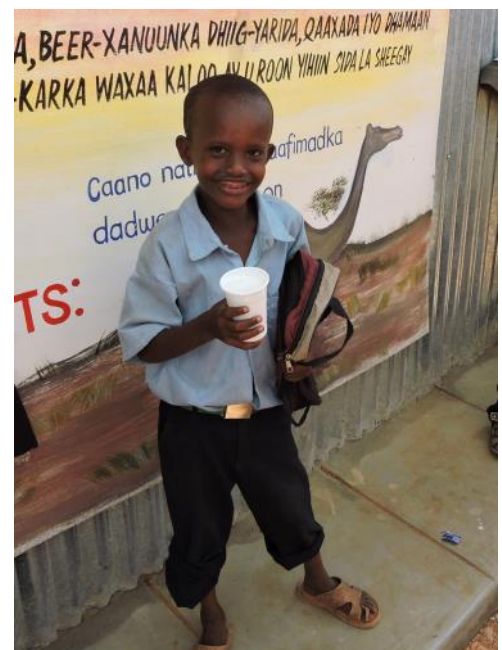


Camili: Transforming the Camel Milk Value Chain in Kenya

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ *Camili* was a Comic Relief-funded project in Garissa, Kenya from 2014-2017, focusing on the camel milk sector and managed by SITE/APT
- ◆ The project used a value chain development approach and mainstreamed the principles of sustainability and gender sensitivity
- ◆ *Camili* achieved all its primary outcomes: greater income and food security; better resilience; improved voice and influence of sector workers; and increased competitiveness of camel milk enterprises
- ◆ Results included: reaching 8,651 value chain actors; an eight-fold increase in cash incomes for 5,441 camel owners and traders; a two to four-fold increase in assets; and enhanced resilience in dry season e.g. avoiding negative coping strategies such as sale of camels
- ◆ *Camili* also improved women's advocacy and working conditions, water management and nutritional outcomes for 9271 children
- ◆ There is scope to build on *Camili's* success through further geographical expansion, continuing to work with County Government and facilitating access to market finance, new technologies and business services

This joint APT-SITE publication provides an overview of the context, approach, key successes, lessons learnt and innovation on *Camili*, as well as recommendations for further work.



ABOUT APT AND SITE

APT Action on Poverty is a UK NGO that works in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia with local partners to build self-reliance and enterprise. APT's mission is to promote economic empowerment and social change, by helping the most vulnerable people to achieve sustainable livelihoods, and by addressing the barriers that limit their potential.

SITE Enterprise Promotion Ltd is a Kenyan non-profit development organisation which has two decades of experience in improving the competitiveness of small-scale producers and enterprises. SITE has partnered successfully with APT since the 1990s.

CONTEXT

The Camel Milk project (*Camili*) was a Comic Relief-funded project implemented by SITE in partnership with APT in Garissa County. Garissa is a highly fragile county in north-eastern Kenya that is vulnerable to poverty, environmental shocks and stresses and the threat of violent extremism. The three-year project ran from June 2014 to May 2017 and focused on improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the camel milk value chain, a sector with considerable potential for improving the incomes, nutrition and resilience of poor households.

During times of drought, camels contribute up to 50% of total nutritional intake and more in terms of cash income.

To realise the four project outcomes, *Camili* had to tackle several challenges, including entrenched gender roles; limited access to market-based financial services; lack of value chain leadership; unhygienic milk handling processes; and reluctance of entrepreneurs to work collectively. The project also operated within a fragile security context.

“The business approach employed by SITE in an environment dominated by relief work is a key factor behind creative minds joining the sub-sector...and a strong basis for sustainability.” Comments by independent evaluator of Camili, April 2017.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

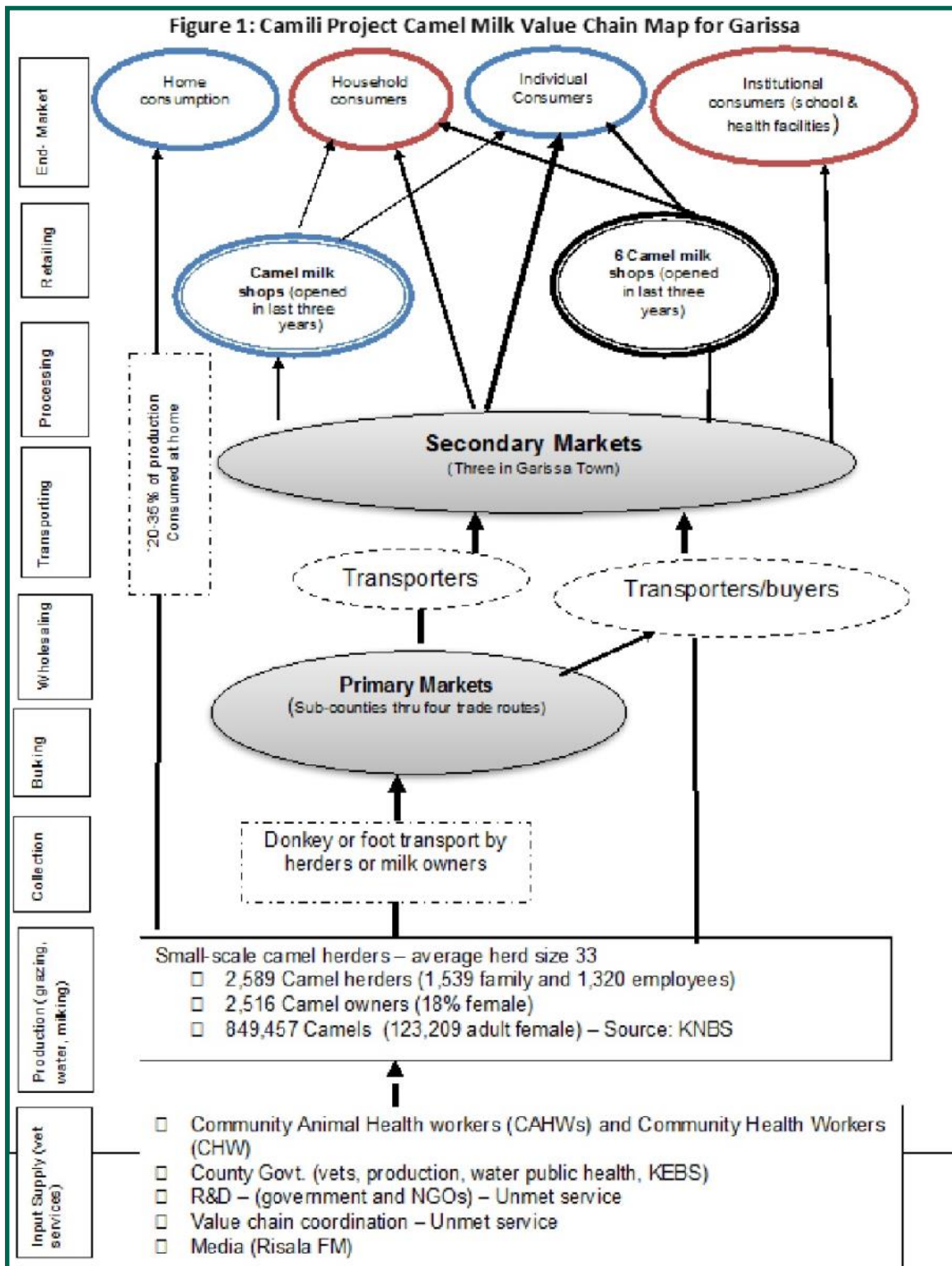
- ◆ Increased and more secure incomes and improved food security of camel owners, herders and traders, and their families.
- ◆ Better resilience to the impact of environmental shocks and stresses among camel owner households.
- ◆ Greater voice and influence, particularly of women, to benefit from camel milk sector development through effective organisations and representation.
- ◆ Increased productivity and competitiveness of enterprises in the camel milk value chain.

KEY ASPECTS OF OUR APPROACH

Our approach focused on holistic value chain development, sustainability and gender sensitivity.

Value chain development

Camili used a value chain development approach, identifying the key actors, constraints and entry points across the whole chain. This approach recognised that the production and delivery of camel milk to consumers within the Garissa market involved many interconnected stakeholders. By imbuing a common purpose and coherent strategy, we sought to improve the competitiveness of the whole chain and accrue complementary returns at each stage. Figure 1 illustrates the value chain map for camel milk in Garissa, showing key actors and marketing channels that *Camili* supported.



The project tailored different activities to the needs of each value chain actor. Our work with camel herders and owners included concentrating on making the business case for selling camel milk at scale. Our work with primary milk traders focused on milk handling, hygiene and communication with herders to stabilise the volumes of milk. Work with secondary traders similarly focused on higher incomes through improved milk quality, quantity and hygiene as well as better customer facilities. Working with institutional stakeholders such as health centres and schools also proved very effective in spreading messages to household consumers on the importance of nutrition and hygienic camel milk to a healthy diet.

INNOVATION

Camili has been both creative and innovative, as the following examples illustrate.

Remote veterinary diagnosis and mobile money have been used to support animal health in collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock and Veterinary Department. Owners and herders have been linked to qualified service providers and are now able to discuss their camel's symptoms over the phone with vets in Garissa who diagnose the condition and prescribe relevant medication. This is paid for by the M-pesa mobile banking system with drugs delivered the following day by milk transporters.

Primary and secondary traders embraced **Camili's introduction of stoves** that were both smokeless and more fuel efficient, thereby preventing contamination of milk and reducing quantities and costs of wood required, as well as reducing pollution and smoke inhalation.

The project's work with water committees was an innovation that has ensured that water points are more effectively run, better financed and able to prolong water supplies. This is having a wider community impact beyond camel herders. An unexpected benefit of the committees is their role as conflict arbiters.

Sustainability

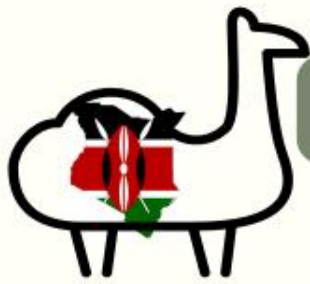
From the outset Camili focused on building trust and gaining the confidence of actors that were wary of short-term interventions. This was achieved through understanding the socio-cultural practices within the local Somali community, cooperating with trusted stakeholders such as Risala FM and County Government to run awareness campaigns, and ongoing implementation by a local partner (SITE) which has considerable experience in building community trust. The use of three local Project Officers from the same ethnic community undoubtedly helped the project to earn respect and support from the local community. Camili also worked to broker good relationships between different value chain actors.

The value chain approach itself promoted lasting change due to prompting mutually reinforcing improvements in the market system; working within the market rather than distorting it through subsidies. We also sought to support longer-term attitudinal change such as improving understanding of the link between hygiene, milk quality, prices and sales; and encouraging independent entrepreneurs to work collectively or in clusters to achieve economies of scale.



Gender sensitivity

Addressing gender inequalities and stereotypes was integral to our approach. The largest category of value chain actors is the camel milk traders, 2,925 (94%) of whom were women. A key challenge for Camili was the traditional gender expectations, both in the camel milk sector and in household decision-making. Women have traditionally been limited to selling camel milk as petty or secondary traders (in addition to childcare and domestic responsibilities) while men typically look after and milk camels, run larger milk shops or fulfil buyer-transporter roles. Such gender roles have deterred people from engaging in different parts of the sector. This meant we had to be creative in supporting the entrance of women and men into parts of the value chain that have traditionally been dominated by the opposite sex. The project brought positive change, with primary and secondary female traders becoming more empowered from their group activities and success in enterprise, leading to greater voice in household decision making.



CAMILI ACHIEVEMENTS



PEOPLE REACHED IN VALUE CHAIN:
8651



NUTRITION:
Improved nutrition for 9271 children



IMPACT ON WOMEN:
Improved working conditions, skills & voice



INCOME IMPROVEMENTS:

8 fold increase for 5441 camel owners, traders & milk shop owners



ASSET IMPROVEMENTS:

2-4 fold increase in assets & savings



WATER SECURITY:

Water management committees trained, equipment repaired



Greater food & income security for 34,000 households

Greater resilience of individuals, households & communities



RESULTS

Camili met all of its project objectives and exceeded its targets with positive impacts on the livelihoods and income security of more than 34,000 household members as a direct result of greater efficiency and improved practices within the camel milk sector. These improvements in the value chain led to increased supplies, better milk quality, greater demand, higher prices and profits.

The knock-on effects for individuals and households have included benefits such as food security, health and nutrition, fewer days lost to sickness, capacity to pay school fees on time, increased savings and reinvestment in existing or new enterprises.

evident in the proliferation of milk shops serving camel milk and hotels serving camel milk tea in Garissa town. The range of milk products now available to consumers has diversified to include cooled fresh milk, susa (sour milk – a local delicacy) and camel milk tea. The number and type of consumers have also grown, expanding to non-Somali communities and local elites.

Specific results related to income, assets, water management, nutrition, women and resilience are described below.

The progression of the camel milk value chain is

“Camili has irreversibly transformed the camel milk value chain in Garissa,” independent evaluation, April 2017

Number of people reached: 8,651 value chain actors, primarily camel herders, camel owners and milk traders; but also milk transporters, community animal health workers, elders and opinion leaders, and county civil servants.

Income: The project led to an eight-fold increase in cash incomes for 5,441 camel owners, traders (59% women) and milk shop owners.

Assets: Asset values for the same group saw between a two and four-fold increase. All the primary and secondary traders were involved in Merry-Go-Round (MGR) village savings and loan schemes that ensure cash resources are available for the ‘hard’ months. All actors in the value chain also saved their increased income by purchasing goats and young camels.

Water management: A major success has been improvement in water management by training water committees and repairing essential equipment. While clearly benefiting camel herders, this has had a much wider community impact in providing water security and reduced potential for conflict over dwindling resources. The project’s role in training Harbole water committee and getting their generator repaired to ensure reliable access to water secured the immediate future of a community of 980 families after their only other source of water had dried up.

Impact on nutrition: Improved the nutritional status of 9,271 children under the age of five who were family members of camel milk traders, owners and herders. School teachers in Harbole reported an increased attendance rate of 10% with no incidence of student malnutrition observed since mid-2015.

Impact on women: The project gave female camel milk traders greater voice and influence in their households and community, and opened doors for them with county government. Greater organisation and representation of women is having an impact individually, collectively and at community level as project activities have enabled members to successfully advocate for authorised trading spots and improved working conditions.



Women (2,662) reported improved working conditions with milk sheds, better milk handing containers and energy saving smokeless stoves. With improved marketing and lobbying skills, the women have been able to access funding from various mainstream government funding schemes. The lobbying skills have also ensured that government policies on market trade and food vending takes women’s views into consideration.

Resilience: As a result of greater income security from increased camel milk sales; improved herd and water management practices and an increase in assets, Camili has enhanced the resilience of individuals, households and communities to shocks and stresses, such as droughts or ongoing water stress. The project evaluation found that camels are no longer sold during dry spells to cover household needs, as income from milk sales now meet this need. There are signs that the Pokomos, a neighbouring ethnic group that traditionally rears cattle and goats, is also being attracted to the camel-rearing business. This is a positive development since camels are more resilient than cattle to drought.

“One of the project’s greatest achievements has been gaining the trust and confidence of people working in the camel sector following a legacy of selective and short-term inputs.” Camili mid-term review



LESSONS LEARNT AND CHANGES OVER TIME

Camili was proactive in documenting key learning and adapted over time in response to changing circumstances, enabling the project to manage risks and harness new opportunities. For example, Camili switched from a simultaneous focus on four key camel milk trading routes into Garissa town to concentrate on one at a time. This was informed by the nomadic nature of the herders which made it hard to maintain prolonged contact and training with a particular group of herders, owners or primary traders. The focus on a single route enabled better engagement and understanding of dynamics of camel herding routes.

entrance of buyer-transporters into the sector whose more entrepreneurial instincts are challenging conventional practices, diversifying products and sales outlets, and introducing competitiveness. Camili welcomed this as a positive opportunity for driving up industry standards, while supporting primary traders to adjust to these sectoral changes.

Following the interim review, Camili placed a greater emphasis on the nutritional value of camel milk in childhood development and family well-being through higher level promotion campaigns that engaged directly with schools and local health departments.

Demonstrating the benefits of the camel milk sector helped to break negative cultural beliefs among community members such as “selling camel milk is a curse” or “a camel cannot be milked at watering points”.

An unexpected development was the





ABSHIROW'S STORY

A mother of two, Abshirow set up her camel milk business to provide for her family.

She ran an open air shop in Garissa town and was able to sell 60 litres of fresh milk, allowing her to earn some income. However, she would often lose much of her produce because of contamination, and exposure to heat and dirt.

Thanks to the training and support from the project, Abshirow improved her knowledge of product storage and hygiene practices. She began to use a fridge to stop the spoiling of her produce. This allowed her to earn more money and gain a greater clientele thanks to having a higher quality product to sell.

The impacts have been life-changing. From her increased daily profit she can now afford rent, school fees for her children, food, decent clothing and good health care. She aspires to start another milk shop within Garissa town and plans to buy another fridge to reach larger markets.



WHAT NEXT? CONSOLIDATING SUCCESS

The positive effects of Camili are expected to ripple outwards: with women playing a pivotal role in the development of the sector, further growth of the buyer-transporter segment, greater public confidence in the quality of milk and a corresponding increase in milk demand.

Therefore, there is potential for more people to reap benefits from the camel milk sector. Market demand in Garissa is high, thanks to Camili's role in shifting community perceptions of camel milk as a result of public information campaigns, the emergence of hygienic milk shops and generally enhanced milk handling practices that have led to consistent improvements in milk quality.

Based on our learning and experience, we believe that this momentum can and should be sustained and there is a strong case for expanding the reach of the project. We recommend a longer-term engagement with the camel milk sector in Garissa for a further three years to ensure that the gains made to date can be consolidated and scaled up.

Specifically, we recommend additional investment to:

- ◆ Expand to the Tana River catchment area as the main supplier of high volumes of camel milk into Garissa town and improve camel milk production and consumption at household and market level.
- ◆ Enable SITE to continue to provide interim leadership to the camel milk value chain by creating platforms for business interaction between value chain actors and external stakeholders, as well as forums for discussion with relevant county and national government departments to stimulate growth and coordination in the sector.
- ◆ Support existing financing mechanisms such as Merry-Go-Round (MGR) which can be made more structured with clear goals and monitoring indicators, and develop links to other market-based financial services, especially for milk shop owners and women traders, based on their capacity to absorb credit.
- ◆ Facilitate further linkages to business services (e.g. veterinary).
- ◆ Embrace new technologies that could further improve the camel milk value chain, including those that are not readily available in Garissa e.g. building new relationships between milk traders and manufacturers of smokeless stoves, processing equipment and milk packaging materials.

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