

UNCTAD Expert Meeting on Systems and National Experiences for
Protecting Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices

Geneva
30 October – 1 November 2000

**The Ritualization of Development
Principles and Experiences of Promoting Development
Amongst the indigenous Loita Maasai Pastoralists of Kenya**

Prepared by

Mark K. Ole Karbolo

**Ilkerin Loita Integral Development Centre
Kenya**

Disclaimer: This document is being distributed in the form in which it was received.
The views are solely those of the author.

THE RITUALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Principles and Experiences of Promoting Development Amongst the indigenous Loita Maasai
Pastoralists of Kenya

by

Mark K. Ole Karbolo
Leader

Ilkerin Loita Integral Development Centre

P.O. Box 128, Narok, Kenya
Tel: +254 305 222280
Fax: +254 305 2283
Email: ilkerin@africaonline.co.ke

A paper presented at the UNCTAD Expert Meeting on Systems and National Experiences for Protecting Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices held in Geneva, Switzerland as from 30 October to 1 November, 2000

1.0. INTRODUCTION

I wish to thank the organisers of this meeting first of all for inviting me to participate and secondly for asking me to share the experiences of our indigenous organisation in promoting development amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists of Kenya.

I Would also like to thank the Rockefeller Foundation for facilitating my participation in this meeting

I wish to state from the onset that I find this Experts' meeting a very unique opportunity for a wide ranging sharing and deliberating on ideas, principles, experiences and policies regarding the efforts and initiatives to recognize, protect and promote the use and application of Indigenous knowledge for this next millennium. I am very hopeful and I do look forward to some very positive outcomes from the workshop.

In my brief presentation I will share the experiences of our indigenous organisation in promoting the desired changes of my Loita Maasai community for the last 24 years. I will start by briefly reviewing the status of development amongst the indigenous peoples of the Africa region. This will be followed by a short review of the state of development amongst the Maasai pastoralists of East Africa. A highlight of the work of the Ilkerin Loita Integral Development Project focusing on its philosophy, principles, activities and approach will follow. The lessons learnt from this will be briefly discussed and conclusions for this workshop will be drawn.

2.0. THE STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT IN INDIGENOUS AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

Today, the African pastoralist, hunter, gatherer and pygmy are easily categorised as the indigenous people of the region. But where does this leave the African farmer, minority and all the other ethnic groups? It is not the intention of this presentation to go into the academic definition regarding the concept of indigenous people. It will suffice to say that the majority of people in the African continent and particularly those in the sub Sahara region are, in more than one way, indigenous to the area. Even though most of them have undergone very significant socio-cultural changes in the last one hundred years or so they have nevertheless retained some unique and indigenous characteristics. For example, most of them have not only continued to occupy most of their ancestral land, maintained and to practice their culture but they have also led a rather unique lifestyle and do pursue a given and proven source of livelihood despite numerous odds.

For the purpose of this paper, I will use the case of the African pastoralist in general and that of the Maasai pastoralists in particular to highlight the status of indigenous development in our region. For all practical reasons the African pastoralist has maintained a more or less semi nomadic existence. His

culture is largely intact. He still has a proven source of livelihood and access to his ancestral land. Today, the pastoralists are a poor, marginalized and minority group where ever they are found in Africa. They are faced with myriad's of problems including poverty, loss of land, cultural disintegration, economic exploitation, political oppression and are still victims of western piecemeal development rhetoric and also experimentation.

The status of indigenous development in Africa is today generally characterised by failed development and misguided initiatives. Very often the indigenous peoples capability and ways of doing things are generally ignored. Most of the projects promoted as well as many other development interventions are largely of no consequence to the local peoples' proven source of livelihood. Most are capital intensive which in the end are unsustainable. The programmes are often poorly designed with a time frame that is totally unrealistic. The local people are often treated as the participants rather than the main actors in the whole process of doing the development that is theirs. In many cases the so called development interventions tend to weaken or altogether replace the accumulated indigenous experience of doing things.

3.0. TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT

If I were to ask the question: what is development? There will be as many answers as many of us in this room. I will also say, most likely, your answer will reflect your general world view. This is true because there is hardly any development that is value free. It is very often difficult to exactly define what development is all about. What we do know is, all of us are doing something towards development. In my country's popular lingo development is said to be nation building.

In the context in which I work and live, we have come to view development as the desired change. A change or changes that seek to improve and enhance the livelihood and chances of survival of our people while at the same time enabling them remain in harmony with their environment while maintaining their rich traditions. Often these changes have to do with the desired cultural, political and socio-economic realities which are whole and integral and which take into consideration their world view and value systems. In this way then what is trotted as development may begin to have a face that is recognisable by them.

4.0. WHAT IS CULTURE?

But in our context, what is culture? Without going too academic about it, I shall simply define culture as the accumulated and tested experience as well as the established ways of doing things in a given community. There is no culture that is static, rather culture is always dynamic and keeps changing and adapting in order to meet the coping needs of respective communities in the emerging and new realities. In this regard, therefore, culture is both the foundation and major point of reference in addressing development and all other new changes. Whatever development you choose to address or tackle in a given community culture is a very powerful force no matter how one looks at it, whether positively or negatively.

5.0. RITUALISING DEVELOPMENT

In my community any new reality has to be ritualised through a series of ceremonies and rites of passage before we can own it. Through such rituals the new reality is made to acquire our characteristics, values, traits, face and semblance, fragrance and culture. The ritualization process is meant to fully indigenize and inculcate the new reality into a familiar and acceptable form which can be adapted and sustained by the community.

Similarly, development and other desired changes should and must be ritualized in such a way that they are owned by and become sustainable in a given community. In this way the culture of a given community comes to enrich, inform and direct the contents and direction of a given development intervention. In our case as we shall see later this approach has had enormous impact in efforts to promote development amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists. The point here is that for any meaningful development intervention to take root and make sense it has to be ritualized and indigenize in accordance with our cultures.

6.0. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Ilkerin Loita Integral Development Project is a small, local and indigenous grassroots based non-governmental organisational structure owned, run and managed by the Loita Maasai pastoralists to initiate, promote and tackle their development and other forms of desired change.

The project began with a conversation in 1968 between the Loita pastoralists and the Catholic Diocese of Ngong. This conversation in form of dialogue, news eating and friendship making went on for nearly four years and sought to clearly understand, articulate and at the same establish the felt and strategic needs of the Loita Pastoralists, the nature of the project and how best to match the two.

By 1972, an understanding was reached to set up the project and to seek funds and resources from the local pastoralists, the Diocese of Ngong, the local District Development Committee and donor agencies in order to operationalize the project. The Loita pastoralists set aside a 3,100 acre piece of land and cut 19 km road to project site. They also donated 60 heifers to help set up the livestock improvement and upgrading programme. They offered free labour and a small fund to meet any extra/non-budgeted project expenses.

The Local District Development Committee approved the project and various government line ministries seconded a total of five technical staff to the project. The catholic Diocese of Ngong became the project's legal holders and availed some of its staff who provided initial leadership to the project. A project committee made up of local elders was set up to provide local input into decision making affecting the project. Cebemo, a Dutch co-financing NGO provided the initial basic and necessary financial resources. After 10 years the project was formally handed over to the local people who have since assumed full and complete responsibility over its running and management.

6.1. Board of Elders

The Project is run and managed by a 20 member Board of Elders representing all major stakeholders, cultural institutions and other traditional systems and fora of decision making. The day to day running of the project is entrusted to two project leaders appointed by and responsible to the Board of Elders. They are assisted by a staff of 60, all of who are indigenous possessing a wide range of skills and know how.

6.2. Project Site

The project is situated in the 5 Loita locations of Osupuko division of Narok district in the Rift Valley province of the Republic of Kenya. The project lies some 300 kms south west of Nairobi.

6.3. Target Group

The project's main target group are the Loita Maasai pastoralists who are also one of the smallest sections of the Maasai tribe. Currently they number about 20,000 and occupy 5 administrative locations. They are still mainly pastoralists in their occupation and tend to follow a more or less semi nomadic mode of existence. Adherence to cultural norms, practices and traditions is still very strong. All land is still owned and used communally under customary practices. Also the Purko, Loodokilani and Laitayiok Maasai sections as found in the neighbouring locations and who number over 80,000 are the indirect project target group.

6.4. Vision

It is the project's vision that the Loita Maasai pastoralists will become more aware, organised, motivated and able to handle and tackle the root cause of their felt and strategic needs and at the same time also capable of managing and directing their own development and other forms of desired changes using their culture as one point of reference. The project and its target group revisit their corporate vision every 3-5 years during the process of evaluating their achievements and other development efforts. The following is the present corporate vision for both the project and its target group which was worked out in February 1996:

We envisage a loita maasai community whose unity, strength, identity and dignity shall be sustained by its strong cultural heritage, bonds and norms and whose people shall be aware, organised and able to handle and tackle their felt and strategic needs and also able to manage, steer and direct the course of their political, social and economic development. Its our vision that with continued community training, involvement and organisation the people of loita shall realise their full potential and shall ensure the equitable distribution of its resources and other development opportunities through their cultural institutions and, where individually and collectively each community member shall strive to improve and uplift their life situation with regard to themselves, their culture, their land and livestock and in building a just, fair and god fearing society.

6.5. Mission

The mission of the project has always been to train, prepare and enable the Loita Maasai pastoralists acquire the skills, capacities and capabilities they require to be able to carry out their own development and to improve their life situation in relation to themselves, their culture, their land and their livestock. In this regard and as we shall see below the project's main task is to lay the necessary groundwork and foundation in form of awareness creation, organisational capability, skills, knowledge and insights and essential support services upon and around which the Loita Maasai pastoralists people can start to indicate, usher in, manage and sustain their own development using culture as their major force and point of reference.

6.6. Philosophy

The project's basic philosophy is based on the simple belief that with the right and appropriate training, motivation, skills and other organisational abilities communities are capable of mobilising available and potential resources in their never ending endeavours to reform, transform and improve their lives and to determine their future. To do this they must use culture as their foundation and major point of reference. Culture is a powerful force for propelling development.

6.7. Strategy

Community training, empowerment and continued cultural awareness and practice have been the project's overall strategy. This consists of involving, informing and reforming the target group through awareness raising, constant dialogue and mutual trust building which lead to capacity creation for the discovery and mobilisation of potential and available resources in the collective realisation of community life tasks.

6.8. Cultural Values

The following core cultural values have influenced and shaped the design, value and purpose of all our development interventions:

a) Community spirit

Our Loita Maasai community believe in maintaining and sustaining a communal way of life where community members live in harmony, are mutually supportive and inter-dependent in the realisation of general life tasks. This is exemplified by the African dictum "I am, because we are; since we, are therefore I am"

b) Cultural dignity and identity

Pastoralists of Loita seek to maintain and enhance our own human and cultural dignity and identity as a particular Loita Maasai community. Their lifestyles and accumulated experience are not inferior to others.

c) Equality for all

The Loita pastoralists believe that all their community members/human beings are borne brothers and are equal regardless of their status, age, clan, gender, colour, race, education and that all should have equal access to the available resources and opportunities in their community and society.

d) Unity is strength

In pastoral communities such as the Loita Maasai, people are mutually inter-dependent and need each other all the time. Maintenance and enhancement of cultural oneness, solidarity and unity amongst the various age-groups, clans systems, sections and other cultural institutions is essential and indispensable in their collective efforts to meet life tasks.

e) Justice for all

Every member of the Loita community has a right of access to services and facilities within the community and those being offered by the project. The project seeks to serve all irrespective of their status, gender, age group, religious faith or colour.

f) Empowerment

The community believes that individuals and groups have an inherent and Enkai given power and potential to reform and transform their lives' situation. The project shall seek to better equip the community with the necessary capacity to take charge and manage their own affairs.

g) Participation

The project's existence is justified by the need for its services in the Loita community. Every member of this community has the onus and right to contribute, benefit and fully partake and participate in all project matters and activities affecting their lives.

h) Sustainability

Individuals, groups and communities have a responsibility towards a sound management and wise utilisation of available resources in order to ensure their regeneration and perpetuity for the sake of posterity.

6.9. Long term objectives

Right from the beginning and as mentioned above the Ilkerin Loita Integral Development project sought to lay the necessary ground work and foundation around and upon which the Loita Maasai pastoralists could begin to usher in their desired changes and to do their own development in a bid to improve their life situation. This has remained the project's long term objective/goal. The project 's constitution spells out the project's broad and long term objectives as follows:

- 1) To train, prepare and empower the Loita Maasai pastoralists to do their own development.
- 2) To promote the continued cultural awareness, practice and adaptation amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists.
- 3) To motivate, organize and mobilize all the sections of the Loita Maasai pastoralists to play their rightful and proper role in the development of their respective communities.
- 4) To initiate, strengthen, promote and implement own identified and desired changes and other activities aimed at the integral development of the Loita Maasai pastoralists.
- 5) To act as one an advocacy centre/organization for the rights and other cherished values of the Loita Maasai pastoralists.
- 6) To act as one recognized link of the Loita Maasai pastoralists to the outside world.

6.10. Short and Medium Term Objectives

The short and medium term objectives are clustered mainly around three major areas of intervention as follows:

People

- a) To conscientise and raise awareness of own felt and strategic needs amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists through short workshops, courses, seminars, excursions, displays and fielddays.
- b) To train and equip the Loita Maasai pastoralists in appropriate self employment skills in livestock husbandry, agriculture, carpentry, masonry any other relevant fields.
- c) To promote and raise gender awareness and the general welfare of the women within Loita.
- d) To promote the integration of the Loita youth in development activities within Loita.
- e) To train and equip all local Loita Maasai-leaders with the necessary leadership skills for effective and efficient functioning in their present day society.
- f) To promote the continued cultural awareness, practice and adaptation amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists.
- g) To promote quality formal education in all its aspects for all the children of the Loita Maasai pastoralists.

h) To promote curative and preventive medical and health care activities in various suitable forms in Loita.

I) To endeavor to help in the construction of schools, dispensaries, dams, wells, and other appropriate forms of essential infrastructure within the means of the project.

j) To promote the supply of water for human and livestock consumption.

k) To promote and enable the formation and proper functioning of community groups such as the subcentre development committees, women groups, youth groups, dairy cooperatives, work groups and any other within the project's area of operation.

l) To promote and work for a just and God fearing society in Loita.

Livestock

a) To directly teach and demonstrate proper management of livestock in all its aspects in Loita.

b) To demonstrate and promote the improvement and upgrading of livestock in Loita.

c) To promote and enable a community based preventive and curative veterinary care program in Loita.

d) To demonstrate and promote the proper handling and primary processing of livestock products (milk, hides and skins) in Loita.

e) To promote livestock and livestock's products marketing in Loita.

f) To teach and promote a sound, viable and sustainable pastoral economy amongst the Loita Maasai.

Land

a) To directly teach and demonstrate the proper utilization of land in all its aspects in Loita.

b) To create awareness of critical land issues such as land rights, landownership, land tenure, land loss, land alienation, land sales in close collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies.

c) To promote and enable the continued conservation, protection, preservation and proper management of the environment as a whole and to promote and enable practical measures to protect critical natural resources, such as indigenous forests, water catchments, springs, wells and cultural sites in Loita.

d) To promote a relevant and appropriate land tenure and legal land ownership system for all the Loita Maasai pastoralists in close collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies.

e) To campaign for or against and enable the Loita Maasai pastoralists fight all forms of land loss and alienation with regards to their ancestral and customary land using acceptable ways and means within the Kenyan law.

f) To teach and demonstrate a suitable form of subsistence agriculture as a way of promoting and improving food security amongst the Loita Maasai pastoralists.

Networking

a) To Liaise and cooperate with other relevant, appropriate and development oriented organizations, groups, NGO's, government departments within the district and the diocese area.

b) To exchange and share ideas and experiences with other Maasai sections as well as other pastoral groups and organizations with similar interests or in situations.

7.0. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

In a bid to realise it's goals and objectives the Ilkerin Project runs a number of activities and programmes which seek to offer essential services to the community and which at the same time serve as community training and demonstrational facilities. The following are the various and current programmes and activities of the project:

a) Pastoralists Community Training

The project runs a small pastoralists Training Centre with the necessary facilities including classrooms, dormitory, kitchen, dinning hall and meeting halls that can cater for upto 40 pastoralists a day. Informal and short training sessions in relevant fields are offered to the local farmers and pastoralists. The centre also hosts other short seminars and workshops on request.

b) Livestock Improvement and Upgrading

The project operates a 3,000 acre ranch with 350 sahiwal cattle, 300 dorper sheep and 350 galla goats. In its operation the ranch serves as a breeding and multiplication centre for improved breeds of sahiwal, galla and dorper in the district and region. Many farmers from Narok and Kajiado have greatly benefited from this activity. The activity also serves as a demonstration of all aspects of Traditional and Modern animal husbandry practices and techniques for the local farmers. Livestock marketing is also promoted and a local weekly livestock market is now in operation at Olmesuti market.

c) Veterinary care

The project runs a community based Veterinary care programme covering the 5 locations. This programme consists of a mobile vet, six livestock medication shops, cattle dips, group hand spray pumps and farmers training sessions. The programme works closely with the existing government veterinary services and traditional systems and helps to carry out local vaccinations, inoculations and immunisation campaigns. Livestock diseases are now under control throughout the area of operation.

d) *Community Health care*

This consists of both curative and preventive health care in Loita. The project has helped to build 4 small dispensaries in the five locations. It also runs an Ambulance service and mobile clinic in the remote areas of the two locations. The programme works closely and hand in hand with the traditional healers and herbalists.

e) *Promotion of quality formal education*

In this programme the project has build 5 primary school in the five Loita locations over the years. Currently it is helping the community to construct five nursery schools and adult literacy centres. The programme also motivates parents to send children to school and to remain in school. In order to help improve the quality of formal education in Loita the project helps the local parents obtain available essential learning materials such as text books, exercise books and other basic learning materials. The project too, helps parents to employ local school leavers as UTs to try and off set a rather chronic shortage of teachers in their local schools. The project is also currently running a boarding facility for std 7 and 8 pupils in the local school aimed at extra tuition and coaching for the examination classes. The project also operates a Bursary fund which currently benefits over 250 college, secondary and primary boarding pupils from Loita. There are plans to sponsor 10 Loita boys and girls to attend local universities in the next one year and to start a local secondary school. During holidays and after school elders take turns to offer cultural education to the school children.

f) *Subsistence Agriculture and Local Food Security*

The project has worked closely with over 90 community work groups in the five locations to embark on subsistence agriculture as one way of boosting local food security and at the same time supplementing their pastoral economy. Recently farm implements worth over Kshs 2 million were donated and distributed freely to these community groups. There implements consisted of ox-plough, hoes, shovels, spray pumps, veterinary syringes etc. As a result the acreage under subsistence crops in Loita has gone up considerably and if the weather condition allows, the Loita Community are now poised to meet over 60% of their grain requirement instead of purchasing from shops. In this programme the pastoralists are also taught proper land use and management in all aspects.

g) *Annual Field day*

Each year the project organised an annual open day at its main centre which also coincides with a small locational show. During this occasion over 2000 pastoralists come to show what they have learnt from the Ilkerin training programme and to compete with each other. The occasion is also graced by many cultural and traditional activities and sports. Prizes are given to the best participants as a way of motivating them further. Other neighbouring Maasai locations have began to join and to participate in this annual event.

h) *Women Programme Activities*

The project has helped to start and to run 7 women groups, all in Loita location. These women groups are engaged in various activities including beaded handicrafts, milk processing, hides and skins marketing and subsistence agriculture. Most of the members of these groups enrol in adult literacy classes. Of

late, the project has been able to employ a full time women programme officer and as a result the women groups are much more efficient and active now.

l) Environmental Management

The Loita pastoralists have formed a trust to continue managing their environment using their cultural practices and system. This is now run separately from the project.

j) Small scale rural based industries

a) Tannery

A programme of helping the local people to run a number of small scale rural industries which are based on locally available materials and labour is undertaken. The project runs a small scale rural tannery where it buys hides and skins from the local people and then process the same into leather. Part of the processed leather is sold and part is used by the local women groups to bead on their traditional jewellery. In the same activity a group of 50 Maasai women are engaged, on a daily basis, to make traditional Maasai beaded artefacts and savourniers which are then sold locally bringing some needed income to these women and their families.

b) Milk Processing

The local pastoralists run 5 small scale rural dairy co-operatives which operate for 6 months a year these dairies process milk into cream, butter and ghee which can be stored for a longer period and then sold locally especially during the season when there is less milk. Of late, the same pastoralists have started to organise themselves so as to engage in organised livestock marketing on a co-operative basis.

c) Honey refining

Ilkerin also helps the pastoralists to run and operate a small beekeeping and honey refining industry where wild honey is collected, refined, bottled and marketed locally in Narok. Modern and traditional beekeeping methods have been introduced and taught to farmers during workshops and seminars.

d) Vocational skills

In the project's maintenance workshop efforts are made to train 4 primary school leavers, each year, to acquire skills in carpentry, masonry, motor mechanics and leather craft. Those who acquire these skills are expected to move into their local community to render the necessary services and earn a living.

8.0. ACHIEVEMENTS:

Since its inception the project and the Loita Maasai pastoralists have made a number of achievements in relation to their set goals. These achievements may be difficult to measure quantitatively and technically but for us they are quite evident. Some of these can be summarised as follows:

Evolution of an indigenous organisation:

Over the years the project has managed to make a successful transition from a small missionary led activity to a fully fledged indigenous people organisation owned, run and managed by the Loita Maasai pastoralists. The project came to serve a felt and a strategic need for the community: survival as a distinct group.

Community organisation:

Over the years the project has helped evolve, strengthen, revive, revitalised and sustained a number of important cultural Institutions into functional Community organisational structures. Such institutions have to do with the section, clan, agegroup systems and other communal organisational structures. This has enabled the community to maintain its organisational capability and to tackle anomalies in a more or less collective and organised manner.

Land Retention:

Compared to their other Maasai counter part in other parts of Kenya the indigenous Loita Maasai pastoralists have retained their ancestral land intact and have religiously conserved and preserved their environment as a whole mainly due to their cultural solidarity and awareness.

Livestock Improvement:

Through its livestock programme the project was able to not only support but improve the main and proven source of livelihood for the local pastoralists. The local livestock now have a higher productivity and hardiness. The economic base and well-being of the local people has also been strengthened and supported.

Cultural identity and dignity:

The Loita Maasai pastoralist have retained their cultural identity and dignity as a Maasai section. Adherence to cultural norms, values and practice is very high. This has given them a continued sense of belonging and identity.

Lobbying and advocacy:

Over the years the project has successfully acted as a lobby and advocacy organisation for the rights and other cherished values of the Loita Maasai. The Loita forest and recent political issues are cases in point.

Understanding participation:

In the course of promoting development the Loita Maasai have come to view themselves as the main actor in the whole process and all others as the participants.

9.0. SETBACKS/PROBLEMS

A number of problems have been encountered in the course of promoting development amongst the indigenous Maasai Loita pastoralists. Some of the most important ones are as follows:

Conventional development philosophies and theories:

Most of the current and prevailing development philosophies and theories are often heavily influenced by western and capitalist thinking and notions of civilisation. Somehow these tended to militate against our view, definition and approach to development. This conflict slowed our efforts made it very difficult for us to concentrate on an indigenous development approach.

Main stream government development policies are also major constraints in as far as they are influenced and driven by multilateral donors like World Bank and I.M.F. etc. These policies which are largely top down as opposed to our bottom up approach are always shifting to reflect. Also instead of letting us develop fully autonomous structures and approaches we are often forced to integrate into the main stream of national policies, practices and approaches.

The influences of the forces of westernisation:

The influences of Christianity and other aspects of westernisation have posed major a setback of our efforts to evolved purely indigenous approaches. As our culture is often condemned as “heathen and evil” which must be made to go under. Schools and churches are unanimous in teaching western values. Forces of change and modernisation have been a major constraint and many other tribes have largely succumbed to them leaving the pastoralists slightly behind to wage a somewhat lone battle.

Recurring drought/Famine:

Largely due to the weakening of the local peoples’ drought coping mechanism the community has also become more prone to drought and famines. This situation has often led to serious setbacks in our work as communities are distracted from the development efforts.

10.0. LESSONS:

Is the Loita experience, mutatis mutandis, replicable elsewhere amongst the indigenous communities? What lessons can be drawn from this experience. Could the following be some lessons and learnings that can be drawn?

Positive power of culture is a sine qua in developing an indigenous development paradigm:

The culture or the accumulated experience of the indigenous people are positive and powerful forces in promoting desired changes. In our endeavours to promote development amongst our indigenous communities can we find out which of their cultural aspects can be harnessed as positive factors and force for development. Which one should be minimised?

Strengthening a peoples’ proven source of livelihood is an important part of indigenous development paradigm

Projects and programmes should focus, support and enhance the local people proven source of livelihood instead of replacing it or undermining or giving it lukewarm support. What matters to the community is the security of livelihood.

Use of cultural institutions and other organisational structures:

If the system in use is not broken do not fix it. It is important to avoid creating unnecessary parallel structures in the communities we work in. In our case giving prominence and fully utilising such cultural institutions as the Maasai territorial section, clan system and age group systems have made it easier to organise the communities and to get them act much more naturally. It is important to support and work through organisational structures that are well understood and controlled by the local people.

11.0. CONCLUSION:

The Loita experience is a unique example of world wide efforts to evolved an indigenous approach to development. The project's purpose, values, philosophy and strategy are heavily influenced by the cultural milieu of the local people. The project has also been operating for a long time and serving real needs with the ultimate goal of making the indigenous Loita Maasai pastoralists take charge of managing their own development using their accumulated experience of culture.

There is a need for an indigenous development paradigm which must be based on indigenous values, realities and guided by our world view, visions and our desired changes. There is also a need to evolve a relevant and working definition of what development is all about. Traditional/indigenous system must drive our vehicle of development.