BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES:
CASE STUDIES FROM PFR KENYA

PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

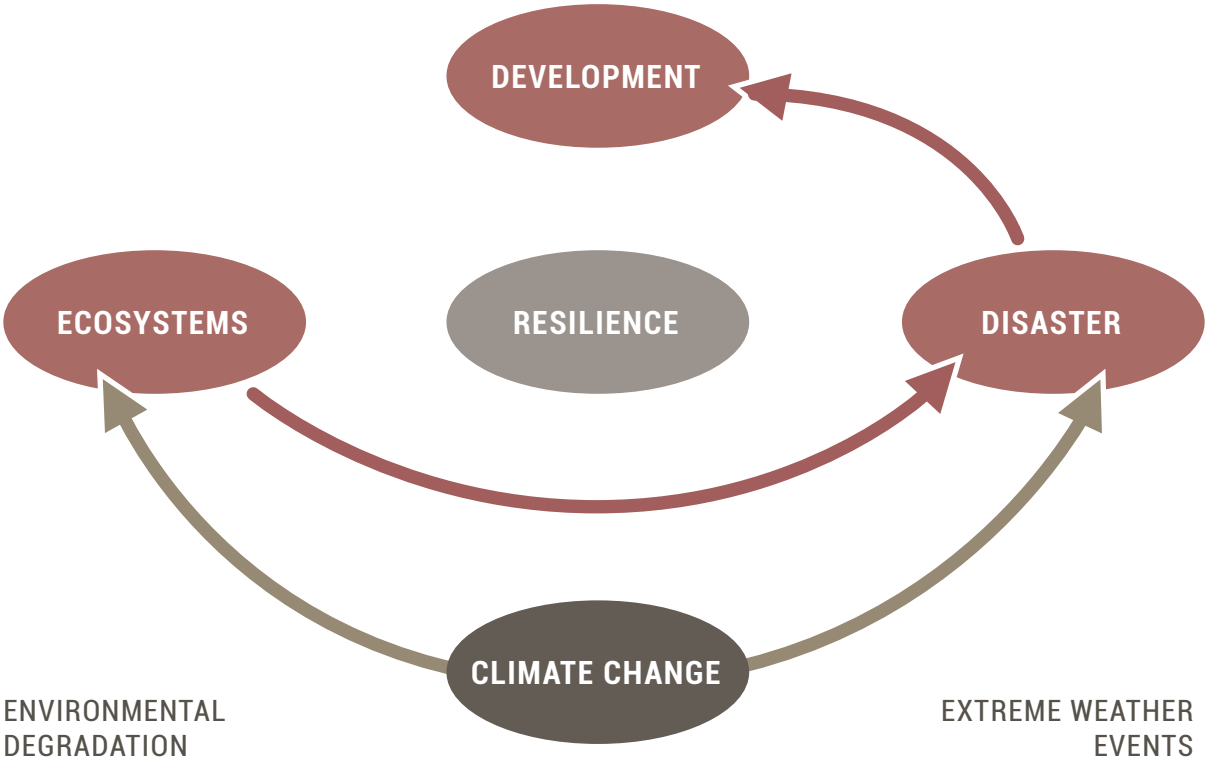
WORKING TOWARDS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

EXPERIENCE FROM PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE IN KENYA AND UGANDA

I. INTRODUCTION: A CASE FOR CHANGE

Disaster risk is rapidly increasing. The reasons for this are manifold. Extreme events such as storms, floods and droughts become more extreme and more frequent in some places as a result of climate change. Rapid environmental degradation is reducing the capacity of nature to regulate these hazards and to provide food, clean water supplies and other products. Communities struggle to find a way to prepare for and respond to the extremes they face. Meanwhile, the world around them is changing rapidly. This represents a major challenge. At a local level poor communities in both rural and urban areas face setbacks in their livelihoods each time a disaster strikes. As a result they

FOCUS OF THE PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE



are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. At a broader scale governments are confronted with the mounting costs of ill-informed development decisions that render the natural environment and society increasingly vulnerable.

Risk reduction practitioners typically adopt sectoral approaches to resolve these issues. Some experts focus their risk reduction work exclusively on communities. Others focus on water management within river basins or on the management of ecosystems. These fragmented approaches no longer suffice on their own. Instead, efforts to enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable communities should encompass multiple disciplines and span both temporal and spatial scales. In addition, resilience building requires much more than the sum of isolated and disconnected interventions by different actors. That is exactly the rationale behind the coming together of humanitarian, development, climate and conservation practitioners to form the consortium dubbed "Partners for Resilience" to implement "a climate proof disaster risk reduction" program in nine disaster prone countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These organizations are Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), Cordaid, Wetlands International (WI), Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC) and CARE Netherlands. The target countries are Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mali, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. The program is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and runs from 2011 to 2015.

The overall goal of the program is to reduce the impact of natural hazards on the livelihoods of 750.000 – 1.000.000 members of vulnerable communities.

This goal is pursued through three outcome objectives:

1. To increase the resilience of communities to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;

2. To increase the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to apply disaster

risk reduction (DRR), climate-change adaptation (CCA) and ecosystem management and restoration (EMR) measures and engage in policy dialogue;

3. To make the institutional environment from international to grass-root level more conducive to integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem-based approaches.

The strategy to realize these outcome objectives and, ultimately, a contribution for the overall goal is guided by the effective integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation (CCA) and eco-system management and restoration (EMR) as outlined and specified in the *PfR resilience vision* document, the *Minimum Standards for local climate-smart DRR* and the *Eco-System Criteria*.

This booklet documents the practical experience of Partners for Resilience in Kenya and Uganda in applying the integrated approach and the PfR resilience vision guidance to realize the outcomes sought through the program. It describes the challenges overcome in the course of implementation, and lessons learnt. These insights contribute to existing knowledge in unpacking and applying this lofty concept called *resilience* and will help to improve future program design.

PFR PROGRAM IN KENYA AND UGANDA

PfR Kenya: -The PfR alliance members in Kenya are NLRC, Cordaid, WI and RCRCCC which have been engaging with Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Merti Integrated Development Program (MID-P), and IMPACT to implement the program from 2011 to June 2015. The target area for the program is Isiolo and part of Laikipia Counties following the Ewaso Nyiro River Basin benefiting 40,000 vulnerable community members. The area is affected by frequent drought, flood, conflict, eco-system degradation, human and animal diseases.

PfR Uganda: - The PfR alliance members in Uganda are Cordaid, NLRC, CARE, WI and RCCC. The implementing partners are Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organisation (SOCADIDO), Transcultural Psychosocial Development Organisation (TPO), Caritas Uganda, Ecological Christian Organisation, Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD) and Caritas Moroto.

The target districts are: Amuria, Napak, Nakapiripirit, Apac, Katakwi and Otuka. The total number of beneficiaries PfR Uganda benefits at the end of year to be 75,000 people across 93 villages.

II. OUR VISION OF RESILIENCE

What do we mean by community resilience? A nearly endless list of descriptions and definitions exist. For practical reasons in this document we follow the UNISDR definition; "Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions". We do so without discounting other valid terminology. It is not our intent however to contribute to the academic discussion that has evolved around this topic. Instead, we try to show below how the partners have tried to unpack the concept and aid its translation into practice using identified success stories.

GUIDING APPROACH/ OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO UN-PACKAGE AND PUT RESILIENCE INTO PRACTICE

Asses disaster risk in a holistic manner

Communities, civil society organisations and government entities are aware of the multi-risk environment they face. Risks, vulnerabilities, capacities and root causes to risk are always assessed at both community and landscape level. This results into comprehensive insights into the social, economic and ecological aspects of risk. The way in which people impact and depend on nature and how they evolve along with a changing environment is fully understood. Knowledge about these socio-ecological interrelationships forms the basis of risk reduction planning.

Address the whole range of risk management options

Stakeholders are dedicated to take all measures that are required

to prevent disasters, reduce their impact or prepare to deal with the effects of a disaster. Following the steps defined in the risk reduction cycle they implement conventional humanitarian measures such as contingency planning, emergency stocking and preparedness, first response, forward recovery and rehabilitation. They also address underlying causes of vulnerability and disasters, through a well-integrated set of environmental management and development measures.

Consider environmental, social and economic dimensions of resilience

Both in Kenya and Uganda, all dimensions of resilience are considered. It is understood that degradation of the natural environment inflicts new hazards, exacerbates vulnerability to existing ones and weaken people`s coping and recovering capacities. This increase in disaster risk is a result of the decreased capacity of degraded ecosystems to stabilise hill slopes, regulate water flows and provide food and clean water supplies. With this in mind, the management and restoration of ecosystems, including the resources they provide forms a core part of risk reduction in the target areas. Risk reduction, climate change adaptation and Infrastructure development measures work with and alongside nature, rather than fighting it. These measures are implemented parallel to humanitarian and development measures that contribute to enhanced social and economic resilience. In this way, regular risk assessments were done considering existing, changing and emerging risks at the local level.

Work across scales

Risk reduction professionals understand that drivers to vulnerability express themselves at multiple spatial and temporal scales: from household or community to landscape level. They understand how the water cycle connects people along the upper reaches of a river with those who live further downstream. They appreciate the temporal dimension of risk: some key drivers to vulnerability and approaches towards increasing resilience take years to emerge.

This is acknowledged in programme design and taken care of during implementation through inclusion of short- and long-term risk reduction measures at local and regional scales.

Ensure adaptive planning and avoid mal-adaptation

Climate change introduces a major factor of uncertainty in risk reduction planning. For many climate-related hazards it remains unknown to what extent their frequency, intensity and predictability will change. Stakeholders adapt their risk reduction plans to this uncertainty. They design measures that accommodate anticipated changes, and that can be flexibly adjusted once change becomes visible. Institutions themselves become adaptive too.

The potential implications of risk reduction measures are always fully assessed. It is understood that short-term responses to current risks may increase vulnerability in the longer term. Likewise risk reduction experts are aware that interests between stakeholders may be conflicting; the construction of water harvesting structures in a highland area for example, may cause water scarcity downstream in the catchment. These trade-offs are well mapped and where possible resolved. Disaster risk reduction programs always include measures to address harmful 'external' developments that take place across sectors, even if they lay outside the direct sphere of influence of the stakeholders involved. These issues are easy said than done. There are many cases in PfR Kenya`s experience whereby risk reduction measures were unintentionally done at the expense of long term benefit. Partners were distributing drought resistant crops and vegetable seeds to later found out they were planted close to the river banks contributing for further degradation of the riverine eco-system. Later this was resolved through community discussion and provision of alternative water sources such as rain water harvesting.

Adopt a partnership approach with a strong civil society capacity building component

There is no organization who is best in everything, and resilience building requires multiple disciplines, including the participation of professionals from a range of sectors such as humanitarian, development, conservation and water resource managers and climate experts. Partnerships typically consist of local communities, government agencies and civil society organisations. This enables implementation of risk reduction measures in both the private (community or household level) and public (the wider landscape) domains. Private actors are fully engaged where relevant. Universities and knowledge institutes provide technical backup during vulnerability assessment and program implementation and contribute to monitoring and evaluation. That is why PfR Partners decided to join hands and pull their human, material, organizational resources and also closely work with local communities, government agencies, civil society organizations, Universities and research centres.

Promoting Community Self-Management

Communities are not just victims of shocks and stresses, they are survivors in otherwise difficult situations. The resilience of a community is to a great extent determined by the degree to which people understand and monitor their risks, have the necessary resources and are capable of organizing themselves and mobilizing appropriate and locally available resources. Community empowerment and creation of local ownership are essential for communities to be in the driving seat of the resilience building processes. They should also be able to establish and facilitate risk assessment, risk reduction plans and turning these plans into actions.

Support the creation of enabling policy and institutional environment

Government agencies are the main actors in deciding development directions for local communities. The decision taken by these agencies significantly determines how easy or difficult resilience building would be. In order for resilience building process to be effective, efficient and sustainable it should be embedded in the policies, strategies and plan of the government at different levels. This will set the institutional arrangement and resources allocation which is a fertile enabling environment for resilience building. Too often, well intended risk reduction measures are compromised by unsustainable development. Risk reduction professionals should engage these groups in their work by establish-

ing extensive dialogues on issues of concern. This also requires touching upon sensitive issues, such as dams (in the case of PfR Kenya), mining, logging and infrastructure development.

Align traditional and science-based knowledge systems

Despite the emerging risks associated with climate change, most communities are not new to the common hazards they are experiencing; they have developed some adaptation capacities on how to reduce its impact and deal with its negative consequences. The traditional knowledge plays an essential role in designing relevant and context-specific interventions to reduce disaster risk. But local knowledge rarely suffices to gain full insight into the local vulnerability context and also the nature and behavior of ever changing and emerging risks which the community have less experience with. Therefore scientific inputs are key to incorporate aspects that are not visible or lest understandable locally. In Uganda PfR collaborated with; Kyambogo University, National Agricultural Research Organisation, Uganda National Meteorology Authory, National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NASSARI) and Makerere University. Similarly in Kenya, PfR worked with University of Nairobi , Researcher (Groningen University, Kenya Research Institute, Interns from various Universities through RCCC, and national meteorological experts.

Stimulate learning

The partners who formed the "Partners for Resilience" alliance came together from completely different mandate/competence areas for the first time to work together and dared to test a new chemistry of an integrated approach (DRR, CCA, and EMR) to realize resilience in disaster prone areas. This necessitates developing a culture of openness to one another, compromises on positions, and focus on common interest, supporting each other and learning in the course of implementation. So, efforts were made by the partners to install a strong learning culture. This involves sharing of lessons learned and good practices within and between communities, CSOs, government agencies, knowledge institutes and external actors.

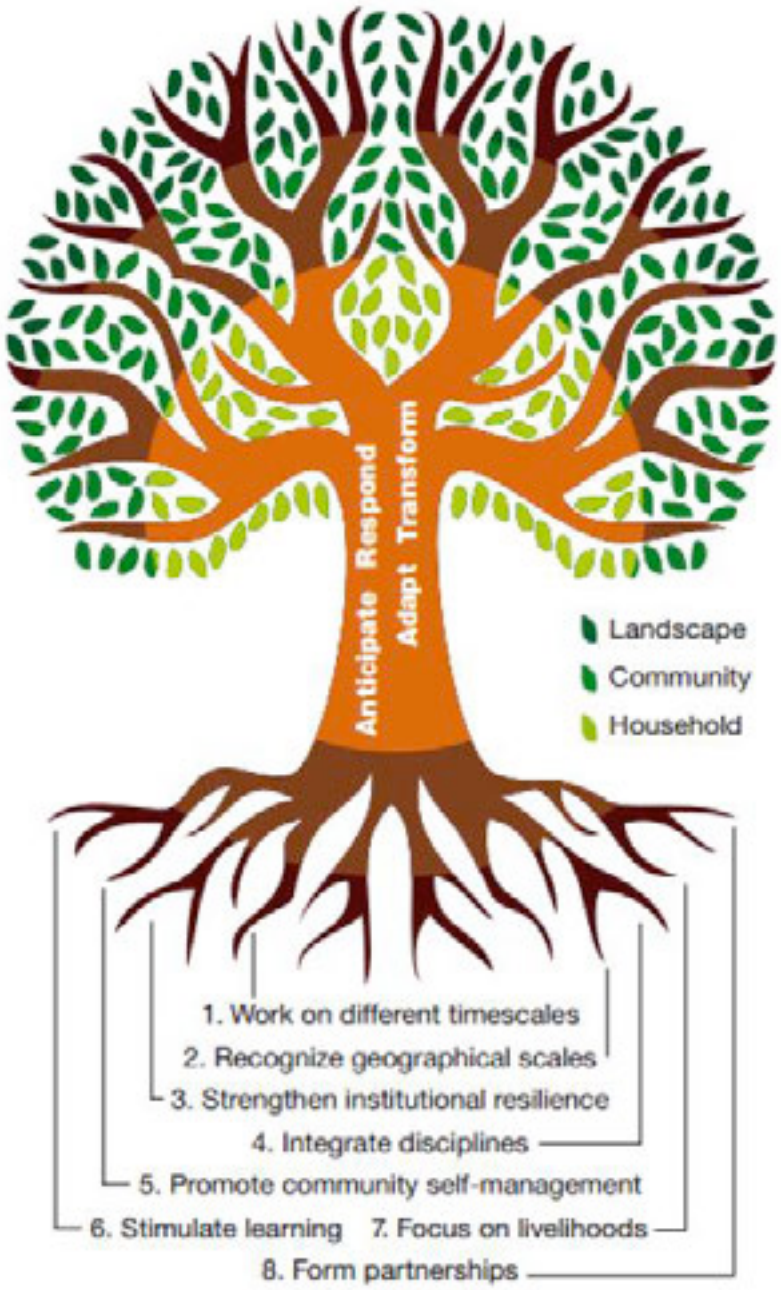
Focus on Livelihoods

Disasters not only take lives, they also have an impact on livelihoods. And through unsustainable practices that harm the protective capacity of the environment, livelihoods activities themselves may even contribute to slow-onset disasters. Therefore, all dimensions of resilience are considered through links with essential livelihoods capital in its human, social, physical, financial, natural and political dimensions-"the sustainable livelihoods framework". Diversification can strengthen resilience by enhancing livelihoods capital multiplying options. This promotes human well-being and through sharing of benefits, incorporates equity issues. The natural dimension is one of the key aspects, as environmental degradation reduces basic ecosystem functions and inflicts new hazards and exacerbates vulnerability to existing ones by weakening people`s ability to cope and recover. It also implies knowledge and capacity for these functions, and investing in community organizations and networks, infrastructures, financial savings and political competence.

III. BUILDING BLOCKS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

So what can be practically done to achieve resilience on the basis of the above guiding approaches and operational principles? How do existing approaches within the humanitarian, development, climate and environment sector come together and complement each other? The Partners for Resilience program undertakes its collaborative programming on the basis of four 'building blocks'. Three of these, anticipation, adaptation and transformation, are derived from current resilience thinking. Considering the mandate of some of the humanitarian partners and recognising our role in disaster response, we have added a fourth building block, namely response. These building blocks should not be seen as different sequential phases or a cycle. In reality they often take place at the same time.

Individual partners from different sectors may engage in activities under different building blocks. In practice however their strength and traditional mandate are usually confined to a subset of the four components. This underlines



the need for a partnership approach.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE CAPACITY TO:

1. Anticipate

This is the capacity to foresee the impending hazard and take appropriate and timely action to reduce harm or/and exploit opportunities. This capacity has two key aspects: early warning and early action and has four key components: risk knowledge, risk monitoring, risk communication and action. The other aspects of an effective early warning system is to have a clear and practical recommendation on ranges of early actions which the communities or individuals have to take when the early warning signals reach certain levels. It is important to note that early action is to respond to warnings, not disasters. These early actions have to primarily use local capacities, ensure people are aware, prepared and are ready to act, and that response plans are tested and updated. Contingency plans describe and trigger the early action that the target communities should put in place based on the

past and present experiences of disaster patterns and incorporating future scenarios of climate change that my induce more extreme and unprecedented hazard levels.

2. Response

Response is the provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduces health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. This is important because of the fact that a hazard doesn`t wait until the root causes of vulnerabilities and lack of capacities are addressed. In that case, a hazard could progress into a disaster. So, as part of risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures, there should always be "Plan B". This is a contingency plan (based on likely case scenarios, including anticipation of new extreme events) prepared as part of early action planning. When the hazard strikes, a trained community team should take action, and if the disaster exceeds the local response capacity, then a district or national level response team be dispatched to the community to assist in conducting rapid damage and needs assessment and support the community action teams.

3. Adapt to tackle changing and emerging risks

As indicated earlier, adaptation is the adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climate stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities These capacities enable the community/household/ individual to comfortably face the hazard whenever it occurs with little (in short term) or no effect (in the long term) and also exploit opportunities for people to thrive.

4. Transformation

Transformation refers to address underlying factors and root causes of risk in a sustainable way. Identification of these root factors and potential opportunities to address them is done during the participatory risk assessment. The transformation aspect mainly focuses on unfair policies, unjust power relation to access and control key resources, communities` perception, ideologies, harmful culture etc. Sometimes a disaster gives communities a chance to completely change the way they used to behave and act based on the experience and lessons drawn from it.

HOT SPRINGS RESTORATION BOOSTS PASTORALISTS' LIVELIHOODS IN ISIOLO KENYA

\\ AUTHORS: BORU GODANA \\ EDITOR: JOHN W. WAIMIRI

About 42,000 Kenyan pastoralists from Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale and Samburu have directly benefited from the ecosystem restoration of Kuro Bisan Owo hot springs in Merti, Isiolo. These hot springs have since time immemorial served as a primary source of fresh water for both the pastoralists and their livestock.

Hot springs are produced by the emergence of heated groundwater from the earth's core. In general, this hot spring's water quality analysis often indicates that it holds dissolved solids with a very high mineral content, containing everything from simple calcium to lithium and even radium.

The local communities concur with indigenous knowledge and

folklore that the Kuro hot springs have medicinal and therapeutic value as an intestinal de-wormer for livestock and pastoralists. For the pastoralists, the hot spring is a natural cure for skin-related conditions and enhances fertility, while for livestock, the hot spring minerals rejuvenate their health, and increase body mass and milk production.

"Kuro hot springs mean everything to pastoralists. It is our economic lifeline, a God-given blessing to our community and our livestock. We depend on it for our entire livelihood. Once every year, pastoralists visit Kuro hot springs for replenishment. We equate these visits to an annual health check-up."

Guyo Dida, a Borana community elder in Biliqo, Isiolo

Located within the Chari drought grazing reserve in Isiolo, a semi-arid area in Northern Kenya, Kuro hot springs were restored in November 2014 following a participatory assessment on disaster risk reduction (PDRA). The restoration was jointly led by the local community in Merti, Isiolo, and Kenya's Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme.

The findings of the PDRA conducted by PfR in March 2014 at Biliqo highlighted the environmental degradation due to unregulated use of Kuro hot springs through human activities and livestock use.

The direct impacts of the degradation of the hot springs were:

- Inter-clan and inter-community conflicts among vulnerable pastoralists whose economic lifeline is the Kuro hot springs for water during times of drought.
- Pastoralists experiencing long waiting periods at the watering points due to the hot spring's limited water flow.
- Local communities suffering from waterborne diseases due to contamination of the water.
- Human-wildlife conflicts, especially with elephants accessing the hot springs. The springs are located along their migratory route and breeding grounds.
- Individuals trying to illegally exploit the community-owned Kuro hot springs as private wildlife conservancies and illegal bird shooting sites.
- A dramatic reduction in the

number of quail, which previously used the springs as a watering point and were an attraction for bird watching and sporting.

Local communities enriched the assessment by contributing diverse views and opinions on ecosystem management. In addition, their knowledge and skills were incorporated into planning and designing the restoration of the Kuro hot springs.

Based on the assessment findings, the PfR partners prioritized the restoration of Kuro hot springs as a flagship project. Its restoration aimed at promoting more efficient use of the existing water resources with the potential for contributing towards improving the livelihoods of pastoralist communities in Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale and Samburu, Kenya.

The Kuro hot springs restoration involved the local community. Contributing their skills and labour entailed:

- Desilting by excavating sand and soils from the source of the springs.
- Construction of underground culverts to redirect water from the hot springs.
- Construction of concrete water troughs for use by both livestock and wildlife.
- Fencing the perimeter of the main hot springs to minimize intrusion by wildlife, especially elephants.

This investment in restoring the Kuro hot springs for the Biliqo community has improved access to safe water for 42,000 pastoralists and their livestock. In the context of adverse climate change, this results in economic gains for the local community and also conservation of the environment. The pastoralists have observed a notable reduction in the number of sick and dying livestock, especially during the drought, in comparison with past years.

As a result of the availability of sufficient water from the hot springs for livestock and domestic use during the drought, water-related conflicts among the local pastoralist communities have declined. In addition, the provision of water points for wildlife has minimized the human-wildlife conflicts.

It is therefore imperative to incorporate the diverse needs of pastoralists, their livestock and also wildlife during the restoration of water resources. To avoid adverse impacts, all building materials used for the construction must also be environmentally friendly.

To promote community ownership in sustaining the restored Kuro hot springs, a 10-member water management committee was established and trained. The community committee now oversees the operations and general maintenance of the Kuro hot springs.

LET'S SING AND DANCE FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

DECLARES BORANA CULTURAL AMBASSADOR IN KENYA

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Ululations filled the air as thousands of community members - drawn from Isiolo, Laikipia and Samburu - celebrated the completion of the 250 kilometre trek to mark the 2014 Camel Caravan for conserving the Ewaso Ngiro River Ecosystem in Isiolo, Kenya. The communities are gathered at Archers Post, located on the banks of the Ewaso Ngiro River, which serves 3 million pastoralists, as they cheer on Abdi Godana, a local Borana community musician.

Abdi's high-pitched voice is heard, and another deeply rhythmical Borana song, as the crowds dance and sing along in unison. The music is fascinating!

Amongst the Borana pastoralist community, song and dance has played a pivotal role in enhancing

social cohesion and influencing positive change. Every community event for conducting cultural rites of passage has been marked by song and dance since way back. The peak season for singing and dancing is during the rains, when some of the most significant Borana community milestones are celebrated, such as births, weddings and initiation ceremonies. With the end of the rains, grass is abundant and milk plentiful. It is a time of great joy, a season of celebrations. As the sun sets on the horizon, the herders arrive home, to resume their dancing with an intensity that drives them into a trance!

In 2013, the Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme in Kenya, jointly with the local Borana community, nominated Abdi Godana, aged 25 years, as a cultural ambassador. His heroic influence among men, women and youth from the community made him a champion of the local Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) committee.

Abdi Godana was accorded special status and recognition by local community members, community elders and local opinion leaders including the Governor of Isiolo County Government for his strategic role in disseminating key messages within Isiolo on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem restoration using folk media.

His lyrics are an innovative communication channel for sharing early disaster warning information before hazards strike the community. Abdi, as an influential cultural figure, also mobilizes communities for DRR and calls for commu-

ABDI GODANA' S LYRICS

STANZA 1

NU-WARI HOO-RI QENCHA,
JIRU TEEN HOO-RI KENAA,

QUSANAA OLKEE-YANAA,
BISAA-NI BUU-YOO TEE-NAA,

BAR-JABAA NUU-THUR JIRAA,
GUYA SUN II-REE TEENAA,

HORRI KEEN ITIN DENAA,
ME-NUUNCHUF AKAS BEENAA.

TRANSLATION

"As pastoralists, our livelihood is dependent on our livestock,

Let us preserve our pastures and water resources,

It will save us during hard times ahead.

Let us all realize such reserves will be our stock during the droughts".

STANZA 2

OO-LAA KES OLKII-DUFAA,
MARRA BISAAN KEEN GULAA,

AATHA JARR BULCHAA DETHAA,
JABESA IRAA BULAA,

AATHAN TISAA WAAN-CHUFAA,
MA-IRAN DII-GII BUAA,

NAMI FAAN SIRA THUAA,
MALADAA WALLI GALLAA,

QAWE AA-LA TAN GUBAA,
AKASIN NAGAA DUFAA.

TRANSLATION

Conflicts occur during drought spells, over our pastures and water resources,

Let us all uphold our traditional natural resource conservation efforts,

Such traditions have governed all our lifestyles with no cause for bloodshed,

Let us agree and say no to loss of human lives

Let us burn all the illegal arms in our custody and enjoy the fruits of peace.

nity action to reduce the adverse impacts of drought before they happen. He has been actively involved in tree planting campaigns and HIV&AIDS sensitization within the Borana community.

Abdi has benefited from training, to compose songs with key messages on disaster preparedness and response. As Abdi composed his songs, the PfR team provided technical quality assurance to ensure the messages were credible and consistent.

Partners for Resilience provided Abdi with state of the art musical instruments. Thereafter, Abdi formed a five-member *Hora Bulla Band* which also performs music concerts during political rallies and various community events. He was given opportunities for professional coaching and mentoring by acclaimed Kenyan musicians. His music received international recognition during its presentation at the DRR Global Conference in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2013. This invaluable support has further enhanced Abdi's skills, talents and overall personal development.

"I'm eternally grateful to the PfR fraternity for nurturing my God-given talent for the benefit of my community. The exposure I have been accorded is beyond my wildest dreams. Today, I'm inspired to compose songs with messages that influence positive behaviour change among the Borana pastoralists, especially towards increasing our collective resilience to climate change"

says Abdi now.

His songs are played on local FM stations such as Baliti FM, Citizen radio, Baraka FM and Radio Maisha, and have often times been selected as top hits by radio listeners tuned to different radio stations in Isiolo County, their frequencies reaching thousands of listeners from diverse geographical locations.

According to Borana folklore, most of the indigenous knowledge was traditionally passed through song and dance to the next generations. By integrating early disaster warning information into the Borana people's cultural song and dance, community members have more readily accepted the messages for community action as credible, authentic and relevant to their daily lives. Through song and dance they are also building and passing on a new tradition of local knowledge about resilience in Isiolo.

See video Clip: Abdi Godana https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIqi-c2egfY

ISIOLO COMMUNITIES UNITE TO VOICE AND DEFEND THEIR INTERESTS

\\ AUTHORS: SIRAK ABEBE TEMESGEN \\ HARRY MISIKO

Communities living downstream in the Ewaso-Ngiro River basin in Kenya's Isiolo County have suffered from droughts, floods, water shortages, resource-based conflicts, diseases, and marginalization by the national government. The river upon which their lives depend is at risk now more than ever before: very often it dries up; remaining dry for longer periods of time; and it floods whenever heavy rains fall. There is increasing degradation, obstruction and contamination of water mid and upstream by flower farmers. Land grabbers have also encroached on Lake Ol`Bolosat—one of the river's main water sources.

As if this is not enough, the government is planning a mega-dam project on this endangered river, to generate power and provide

water to the proposed Isiolo Resort City, and to the detriment of communities downstream. While the communities downstream were opposed to these plans, they lacked a voice to defend their rights and interests. Lacking a common platform to air their concerns, neither county nor national government would listen to them.

In 2011, Partners for Resilience (PfR) supported a group of mid and downstream communities in the Ewaso-Ngiro River basin in conducting a participatory assessment of their vulnerabilities. The 13 communities are: Dadacha Basa, Korbesa, Biliko, Bulesa, Gafarsa, Ireseboru, Malkadaka, Kulamawe, Burat, Malkagalla, Gambella, Kinna and Badana. Key vulnerabilities they identified were: a degraded ecosystem in the Ewaso-Ngiro River basin, periodic loss of crops and livestock; lack of political representation; poor infrastructure; weak community organizations; limited knowledge and skills in risk reduction and overall resilience building.

On the other hand, the survey also revealed potential opportunities within the communities that could be improved and used to address their challenges. Among these were Community Development Committees (CDCs) that were supported by the former Department of Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP) under the Ministry of Special Programmes and Cordaid. Based on these findings, all 13 target communities came up with action plans on how to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities, including forming new community organizations.

After identification and, in some places, formation of the community organizations, PfR provided them with technical support in the form of training, field-based remote mentoring and coaching. Kenya Red Cross Volunteers and CMDRR[1] Champions who live within the communities, provided support to the community organisations' day to day operations. As the 13 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) started working in the Ewaso-Ngiro River basin, they realized the importance of having an umbrella organization. A conference brought together close to 100 community representatives, NGOs, CBOs and government in Guba Dida in Kinna in November 2012, and resulted in the formation and registration of the Waso River Users Empowerment Platform (WRUEP). Mr Yussuf Muhammed Hamo, head of the CBO 'Sericho Youth United', and secretary of WRUEP said:

"I want to be part of WRUEP because WRUEP is bringing together people from both sides of Isiolo County and is seeking to voice the plight of our communities".

1 CMDRR- Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction

Since its establishment, WRUEP has benefited from the support of PfR partners. For instance, they trained its executive and management committee members in participatory risk assessment, proposal writing, the integrated approach (DRR/CCA/EMR) to risk reduction, advocacy, lobbying and participatory monitoring. Kenya Red Cross, Cordaid, and Wetlands International gave WRUEP approximately six million Kenya Shillings to implement its collective action plan focusing on a landscape approach, protection of the eco-system of the Ewaso-Ngiro River, policy awareness, as well as early warning and early action.

WRUEP and the community organizations have engaged in community discussion, planning, and implementation of various activities - such as the Camel Caravan - to raise awareness about the situation of the Ewaso-Ngiro River. They have established a farming demonstration site, set up of flood gauges, started airing residents´ concerns on the mega-dam and eco-system degradation on Baliti Radio, and opened discussion of various development issues with the county leaders.

So far, WRUEP and the 13 community organizations have realized some remarkable achievements. Key among them is voicing the concerns of the communities that have suffered persistent drought, floods, conflicts, diseases and poor infrastructure due to marginalization. Five of the 13 CBOs - Burat, Biliko, Bulesa, DadachaBasa, and Korbesa - managed to secure funding from various NGOs, including ActionAid, Action Against Hunger and Kenya Red Cross, as well as from the government and the locals, to implement their action plans. The offices of the CBOs now serve as places where the communities meet outsiders, and outline, discuss and reflect on their plans and accomplishments.

Particularly noteworthy achievements of WRUEP are the successful camel caravans of 2013 and 2014. These campaigns not only managed to bring together warring ethnic groups in the river basin but also engaged civil societies, the private sector, the media and the government to support the Ewaso Ngiro River communities' cause. The caravans saw WRUEP, with the support of PfR, raise awareness about the degraded eco-system of the basin and adverse impacts of the planned mega dam. Similar sensitization was done on negative impacts of resource-based conflict among Borana, Samburu, Turkana, and Somalis, and the role of girls' education in women's empowerment. As a result of the 2014 Camel Caravan, the Governor of Isiolo and his deputy promised to support the 2015 campaign and make it a cultural and tourism event for the county. The two leaders also promised to facilitate talks between the communities and the National Water

and Pipeline Corporation on the construction of the mega-dam and to support both eco-system improvement efforts across the river basin as well as girls' education in the county.

These achievements aside, strengthening community institutions in Isiolo has not been an easy endeavor. The initiative has faced many challenges, including gaps in financial accountability and reporting, lack of means of transport, limited motivation for the executive and management committees and interns, and diminishing financial support as the PfR programme draws to an end.

In this project, the Partners for Resilience have learnt that when communities unite and work in an organized, coordinated manner on a common problem, they achieve more and with better results. The power of the collective is much more than the sum of individual, uncoordinated and separate efforts.

DROUGHT CYCLE MANAGEMENT INTRODUCED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS CURRICULUM IN ISIOLO, KENYA

\\ AUTHORS: BORU GODANA \\ JOHN W. WAIMIRI

Primary schools in Merti, in Kenya's Isiolo area have introduced drought cycle management into the curriculum. Merti's primary schools have also been earmarked as early hazard warning information centres, in partnership with Kenya's National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) and Kenya Metrological Survey Services.

In February 2015, NDMA conducted a training of trainers on Drought Cycle Management (DCM) using a DCM toolkit developed by Cordaid Kenya. A total of 60 teachers, pupils and members of the local community, drawn from 10 selected primary schools across the Partners for Resilience (PfR) project sites, were enlisted and trained as strategic spokespersons for early warning information in their respective communities.

KEY COMPONENTS OF LOCAL DROUGHT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

- Information and planning
- Timing of activities
- Appropriate activities
- Coordination.

COLOURS SYMBOLIZING **DIFFERENT STAGES OF DCM**

- Green: Normal
- Yellow: Alert
- Orange: Alarm
- Red: Emergency

Upon training, symbolic flags with different colours were hoisted at the selected primary schools. The flags highlighted the current stages of the drought cycle within the local community. At each stage of the drought cycle, different disaster preparedness measures and appropriate responses – corresponding to the flag colors - were disseminated by NDMA's monthly bulletins and Kenya Metrological Survey Services seasonal climate forecasts, for implementation by the local community.

RobaTaticha, Biliqo Primary School head teacher said,

"This training on drought cycle management has come at a very opportune moment and we shall use it in our response to droughts. The DCM flag which has been erected at Biliqo Primary School is useful to my teachers and pupils.

The symbolic flag has also raised the attention of local communities and travellers plying the Isiolo - Wajir highway. We have used the opportunity to demonstrate the current stage of the drought cycle, from the colours denoted on the flag."

At each school, pupils were appointed as Drought Ambassadors and they were responsible for hoisting the symbolic flags to disseminate early warning information within the school and the local community. In addition, the pupils composed songs and dances on conservation of the environment. Pupils also established vibrant Environment Clubs within their schools.

The selected primary schools spearheaded 'solar lamps for trees planting campaigns' as a way to minimize the effects of climate change. During the cam-

paign, in February 2013, about 1500 indigenous fast maturing trees such as Neem and Acacia were planted at the 10 primary schools. Each tree seedling was adopted by a pupil and his or her family to ensure the tree's survival. In addition, each pupil was responsible for watering their tree seedlings every day.

Within the pastoralist communities in the arid and semi-arid areas of Northern Kenya, tree planting is rare due to the lack of water to water the tree seedlings. In these drought stricken areas, limited water is used primarily for livestock and domestic use. Therefore, as an incentive in the 'solar lamps for trees planting campaign', 760 solar lamps were presented by Kenya's Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme to the 5 best primary schools: Dima Ado, Biliqo, Taqwa, Goda and Dadacha Basa. The schools were selected based on the total number of trees planted within the school compound and also the number of tree seedlings that survived during the dry spell. At different locations, the solar lamps were used by the school community to extend the teaching and study hours of both teachers and pupils during early mornings and late evenings.

According to Mr. Roba Wario, head teacher at Dimo Ado Primary School, where the campaign was first launched,

'...the recently planted trees have a lot of benefits for us. They provide shade from the hot temperatures and have created a suitable micro-

climate within the school compound. In the past, our compound was windy and dusty. Today the school is a haven for teachers and pupils who want to spend their quality leisure time in a serene and refreshing environment. I have also introduced greenhouse farming within the school. The solar lamps have helped my pupils study at night, while their parents also use it for their domestic lighting. I was very privileged to have hosted the June 5, 2014 World Environment Day in recognition of my school's efforts in environmental conservation.'

The local communities also enjoy the overall benefits of the 'solar lamps for trees campaign'. Within local households, the solar lamps are used for domestic lighting, thus extending the duration of time available to complete household chores. The lighting is also used to scare away hyenas and jackals from the compounds. The solar lamps reduced the household expenditure for the more costly kerosene fuel for lighting while at the same time lowering carbon emissions. In addition, the local community was further motivated through the in-school campaign to plant more trees adapted to the local agro-ecological zone within their individual home compounds.

With the pilot 'solar lamps for trees campaign', the bio-rights approach was demonstrated whereby local communities got incentives for their proactive involvement in ecosystem management and restoration. In addition, the primary schools were used by the National Drought Management Authority to disseminate early hazard warning information and thus contribute towards building community resilience.

CAMEL CARAVAN:A UNIQUE TREK TO SAVE THE EWASO-NGIRO RIVER

\\ AUTHORS: JOSEPH LENDIRA AND BORU GODANA \\ JAYNE ROSE GACHERI

Not even her three month old baby, the fear of bandits, an attack by wild animals or walking under the scorching sun for six days could deter Amina Roka, of Garbatula Ward, Isiolo County from taking part in this unique caravan.

The convoy, a dual camel caravan of men, women, young and old people, led by camel handlers from Merti, Isiolo, Enaboli, and Laikipia made a 250 km. trek along the Ewaso-Ngiro River. The caravan brought together more than 200 pastoralists from Samburu, Borana, Maasai, Turkana, Somali and Rendilie during the 2014 chapter of the annual Camel Caravan Campaign event, now in its 2nd year. Stakeholders taking part in the trek were joined by the media, as well as local and international artists.

With her baby snugly secured on her back, Amina, a mother of three children, would do this again as a way of adding her voice in creating awareness on the degradation of a river that has been her source of livelihood since childhood. Despite walking barefoot, she was determined to be on the finish line…

"My (toe) nail got broken as I was walking in this caravan which is a tough journey but I wanted to put my voice on record as I raise awareness about the Ewaso-Ngiro River".

Like the camels, Amina is a symbol of resilience.

AN ALARMING SITUATION

Long drought spells have contributed to the drop in water level of the river attributed to climatic change. Upstream large-scale farming that depends on water has contributed to the degradation and pollution of the river. Traces of pesticides, which are released into the water by the upstream farmers, have been found in the water. Since several communities depend on this river, these problems have resulted in conflicts among local pastoralists as they compete for scarcer and scarcer water and pasture. It has also led to increased human-wildlife conflict.

Pastoralists and residents could not watch and do nothing as they witnessed the Ewaso river die. Action had to be taken. After deliberations among communities, stakeholders and PfRpartners, the Camel Caravan was conceptualized in 2012 as a tool to help conserve the Ewaso-Ngiro River.

THE EWASONGIRO CAMEL CARAVAN CAMPAIGN

The Ewaso-Ngiro Camel Caravan Campaign is an advocacy strategy that involves trekking along the Ewaso-Ngiro River which draws its waters from tributaries running from the slopes of Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares Range and runs across the four counties of Nyandarua, Laikipia, Isiolo and Samburu. The river is a key source of social-economic livelihood for more than 3 million pastoralists and their livestock as well as important to the habitat of plant and wildlife communities and the region is famous for the big five—elephant, lion, buffalo, leopard and rhino—a significant tourist attraction.

According to Partners for Resilience (PfR), the focus of the Camel Caravan is on creating awareness on the need to restore, preserve, conserve and protect the river. It takes place amongst the communities of Isiolo, Laikipa and Samburu counties concerning the plight of their river basin ecosystem and the need to conserve and preserve it for future generations.

"If there is no Ewaso, there is no water and if there is no water, there is no life" says Mzee Dabaso Halkano, a pastoralist and a participant. He says that during the dry spell there is hardly any water as Ewaso *"mysteriously disappears"* and the communities have to walk for more than 40 kilometers in search of water.

"God works miracles but in the case of Ewaso-Ngiro we do not know when he will work a miracle and so we must protect this river by creating awareness on the looming calamity facing the people who largely rely on the waters from Ewaso-Ngiro,"

says Galgaro Kote

According to George Lemuge, a community development activist and a team leader in the Laikipia camel caravan, getting pastures for livestock is a problem as water catchments are drying up and the little water available is highly polluted.

WHY A CAMEL CARAVAN?

According to Boniface Kandiri, a camel expert, the camel is an animal that most pastoral communities heavily rely on:

"The camel is drought resistant, is cheap to maintain though expensive to buy and is like a land cruiser. It can carry 1000 kilograms of load and can go for a long time without taking water. It is a sign of resilience as it can withstand harsh conditions of dry land..."

Kandiri adds that one of the reasons why the camel was chosen was due to its symbolic similarity with what the campaign was all about.

Each of the two caravans, one from Merti in Isiolo, and the other from Enabori, take off simultaneously. Each have personnel including camel experts, volunteers in charge of First Aid, cooks and licensed security personnel drawn from various communities in the river basin. This team assists participants who join the walk through the semi-arid region. The trek is well planned and counts on hired camels, well-coordinated security, as well as cultural events including performances by local and international groups. Issues targeted by the Camel Caravan project include the enforcement of the existing policies regarding the management and use of water in catchment areas and down-stream.

Both the 2013 and the 2014 Camel Caravan events have achieved considerable gains in creating awareness on the need to conserve and protect against destruction the Ewaso-Ngiro ecosystem. Mzee Halkano now knows that wanton destruction of vegetation along the river bed will result in his livestock not having water. He has also seen how the government, due to the media generated by this caravan, was made aware of the need to consult the local communities on matters affecting them.

During night stopovers, the participants find time to discuss issues that have drawn them to take part in the caravan. For instance in 2014, the issue of the proposed construction of the Isiolo Mega Dam was discussed. Community members shared their views, which were taken up by the leadership present. As a result, a contractor was summoned to give more insight on the project. Due to the caravan, the county leadership that had been reluctant to engage the community on proposed projects, such as the construction of the Isiolo Mega Dam and the Resort City, are now holding consultative forums.

Another benefit of the Caravan is that it provides a forum for discussion and conflict resolution where issues can be worked out. For example, most communities fight over pastureland, but when an issue arose during the Camel Caravan, tensions could be discussed and resolved. This happened when there was a near conflict when the trekkers stopped over at a Samburu village. The Samburu people at first did not react positively but when an explanation was provided on what the convoy was about—the 2014 theme was "Conserving the Ewaso-Ngiro River for Peace and Prosperity"—the two sides parted as friends and with an un-

derstanding of the need to coexist peacefully.

Girls and early marriage is another topic of discussion. *"There is a strong relationship between water and the educational development of the girl child,"* says a representative from the NGO IMPACT, explaining that in communities fetching water was traditionally solely a girls' or women's responsibility and when there is no water, this impacts negatively on both women and girls. Highlighting such issues brings home the need to save the Ewaso-Ngiro River.

During the camel caravan the media is fully involved, which is why the event has received visibility. Winnie, a journalist, took part in the 2014 caravan. *"I am here walking, following the caravan to get a story,"* she said. For Denis Omondi, a photojournalist from Standard Media, this was no ordinary story. *"This story is a story that can sell beyond Kenya. It is an international story, one that is a winner,"* he noted. Benson Njue from GBS believes that the caravan is a worthy cause coming from the community itself, while Job Weru, a photojournalist with the Standard knows that if issues are not highlighted, they can never be resolved. He was trekking to write a good story.

Since 2013, the event has been used as a platform to create awareness on further issues affecting the communities, such wealth creation, the development agenda, and county governance, among others. The purpose is to bring aboard the county leadership. So far, communities are now aware of the importance of reforestation to maintain the vegetative cover which holds rain and affects the local water cycle. A documentary on the issues surrounding the Ewaso-Ngiro River was shared widely with government bodies, among them the Water Resource Management Authority (WRMA), the County Governments of Isiolo and Laikipia, the PfR consortium, the media fraternity, and other stakeholders, which contributed greatly in giving visibility to these causes.

Issues raised are now being addressed by the various counties. The Laikipia County has a draft water and sanitation bill which seeks to regulate the use of water and protection of the water catchment areas to facilitate the normal flow of the river. Through the support of CORDAID Kenya the county has developed a Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction policy under the County Assembly Agriculture committee. Plans by the county governments to sponsor education of girls in Merti are at an advanced stage. Through the support of Wetlands International the Laikipia North Water Resources Users Association Forum has been established with a mandate to lobby and advocate for water rights and other policies within the County Government. The communities were also able to present a memorandum highlighting their concerns to their County governments.

CHALLENGES

Mobilizing stakeholders to bring them on board was challenging especially because this was a six day event. There was little goodwill from Government. However with the success of the 2014 event, more stakeholders are expected to join in the 2015 event.

Accessing information on the proposed Isiolo Mega dam and the Resort City presented a challenge. This would have helped to illuminate issues to enable the communities to make informed decisions.

Fund raising for the event was also challenging. In the future, a well thought out and planned fundraising strategy must be put in place to ensure a successful Camel Caravan.

With early planning, including securing media visibility for the event, future Camel Caravans can be success stories that set in motion policies to save Ewaso-Ngiro River as well as to resolve other issues.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTSIN DADACHA BASA, ISIOLO, KENYA

\\ AUTHORS: BORU GODANA \\ JOHN W. WAIMIRI

The vulnerable communities living in Dadacha Basa, Isiolo, Kenya are currently able to prevent and mitigate bush fire outbreaks following the adoption of participatory tools for disaster preparedness and response. Community resources previously allocated to respond to fire outbreaks have now been redirected to build greater community capacity to secure the pastoralists livelihood.

The bush fires were most frequent during the drought season, when they destroyed large tracts of pasture lands. During the dry spell from March 2013 to December 2014, the Dadacha Basa community used their knowledge and skills effectively to control three bushfire outbreaks at the Halango and Bullerange lands through the collaborative efforts of dif-

ferent agencies such as: the Isiolo County government, political leaders, peace committees and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

"We feel empowered to have utilized our home grown skills to prevent any fire outbreaks during the drought. In future we will share the Contingency Plans with our leaders at the Isiolo County for additional technical and financial support,"

Osman Jarso, the Dadacha Basa CMDRR committee chairperson

The bush fires were identified and prioritized by the beneficiary population of about 8000 individuals as a major hazard and setback in their livelihoods each time the disaster struck. The wildfires were ignited by pastoralists who negligently left embers of household fire unattended during their migration from one location to another in search of water and pasture for their livestock. Occasionally, neighbouring pastoralist communities also set the rangelands on fire when they were repulsed from accessing pasture and water resources by the host communities, leading to resource-based

1. The concept of contingency planning is important in disaster risk management.

2. Contingency Planning is a management process that analyses specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations. Contingency plans therefore deal with potential events to increase the readiness to deal with future hazards.

3. In disaster risk reduction, the efforts of all stakeholders and especially the vulnerable communities, should be to prevent hazards occurring where possible or mitigate potentially damaging effects of the hazards. However the progression of hazard events into a disaster situation may still be a possibility. Thus, adequate preparations should be made for emergency responses to save lives and livelihoods as well as facilitate quick return to normalcy.

4. Among African communities, informal contingency plans have existed for a long time. For instance pastoralist communities in the Greater Horn of Africa activated various responses at different stages of the drought cycle.

5. Indigenous early warning systems were used to predict hazard events and thereby trigger contingent actions to minimize the loss of human lives and assets.

conflicts. Some bush fires were also caused by the extremely hot temperatures experienced in the area.

Previously, in 2011 and 2012, bushfires occurred about seven times within the short period of three months in January, February, and March, destroying vast rangelands and indigenous forest ecosystems of about 6,000 hectares, leaving the livelihoods of more than 650 households vulnerable. Such rampant incidences of fire outbreaks in the past had left trails of destruction of life and property.

The traditional contingency plans and response mechanisms among the Dadacha Basa community since time immemorial have been undermined by the repetitive occurrence of extreme events. These hazards have drastically shrunk the community's resources. The social support system has also been weakened and is almost non-existent.

Recognizing the importance of having a contingency plan and a strong social support system in the context of unpredictable future hazards and climate variability, Partners for Resilience (PfR) in Kenya revitalized the traditional social support system and their disaster preparedness plans by supplementing it with modern information and techniques.

The Dadacha Basa community thus developed and implemented Community Contingency Plans (CCPs) to prepare for and respond to bushfires. Cordaid provided financial resources toward the 2013 Dadacha Basa Community Contingency Fund. Additional funding was allocated to the 2015 Community Contingency Fund.

The CCPs were developed by the local community through a Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA), conducted in February 2013 by the Dadacha Basa community. This approach prioritized the local community's role in disaster preparedness, surveillance and implementation of the contingency activities, through the Disaster Risk Reduction committee.

The DRR committees of 20 local community members, who developed the CCPs, were trained in firefighting skills, the causes of fire outbreaks and precautionary measures. About 10 fire scouts were also recruited, trained and deployed to ensure sufficient mobility during fire outbreaks.

About 45 local community members were also sensitized on preparedness for bushfires through community gatherings, public meetings and religious events. At all community forums, key messages on precautions against fire outbreaks and firefighting skills were disseminated to further solicit community involvement and ownership. The information was also shared with other key stakeholders including the Kenya Forestry Service, Kenya Wildlife Service and the local County administration.

The CCPs were replicated in other pastoralist communities, such as Bulesa and Biliqo, following the success stories from the Dadacha Basa community. At these new sites, the local community contributed their indigenous knowledge and skills towards developing CCPs for other communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Community Contingency Plans have increased local community resilience to withstand bush fire outbreaks.
- Community Contingency Plans should be used to influence policy dialogue with the County government for the allocation of additional resources towards disaster preparedness.
- In the future, coordination between the Community Contingency Plans and the County Contingency Plans should be harmonized for more effective implementation.
- The indigenous disaster early warning systems used by the pastoralist community should be integrated into modern disaster early warning systems for more effective disaster preparedness and response.

REPORTING DISASTER, RISK REDUCTION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

\\ AUTHORS: ZEITUNA ROBA AND LEONARD AKWANY \\ EDITOR: JAYNE ROSE GACHERI

A picture is worth a thousand words, while the power of the pen is mightier than the sword. So is the power of the electronic and social media in telling stories on disaster preparedness and resilience initiatives.

Despite being seasoned journalists based in Nairobi, Denis Omondi, a photojournalist with Standard Media Group, and Benson Njue of GBS, say they had problems in the way they reported on disaster and risk management stories and resilience initiatives implemented by the Isiolo communities.

Probably this is why: notwithstanding the many stories to report on disaster, risk management and resilience initiatives in Isiolo County, not much was reported by

the media. Even those stories reported were mostly lacking in details. They only told one side of the story. They did not highlight the situation as it was. Rather the interest was focused on destruction, injuries and deaths caused, as opposed to reporting holistically.

Yet if these stories were to be told as human interest stories by journalists with experience in these areas, they could contribute to a change in local government, by influencing the updating of their policies or putting in place systems that are able to detect and send emergency alerts for action to be taken before a peril strikes.

The situation of poor - or lack of - media coverage called for action. After a review of the media coverage of Isiolo County by PfR (Partners for Resilience) Kenya, the key barriers to effective reporting were identified: lack of information, limited access to transport and communications.

LITTLE UNDERSTANDING AND LACK OF INFORMATION ON DISASTER AND RISK REPORTING

It was established that among the reporters representing various media houses in the region, journalists had little or no experience in reporting about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and they did not know how to engage with the community during their day to day reporting. They also had little information about reporting on issues of climate change, environment and conservation, and did not understand the topic of climate change.

LIMITED ACCESS TO TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

Isiolo County is located in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya which have very poor road networks. During the rains, most of the roads in Isiolo are inaccessible. For instance when it rains

the Gotu Bridge which connects Isiolo to Merti is flooded and this cuts off communication between the two towns. One journalist commented,

"Many times I have been not published because media houses work on strict deadlines and schedules. At such times, the affected areas get blocked out from media coverage,"

Ali Abdi, a Standard Newspaper reporter based in Isiolo.

Another issue is inadequate masts to transmit broadcast signals. This limits electronic media coverage. Except for KBC, most networks do not have masts that can send strong broadcast signals to these regions. Amina Haji, from Isiolo, told us...

"This means that most of the interior of Isiolo is cut from accessing valuable information via Radio or TV"

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER INFORMED COVERAGE ON DRR ISSUES

After talking with the journalists, a decision was made to engage the media, both local and international, to address these key issues. To enable journalists' access to the area, in one year the communities and PfR invited 12 journalists to join them during field visits. A total of 36 field visits with journalists, from print and electronic media, have been conducted in the two years since 2013. The objective was to visit communities affected by drought, floods, livestock diseases and environmental degradation.

The journalists have written stories on disaster and risk management and resilience building. Journalist Peter Orengo captured one story which appeared in the Standard Newspaper after a field visit with Wetlands International. The story was captivating as it reported from a human angle, and described community members harnessing solar energy to ensure the supply of irrigation water in an arid and semi-arid region. In addition to the field visits the reporters also now get transport assistance whenever there is a story to write.

In providing a solution to the lack of signal transmission, PfR has supported Baliti FM, a local radio station, to install a radio mast that will enable broadcasting to reach remote areas of the county. The present mast covers only Kina, Kula Mawe and Burat which are communities where PfR works. By May of 2015, PfR plans to expand coverage to 13 additional communities including Basa, Biliqo, Bulesa, Korbesa, Badana, Iresa Boru, Gambela, Gafarsa, Malkadaqa, and Malkagalla.

A plan was developed to optimize sustainability of the partnership between PfR and Radio Baliti after the project ends. Baliti FM is currently very popular and now hosts talk shows on disaster preparedness. PfR and the National Drought Management Authority are collaborating with Baliti FM in sharing early warning information and holding monthly talk shows on DRR issues in Isiolo County.

With training on the technical language used in DRR, Climate and Environment and with experience from the field visits, the journalists are better equipped to report on these areas.

Omondi from Standard Media attests,

"Now I know how to report stories revolving around disaster, risk management and I know how to collect information from the community to write a human interest story on resilience building"

With the training provided, journalists were able to understand terms used in climate change, how to report on environment and how to understand advocacy and policies for adaptation to climate change, ecosystem management and restoration.

"Now, we can report confidently and cite the necessary documents",

says Njue from GBS, adding that now the reporters in the area write with a higher level of understanding and personal experience, publishing stories that have influenced the decisions and attitudes of both national and county governments.

"After this exposure, I wrote a story that put pressure on the County government of Isiolo to involve communities in discussion of the proposed Mega Dam and Resort City",

mentions Abdi.

Following the technical training provided in discussion forums, Abdi covered a series of stories that had high impact. One in particular highlighted the planned construction of the mega dam and this story, which was published in the Standard in April 2014, prompted the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation (NWCPC) to contact MIDP (Merti Integrated Development Programme). Prior to this, NWCPC did not want to engage in a dialogue with the community or any stakeholders. *"The pressure generated by the story made then bow down,"* recalls Abdi. What followed were serious engagements in forums which were covered by the media. During this time the project stalled. The two governments are now ready to listen to the voice of the people he says, adding that the series of forums held have been involving the communities and other stakeholders.

Indeed, information is knowledge; after attending the forums that followed Ali's coverage, the communities were better informed. They understood that the dam was being constructed to provide water for the proposed Resort City.

"We actually learnt that the project was a government project as opposed to a community project,"
Diba Golicha from Rangeland Users Association (RUA) says.

"As a community we will not accept the construction of the Mega Dam until we are consulted and also engaged in all the processes of the Project from the beginning to the end...."

says Abdullahi Shandey, CEO of MIDP, adding that what the communities involved are demanding to know is how the project would benefit them.

"As a local institution, we are not opposing the project but are concerned that the voice of the community is not being incorporated when decisions such as this that affect our livelihoods are being made, yet the Constitution is clear in demanding minimum community participation in such matters"

LESSONS LEARNED

Working with media organizations was a welcome partnership for PfR Kenya. Partners understood that journalists are focused on newsworthy information, and therefore the PfR partners needed to provide good quality information and material to the journalists. In fact, PfR did not retain editorial power over these stories, and could not control whether journalists publish specific DRR messages. However, they understand that establishing a good relationship with the journalists ensured coverage and visibility for the work on ground.

DAWNING OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE:
THE CASE OF AGRO-PASTORALISTS AND PASTORALISTS ADOPTING FISH FARMING IN ISIOLO, KENYA

\\ AUTHORS: SUADA IBRAHIM \\ EDITOR: NANCY OKWENGUI

In the beginning it seemed impossible. It was like asking a fish to live on land and a bird to live on water. But the reality was the climate was changing and there was a need to adapt. This is the story of diversification of livelihoods and a move to sustainable alternatives, from major reliance on pastoralism and agro-pastoralism to include fish farming.

The Ewaso-Ngiro River that runs through the county had always been at their reach, but was underutilized for productive purposes. However changing weather patterns were affecting their livelihoods. In fact, episodes of drought and floods were reported annually. These resulted in loss of livestock and crops that led to food insecurity, malnutrition and a high disease burden (such as

malaria, diarrhea and upper respiratory infections).

The recovery period in between episodes of drought and flood was rarely sufficient to enable communities to return to their original state of either wealth or health. Communities once vibrant and self-sufficient became largely dependent on food aid.

A substitute was sought to promote alternative livelihoods that could reduce the impact of disaster, adapt to the changing climate, and support ecosystem restoration.

Mud-fish farming to meet both dietary needs and income generation, was chosen by the community as an alternative source of livelihood, since a large portion (3.6 million in three counties along the river) of the population resided along the Ewaso-Ngiro River. Moreover, because of their ability to survive long dry spells the river had plenty of mud fish, especially during the dry seasons.

However, a fundamental community belief had to be changed for them to enjoy the benefits of fishing. The communities living along the river had not been consuming fish in the past. In fact, to some, fish eating was a culturally inappropriate source of food, even a taboo to many. Thus they also lacked knowledge of how to catch, cook and preserve fish.

Some community members had their first experience of eating fish during the 2006-2007 El Niño floods. The roads were cut off for almost one month and accessibility to food aid was not possible due lack of transportation caused by broken roads. Fish eating, though seen as a taboo, was then perceived as a survival tactic, and in this case fish were being consumed in secret by a few community members.

HOW WE IMPROVED OUR SITUATION

When Kenya Red Cross Society through Partners for Resilience (PfR) in Isiolo presented the benefits of mud fish farming to the community, it appeared that the community had been sitting on a gold mine whose potential had been untapped for decades. Indeed a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. The success and change of behavior that this community enjoyed was a product of integrated participatory approaches implemented by PfR in Isiolo.

To begin this journey, PfR through Kenya Red Cross Society conducted a community vulnerability capacity assessment in various locations along the River Ewaso-Ngiro. The assessment process made the community realize their potential, propose ways of addressing risks, and consequently adapt to the changing climate.

From the assessment the community also came up with community action plans aimed at DRR to mitigate various risks factors related to food insecurity, water shortage, internal and external conflict, loss of livestock, and migration.

Through this process, fish farming was identified by the community as the potential source of alternative livelihood that the agro-pastoralists could embrace as a means of diversifying their livelihood.

PfR also worked with community members and traditional leaders in Isiolo in 2014 (mainly Korbesa and Gafarsa) by conducting community sensitization on fish farming including information about nutritional value and demonstrating various ways of cooking fish.

PfR also worked with the government's department of fisheries. Forty-five community members benefited from training on improved fish farming, including fish pond management, fish preservation and cooking.

Four groups, each having 10 members, were formed and received further support from PfR by supplying five fishing nets, two scooping nets, three tarpaulins for lining the pond and fingerlings. Even before the items were supplied, one farmer in Gafarsa started his own pond after feeling motivated by the training. He dug his own pond and collected water from the river to fill it. He then caught fish from the river to breed. The farmer, Hassan shared,

"We now have the capacity to help ourselves. We were once asleep and needed to be woken up. Now we are awake and enjoying the benefits of fish farming."

The groups are now engaged in

fish farming and are selling their harvest in Gafarsa and Korbesa and as far as Isiolo town and Meru District. Typically, the fish harvest is transported after being preserved. In 2014, one average sized fish sold for KES 100 (1.5 USD). By the end of 2014 the ponds held over 3,500 fish in four ponds. The ponds are located on communal land and have access to water points. The benefits are evident since 40 households are able to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, medical care, school fees, and shelter, with this increased income.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ISIOLO PFR FISH FARMING

The project has created a growing interest from other individuals and groups who also want to take up fish farming.

Access to markets has been a challenge due to poor road networks and lack of cold storage for the fish. Most community members use traditional means of fish preservation such as sun drying.

Participatory processes are crucial in addressing community risks. Solutions that come from the community are more likely to be adopted, especially when changing mind sets is needed.

Learning-by-doing approaches enhance understanding and replication. For example, communities were engaged in fish catching, preparation and cooking.

Involvement of government line ministries in supporting livelihoods is also critical to enhancing the sustainability of such projects.

HARVESTING GAINS OF COLLECTIVE EFFORT IN BURAT

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The Burat area in Isiolo County is a cosmopolitan community comprising different ethnic communities including the Borana, Turkana, Meru and the Somali.

This area with a population of approximately 8000 people is a beneficiary of an integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Ecosystems Management and Restoration (EMR) approach aimed at strengthening resilience, which has in turn resulted in peaceful co-existence of the agro-pastoralist communities living in the area.

STEP BY STEP

The process of risk identification and ecosystem restoration started in 2011 with the Kenya Red

Cross Society in Isiolo bringing the communities together to identify their potential risks. The twin issues of conflict and drought were identified through a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) as the main threats to their livelihoods.

Per the assessment, the communities shared the challenges to pastoralism as a livelihood posed by the cyclic nature of drought in the area, as well as the conflict resulting from cattle rustling. The conflict was exacerbated by competition for resources. Moreover, the communities relied on rain fed farming using water from the River Isiolo which had proven to be unsustainable. During the dry seasons, crops would fail leaving the communities with very few options for survival. They would turn to charcoal burning and retail trade.

As part of addressing the risks earlier identified, an action plan was developed by the Burat participants that involved adopting irrigation to support rain-fed agriculture.

Besides the need to increase farm yields, the adoption of irrigation was compelled by the need of the local authorities to regulate use of water from the River Isiolo, which required the farmers to obtain a license and use a piped system for their irrigation.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

A key strength identified by the VCA was that there were organized community structures in the communities, such as the water management, peace, health and farming committees. The water committee had gained skills in constructing water points and dams while the peace committee was found to have worked with the national and local authorities.

Drawing from such strength, the water committee approached the water and irrigation departments from the central government seeking advice on how to construct a water point; this resulted in piped water flowing from Gakili to LMD in Burat area. In addition, they presented a proposal to the Kenya Red Cross for funding to buy pipes to cover a distance of 3.6 kilometers, with the communities offering free labor to construct the water point. Additionally the communities asked for477 pipes to facilitate irrigation from different partners such as Ministry of Water, Kenya Red Cross and Action Aid. The water committee has played a crucial role in the management of water resources by ensuring proper use and monitoring of the water facilities. They also came up with strict measures to minimize water wastage and penalize those who misuse water.

The residents received seeds and seedlings from KRCS, Action Aid and the Ministry of Agriculture, for planting on their farms. Farmers were able to move away from growing maize only, to diversify with new crops such as cassava, french beans, fruits and vegetables. The farmers also received training in agriculture from the Ministry of Agriculture extension officers in order to support new farming practices that resulted in this diversification of crops.

GAINS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Working with Partners for Resilience (PfR), the area has been converted to a food basket as a result of concerted efforts to bring the communities to work together and deal with the risks facing them. The farmers are now sustaining themselves at the household level as well as supplying the local market in Isiolo. Conflict has also been reduced through peaceful co-existence brought about by working together on the farms.

The chairman of the Burat Farmers group, Mzee Huka Godana commented,

"I thank God for the timely intervention done by KRCS-Isiolo through the Partners for Resilience project and other actors in helping us come together and make this a reality. I couldn't imagine that for once we could collectively achieve this. This has motivated us to come up with a community organization that will sustain the project"

PEOPLE´S BENEFITS

Presently, about 400 households have adopted new practices and have better harvests. In fact, more people are being attracted to farming. A 27-year old street urchin, Mr Apuru, who is a beneficiary of the project, attests to this:

"Life in the streets has been miserable and after a lot of soul searching I decided to join this group of farmers. I was given a portion by the committee on which I now grow different food crops which I hope to take to the market soon. I can foresee a bright future ahead of me."


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