

Case Study Brief No 1: Changes in dairy marketing policy in Kenya

This brief outlines a case study conducted by the International Livestock Research Institute's (ILRI's) and Overseas Development Institute's (ODI's) 'Process and Partnership for Pro-poor Policy Change' project, which seeks to identify and institutionalise innovative research and development approaches that lead to pro-poor policy outcomes. A new approach to policy process analysis was used, outlined in the accompanying brief: *'An Approach to Understanding the Role of Research in Policy Processes'*.

Background – Kenya's informal dairy market



In Kenya, traditional milk markets from small-scale farmers through small-scale milk vendors (SSMVs) supply over 85% of the market, selling cheaper milk for poor consumers and giving better prices for farmers. Yet previous policies did not reflect the needs of the majority of farmers, traders and consumers. This was reflected in harassment and rent-seeking as the larger powerful players, linked to those in authority, sought to increase their small market share. The Kenya Dairy Board (KDB) relied on a western model of processing and packaging of milk, actively discouraging SSMVs and acting as 'policemen', trying to stamp them out.

The policy change

Since 2004, there has been a major change in policy and practice towards the informal milk market. A newly drafted Dairy Policy clearly acknowledges the role of SSMVs, with specific measures including development of low-cost appropriate technologies, training on safe milk handling, provision of incentives for improved milk handling and establishment of a supportive certification system. Whilst written policy change is still in progress, the changed attitude and behaviour of policy implementers has been noticeable for some time now, reflected in changes in the market. There is proactive engagement by the KDB in training and certification of SSMVs, in order to safeguard public health and assure quality, rather than by trying to stamp it out.

The Smallholder Dairy Project (SDP)

SDP was a research and development project that ran from 1997 to 2004, collaboratively implemented by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). SDP conducted extensive participatory socio-economic, policy and technical research to understand the constraints affecting Kenya's milk market, before implementing a strategy to influence policy reform towards a more conducive system for small-scale farmers and traders.

A range of stakeholders came together, facilitated by the project, representing public, private and civil society organisations. SDP drew on its comprehensive research outputs to demonstrate novel institutional approaches and appropriate technology for quality assurance to safeguard both public health and the livelihoods of the poor who depend on the market.

Case study findings

Key influences

This case study highlighted a 'tipping point' in changes in attitudes leading to the behaviour change and ultimately the policy change (see Figure 1). This occurred in early 2004, following a campaign for 'Safe Milk' led by large scale processors and the KDB. Reaction to this campaign by a coalition of advocacy NGOs using SDP evidence, in support of the SSMVs and livelihoods of farmers and consumers, led to the 'Milk Wars', largely conducted in the media. This opened the way for the key evidence to be taken on board by policy makers, under pressure from grass roots

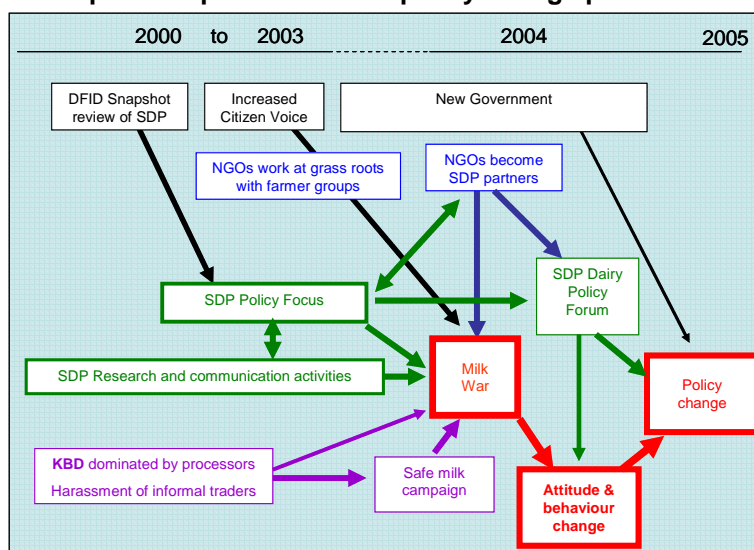


organisations arguing for the same changes. However this change was enabled by several years of communication of relevant evidence by SDP, challenging attitudes with evidence that had previously been absent.

It was widely acknowledged that SDP's activities had been the major influence on the policy change, and the reasons for included:

- Highly effective long-term **collaboration**, producing robust, relevant **evidence** to make a credible story.
- Consistent **communication** of this evidence to a wide range of stakeholders using a **range of different materials and means**.
- A **political environment** providing opportunities for change –government strategies and freedom for civil society organisations.
- Awareness of the **political context** and effective links with advocacy-focused **NGOs**.
- Wide ranging linkages so that evidence could feed into the policy process via several routes – direct to policy makers in meetings, to public through media, through NGOs.

Figure 1: Simplified representation of policy change process and influences



Key lessons

- **Effective collaboration** can be a combination of long-term relationships and tactical use of new linkages. But this involves **significant time investment**.
- **Robust, credible evidence** is hugely important in controversial environments. SDP evidence stood up to concerted efforts to discredit it.
- **Flexibility** of projects to change activities to new, relevant areas helps to respond to policy priorities and opportunities.
- External pressure and support from donors to focus on policy and livelihoods can help turn research outputs into policy outcomes.
- **Multiple approaches to communicate evidence** and influence key people are more effective than just a few.
- Approaches and messages that appeal to the **personal incentives** of key policy makers also increase likelihood of influence. The evidence is only one pressure on such people.

More information

The full case study report has been published as an ODI/ILRI Working paper: Leksmono, Young, Hooton, Muriuki & Romney (2006) *'Informal Traders Lock Horns with the Formal Milk Industry: The role of research in pro-poor policy shift in Kenya'* ODI/ILRI Working Paper 266.

More details are also available from the websites of both the Smallholder Dairy Project www.smallholderdairy.org and the Process and Partnership for Pro-Poor Policy Change project www.pppppc.org.