



# Africa – a continent of contrasts

## Lesson 7: Africa – looking to the future

### Kenya – The Impact of Mobile Phone Technology

"Kenya's mobile phone industry is booming. Mr Kibaki said that more than 13 million Kenyans owned mobile phones, compared with less than 20,000 in October 2000. "At this pace of growth, we expect to realise 20 million subscribers in the next three years," he said." (Quote from President Kibaki at the start of the Safaricom shares sale in March 2008.)

"The mobile has made us equal," Molu Kulu, a Masai village elder said. "It is not like the landline, which was only available in some homes, or the phone booth, which was available in trading centers. Now everyone can communicate."

#### Task:

You are a Masai cattle herder with a herd of 12 Zebu cattle. You wish to sell four of your cattle. There are three nearby towns with cattle markets.

Town A is 8 miles away

Town B is 12 miles away

Town C is 16 miles away

To get to each town, you would need to walk. Your walking speed is 4 mph.

If you are taking cattle to market, your walking speed is 2 mph.



#### Group 1

You have no mobile phone and so you have two options:

- walk to each of the towns to see what the price of cattle is in each one and then take your cattle to the market with the highest price
- choose a town at random and then take your cattle to that market.

Q. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

Q. How long would it take you to sell your cattle?



#### Group 2

You own a mobile phone and you can get the latest prices for cattle at each of the three markets via SMS.

Q. What are the advantages of knowing the daily prices at all of the markets?

Q. Why might you choose not to take your cattle to Town C even if the prices are highest there?



Two other problems for the Masai are cattle rustlers and cattle getting sick. Cattle rustlers move from village to village stealing cattle. Cattle, like all animals get sick and need medicine or sometimes treatment for wounds if they get attacked by lions or leopards. How can owning a phone help you deal with these two problems?

Compare the experiences of the two groups and explain how owning a mobile phone has made life much easier for the Masai cattle herders.

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