent of the district, but a process of dissolution had set in among the first generation of group ranches. In the mid 1980s it became clear that a process of subdivision of group ranches, and individualization of land ownership had started that could no longer be contained, and that became actively supported by Maasai leaders and the district authorities. Soon it was evident that quite a number of the Maasai owners started to sell part or all of their newly acquired land to other Maasai and to outsiders, Kikuyu in particular. Rutten did a thorough investigation and called it a process of 'selling wealth to buy poverty' (Rutten, 1992).

The acquisition of land that Maasai regarded as theirs, had started in the few hilly areas already during colonial times. The Ngong Hills, close to Nairobi, had become a Kikuyu immigration area, with some urban centres (in 1989 Ongata Rongai had 17,000 inhabitants and Ngong Town 9,000; Kenya 1994, II, p. 401). The foothills of the Kilimanjaro, around the small urban centre of Loitokitok, became a well-developed irrigation zone, in the hands of non-Maasai (although following the droughts of the 1980s also Maasai started irrigation activities). And patches of escarpment and hill areas in the west and south were occupied by cultivators as well. The 1989 Census showed that there were 260,000 inhabitants in Kajiado District (at least 200,000 in the ASAL areas proper), but only 150,000 were Maasai. The northern parts of the district and the urban centres became dominated by non-Maasai<sup>10</sup>.

The considerable population growth during this century (from 13,000 Kajiado Maasai in 1927 to 150,000 nowadays), and a - lower - growth of the livestock population, as well as a shrinking pasture area, resulted in growing pressure on resources. It also meant that many Maasai could no longer maintain their purely livestock-based food habits and had

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10In neighbouring Narok as a whole the Maasai are even outnumbered by the immigrants: 190,000 Maasai out of 400,000 inhabitants. Another 40,000 Maasai were counted outside the two Maasai Districts, of whom 12,000 in Laikipia, and 11,000 in other districts from where Maasai had been evicted in the early colonial days to make room for White settlers. Nairobi hosted 5,000 Maasai, of whom many worked as night watchmen. There are also Maasai in Tanzania.

to adjust to consumption of grains. Making use of good 'caloric terms of trade' they started to exchange livestock for grains (see Zaal & Dietz, forthcoming). A considerable minority among the Kajiado Maasai women also started to cultivate small areas of sorghum and maize in former grazing zones.

In terms of employment and income, Kajiado still has a strong livestock dominance. The poor are the ones without cattle or with a small herd only. The few exceptions are irrigated cultivators in the southeast of the district, but these are mainly immigrants. Poverty conditions exist among those immigrant households who do not own irrigated land and who have to work as casual labourers, and often for a pittance. But poverty conditions are on the rise among the Maasai community as well: those who could not recover from livestock losses after recent droughts and those who 'sold wealth to buy poverty'. Remittance income is rather limited in Kajiado. Tourism and soda mining provide employment and income opportunities (although a large part of it is being used by outsiders and leaks away from the district). With tourism some indigenous initiatives are on the increase, though. The border with Tanzania provides some opportunities for border trade and smuggling. Any development policy for Kajiado should give major weight to intensification of the livestock sector: herd upgrading, veterinary care, sustainable watering sources, range and mobility management and commercialisation. However, all of it should be built upon the solid eco-adapted management practices which have served the Maasai for a long time.

## **2.4 Some comparative remarks**

In terms of the combined value of cash and non-cash income, the livestock sector was and still is dominant in the rural economy of most of the ASAL areas of all three districts. In Kajiado the livestock basis is especially strong. Livestock prices are considerably higher than in Northwest Kenya, because of the nearby and easily accessible Nairobi market. Compared with Kajiado, arable agriculture is more important in West Pokot and in Keiyo and Marakwet, partly because of slightly more favourable ecological conditions and partly because of a much lower livestock-per-capita basis. Non-agricultural income is also substantial in all three districts, but for quite different reasons: remittances of migrants in Keiyo and Marakwet, gold mining in West Pokot and tourism in Kajiado. West Pokot has the most diversified rural economy, whereas Kajiado is most dependent on a single sector, livestock.

Population pressure is most visible in parts of West Pokot and in the Kerio Valley of Keiyo and Marakwet. This is partly caused by population size in relation to available resources, partly by the unequal distribution of resources and partly by the type of rural economy.

In all three districts there are substantial differences in income among households and a rather high incidence of poverty, as measured by income in cash and kind, and by cattle wealth. There are quite a number of households which have lost most of their livestock wealth and which have not been able to secure more than a marginal non-livestock economic base. They are poor compared to the 'perception of their past' and they are poor compared to others. In Kajiado a growing group of Maasai households sold their

privatised land resources to wealthy Maasai or to immigrants and did not invest in a new economic base. After some years of conspicuous consumption they join the swelling ranks of the persistently poor. But in Kajiado there are also many very poor households among the immigrants, who often try to eke out a living by doing casual jobs for those who can afford hiring them occasionally.

Situations of poverty and wealth are not at all stable conditions in these three districts. Life in the drylands is so insecure that households who are relatively rich in one year could be very poor the next year: drought, livestock diseases, cattle rustling and other forms of violence all play a role. And it also happens that households which are poor suddenly become rich: they find gold (as in West Pokot), ruby (as in West Pokot or Marakwet), or they successfully participate in a 'ngoroko' cattle theft (as in West Pokot). In Kajiado quite a number of households were fooling themselves by selling part of their recently acquired private land after the subdivision of the Group Ranches: they suddenly had a lot of money and became 'rich' in terms of money or in consumption property (a 'modern' house; a car). Many of them did not invest and their sudden 'wealth' was not structural at all. It should be added that in all three districts there are not many cases yet of female-headed households, and one cannot speak yet about a clear 'feminisation of poverty'. Social structures of extended families and clan-based social security networks are still rather strong. However, a tendency of individualisation is visible and with it a rise of individualised forms of poverty. For those households poverty not only means a low livestock wealth, or low income but certainly also a meagre and shrinking social security network.

Kajiado is not only characterised by higher livestock wealth per capita, higher average incomes and lower incidence of poverty, but it also has better social services than West Pokot, Keiyo and Marakwet. However, since the early 1980s these services have been rapidly improving everywhere, partly because of an increasing presence of competing and often mission-based NGOs. Primary schools expanded so rapidly that almost complete coverage was reached by the late 1980s, although it decreased again in the 1990s because of budget cuts. Even secondary enrolment increased to unprecedented levels. Health and water supply services were also improving considerably since the early 1980s, with probably an upward effect on population growth. Markets and shops were expanding everywhere as the subsistence orientation of the economy was rapidly changing to one based on monetary exchange, although for many not as a result of free choice but because of the undermining of their local subsistence basis. Most shop owners and traders were from outside, with 'Asians' and Kikuyu playing an important role in Kajiado, and Kikuyu, Luhya and some Somali in West Pokot, feeding a growing hatred towards 'immigrants' and sowing seeds of ethnic warfare.

The expanding population increased the pressure on productive resources. In the eyes of many ASAL inhabitants the basic development problem was the undermining of the livestock economy, by a shrinking livestock per capita situation, by shrinking pasture and an often problematic livestock watering situation, the impact of drought, and unreliable markets for livestock produce. In the eyes of many Kenyan government officials the basic development problem was the 'lack of modernity' of these pastoralists, with a need to

improve their education and to change their orientation towards non-livestock occupations.

Finally it is interesting to put the support for the ASAL areas in West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kajiado in a political perspective. Political leaders of these districts all belong to the Kalenjin-Maasai alliance which has become very important in Kenyan politics and in the ruling party KANU after the start of the Presidency of Daniel arap Moi in 1978<sup>11</sup>. Two of the President's closest allies are coming from Keiyo (Biwott) and Kajiado (Vice-President Saitoti), while since 1993 even the Pokot have a minister in the cabinet (Lotodo). Although the Pokot are sometimes seen as a nuisance and a security threat, with their ongoing *ngoroko* cattle thefts, the Pokot, Marakwet, Keiyo and Maasai all belong to the politically favoured groups.

### **3 THE APPROACH OF THE ASAL PROGRAMME IN WEST POKOT, KEIYO-MARAKWET AND KAJIADO**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

After a promising start in the early 1980s under the (then) Ministry of Finance and Planning, the leadership of the Government of Kenya in the ASAL project approach was very weak throughout the last ten years. In the second half of the 1980s all donors more or less got a free hand to develop their own district-specific approach, together with district-based civil servants. The idea of a multi-sector programme was adhered to everywhere, with the District Development Committees responsible for 'integration', and in some cases with a specific role for civil servants from various ministries who formed an ASAL programme liaison group. Supported by the Netherlands Embassy, and by others involved from the Dutch side, in Dutch-sponsored ASAL programmes the basic philosophy was: 'low profile', 'process approach'<sup>12</sup>, 'support the decentralisation to the district level', 'support district civil servants to do their work better', 'try to get the local people's participation as much as possible', and 'try to support the local economy with the ASAL funds available'.

During the late 1970s the Netherlands government and its Nairobi-based Embassy had developed a preference for working in the western part of Kenya and to work in really poor, marginal areas. When the ASAL programme started as a Kenya-wide attempt to uplift conditions in all dryland areas of the country, it was evident that the Netherlands would participate in any of the northwestern districts. Turkana district in the far northwest could have been selected but it was already 'claimed' by the Norwegian aid agency. West Pokot became an obvious choice. It was among the poorest and most marginal of all Kenyan districts at that time, and it was located in the western part of the country. On top of that the Netherlands already had some experience in West Pokot,

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<sup>11</sup>The end of the Kenyatta regime and its strong focus on the Kikuyu, and the change of the political power to the Kalenjin group was a political reason for a strong Kenya government attempt to get donor support for many districts that had been marginally involved politically during Kenyatta's era.

<sup>12</sup>In Dutch development parlance also called 'programmatic approach'.

before the ASAL Programme started<sup>13</sup> and an influential and widely respected Dutch officer who had worked in West Pokot happened to work at the Netherlands Embassy when the request came to adopt one or more district ASAL programmes. Keiyo-Marakwet was added because it was close by and the Kerio Valley was also referred to as one of the poorest areas of the country.

In 1981, a Dutch sociologist was recruited to become programme coordinator<sup>14</sup> for the two districts combined. He had a long experience with SNV, a.o. in Kenya, and he had just finished further studies in development theory, graduating on a thesis about the 'programmatic approach' (Hendrix, 1981). The Kenyan government promised a counterpart and office personnel, but it took a long time before staff was posted. This resulted in the situation that the Dutch 'Advisor' became the core person of the programme. It soon became clear that the Kapenguria-based advisor could never manage to work in Keiyo-Marakwet as well. A separate Dutch ASAL coordinator was appointed for Keiyo-Marakwet later during 1982, who settled in Iten. He was another sociologist, but with agricultural ('Wageningen') background. He had to cope with a weak Kenyan facilitating structure as well.

With the 'process approach' as the guideline, it was decided to start with a few starter activities and to spend time to get to know the problems and history of the ASAL areas in the two districts. The Netherlands Ministry engaged a team of geographers from the University of Amsterdam (associated with the Institute for Development Studies of Nairobi University) to do four types of studies: archival research to find out about all development initiatives in the past, mapping the district's current government and NGO facilities (and its history), judging the population supporting capacity of the area and assessing people's livelihood strategies. During the 1982-1988 period it resulted in a District Atlas for each of the two districts (Hendrix et al., 1985 and Cappon et al., 1985), in a large number of 'Locational Development Profiles', in the start of District Information and Documentation Centres and in academic publications (see Dietz 1987 for more details).

During 1985 a major controversy had become apparent between the Dutch programme coordinator in Keiyo- Marakwet (backed by the Netherlands Embassy) who wanted to maintain the level of funding and the 'low profile' character of the programme and the District authorities who wanted a fourfold increase of the ASAL budget, and more emphasis on productive investments (see Owiti et al., 1985, p. 7). Unlike West Pokot where the Dutch programme coordinator had succeeded to become a strong force in district development planning, there was a big 'distance' between the Dutch programme coordinator in Keiyo-Marakwet and the district bureaucracy in Iten. In 1986, the programme coordinator became ill, and after he left the country his replacement took a long time. When the newly recruited Dutch programme coordinator started during the

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13During the period 1971-1975 the Special Rural Development Programme had Kapenguria division as one of its pilot areas, with a Dutch 'development volunteer' (of the organization SNV), stationed in Kapenguria and with a considerable amount of money at his disposal.

14Initially the Dutch were called programme coordinators, but later they became programme advisors.

second half of 1987, he discovered that the vacuum had enabled considerable embezzlement of ASAL funds. It was decided to continue with a few commitments and to 'clean the mess first' before new donor funds would be committed. All Kenyan ASAL staff in Keiyo-Marakwet was transferred. After a period of much confusion, in 1991 a new Dutch programme advisor was appointed, and the programme could make a new start.

In 1986 a new Dutch programme advisor was appointed in West Pokot, who had a background of agricultural studies and development sociology, and he had worked in Kenya before, for SNV and for his studies. He would become the personification of 'ASAL' in the district for the next six years, partly because during long periods he worked without a Kenyan counterpart. Gradually the project activities in a lot of fields expanded and began to cover the whole district, including the very remote corners. Carefully avoiding political pitfalls, the programme became the 'oil in the district machinery', enabling government officers to direct their attention also to the ASAL areas, which would have been virtually impossible otherwise. ASAL West Pokot indeed succeeded to work as a catalyst for much more government attention for the remote ASAL areas, even during more recent years when government funds in Kenya generally decreased.

When in the second half of 1993 a new Dutch programme advisor (economist-cum-geographer) started in West Pokot, his start was unlucky. He came when ethnic-political tensions had reached a boiling point. When non-Kalenjin were threatened and fled from the district, the new ASAL Advisor decided to assist the displaced persons, using ASAL facilities. This humanitarian action was regarded by some Pokot as coming close to treason. Although relations normalised later, there remained an atmosphere of careful distance. The project, in the meantime, gradually increased with more activities related to land use planning. In 1996 a new Dutch programme advisor was appointed, the fourth one, with a background in agriculture. Soon after he started, the programme was temporarily stopped, to enable a 'search for lost funds', which was a result of an external audit, after allegations of gross corruption. In 1997 he left the programme and a fifth advisor was appointed.

In 1986 the Dutch development organization SNV was asked to become involved in the development of an ASAL programme in Kajiado District. The identification mission was confronted with high expectations and very conflicting demands from the various parties involved (see Dietz, et al., 1986). Based on the experiences in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet, it was decided to include all sectors, and to put more emphasis on possibilities for ASAL-NGO collaboration. In 1987 the irrigation expert, who had previously worked in West Pokot, was recruited as the Dutch programme advisor. A Kenyan member of the identification mission, formerly working for the ASAL headquarters in Nairobi, was appointed as Kenyan Programme Coordinator (he would remain in that position until now). Unlike the situation in most other ASAL programmes, this Kenyan-Dutch team would bring continuity until 1994, when a new Dutch programme advisor was appointed. In the meantime the ASAL team had been strengthened by a Dutch 'Women in Development' advisor.

Table 1 gives an overview of Dutch disbursements for all ASAL programmes in Kenya. Two-thirds of the funds went to West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kajiado, the remainder to a failure (Ndeiya Karai), a non-starter (Narok) and a new, rapidly expanding addition (Laikipia), besides funds for Nairobi-based activities. Table 2 gives our judgement of the relative importance of ASAL support for various sectors, in three periods under review: the initial phase, 1982-86, when the programme activities started in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet; the middle phase, 1987-91, when the West Pokot programme expanded, the programme in Keiyo-Marakwet came to a halt and the programme in Kajiado started; and the most recent period, 1992-96, when the West Pokot and Kajiado programmes had matured and Keiyo-Marakwet had a new start. In an annex the detailed information is presented<sup>15</sup>.

Table 1: Dutch support for the ASAL programme, 1982-1996

A. Disbursements, 1982-1996 (in 000 DF1)

District	Disbursement
West Pokot	16,694
Keiyo & Marakwet	9,281
Kajiado	11,173
Subtotal	37,148
Laikipia	10,416
Ndeya Karai and Narok	3,163
ASAL general	6,792
Subtotal	20,371
Total	57,519

Table 2 ASAL projects In West Pokot, Keiyo & Marakwet and Kajiado, per district, per period

Sector V = major involvement v = less involvement . = some involvement	West Pokot			Keiyo- Marakwet		Kajiado	
	82- 86	87- 91	92- 96	82- 87	91- 96	87- 91	92- 96

<sup>15</sup>The information about all ASAL projects was collected in the archives of the Ministry for Development Cooperation in The Hague by Nanda Haverkort, using quarterly and annual reports, work plans and evaluation mission reports. Part of the interpretation was done by Annemieke van Haastrecht. We would like to acknowledge their work.

Crop Cultivation	v	V	V	v	V	v	V
Livestock	v	V	V	v	V	V	V
Resource Conservation	.	v	V	.	V	v	v
Non-Agricultural Activities	.	.	.	.	V	v	v
Women Groups		v	v	.	v	v	V
Water	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Roads		v	v	.	v	v	v
Public Buildings	V	.	.	V		V	v
Education	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Health	.	.	.	v	v	v	v
Support District Development Planning	V	V	V	v	V	V	V

### 3.2 Reasons for selecting sectors and activities

#### a) West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet

The choice of the sectors during the initial years was partly based on prior experience and partly on ongoing activities already financed by the Dutch. During the SRDP period in Kapenguria Division, two major SRDP projects had been the support for the Riwa Group Ranch and support for road construction in the strategically important border zone with Uganda. A lot of money went to one particular road, that was, however, completely spoiled with the first heavy rains. Although the IDS evaluations (e.g. IDS 1975) were positive about the Riwa Group Ranch, it had failed completely afterwards, and mainly after the 1976 drought. The message was rather clear: do not get involved in road building so easily and avoid the Group Ranch approach, range management and livestock development, certainly in the beginning, to avoid making mistakes that would be beyond repair later and would result in a loss of confidence.

However, there were many other urgent problems on the agenda, to be tackled by the ASAL programme: improvement of education became a top priority (class rooms, teacher's houses, water supply to schools, desks, training of untrained teachers, vocational training) as well as support to the water sector (piped water supply, boreholes and borehole maintenance, later subsurface dams, spring protection, shallow wells, rock catchments and water jars). The improvement of health services was an obvious priority as well. However, after SRDP, the Dutch Embassy had decided to assist the health sector in West Pokot, with major support for the district hospital, for health centres and for a number of dispensaries in remote corners of the district. From 1981 onwards the Dutch Ministry for Development Co-operation had continuously provided one or even two medical doctors. In addition SNV and Dutch NGOs were involved in supporting non-governmental health activities in the district. This meant that the ASAL programme would mainly 'monitor' the health sector. Together with others, the Dutch doctors formed a Dutch support organization for West Pokot, the Netherlands

Harambee Foundation, which took over the Netherlands government support for dispensaries and which later convinced another Dutch NGO, related to one of the major private banks in the Netherlands, to adopt West Pokot and start a support programme for health-related activities at schools (water and latrines mainly). This meant that also the link between health care projects, water projects and education was put beyond the ASAL programme. In Keiyo-Marakwet, however, 'parallel' Dutch initiatives in the health and hygiene sector did not exist, so they were included in the ASAL programme there.

The Dutch were also active already in the Rural Access Roads Programme (later Minor Roads Programme), which had started in 1976. It meant that the ASAL programmes did not have to be involved much in road construction. 'Classified roads' were beyond the mandate of the RARP, though. Yet these were of crucial importance for especially Keiyo-Marakwet and to a lesser extent for West Pokot. After 1988 ASAL West Pokot slowly got involved in road improvements, but in Keiyo-Marakwet it never really took off, despite the fact that it would only be possible to exploit the high agricultural potential of the irrigated areas in the Kerio Valley after major road improvements.

In the initial years, the ASAL programme support for productive activities and for resource management was rather meagre. During the first five years 'confidence building', among people who generally looked at 'government' as an enemy, or at best as 'not interested', could much more easily be attained by concentrating on what the people themselves regarded as the major problem in the dryland zone: lack of water facilities; and by concentrating on the serious time-lag in education compared to other parts of Kenya. Starter activities in livestock, dryland agriculture, irrigation and resource conservation had to be developed with a lot of care and certainly not too hasty. But not only the judgement of the people's attitude played a role. Existing government structures also had to be approached with care.

Dutch development aid in the early 1980s already had some involvement in the Provincial Irrigation Unit of Rift Valley Province, which resulted in problems of competence in the Marakwet area. In West Pokot, however, SNV decided to assist the ASAL advisor by providing a Dutch water engineer to support the planning of irrigation improvements in the district. Prudent behaviour was necessary, though, because of clear differences in approach and potential conflicts with the Kerio Valley Development Authority, which had started rather large-scale and top-down projects, with the backing of a powerful Kalenjin Minister. Only after 1984 in West Pokot and after 1991 in Keiyo-Marakwet support for indigenous irrigation got considerable attention. Gradually many activities were supported to develop dryland farming, with attention for drought resistant crops, 'intermediate tillage', draught power with oxen and donkeys, improved horticultural crops and fruit trees, agroforestry and beginning attention for water harvesting and so-called indigenous food crops.

It also took some time before the programmes started to tackle problems in the livestock sector. Initially efforts were concentrated on establishing a government presence in the many remote areas, to improve veterinary care, cattle dips, livestock watering and livestock holding grounds and sale yards. Later the approach widened and included stock

upgrading (Sahiwal bulls, Dorper rams and Galla goats were popular), the introduction of camels, the training of 'paravets' and 'private tick control' (by spraying), pasture improvement, fodder production, and honey production (e.g. the introduction of improved hives). Recently there was also some attention for tsetse fly eradication, poultry, and fish ponds.

During the first ten years, the same prudence was evident with regard to 'environmental projects'. There was some support for tree nurseries and anti-erosion measures, and there was some attention for land management, but the involvement was tricky. On the one hand the 'environmental issue' was a highly sensitive one, in an area with severe erosion (but certainly not only a result of bad management practices), and a strong memory of unwanted government interference during colonial times. On the other hand the Kerio Valley Development Authority more or less claimed that sector and relationships between ASAL and KVDA have always been rather tense. In 1990 a Dutch evaluation mission studied the impact of development projects on environmental issues in Burkina Faso, Indonesia and Kenya, and included ASAL West Pokot in its sample. The mission concluded that none of the ASAL projects had a negative impact on the environment or were risky from an environmental point of view (IOV, 1992: 196). Discussions with the members of this mission and its report stimulated ASAL support for environmental projects, although 'low profile'. Only after the Programme Evaluation of 1993 strong Dutch pressure on the ASAL management resulted in a more explicit change of focus with 'land use planning' becoming the core of the programme, first in Keiyo-Marakwet and later in West Pokot<sup>16</sup>. Resource management meant three things mainly. The first element was the prevention of forest destruction and reforestation, mainly in the water catchment areas of the Cheranganis - so the ASAL programmes became heavily involved in the very wet uplands as well. A related element was the propagation of energy-saving stoves. The second element was the afforestation in farmer's areas: first with an emphasis on district, chiefs and headmen's tree nurseries, later with the emphasis on on-farm tree nurseries, agroforestry, sylvopastoral projects, and involvement of schools. The third element was soil and water conservation, with attention for spring, riverbank and well protection, gully stabilization, reseeding rangelands, and the rehabilitation of eroded lands, which, in West Pokot, included the rehabilitation of gold panning areas. Two hobbies of many officers during colonial times got meagre attention, though: terracing and forced destocking.

It is interesting to note that it was the idea in the ASAL office in Nairobi, during the early 1980s, to mobilise special support for an ASAL women programme, with the challenging name 'Community Action for Disadvantaged Rural Women (the 'Disadvantaged' was later dropped). A first phase of the programme was completed in 1986, but later phases lacked funds or were never effective. The CARDW programme was extremely demanding for the ASAL staff in the districts and it had the effect of a prudent 'wait and see' attitude among the ASAL staff in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet, with regard to the 'gender issue'. The experiences with this programme also

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<sup>16</sup>The impact of the 1993 mission in this respect should not be overestimated as far as West Pokot is concerned. In practice the difference of the attention for the environment before and after the 1993 mission is more one of scale and 'presentation'.

further strengthened a sceptical attitude of the ASAL district staff against all initiatives from 'Nairobi' since they took a lot of time and rarely took off. Only recently there is more emphasis on gender issues and specific district projects to strengthen women's projects and empower women groups. It goes together with a more serious attention for non-agricultural activities. Gradually the ideologically-motivated focus on 'groups' of small-scale entrepreneurs (women groups, youth groups, cooperatives) was relaxed and individual traders, crafts(wo)men, and self-employed 'jua kali' workers could get credit and support, with the programme in Keiyo-Marakwet taking the lead.

During the first four project years, out of 7 million KShs expenditure in West Pokot (at that time the equivalent of f 2 million), almost half went to 'general programme management and planning', the bulk of it to the building of a District Development Office. Of the other 3.9 million KShs 40 percent was spent on water development, 31 percent on primary education and youth polytechnics, 21 percent on agriculture (mainly support for small-scale irrigation and agro-forestry) and only 8 percent on livestock. Out of 6.3 million KShs (f 1.5 million) spent in Keiyo-Marakwet also almost half was spent on 'general programme management and planning' (a large amount of it to build two staff houses) and of the remaining 3.4 million KShs 40 percent went to agriculture, 32 percent to a Youth Polytechnic (a project started by a religious Dutch NGO), 15 percent to primary education, 7 percent to water projects and a mere 4 percent to livestock projects (Owiti, et al., 1985). In later years the programme expenses grew to between f 1 and f1.5 million per year, with less financial emphasis on programme management and much more on production and resource conservation. Water and education continued to be important sectors for ASAL support.

The broad sectoral involvement of the programmes made it relatively easy for the ASAL management to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. Part of the lack of attention for women groups during the early years of ASAL West Pokot could be attributed to highly incompetent and corrupt officers in the department of social services, causing ASAL staff to bide their time. When in 1987 very good people took over, the whole sector could soon be included in the ASAL programme. On the other hand, part of the 'headstart' in water development in West Pokot in the early years could be attributed to excellent water officers. However, when crucial people were put 'on transfer' later, the implementation of new projects came to a standstill. The integrated approach enabled pragmatic management.

## **b)Kajiado**

The ASAL programme in Kajiado could profit a lot from the initial experiences in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet. The mission initiating the programme in 1986 and the first ASAL programme staff mainly consisted of Kenyan and Dutch people who had a diverse involvement in the ASAL programmes in the northwest. Expectations were high and pre-existing bureaucratic arrangements, or competing donors, were negligible in Kajiado, unlike West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet. In principle every sector was eligible for support, but from the start it was clear that a major emphasis would be necessary on water and livestock. Besides a lot of social projects (education, health care, women groups), the Kajiado ASAL programme indeed put considerable emphasis on productive

activities. After a dedicated livestock census, livestock extension services, livestock improvement, multiplication of 'upgraded goats', introduction of camels, vaccination crushes, veterinary training and livestock auction yards, are (much) more important than in the other two districts. The introduction of drought-resistant crops, small-scale irrigation projects and animal traction have become important, although not always very successful, activities as well, following a farmer's census to get baseline information about the extent of farming (with the result of a pile of more than 14,000 questionnaires...). A small business centre, vocational training and the building of bridges and other road works were also part of the ASAL approach. For the ASAL programme in Kajiado a change to 'land use planning', as the major current focus en vogue in the Dutch ASAL approach, was not a major one. Although 'destruction of the resource base' was not very evident in Kajiado, quite a lot of small-scale projects were started to promote afforestation, energy-saving 'jikos', spring protection against cattle, and gully stabilization, also involving women groups. The first Dutch programme advisor summarized the ASAL Programme philosophy by writing (Klinken, 1995, p. 62):

*"In an effort to maximize the room for manoeuvre for the (Maasai) pastoralists, the Programme objectives were based on modesty. No saviour of the last of the Maasai, nor coaxing them into the modernizing market, but concerned with creating opportunities and expanding options".*

### **3.3 Characteristics of the approach**

DGIS, the section in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with development, and the Netherlands Embassy first decided that the ASAL programmes in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet would not be subcontracted. Dutch programme officers were directly appointed by DGIS, after approval by the Kenyan authorities. However, in 1986 it was decided that the Kajiado programme would be subcontracted to the Dutch semi-government organisation SNV, with its own office in Nairobi, acknowledging the fact that SNV had been instrumental in getting Dutch support for ASAL Kajiado. Later the programmes in Keiyo-Marakwet and West Pokot followed suit. Although Dutch ASAL staff members informed each other about their work (often rather informally), and the Netherlands Embassy as well as the SNV Nairobi office tried to streamline approaches<sup>17</sup>, each District ASAL office was allowed to leave its 'mark' on the approach and rather large diversities soon developed. It was also the effect of the 'process approach' and the differences between the districts: in the first years the programmes were allowed to develop in an ad-hoc way, on purpose, to gain the confidence of the district bureaucracy and of the intended beneficiaries in the district. How to go from there was never very clear. The ASAL programmes became indispensable and ever more important elements of the 'development-oriented presence of the government' in each of the districts, but efforts to develop a long-term development strategy were lacking. However, the severe crisis which developed from the late 1980s onwards in the Kenyan state bureaucracy and

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<sup>17</sup>The Dutch Programme Advisor was supposed to maintain contact with the Netherlands Embassy, the Kenyan Programme Officer with the Ministry in Nairobi. Due to the fact that for West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet there were long periods without Kenyan programme officers, and the distance and communication problems with Nairobi, the ASAL Ministry hardly played a streamlining role. For Kajiado the situation was different.

in the Kenyan economy would have made such an effort rather unrealistic. "To keep things going" was often difficult enough. Multi-year programmes were gradually developing in each of the three districts, with a lot of room for flexibility and 'room to manoeuvre'. The ASAL staff generally tried to support the management of district planning. The Harvard-assisted attempts at the national level to improve five-year district development plans (started in 1974-78) for each and every district were wholeheartedly supported at the district level. Annual forward planning (with annual annexes to the district development plan) became a major activity for the district development officer in each of the districts, strongly supported by the ASAL staff. However, the flexibility of the Dutch-supported ASAL approach did make room for a lot of 'opportunity behaviour'. Project proposals were supported where district staff (and in some cases NGOs) were strong and support for other sectors was suppressed as long as departmental staff were weak, corrupt, or incompetent. A new person could make all the difference, although it of course took time before his (and in very few cases her) proposals to get ASAL programme support, and to be included in the forward plans, were approved and implemented. The flexibility of implementation was strongly enabled by a system of 'direct payment', in which Dutch development aid did not go via the Kenyan Treasury, but directly through a project bank account.

One can also learn something about the project approach by looking at the type of expenditure, according to the donor's accounting system. All three ASAL projects, but especially West Pokot spent a lot on infrastructure and buildings. West Pokot also much on courses and training, Keiyo-Marakwet a lot on consultancies and credit, and both Kajiado and Keiyo-Marakwet a considerable amount on travel and accommodation. Transport is also an important component in Kajiado and Keiyo-Marakwet, but less in West Pokot. There is a tendency that with the increase of the budget after 1992, relatively (much) more expenditure is incurred for consultancies, transport, and travel and accommodation<sup>18</sup>.

### **3.4 Project organization**

The Dutch support budget that was and is available (approx. f 1 million per year, per district, in the beginning; gradually increasing) enabled a more than marginal involvement in the districts. Until 1993, when there was a change in Dutch policy, it has always been the intention of the Dutch donor (but not of the Kenyans involved) that the ASAL programme would remain 'low profile', meaning that ASAL would not provide more than 10 per cent of total 'development vote'. Although this figure was rarely passed if the total development vote for the district as a whole is taken into account, in certain (often remote) areas of the districts the importance of ASAL funds was considerable and sometimes close to 50%. Kenyan financial support to the programme as such has always been meagre.

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<sup>18</sup>The source of information was the DGIS office and the office of SNV in The Hague.

It became the intention that the Dutch-sponsored ASAL Programmes should not develop a parallel organization. A small ASAL office, the Programme Management Unit (PMU), should work with line ministries, through 'contact', or 'liaison' officers, often middle-level officers in the district staff of each relevant ministry. The risk was that these contact officers would become an elite group among civil servants (with good allowances for instances, and adequate transport), and that jealousy would develop with their colleagues, and especially with their Heads of Department. This risk was regarded as more bearable, than building up a separate implementing agency<sup>19</sup>. Now the PMU only had coordination roles, and the control function; no project funds should be used for non-project goals. Although hotly debated, the PMU (and in practice: the Dutch ASAL advisor) had a direct financial link with the donor agency, called 'direct payment', enabling the management to work as a 'pseudo-NGO', although generally following the Kenyan government procedures with regard to tendering, purchase orders and payments.

Meetings between the contact officers in the ASAL steering committees (and between the heads of department at the level of the District in the District Development Committee) would enable regular integration of planning activities. In some ASAL projects a team of civil servants from more than one department (e.g. Crop Development, Water Development, Animal Husbandry; or Water Development and Education) were responsible for implementing the integrated projects. In project planning, a lot of flexibility was deliberately built in. Every sector could in principle take part in the programme, depending on the ability to implement projects (the absorption capacity of the line agencies and, the absorption capacity of the local communities). Often it depended on individual people if initiatives were forthcoming, and because of the large turnover of staff, project performance was often rather erratic. In West Pokot and Kajiado Districts the programme succeeded to spread its activities over the entire ASAL parts of the district with many small and often visible projects. In the eyes of the population the ASAL programme began to stand for 'down to earth government presence', 'easy and fast'. ASAL also meant: 'continuity', 'reliability' and 'flexibility', all attributes that were rather alien to the Kenyan government bureaucracy.

After a 'starter' phase of gathering information by teams of researchers, government staff and local assistants (already experimenting with -then- Rapid Rural Appraisal methodology), a participatory form of planning was developed by organizing participatory rural assessment meetings (e.g. in West Pokot), by organizing 'Community Oriented Project Planning' (as in Keiyo-Marakwet) and by strengthening the decision making in divisional, and later locational and sub-locational development committees.

Civil servants in all three districts were supported to do specific studies (e.g. on water, on the functioning of the cooperatives, on the educational performance at exams, an

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<sup>19</sup>In practice this risk was rather well controlled by the programmes, although in the eighties the liaison officers or contact officers within various departments had the effect in Elgeyo Marakwet to form a parallel system: 'normal' civil servants dealt with the nearby and more rewarding humid areas and they concentrated their activities in the highlands even more than in the past. A few ASAL 'liaison officers' had the task to work in the hot, remote and often despised valley, getting some incentives.

integrated livestock census), and discuss the outcome with their colleagues and with key persons in the local population. The District Atlas projects (Hendrix, et al, 1985; Cappon, et al, 1985 and Klinken, et al, 1990) in all three districts were very useful to develop an 'analytical mentality' among the staff .

The ASAL programmes in the three districts always avoided a heavy reliance on 'Nairobi'. They wanted to make use of the available cadre in the districts. However, the Kenyan departmental staff cadres rotate from one district to another, to avoid 'rooting and rusting'<sup>20</sup>. This, however, has the unfortunate result that investment in persons easily 'evaporates' and that there is an ongoing (and often very rapid) turnover of members of integrated teams. To send civil servants abroad for further studies<sup>21</sup> further undermined the local institution building (and poses a major dilemma of scale). In cases where the Dutch programme advisor spends quite a lot of years in a programme, he ever more becomes the focus, and the point of institutional memory. When he leaves, his follower can often start all over again. An additional problem is that, to function, the ASAL key persons have to invest a lot of time and effort in contacts with their colleagues, and the large majority of these colleagues form part of a floating group of 'migrants', without major attachment to the district population. In districts like West Pokot, Keiyo-Marakwet and even Kajiado there are few local people who are part of the district staff. All the attention in ASAL programmes to 'human capital development' within the government machinery only indirectly reaches the district population and therefore its impact is limited. The recent selection of NGOs as implementing agents (as in Kajiado) does not necessarily change this, as the cadre of these NGOs also does not necessarily come from the district. It is interesting to note that the only really 'local' agents within the government structure, the County Councils, were largely neglected by ASAL (as they are largely neglected in general). The issue to involve more 'local' people was easily 'ethnicized' in a situation where Kenya was full of ethnic clashes, as in 1991-93. A genuine attempt to decentralise government power ('District Focus') became one of the sparks to the tinder of ethnic hatred. Most of the government staff responsible for ASAL's support for the District Focus approach began to realise that they, as ethnic outsiders, were walking on a rope that became ever more tight. ASAL projects to support ethnic identity, and ethnic pride (e.g. a Pokot and Sengwer museum in Kapenguria; a booklet with Pokot proverbs, a conference about Maasai pastoralism) were potentially fuelling inter-ethnic violence. But not supporting genuine Pokot and Maasai requests to counterbalance the feeling of being second-class citizens in Kenya could easily result in strong mistrust between 'ASAL' and the people whose situation it claimed to improve. One of the very hot items in the ASAL programmes became the issue who was selected for studies, abroad or in Kenya: 'local' staff (e.a. 'Pokot' or 'Maasai') or non-local staff,

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20The emphasis was on middle-level officers because in practice they were not transferred as much as the higher levels of the district staff. Investments in staff and 'working arrangements' could bear more fruit. Middle-level staff was also a bit more recruited from among the local population.

21It happened in all three districts, but on a minor scale. In principle the Dutch ASAL staff opted for short, practical, relatively cheap courses, with a direct impact. The Kenyan staff often favoured long, foreign, expensive courses which could have a major impact on their personal careers.

who sometimes had worked in the district with a lot of dedication for years. The fact that selection was to be done at district level made this an impossible bone of contention<sup>22</sup>.

The Kajiado programme put more emphasis on the involvement of NGOs, both the international ones active in the district and the recently started local (or 'indigenous') NGOs. It actively tried to mobilise the available Maasai expertise, a.o. by organising conferences to discuss the future of Maasai pastoralism. Compared to West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet, the number of academically trained Maasai from Kajiado is much higher, and the number of professional Maasai working in top positions in Kenya is also higher. The ASAL programme also tried to direct the project funding to local self-help groups, including women groups, 'farmer's lobby groups', groups of livestock traders, and water management groups.

In general, but more specifically in Kajiado, the judgement of the 1993 evaluation team was that the flexibility of the ASAL approach also had its negative sides: too much 'trial and error' meant that the decision making process was not transparent and "lessons learned are often limited to a few officers within the district" (MDC etc., annex 3, p. 15).

## **4.PROJECT RESULTS**

### **4.1Introduction: the lack of development monitoring**

The ASAL programmes in all three districts were very complex, with very many small-scale projects in many sectors and scattered over the project area. ASAL interventions were hardly ever dominating interventions. Next to ASAL many other initiatives existed of the Kenya Government, supported by quite a number of different donors, and with the Dutch also being involved in other non-ASAL programmes in the districts. And there were many non-governmental organisations and local initiatives as well. Measurement of ASAL effects and impact would be difficult if at all possible. The groundwork laid in all three districts (atlases, locational profiles, censuses, sectoral studies, additional surveys) would have made it possible, though, to create a framework for 'systematic development monitoring'. It did not work that way.

From 1985 till 1990 it was the intention of the Ministry in The Hague that 'backstoppers' from the Netherlands would provide guidance about the organization of this 'development monitoring'<sup>23</sup>. Relationships between the 'distant scientists' and 'down-to-

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22One of the major chances that were missed in the overall ASAL programme was the lack of a general fund for studies and fellowships.

23Backstoppers were Ton Dietz and Annemieke van Haastrecht of the University of Amsterdam, researchers who had done the baseline work in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet in 1982-83. Soon an unfortunate mixture of roles developed: advisory roles to the programme staff, documentation roles (for the District Information and Documentation Centre), research and research supervision roles, review roles (as in review missions in 1985 and 1986), identification roles (as in the Kajiado mission of 1986), specific consultancy roles (as on roads in 1988 and on employment effects in 1989), organizing roles (as in a conference about the Maasai in 1990) and advisory roles to other evaluators. Costs were relatively high and 'strategic' benefits not very clear for the ASAL district staff.

earth programme staff' were not always easy and in 1990 officials in the Netherlands Embassy and ASAL programme staff in the districts decided to 'localize' the 'backstopping structure'. Although a rather sudden decision, in itself it was a laudable initiative, but without any serious follow up. In practice, 'localization' meant the support of the 'local' Nairobi office of the World Bank and most of the groundwork did not get a follow up in the districts. As in many other programmes with a process approach, the ideas about the initial phase were well developed, but ideas about how to take care of systematic and continuous 'development monitoring' in more mature phases of the project are meagre and weak. Within the ASAL programmes quite a lot of survey work was done, but it was haphazard and without an overall interpretative structure.

In these circumstances 'development monitoring' in fact became part of the 'evaluation consultancies' of ever-changing outsiders. The role and functions of these evaluation missions are very much a result of personal views of particular desk officers in The Hague or officers at the Netherlands Embassy (and much less so of Kenyan civil servants). New desk officers often mean drastically different assignments and hardly any continuity. A minor issue can suddenly become a major one and 'images of success and failure' are very easily constructed. Evaluation missions often do a rather hasty job, spend a few weeks to 'measure' output, effects and impacts, and to write their reports. Without an existing 'grand design' of development in ASAL areas there is not much evaluation missions can use and whatever is there, is often not properly read, discussed and/or understood. Conclusions are often not based on critical, empirical assessment of results, against the background of the original project intentions, but on yet another new wind that is blowing through the House of Cards of Development Assistance. It preempts the learning process that is the base of the process approach.

The most important evaluation mission of the ASAL programmes was the one of 1993<sup>24</sup>. There had been many personal changes in The Hague, at the Embassy and in Kenya, and some ambitious Dutch officers strongly suggested that the 'low-input' approach was a bottleneck and that 'women' and 'the environment' should be the major yardsticks of success. The mission indeed resulted in creating an 'image of failure' on crucial aspects of the programmes, whereas hitherto the ASAL programmes had always been regarded as quite or even very successful (Owiti et al, 1985, IOV, 1988 and Zijlstra et al, 1990). If one reads the mission's reports one gets the impression that statements often lack empirical grounding and one hardly gets any idea about impact, effects and even output of all the work that had been done in the ten preceding years.

One of the problematic elements of the ASAL approach was and still is its lack of 'grand designs'. The multitude of scattered, small projects, rather erratic and making good use of the often fluctuating local context, meant that not much effort was put in 'scenario thinking'. As 'successes' are difficult to measure, one could expect that one day evaluators would come criticising the 'lack of measurable impact' and demanding a 'more coherent strategy for the development of the district'. That evaluation came in 1993 and coincided with opinions in the ASAL ministry to turn the tide of decentralisation and get more

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<sup>24</sup>In 1997 a new evaluation was carried out. The conclusions of this exercise which were available have been included in this paper.

central grips on all those local and rather autonomous ASAL programmes<sup>25</sup>. As the wind in the Netherlands' development aid bureaucracy was also blowing from a direction where 'projects' were not very much liked any more, where 'integrated development' as an approach was highly doubted and where 'women' and 'environment' had become the predominant yardsticks of judgement, the Netherlands Embassy was also supporting the sudden and rather harsh criticism on the profile of the Dutch ASAL programmes. The formulation of a 'land use strategy' became the priority, with projects directly changing the 'bad land use practices' and becoming directly involved in people's use of the natural resources. After 1993 there was a strong desire 'to show results' and to work on a larger scale.

There were major risks involved, though. Programme staff had to try and avoid projects that were sensitive for interference by national or local politicians. In a political situation where corruption has become a way of life, the ASAL programmes all got their share of 'financial meandering', theft, and bribery. Especially when the influence of the Dutch programme advisor was sidetracked (by illness, or in between advisors, or due to political pressure) or when the programmes were handling (or forced to handle) more funds than could be monitored, the risk of corruption was high (and the overall 'corruption context' became ever more threatening), with a result of programme disruption, temporary closure and undermining of trust among the local population, as happened in Keiyo-Marakwet in 1987 and in West Pokot in 1997. Throughout the history of the ASAL programmes there was a remarkable lack of interest in 'Nairobi' and 'The Hague' in the establishment of feasible, sustainable and joint accounting procedures and in the very difficult position of the Dutch programme advisors in this respect.

#### **4.2 Evaluation of the results**

The output of the ASAL programmes was very diverse: better knowledge about the districts, its problems and possibilities, much more widely spread than before; a more visible government presence in remote areas and better offices, houses, and other facilities for government personnel there, as well as strongly increased numbers of visits, by better trained civil servants; a higher availability of dryland crop seeds, trees, 'upgraded' or 'improved' animals than ever before; structurally improved irrigation intakes and furrows; more farmers using draught animals and improved tillage, soil and water management and animal husbandry practices; a better health and veterinary health infrastructure; far more water points for human and animal consumption, more easily maintained and better guarded against environmental destruction; improved pastures; better livestock marketing facilities and more possibilities to earn cash with productive and service activities (also for members of women groups); better possibilities for entrepreneurs to get credit and other support; more attention for environmental

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25Four of the eleven members of the review mission came from the Ministry and therefore it was in an excellent position to push its ideas through. However, inclusion of staff of the Ministerial headquarters was heavily disputed by the district staff, since they maintained that the Headquarters very often interfered with the content of the programmes instead of carrying out its duties as described in the ministerial mandate. In fact the district staff had argued that the Terms of Reference should include an evaluation of the role of the headquarters' staff, but this was not to be.

conservation and for gender issues; a far better educational infrastructure, with far more trained teachers (many of them coming from the ASAL area), in better classrooms, with considerably improved facilities (desks, water supply, tools), and with a more prominent position of schools in development activities, but also in strengthening cultural identity. These are not meagre results.

Empirical data to prove these positive effects can be derived from the 1997 review in West Pokot. In order to get a better understanding of the impact of the ASAL programmes household surveys were carried out in so-called intervention areas (with substantial ASAL activity) vs non-intervention areas (areas with few ASAL interventions). Much care was taken during the selection of the areas to be sure that the main difference between the areas was ASAL intervention. In Pokot one of the intervention and non-intervention areas were (agro-) pastoral and the other two were small-farmer areas. Twenty-nine variables (e.g. education girls, education boys, income sale of crops, income sale of animals, food security, trees planted and water situation) were derived from the questionnaires and the results were as follows:

Table 3: The impact of ASAL interventions: intervention and non-intervention areas compared in West Pokot

	<b>areas of (agro-) pastoralists</b>	<b>areas of small farmers</b>
<b>situation better</b>	23 (79 %)	20 (69 %)
<b>the same</b>	2 ( 7 %)	4 (14 % )
<b>situation worse</b>	4 (14 %)	5 (17 %)
<b>total N</b>	58	56

Note 1: N gives the number of respondents of both the intervention and non-intervention area.

Note 2: Generally speaking, if the situation was better, the differences were also much larger than when the situation was worse.

The 1993 evaluation team had a varied judgement about the planning and community participation in the three projects. In West Pokot the programme was regarded as "well balanced", "based on proper problem analysis", "well established in the district structures" and with "good relationships with the planning and implementing agencies" (MDC etc, 1993, annex 3, p. 1). However, the mission was not satisfied with the level of community participation and advised further strengthening of this aspect.

In Keiyo-Marakwet "community based planning" was based on "improvement of bottom-up planning through sensitizing, awareness raising of and problem analysis with the local communities in the project area". "Numerous workshops based on the method of 'Community Oriented Project Planning' at locational and district level have certainly resulted in improved planning capability at grass root level and an increased readiness and capability of the line agencies to respond to identified needs and priorities of the local communities" (Ibid, p. 6). However, in 1993, "only three community based project proposals have been approved by the District Development Committee and the ASAL Programme... a strategy (that) may lead to frustrating the communities". Another weak point was seen as a lack of problem analysis, lack of data, and subsequent strategy development<sup>26</sup>. According to the 1993 evaluation mission, the scale of many projects was too small and the emphasis on local communities not very helpful to solve "the severe environmental situation" in the district. Institutional strengthening of line agencies and training was neglected. And the ASAL programme in Keiyo-Marakwet concentrated its activities far too much in the valley, and neglected the links with the escarpment and upland areas. The evaluation mission even concluded that ASAL support should be given to community-based planning in the entire district.

In Kajiado the judgement of the 1993 evaluation mission was more cautious. On the one hand the 1993 evaluation mission saw "a real participatory programme", on the other hand it noted that part of the government structure was neglected. On the one hand the mission is very positive about the emphasis on gender and environment, on the other hand not much of this emphasis could be seen yet 'on the ground'. Training needs were not assessed in a proper way, project formulation and monitoring was not well documented and the mission was irritated by too much trial and error and not enough systematic planning and learning. The emphasis on livestock gets positive comments, although the mission had liked to see a more in-depth analysis of this sector.

In summary the mission in 1993 was positive about the planning and involvement of the communities in the ASAL districts, but it also found various shortcomings that should be improved. As far as Keiyo-Marakwet is concerned, the judgment sounded a bit harsh for a project that was only recently re-started and did not have a proper mandate to implement projects in the highlands.

### **4.3 Economic effects**

Not much could be concluded about the economic effects and impact of ASAL projects by the 1993 evaluation mission. The mission did not seem very interested in what had remained of the early years of the programme, that is: until 1991, while in Keiyo-Marakwet they regarded the new projects as so new that not much impact could be expected, yet. However, to understand changes in land use, it would have been essential

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<sup>26</sup>The new ASAL staff largely neglected the historical and baseline information gathered during the 1982-1986 period, of which the major conclusion was that one had to be very cautious with land-use interventions in this very complex area. The neglect was perhaps caused by a classical problem in/by community-based projects/planning for which the programme management did not have an answer: how do you reconcile the outcomes of a technical analysis with the wishes of the people when they conflict.

to look into the impact on agricultural and livestock change of the irrigation support, the provision of livestock watering points, the livestock upgrading experiments and so on. It would have been very relevant to find out what had happened with the many young people who received better education and vocational training in the first phase. Did the boost of education during the 1980s result in a further growth of migration to the highlands and a further draining of the potential 'change agents'? It would have been relevant to check whether the separate support for activities of a number of women's groups (e.g. possibilities to get credit that would otherwise not have been possible) had indeed brought these women improved businesses. And by way of contrast it would have been interesting to see whether ASAL's denial of credit and other support for young male individual entrepreneurs who decided to start a business in the ASAL areas (and there were a few) had indeed frustrated their efforts. It was all not done and this can be regarded as a fundamental shortcoming of the 1993 evaluation and its preparation.

In the West Pokot part of the 1993 evaluation documents there is hardly any clue to get an idea about the economic impact of the many activities, including the economic projects, started from 1982 onwards. The household survey in 1997, however, showed a higher cash income for the small farmers and for the pastoralists in the intervention areas.

In the Kajiado parts of the 1993 review one can get some idea of the economic effects. The support for the livestock sector in particular was generally seen as successful and a boost to the livestock productivity and hence income of the area. However, the empirical basis to support the sweeping statements is lacking and neither the ASAL programmes nor the evaluation mission provided much insight in down-to-earth variables concerning the change in real income levels, livestock per capita changes, livestock and crop productivity, and land use, compared with the baseline data that exist in all three districts.

According to the 1993 review, the type of programme support given during the more recent phase in Keiyo-Marakwet did result in an operational agricultural extension service in the neglected valley, in a number of on-farm demonstrations on rainfed crops, and in better support for the livestock sector in the valley: with upgraded indigenous animals, improved fodder production, better veterinary services (a.o. making use of paravets), improved watering sources and a start of 'sustainable grazing'. The 1997 review appreciated the high priority that the programme gave to economic activities, but remarked that with regard to increasing production the challenges still exist as it is very difficult for a programme to increase agricultural production.

But how to assess the economic benefits against the project costs? The classical problems of assessing the economic impact of a large number of small-scale and often scattered projects are quite evident for evaluating the ASAL Programmes. It was obvious that mainly the few better-off farmers were the first to make use of the services delivered and it is very unclear if and how these 'innovations' trickle down to the majority of generally very poor peasants. In addition, and obvious for semi-arid areas, the rainfall is so erratic, and crop yields and livestock productivity so fluctuating and risky, that the meagre support the ASAL programme was and is giving could never outweigh the impact of

nature's whims. The 1993 evaluation mission recommended that smaller farmers should get more attention and that crop diversification and risk minimization would have to become the cornerstone of any productive support of the ASAL programme. In addition more activities in furrow irrigation improvement would be necessary and especially more efficient water use. Such views have been expressed by other outsiders time and again. Once, these suggestions had been followed up, in 1957-60, and resulted in projects that failed terribly and with a devastating famine in 1965 as one of the outcomes. The Marakwet can be thankful that the ASAL programme until 1993 was unsuccessful to 'improve' the irrigation system, without first understanding it. The more 'marginal' approach followed by the ASAL Programme to improve irrigation furrows in West Pokot was much more effective, but got very meagre attention by the 1993-evaluation mission.<sup>27</sup>

To measure the effects of resource conservation measures and land use planning would be even more difficult. Current-day environmental scientists are deeply divided about the assessment of resource degradation, the judgement of the effects of land managers' practices and the proven value of soil, water and land management improvements for sustainable yields at acceptable cost-benefit ratios. In escarpment areas like West Pokot and the Kerio Valley the forces of nature are so overwhelming that 'halting erosion' would be a multi-billion affair. On a micro-level of scale afforestation, gully stabilisation and protection against erosion can be important, but the recent ASAL emphasis on land use management can easily give the impression that a major change would be possible, if enough effort could be mobilised. Kenya experienced such naive grand designs twice before, during the late 1930s and the late 1950s and both times they soon resulted in frustrated government personnel and a change from 'convincing' to a harsh approach, blaming the victim.

#### **4.4 Effects on poverty alleviation**

With a rather grim project context (droughts in 1984, 1986, 1992-93; decreasing government services and salaries of civil servants; ethnic turmoil), the ASAL Programmes can not claim to have improved the income situation of the people in a structural way. They have resulted in less deterioration than would otherwise have happened. Cash income generation was also largely beyond the domain of the ASAL programmes, as livestock trade, trade in gold, precious stones, minerals (e.g the fluorspar mine), miraa and arms largely took place outside the government's orbit (with the exception of parts of Kajiado). Livestock will definitely have gained by the better watering situation and better veterinary care and irrigated and dryland crop production became a bit more secure<sup>28</sup>. The areas in West Pokot where the ASAL programme had

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27Interesting enough the expenditure, mainly costs for transport, for traditional irrigation was much higher in Keiyo-Marakwet, showing that high expenditure is not necessarily related to more impact as is too often assumed.

28The support for indigenous irrigation in all three districts did not only favour the cultivators. In dry years furrow irrigation drastically expanded and gave a much better food security for cultivators and pastoralists: partly because of age-old trade and barter relations, partly because pastoralists became cultivators. During years with good rainfall the importance of furrow irrigation was (far) less important.

been most active, proved to have a higher food security situation than the areas where there were far less interventions by the ASAL programme. In cash income terms the situation was diverse. An analysis of the income situation in a small-farmer area and a pastoral area where the 1997 situation could be compared with 1985 showed that the cash income in real terms had deteriorated in the small-farm area (as in most of Kenya), but that it had improved in the pastoral area (an increase of 29% in real terms).

Although the ASAL programme can certainly be regarded as an important contributing factor to the improvement of the (cash) income situation in the pastoral areas, and on the mitigation of the crisis in the small-farmer areas, the context variables are so much more important than whatever the ASAL programme did that its 'separate' impact would never be measurable. Where relevant, the ASAL support for drinking water, health care and education has probably had more structural impact, although the partly overlapping activities of other actors (NGOs in particular) make any more definite statements ridiculous.

The approach followed by the ASAL Programmes suggests that more money than in other development projects did remain in the district for a longer time, and must have had a larger local economic multiplier. First there is the considerable amount of money actually spent on civil servants to enable them to travel to and work in the interior of their districts. It will have meant a boost for the (few) petrol stations, the small 'hotels' (or tiny places to eat, drink and sometimes lodge), the small shops. With the drastically deteriorating salaries, the 'topping up' through 'nights out allowances' must have compensated quite a lot. Secondly there has always been the attempt (although not often so successful) to support the local traders, and producers by enabling them to deliver goods and services to ASAL projects. Thirdly the training of many civil servants (including untrained primary school teachers) did result in entitlements to higher salaries and secondary benefits that were at least partly consumed and invested in the district<sup>29</sup>. Fourthly, and most important, the programmes had a preference for labour-intensive approaches and since casuals were always recruited locally, their payments remained in the district enabling a large multiplier.

One of the basic experiments in all ASAL programmes was the mobilisation of local contributions to all types of projects: money, materials, labour. With the virtual absence of local taxes, these 'voluntary contributions' can be seen as experimental forms of

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The system is very flexible; a situation that is often difficult to understand or accept by agricultural specialists trained in 'agricultural modernization'.

<sup>29</sup>However, the poor productive and service situation in most of the ASAL areas still results in a relatively fast 'migration of the money' towards the more humid highlands or outside the districts. This will be even more so, because the people who benefited most directly from ASAL money, have mainly not been Pokot, Keiyo, Marakwet or Maasai. The large majority of civil servants and business people are 'ethnic outsiders', often with their economic base elsewhere. With increasing ethnic tensions, their inclination to invest in their work districts has decreased and their remittances to their kin elsewhere increased. On the other hand between 1986 and 1990 quite a number of non-local civil servants had built or bought houses (and sometimes other property) in their work districts, which they often sold rather cheaply to local people after they were transferred, certainly after the ethnic clashes.

district-related taxation. Relative importance and equity aspects, though, deserve more attention.

#### **4.5 Effects on environmental sustainability**

According to the evaluation mission of 1993 the environmental degradation taking place in the Kerio Valley is so alarming, and the ASAL programme in Keiyo-Marakwet so unsuccessful in tackling these severe problems, that it was strongly suggested to change the focus to the "productive and environmental sectors", in a much larger operational zone. The language of the 1993 evaluation mission (MDC etc, 1993, annex 3, p.7) resembles the language of horrified colonial civil servants during the 1950s: "Continuous over-grazing in the valley in the past decades has led to a serious degradation of the pasture lands resulting in a decrease in bio-diversity of pasture species, intrusion of tree and bush species in the original savanna lands, reduced infiltration capacity which in turn has led to increased gully erosion". "It can be foreseen that the lands in this area will turn completely unproductive, unless firm measures are taken. In this alarming stage of degradation only complete de-stocking combined with conservation measures seems to be feasible to regenerate the lands". It is also added that "heavy capital investment (is) required to contain the problem of gully erosion in community lands". Already during the early phase of the Keiyo-Marakwet Programme it was evident that the approach could not result in major ASAL programme support to tackle environmental degradation. "Soil conservation was found to have a very low priority within the local population" (Owiti, 1985, p. 10). And the investments that would really be needed to have any impact would require enormous injections of labour and capital.

Also in West Pokot the environmental activities of the ASAL programme were regarded as rather meagre throughout the life of the ASAL Programme. In 1985 the review mission wrote (Ibid., p. 11): "there is an urgent need for soil conservation in the Suam River basin... The mission fears that slow implementation of soil conservation measures there might result in measures to the detriment of the inhabitants of the area after a decade or so...The mission realizes that adequate soil conservation means huge investment far above ASAL possibilities". Although after 1985 tree planting, the rehabilitation of eroded grazing areas and preventive management in water catchment areas had become more important, the 1993 evaluation mission still concluded that a more comprehensive approach was certainly needed, and that 'land use planning' would be the recommended approach. After 1993, a ' District land use planning team' was formed and they selected small areas in the district for pilot projects for a completely integrated approach which had to lead to fundamental improvements in land use. In addition the gender sensitivity of the ASAL approach as a whole and the environmental component in particular had to be strengthened, through the appointment of a local (Pochon) woman, who had to be trained as the new gender specialist and who would become a member of the PMU.

Kajiado has less dramatic natural escarpments (and hence less visible forms of erosion) than in West Pokot and Keiyo-Marakwet, so the language of the evaluation mission of 1993 is also less demanding with respect to environmental action needed.

The ASAL programmes after 1993 responded constructively but cautiously to the challenges of the 1993 evaluation mission and its obvious backing by the donor. New environmental projects were planned, and existing ones expanded. Most projects show a 'convincing' approach, with much emphasis on local self management. The authoritarian, top-down approach of the past (with prisoners being involved in large-scale afforestation campaigns, harsh terracing targets, forced destocking and the like) was (still) avoided, although some projects were formulated with titles like 'forest enforcement'.

In 1997 the ASAL programme in Keiyo-Marakwet had implemented most of the environmental recommendations of the 1993 evaluation mission and had increased its expenditure. The ASAL programme in West Pokot was criticised for having remained too much the same, although its expenditure increased. The programme in Kajiado was judged in between. However, the 1997 mission concluded that it remains to be seen (and it can only be judged much later, if ever) whether it really supports the long term resource base of the people. It can be argued that this conclusion undermines the wisdom of the recommendations that were made in 1993. Why recommend an expensive and complete overhaul that cannot be evaluated after four years and perhaps never?

The implementation of the 1993 recommendations largely reflects the different position of the three ASAL programmes. Since the programme in Keiyo-Marakwet was only recently re-started, the new policy could easily be incorporated. In Kajiado not much changed between 1993 and 1997, apart from the introduction of land use planning and an increase of funds; the other aspects of the programme remained largely the same, mainly because the administrative set up of the programme allowed much trial and error, something for which the programme had been criticised before. In West Pokot the situation was entirely different. The programme management strongly doubted the wisdom of the 1993 review mission and did not see how it could implement all the new wishes of the Dutch development bureaucracy. It also criticised the review mission for not having assessed the previous successes of the programme, which in their eyes were evident and indeed were confirmed by the 1997 mission. It also argued that nobody in Pokot had requested for the changes and that a World Bank land use planning project had failed miserably in the district. The management challenged the Dutch Embassy by stating in its Plan of Operations 1994-1996 that the programme "will remain fundamentally the same". The Embassy did not accept this 'rebellion' and the programme management in West Pokot was forced to implement the new policy for which it lacked the administrative capacity and the historical background. The funding almost doubled. Inevitably this was to result in turmoil and an audit in 1997 showed that a large amount of project funds had disappeared. Although currently it is not entirely clear what will happen with the programme, it is almost certain that the level of funding will be cut down drastically. Indeed, it appears that the programme in West Pokot is an example of a rather successful project that was forced by the donor to follow a new and very ambitious strategy, ending up in turmoil and confusion.

## **5.CONTEXT VARIABLES INFLUENCING PROJECT IMPACT**

## **5.1 The external context**

Three major influences can be regarded as 'external'. A major one of course is the rainfall situation. A drought year can be such a devastating experience that all gains in relatively good years can be destroyed. Two or three bad years in a row can be such a calamity that there is a structural weakening of the entire economy of an area, with a lasting impact for at least a decade. The ASAL areas in Kenya experienced drought years in 1984, 1986 and 1992-1993 and the overall impact has probably been a weakening of the livestock resource basis in most areas. Some compensation existed because of relatively high livestock prices and a better veterinary support than before.

A second major external influence was the weakening of the government's ability to finance its activities and a gradual undermining of the real income of many civil servants. The move towards 'decentralization' (in Kenya: 'District Focus', started in 1983) in practice meant a devolution of power without funds after 1987. As a rule, departments lacked funds to maintain their transport. Civil servants became ineffective. The impact of foreign-induced 'structural adjustment programmes', and the disastrous economic development in Kenya as a whole, from the late 1980s onwards, did play a role in undermining the government's ability to finance development projects, and donor reluctance in some of those years, for political reasons, resulted in large fluctuations in the implementation of development projects. It is doubtful though, whether the generally bad situation of the Kenyan cash economy did only have impact on the three districts. An important positive effect of structural adjustment for the pastoralists were the much higher livestock prices. The political and economic turmoil also resulted in niches of opportunity (trade in gold, arms, stolen livestock) and the existence of a large (and growing) affluent class in and around Nairobi did mean an expanding market for livestock products, with high prices, while the rapidly expanding population of the urban poor resulted in an expanding market for charcoal and firewood, coming from the ASAL areas.

A third major external influence was the political democratization ('multi party') after 1991, allowing for more open political opposition but with increasing ethnic tensions as a byproduct. Among the districts under review, the politically instigated ethnic hatred led to the most dramatic results, so far, in West Pokot, where a large part of the non-Pokot population was chased away (or fled in panic and did not dare to return). In addition, the weakening of the central government was interpreted by quite a number of people as an increasing opportunity to steal cattle from neighbouring ethnic groups or clans, with widespread insecurity as a result. With the ethnic factor so prominently exposed, non-local businessmen either left the area or drastically reduced their risks. Some local businessmen (-cum-politicians) took over, but generally it meant a much lower level of business activity than in the 1980s. Where the ASAL programme 'made things happen' by using non-locals as the direct and indirect project entrepreneurs, they now had to re-orient their approach and were faced with major dilemmas, also of an ethical-political nature.

## **5.2 The internal context in the project areas**

Within the project areas the most important change in the context was the further expansion of the activities and the impact of Non-Governmental Organizations. Most of these NGOs had their origin in Missionary organizations from abroad, with foreign actors from a very diverse background, and hence, funds from everywhere. During the 1990s also local people began to form NGOs, especially among the Maasai, and these more indigenous NGOs began to attract foreign funding as well, and became interesting partners for the ASAL programme. The relative importance of NGOs increased partly because of the decreasing effectivity of government agents and a general lack of private business initiative beyond the micro level of scale (with some exceptions, but firmly in the hands of outsiders). Where during the 1980s the government was still planning to take over health centres of missionary organizations, or at least make them 'dance to the tunes' of the District Development Committee, in the mid 1990s the missions were begged to assist the ailing government health care structure and local businessmen were asked to preside over the District Health Management Boards, to assist in cost-sharing endeavours.

In the Maasai area a specific context factor of major importance was the privatisation of the former group ranches. The development of a land market, loss of land to immigrants, the visible pauperization of parts of the Maasai population, tense ethnic relations, increased fencing and blocking livestock routes were all part and parcel of this development. In the Pokot, Keiyo and Marakwet areas the Group Ranches had never been much more than existing on paper, and also privatisation of land in the pastoral areas was not yet occurring on any scale (except along rivers, for cultivation purposes).

### **5.3 Project and beneficiaries**

Who are the major beneficiaries of the ASAL programme and its integrated approach<sup>30</sup>? The almost *f* 40 millions of Dutch support definitely strengthened the government structure (maybe with the exception of Keiyo-Marakwet) and civil servants related to ASAL were not experiencing the drastic budget cuts which other civil servants had to endure. As far as effective, their service activities could continue and indirectly one may expect benefits for the people in the semi-arid areas, benefits which have not been unimportant, but which were embedded in the impact of activities of many other intervening agencies, mainly NGOs.

Neither the 1993 evaluation mission, nor we in this contribution, can be more specific. It is the intention of the Nairobi-ASAL leadership to start an evaluation unit (after 15 years...) and to support all ASAL districts to form a monitoring unit in all ASAL PMUs.

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<sup>30</sup>In total, more than 40 person-years of Dutch development experts were financed by the Dutch. Although the idea was to keep the Dutch presence small (one Advisor per district mainly), the expenses involved are nevertheless considerable, and with an estimated average of *f* 125,000 per annum per expert it would mean *f* 5 million. Against less than *f* 40 million of total programme expenses the question always remains: is the level of scale large enough to warrant such 'overhead'? On the other hand the type of projects financed did not result in 'leaking' of a lot of Dutch donor money to Dutch (or any other foreign) consultancy firms or suppliers. In financial terms the ASAL programmes were very much programmes benefitting the Kenyan economy.

And again, the idea is to start baseline surveys. With the new approach to get much stronger PMUs (with land use experts, gender experts, education experts, monitoring experts and a drastic increase of the office staff), the old idea of a 'low profile' and 'non-implementing' programme might be an idea of the past. If government or NGO agents lack the capacity to perform at the adequate levels of scale, one may expect a much larger implementation activity of ASAL itself. ASAL then becomes the parallel agency it has successfully avoided to be for fifteen years. A stronger role for 'central directives' from Nairobi could mean that effective local, 'participatory' involvement will be marginalised. If the central directives in land use management mean that the population will be forced to do things they don't like, the ASAL programme will soon be regarded as an enemy, to be avoided. Forty years ago similar directives created part of the rallying points for political mobilisation that led to Independence. It also resulted in 'the environment' becoming a taboo theme for over fifteen years.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Although the ASAL programme in all three districts produced considerable paperwork on activities, output, and context analysis, there has never been an in-depth attempt to look into the effects and impact of the programme as a whole. This is a serious shortcoming that should be rectified. On the other hand it should be said that any serious attempt at 'development monitoring' would only be possible with a dedicated separate staff and that the academic difficulties would mean staff of high calibre, who would be expensive. The easy way out to involve consultants would make it even more expensive (and with the very complicated land use planning becoming the core of the approach even more so). It would provoke a strong antipathy among civil servants and local people: an expensive ASAL programme without enough local multipliers. Development monitoring should as far as possible be internalised in the district planning activities, in a systematic way.

The ASAL programme certainly was (and is) a multi-sector programme, involving most government departments in the district, and at all levels of the government bureaucracy, also succeeding to reach the most remote corners of the area. In addition (but mainly in Kajiado) NGO's were involved in implementing part of the ASAL projects. As a multi-sectoral programme, coordination of planning and monitoring of implementation was at the levels of ASAL 'Steering Committees' (or the group of 'ASAL Contact Officers'), the District Development Committee, and the lower-level development committees. Quite a number of projects were integrated by their nature: e.g water, health or environmental projects at schools; environmental projects around livestock watering points; or income-generating projects by women groups. ASAL's attempts to get a 'bottom-up' involvement of people at the village level (in selection of priorities, planning, and contributions in labour, kind and cash) also added to integration at the level of people's livelihood strategies.

The three programmes had a different emphasis on the three major activities; that is, strengthening the district planning capacity (and strengthening the participation of local inhabitants and NGOs in the management of district affairs); improving the social and

infrastructural facilities, like water services, schools, and health dispensaries; and strengthening the productive base of the district in a sustainable way. Support to the core sector, the livestock economy, was central to the ASAL programme in Kajiado, but less so in West Pokot and certainly less in Keiyo-Marakwet. Although a major impact on wealth and income can be expected, figures to give evidence are not available. It is also not clear if the support for the productive sector (livestock and irrigated agriculture mainly) did mainly mean support for those who were on the better side of the wealth spectrum, or if the programme rewards were spread more evenly. The most obvious problem in maintaining improvements is the occurrence of drought conditions, causing large fluctuations in wealth and income, and with a threatening potential to 'kill' project results of years in a few months time. If that happens, does it mean the approach was bad? Or did it mean that for the years it worked it strengthened the local economy? The whole concept of long-term sustainability of project investments gets a very problematic twist in these highly insecure situations. What is certainly true in all three programmes is that without the ASAL investments, the situation would have deteriorated much more than it did now, and poverty as well as lack of basic services would have been much more widespread. The flexibility of the ASAL programme, and its multi-sectoral and small-scale, even 'integrated' approach meant that at least part of the government machinery could react to the multitude of fluctuating problems which the inhabitants of the drylands have to face. 'ASAL' became part (and not the enemy) of the people's coping strategies. In West Pokot and Kajiado the ASAL programme probably became the most respected part of the government activities.

The basic task of the ASAL programme, as it is currently formulated by the Donor, is to improve 'sustainable land use' by combining real productivity gains with environmental security, without losing sight of the 'social and cultural factor' and without undermining people's access to resources. The basic challenge is to find out where the agricultural productivity gains can be reached. However, ASAL can never do that alone. For instance: it demands a complete reversal of the work of the agricultural research stations (under the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute), with much more emphasis on the reasons for current low and erratic productivity at farmers' level. Agro-technological research is then not the prime activity. Constraint analysis is much more important. Despite all the good work that the ASAL programme has done, they have not come up with systematic analysis of these constraints and it is doubtful whether this is within their possibilities. Constraints are often of a social-political nature and it would mean a much more vulnerable position. A change from 'the oil in the district machinery' to the 'dynamite in the district (if not national) structure' will probably be a nut too hard to crack. Therefore it is wise to maintain the diverse and flexible, low profile approach of the 'integrated approach' while at the same time carefully experimenting with the dynamite. The change from an approach of many small-scale projects in many sectors (with all its shortcomings and with the enormous difficulty to 'prove' a tangible impact) to a sector-specific approach (e.g. 'education', or 'land use management') is a dangerous one. A good way out would be to maintain a flexible, multi-sector, low-key ASAL programme more or less the way it is, and to add a few major sector-specific programmes, wherever a more 'massive' attempt is felt necessary and possible to change and improve circumstances drastically.

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## ANNEX

### ASAL PROJECTS IN WEST POKOT, KEIYO-MARAKWET AND KAJIADO, 1982-1996

#### AGRICULTURE

- a. **Training farmers:** T&V approach; training 'intermediate tillage', dryland crops, compatible agriculture, field days, irrigation/furrow management, draught power/ animal traction including selling ploughs; study and demonstration plots water harvesting; study and demonstration plots drought-resistant crops;
- b. **Support Ministry of Agriculture:** training officers Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs, support T&V programme; staff houses in isolated locations;
- c. **Empowerment:** contract farming by 'lobby groups', and establishment of horticultural farmers associations
- d. **Studies:** identification indigenous crop species; crop marketing: group formation and support groups; irrigation: baseline studies; fruit tree investigation;
- e. **Irrigation** (mainly traditional systems): improvement and rehabilitation of intakes and furrows; construction major irrigation canals and desilting;
- f. **Food security:** distribution of 'essential commodities'; drought recovery programme;
- g. **Other activities:** support land adjudication; seed distribution; improvement of crop nurseries; introduction new crops; support coffee nursery / small-scale coffee improvement; fruit tree nurseries, bulking plots improved fruit.

#### LIVESTOCK

- a. **Training:** training ministerial staff (dairy, camels and tsetse fly eradication); training dairy cooperative members; training group ranch committee members; training cattle dip committee members; training farmers (beekeeping, animal husbandry, dairy, management, use of hand spray pumps, range management, paravets);
- b. **Upgrading animals:** breeding and multiplication centre, bull scheme, bull station; selling of Sahiwal bulls and dairy animals; support farmers' animal breeding initiatives; small stock upgrading; exchange small stock; small stock multiplication centre; sale of pullets and cockerell exchange programme;
- c. **Fodder projects:** pasture improvement, pasture seed distribution, private range management; study and improvement indigenous range and fodder; fodder production, fodder tree nurseries; zero grazing propagation, range management demonstration (controlled grazing shambas);
- d. **Disease control:** construction drug store; refrigerators; livestock coop society, paravet equipment; livestock drugs, revolving fund; livestock vaccination campaigns; rehabilitation vaccination crushes; construction and rehabilitation cattle dips (e.g. water supply); support private tick control; distribution of spray pumps; tsetse fly eradication (investigation, traps), poultry vaccination programme;
- e. **Marketing:** study marketing livestock; livestock marketing booklet and adverts; support livestock traders groups; support livestock sale yards and holding grounds;
- e. **Other activities:** introduction camels, farmers training, sale of camels, sale of camel milk; livestock watering sources; cattle troughs, construction and rehabilitation;

water dams; support planning group ranches, parcel survey and demarcation for group ranch subdivision, construction fish ponds; construction bandas and training hides and skins; propagate rabbit keeping; propagation life fences; beekeeping (forming groups, training; support honey production, marketing, refinery, introduction improved beehives); equipment Ministry offices & vehicles; staff houses in isolated locations; livestock census (only Kajiado).

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT / CONSERVATION

- a. **Training:** Training environmental committees, ministerial staff; social forestry; agroforestry, general, soil conservation at farm level; recruitment and training private tree stockists; training wildlife management;
- b. **Nurseries and demonstration plots:** support district tree nurseries (e.g. water supply); support chief's or headman's demonstration plots; support on-farm tree nurseries and training (incl. fodder tree nurseries); support school nurseries, incl. 4K-club patron training; afforestation school compounds; demonstrations on soil conservation;
- c. **Soil conservation and related activities:** reclamation trials, bulking vegetative soil conservation material (e.g. vetiver grass and makarikari grass), rehabilitation eroded land, micro catchment protection, spring and well protection, riverbank protection, gully stabilization, cut-off drains, checkdams, sisal (protecting infrastructure and planting of strips); planting of grass strips; reseeding rangelands; rehabilitation gold panning areas;
- d. **Other activities:** large-scale reforestation; forest felling plan; forest boundary enforcement; survey indigenous trees and bamboo species; promotion energy-saving cooking equipment and improved jikos; promotion non-wood forest products; protection crops against wildlife; survey endangered species; field offices (including transect offices and other transect infrastructure in Keiyo-Marakwet).

## NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- a. **Training:** training income-generating activities of self-help or youth groups; training management skills to small-scale entrepreneurs (incl. Youth Polytechnic leavers); training of traders; community development workshops;
- b. **Support activities:** construction of cooperative stores, offices and other infrastructure; credit and revolving fund for members of cooperative societies; support small-scale entrepreneurs (e.g. construction of sheds); revolving fund for the 'jua kali' (hot sun) sector; support lobby groups (of small-scale entrepreneurs, e.g. Paolo Freire training); support Youth Polytechnics (building materials, desk production, tools, instructor's courses); support craft production (leather products, improved beehives, jikos); study and production alternative building materials; demonstration and training units home economics, trade promotion; market research; support curio shop; resettlement support.

## WOMEN GROUPS

- a. **Training:** training for women group members in agriculture: camel husbandry, beekeeping, fencing shambas, dryland crops, tree nurseries; training in home economics, esp. food and energy, management, leadership, business skills, 'sensitization'; health training and management; posho mill management training;
- b. **Income generating and other activities:** support non-farm income-generating activities (credit and revolving fund; support women groups building 'improved houses', rental houses, shop buildings, posho mills; support women groups natural resource management (latrines, refuse pits, shallow wells, water jars); support women groups cultural villages.

## WATER

- a. **Training:** training pump attendants and water pan owners; training self-help groups on water management; workshops for ministerial staff;
- b. **Project activities:** (major) gravity rural water projects; development and protection of springs, sub-surface dams, shallow and infiltration wells, rock catchments; drilling boreholes and borehole equipment (gantries, hand pumps, solar pumping units); support borehole maintenance units; borehole maintenance; water tanks and water jars; roof catchment;
- c. **Other activities:** inventory water resources; establishing divisional water teams; establishment borehole management committees; staff facilities Ministry of Water Development (incl. houses in isolated locations).

## ROADS

- a. **Planning:** District Roads Plan (West Pokot); road development survey;
- b. **Construction:** road construction, improvement and grading; bridge construction; construction of special-purpose roads (e.g. transect roads, community roads).

## EDUCATION

- a. **Training:** in-service training untrained teachers; refresher courses teachers; support Teacher Training Centres and Teachers Advisory Centres; workshops for parents & teachers associations (a.o. cost sharing course); headteachers seminars (all for primary schools); seminar preprimary school teachers;
- b. **Buildings and other physical structures:** primary school buildings: boarding facilities and class rooms; ('appropriate') building materials for class rooms and teacher's houses of primary schools; improved sanitation and improved water supply for primary schools (mainly tanks); secondary school buildings; adult literacy training resource centre;
- c. **Teaching aids:** primary schools: desks, text books, tools; development and printing of District School Atlas (West Pokot) and wall maps; secondary schools: laboratory equipment;
- d. **Environmental projects for primary school pupils:** afforestation; distribution of tree seedlings; training afforestation; training dryland agriculture;

e. **Others:** support school feeding programme; support school inspection; special education (mainly assistance to the education for blind pupils; assistance literacy groups, e.g. drought-resistance crops programme.

## **HEALTH**

- a. **Training:** staff training, refresher courses nurses, training traditional birth attendants, community health workers and training vaccinators;
- b. **Construction:** construction health centres, houses of TB manyattas; building and upgrading dispensaries, staff houses;
- c. **Other activities:** monitoring health activities; support mobile health team; increasing vaccination and immunization coverage; enhancing disease prevention and control; establishment nursery herbal medicine; construction camp for environmental health unit of AMREF (Keiyo-Marakwet).

## **SPECIAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

- a. District Development Offices; construction of cultural centre (Kajiado); multipurpose hall (West Pokot); buildings for NGOs, cultural museum (West Pokot).

## **PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

Salaries drivers, support staff (a.o. gender specialists); training ASAL staff; ASAL staff houses; construction and equipping District Information and Documentation Centre; baseline studies; district atlases; NGO studies; seminars government staff; staff houses other ministries; office costs; procurement of vehicles and transport costs; seminars community-oriented project planning; locational training seminars; PRA/RRA; Radio and TV programmes on ASAL; support District Development Committees and Divisional Development Committees; organizing meetings of local leaders; studies abroad.