



PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

Amplifying grassroots voices on

Resilience

Integrated Approach In Disasters Reduction

THE ROADMAP TO DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT ACT

Overcoming water
challenges: The case
of Sericho WRUA

Covid-19: Effects,
Interventions and
Support



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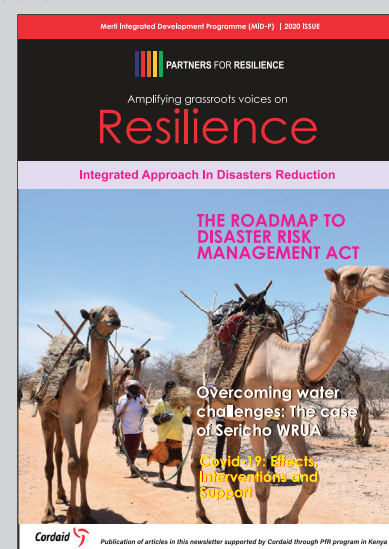
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TRIBUTE TO ABDULLAHI JILLO SHANDEY

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the employees I would like to express my gratitude to each and everyone who supported us during the demise of our late Executive Director, Abdullahi Shandey. He was at the helm of the organisation from inception 20 years ago until his demise on December 1, 2020. He leaves behind a mother, a widow, five children and two grandchildren.

His death has robbed the region of a dedicated leader whose contribution to development will be greatly missed by the Isiolo Community at large. He was instrumental in building a cordial relationship between CSO and the Government (County and National).

He always had positive thoughts and had a response for most situations and that is how he managed to run the NGO effectively. His shoes are too big. The challenges he handled will be faced by those of us whom he left. However, his memories and legacy will be a motivation for us. The organizations he founded with others like MID-P, Isiolo Girl child Education Trust and Isiolo County CSO Network will be a reminder of him and we have an obligation to keep the fire he lit burning and producing both heat and light to make a difference for the community he loved and served with commitment and dedication.

We value the partnership provided by Partners for Resilience and would like to assure you that we are committed to the Vision, Mission, goals, values and objectives of MID-P and will build on the progress we have made as a local NGO with the late Shandey. May God the almighty rest his soul in eternal peace.

Galgalo Salesa
Chair, Board of Directors MID-P

2020 ISSUE



Partners for resilience (PfR) is a consortium of four Netherlands-based humanitarian, development and environmental civil society organisation (CSOs) with the support of Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The consortium members are Cordaid, the Netherlands Red Cross (Kenya Red Cross), the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International.

The local Partners are Merti Integrated Development program (MID-P) in Isiolo and Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) in Laikipia and Samburu counties. PfR through Cordaid has signed a partnership agreement with University of Nairobi (African Drylands Institute for Sustainability (ADIS), Kenya Law Reform Commission (KLRC) and Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF).

The alliance promotes the application of Integrated Risk Management (IRM) to strengthen and protect livelihoods of vulnerable communities. PfR focuses primarily on climate-related natural hazards, whose underlying causes and potential for disasters result to large extent from human-induced processes.

Partners for Resilience has been working together since 2011, applying the IRM approach in strengthening community resilience in Kenya. In the second phase of the programme (2016-2020), the alliance aims at strengthening IRM in policies, investments and practices at national and county level.

Three domains for dialogue on Integrated Risk Management

1. Policy domain: Mainstream IRM/DRM (and related) in policies at national and county level. For instance DRM policies, climate change bill, livestock strategy and other policies.

2. Investments domain: Effective engagement with private sectors/investors on mainstreaming IRM in their policies and businesses. Additionally to

promote public private partnerships for resilience strengthening; for instance in mega government projects like LAPSET. We also build capacity of CSO on how to access and utilize the global climate funds.

3. Practice domain: Promote IRM practices and approaches in development plans and programmes through linking and learning and also leverage dialogue agendas on other running DRM programmes. PfR also promote good practices documentation on IRM from PfR programme and relevant stakeholders programmes in the county as well as building linkages between national and county governments for evidence based policy influence at all the levels.

Our Vision

Partners for Resilience foresee resilient families and communities by integrating ecosystems and climate change in disaster risk reduction. This integrated approach enables communities to withstand shocks from natural hazards and sustain development by securing or transforming their livelihoods.

Our Mission

PfR contributes to the resilience of communities by integrating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Community approach will be strengthened if the institutional environment can be made more conducive to climate and ecosystem DRR, and they engage with civil society and government actors to apply a combined approach.

PfR has presence in Guatemala, Haiti, Mali, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Indonesia and Philippines.

BUILDING RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

From the Desk of Executive Director- (MID-P)



Since we were registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to operate in Isiolo County 17 years ago, MID-P has made milestone in areas of its focus, building resilience among the mainly pastoralist community.

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) was the first international NGO to enter into partnership with MID-P in 2005 to implement pastoralist education programme using mobile school model. Later Cordaid came on board to support drought emergency interventions the same year. The partnership with Cordaid has since grown into a long term multi-year funding with institutional strengthening components.

To build its capacity and capability to work with the communities, MIDP undertakes an organizational self-assessment and use the outcome to guide its growth as a development and humanitarian agency. It has been guided by strategic plans; the Third Edition in use- Strategic Plan 20220-2024. MID-P envisions an Empowered, Just, Equitable and Resilient society in Northern Kenya. MID-P exists to facilitate and co-ordinate sustainable community development initiatives and promote good governance. It is guided by the following core values- Integrity, Team work, Equity and respect for Diversity, Building Relationships, Innovation and Professionalism. Our other areas of focus have been on Gender, HIV/Aid environment and conflict management which were identified as cross cutting themes in all programmes.

The strong partnership we have cultivated with the County Government of Isiolo has seen some legislations put in place and others in preparatory stages including Persons with Disability Policy, Disaster Risk Management Policy, County Climate Change Fund Act 2018, Disaster Risk Management

Bill, Rangeland Management Bill among others. We salute all those who have worked tirelessly to make enactment of DRM policy a reality led by Deputy Governor Dr. Abdi Issa and the Isiolo County Assembly Speaker Hon. Hussein Roba. DRM policy was championed by MID-P and supported by funding from Partners for Resilience.

Challenges we have endured include high demand for services from target communities, vastness of the operation areas, poor transport and communication network. However, we have made notable strides in our programmes that focus on policy, investment and practice.

MID-P is a member of a number of county level development groups/forums among them County Steering Group, County Peace Forum, County Climate Adaptation & Planning Committee and others concerned with decision making and development initiative at sub county level. Another notable achievement is the appointment of MID-P as the coordinator of more than 60 CSOs.

In collaboration with Water Resources Authority, MID-P built capacities for 10 Water Resource Users Association to bridge the gaps they identified- leadership, resource mobilisation and conflict resolution.

The Crocodile Jaw Dam is one of the Mega Projects Proposed in Isiolo County by the National Government under Vision 2030. Our stand is that the Dam has been designed without involving pastoralist communities who live along Ewaso Ng'iro River and the project will undoubtedly make pastoralists living in semi arid part of Kenya get exposed to different hazards.

Molu K. Tepo

Acting Executive Director

The roadmap to Disaster Risk Management Act



Anthony Kiarie

This informed the start of a process that commenced in 2015 aimed at putting a legislative framework in place, guided by a policy direction on necessary timely interventions.

The Partners for Resilience (PfR) through Cordaid agreed with the County Government of Isiolo on a technical support in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) with the objective being to develop a Disaster Risk Management policy.

Whenever disasters strike, there is always the feeling of hopelessness among the affected with most of the times interventions coming a little too late.

Every county in Kenya is prone to its unique hazards that disrupt livelihoods. Isiolo County experiences various disasters among them drought, floods, resources based conflicts, insecurity, livestock/human diseases, urban fires and recently desert locust invasion and Covid-19.

In a region where 80percent of the population depend on livestock rearing as source of livelihood, onset of drought herald death of animals and conflicts brought about by competition for natural resources.

Disaster reduction is not a local concern but has received global attention through the United Nations.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) was adopted on March 18, 2015 by representatives from 187 UN Member States gathered at the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), in Sendai, Japan.

Addressing various disasters that afflict vulnerable communities has been a concern of various stakeholders operating in Isiolo County who includes Civil Society Organizations, development partners, National and County Governments.

Merti Integrated Development Programme MID-P, an implementing partner of PfR programmes in Isiolo County took a central role by mobilizing various stakeholders in the development of Disaster Risk Management Bill and a policy. It was envisaged that intervention backed by a legislative clause would be effective in minimizing disasters in the three phases of before, during and after disasters.

The journey that began seven years ago is coming to a close, with policy having been formulated and what remains is enactment of the Act to pave way to a well coordinated intervention on disaster management and reduction.

"Early this year (2020) we carried out the process of validating the Disaster Risk Management Bill in readiness for its tabling before the County Assembly. There has been wider consultation throughout the process with emerging issues being ironed out before moving on to the next step," explains Anthony Kiarie, Director of Information and Public Communication at the Isiolo County Government.

The journey towards enactment of the DRM Bill has been tedious and at times slow but nevertheless is a smooth process where the community and other relevant partners have been active participants.

"This far we have come due to the good working relationship between the National Government agencies and departments, County Government and the Civil Society Organizations. It was a process that included public participation and CSOs played a bigger role by facilitating validation leading to passing of the DRM Policy by the County Assembly," says Lordman Lekalkuli, National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) coordinator, Isiolo County.

Interventions by NDMA mainly focus on drought while other hazards like floods, fire, human epidemics are left to government departments and other non state actors.

Once the Act is in place, it will see coordination right from the village to the county level. The community will have a big say on the best approach to intervene on an impending disaster or after one has occurred.

"Through the Community Managed Disaster Risk Management Committees (CMDRRs) constituted at the village level, the community will be empowered to communicate and coordinate tackling of hazards. MID-P has supported this process through the PfR Programme and we are just a few steps away before DRM Act is in place," says Ibrahim Kabelo, Programme Officer at MID-P.

The Act is coming to place at a time when Isiolo County has witnessed two more previously undocumented disasters, invasion by desert locusts and the global pandemic Covid-19.



Lordman Lekalkuli

Community's efforts in disaster reduction

Ibrahim Boru,
Member, Bisan Biliqo CMDRR

Years before the idea of coming up with a legislation on disaster reduction, committees had been established in some villages to address the challenges brought by natural hazards.

MID-P through PfR programme had eight years ago facilitated the formation of Community Managed Disaster Risk Management Committees (CMDRRs).

"This CMDRR committee was formed in 2012 and was supported by PfR Two with 16 members where gender and youth factors are considered. Members who sit from this committee are representatives of public institutions such as schools, dispensaries, mosques, water committee and grazing committee," says the chairman of Bisan Biliqo CMDRR Ali Wako from Merti Sub-County

Some of the activities the committee is engaged with and which are aimed at minimizing disasters include protection of River Ewaso Ng'iro riparian through planting indigenous trees and giving advice on possible flooding of the river for the residents to take precaution.

"We are involved in protection of the river's ecosystem through protection of indigenous trees along the riparian. During the rainy season, we educate farmers not to grow crops so close to the river and advice them to move about 100metres away to avoid being affected by floods," explains the chairman.

The committee coordinates with national Government agencies among them Kenya Meteorological Department and the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) to get weather predictions notably on droughts and floods.

"Once we receive weather information from Government officials, we advice our community accordingly. For instance when there is an impending drought, we inform the livestock owners to sell part of their animals as and restock during the rainy season to minimize losses," says Mr Wako.

However, the CMDRRs have several challenges which they hope will be adequately addressed once the DRM Act becomes operational. Currently they have no established office and mobility of committee members is a challenge since they receive no facilitation during their meetings.



New face of Isiolo Municipality

Elevation of Isiolo as one of the 59 municipalities in Kenya is a step towards minimizing disasters experienced in this urban centre.

Over the years, the town has experienced challenges brought about by poor urban planning among them fire and floods.

"Floods from Mt Kenya and Nyambene hill flow towards Isiolo Central Business District and cause a lot of destruction. The floods come seasonally but when they flow this way this have a lot of impact. Fire incidents have also seen property worth millions lost in the past few years

One of the challenges we have been facing is encroachment of access roads where the fire engine was not able to easily access parts of Bula Pesa Ward and part of Wabera Ward. We are planning to enforce Physical Planning Act 2016 to open up the access roads during the 2020/2021 financial year," explains Osman Halake, Manager, Isiolo Municipality.

The manager reveals that since elevation to a municipality, some services have now been transferred to his office and includes refuse collection, street lighting and managing of floods in an area covering five kilometres square.

Four departments have also been established for effective service delivery among them public health and environment, Finance and Administration, Engineering and Disasters Department which has a staff of 27.

Already roads have been upgraded in the town and access roads opened up through a World Bank Supported programme-Urban Development Grant and Urban Institutional Grant which aims to improve urban infrastructure within the CBD.

Mr Halake says in an effort to achieve set objectives, his office has worked closely with MID-P through its PfR programme.

"We appreciate the support extended to us by MID-P during the collection of

views from stakeholders while drafting the municipality's Integrated Development Plan. It is after collecting the views that we now have a plan and a roadmap on how to provide services to the residents of this urban centre," explains Mr Halake.

He says MID-P as the coordinator of CSO network in Isiolo County has also been instrumental in engaging staff at the municipality on the urban climate change programmes. Members of the climate change committee are drawn from three urban wards.



Osman Halake,



Enterprise Fund Act opens business opportunities for women and youth

Women, youth and people living with disabilities now have an opportunity to grow their business enterprises or establish new ones through financial support from the County Government of Isiolo.



Makai Intalo

This follows the enactment of an Act that will see this vulnerable group allocated free interest loans repayable in duration of two years maximum.

The Youth, Women and Persons with Disability Enterprises Fund Act and Regulations 2019 provide for the establishment of a kitty to support micro and small business and industries.

The enterprises funds monies is allocated through each cycle of Annual Development Plan (ADP) and has factored in Islamic financial service Sharia compliance of interest free loans.

A board to manage the funds is already in place and a bank account has been opened where the money will be channeled.

Isiolo County Chief Officer in charge of Administration who previously served in the gender and youth docket Mustafa Kuntullo says the funds are ready for disbursement and several self help groups have applied.

"For the financial year 2020/2021, a total of Sh18million has been allocated with women getting Sh8million, youth Sh6million and Sh4million being set aside for people with disabilities This figure is not static and we shall see an increment in coming years," says the Chief Officer.

The coming to place of Youth Women and Persons with Disability Act was a process supported and at times facilitated by MID-P through the PfR Programme in collaboration with other civil society organizations through the county's CSO network(ICCEN).

MID-P has been coordinating activities of 60 CSOs in Isiolo County. The network has been in the forefront lobbying for the establishment of various policies and legislations aimed at building resilience of vulnerable communities.

"We have been part of this process through the various stages of policy development of the Act. Our role has mainly been in sensitizing relevant stakeholders as well as facilitating public participation, a requirement before enactment of any legislation," explains Ibrahim Kabelo, MID-P Programme Officer.

He adds that following the enactment of the Act, MID-P has managed to hold sensitization campaigns in six wards to encourage the intended beneficiaries to apply for the funds. The six wards are Chari, Kinna, Bula Pesa, Wabera, Burat and Ngaremara where the applicants have also been trained on prudent financial management and bookkeeping principles.

One of the groups that has benefited from training facilitated by MID-P is Malka Bisanadi Cultural Village, a women group engaged in commercial farming in Kinna Ward.

"We were invited for training by MID-P after we applied for the County Government's Women and Youth Fund. The training was beneficial to our group since we learnt about bookkeeping and other principles of financial management. Officials of the group now know their specific roles and will play it effectively," says Makai Intalo, the chairlady of the group.



Mustafa Kuntullo



From the Desk of Wetlands International



Wetlands International is dedicated to safeguarding and restoring wetlands for people and nature. We are driven by the knowledge that safeguarding and restoring wetlands is urgent and vital for water security, biodiversity, climate regulation, sustainable development and human health. In our disaster risk reduction work, we work from the principles that environmental degradation can lead to disasters and aggravation of hazards, and that the sustenance and restoration of healthy ecosystems are key to reducing disaster risk and improving community resilience.

Wetlands International Kenya in Strategic Partnership (SP) with Cordaid, Kenya Red Cross and Red Cross Climate Centre is implementing a five year (2016-2020) Partners for Resilience (PfR) Programme to build and strengthen community resilience in Kenya by integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) – referred to as Integrated Risk Management (IRM).

The strategic partnership aims at strengthening civil society organizations to lobby, advocate and promote the application of Integrated Risk Management (IRM) to enhance and protect livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Kenya through the so-called 'IRM Dialogue trajectories' in three 'Domains of Change' - Policy, Investments, and Practice

The geographical area of implementation is Ewaso Ng'iro River Basin covering Isiolo, Laikipia and Samburu Counties and also at national level. The local Partners are MID-P) and Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT). This is done through community capacity building in partnership with Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs) and lobbying for adoption of IRM relevant policies and risk sensitive investments.

PfR Two focused primarily on climate-related natural hazards, whose underlying causes and potential for disasters result to a large extent from human-induced processes.



Ewaso Ng'iro River

So far PfR has supported more than 20 WRUAs through capacity building interventions with great positive impact. WRUAs are community-based associations of water resource users at the sub-basin level established under the Water Act, 2016. WRUAs that benefitted from Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) carried out in October and November 2016 include Merti, Dhukes, Kuro Bisan Owo, Gafarsa, Gotu, Sericho, Oldonyiro, Kipsing, Yamicha kom and Galan gofo WRUAs.

Titus Wamae, HSC
Policy & Advocacy Officer
WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL, EAST AFRICA



WRA: Supporting WRUAs to execute their mandate



Operations of Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs) continue to face serious challenges with most of them existing only on paper but little to show on the ground.

Financial constraints hinder them from executing their lawful mandate and some have died a natural death a few years after registration and development of a Sub-Catchment Management Plan (SCMP).

At the Middle Ewaso Ng'iro North Catchment area which covers six counties among them parts of Meru, Laikipia and Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit and Garissa, 84 areas have been identified as in need of WRUAs. But only 24 exists majority of which came with SCMPs but have expired without being implemented.

"Once a SCMP is developed, it should be implemented within five years. If this is not done, it expires automatically and the members have to sit down and come up with a new one, a situation that is demoralizing and many of the members end up losing interest," explains Tatisius Kinyua, Sub-Regional Manager at Water Resources Authority office, Middle Ewaso Ng'iro North.

The Water Resources Authority (WRA) is mandated by law to conserve and protect water sources in an effort to reduce conflicts among communities competing for the scarce resource. However owing to logistical constraints and limitation of human resources, execution of this mandate has been left to WRUAs.



Illegal abstraction of water from a river

The National Government's decision to come up with a policy to establish WRUAs countrywide was informed by realization that water resources are extremely difficult to control as they are viewed as God-given resources.

WRUA's has been instrumental in reducing conflicts arising from illegal abstraction of water mainly on major rivers, a situation that previously denied the downstream communities this essential commodity.

For a WRUA to be recognized, it has to be registered at the Attorney General's office under the society's Act. The process involves a properly formulated Constitution and minutes of meeting detailing the election of the office bearers.

Some of the challenges faced in the formation and proper execution of responsibilities by WRUAs include ethnicity. Some of the water sources like boreholes and springs are considered to be owned by particular clans or communities and the "owners" are hesitant to accommodate outsiders.

"One of the key roles of WRUAs is to solve water conflicts before we are involved. They are at liberty to source for finances from development partners and County Governments. Our role is to see to it that the financing proposal is drafted in line with their SCMP and this is where we offer guidance," says Mr Kinyua.

One of the major financiers of WRUAs is the Water Sector Trust Fund (WSTF) but can only fund at most six in a sub-region. This could explain why many of these community associations remain inactive after their establishment since few other funders including County Governments rarely show interest.

The WRUA Development Cycle (WDC) is based on five principles, key among them the Catchment Management Strategy (CMS) and the Sub-Catchment Management Plan (SCMP). The latter is a plan developed by stakeholders (WRA, WRUA and others) which sets up a plan of activities to address the water resource management problems faced in a particular sub-catchment.

However, despite the challenges, it is not all gloom and doom. There are some WRUAs with a success story to tell after undergoing training to build their capacity on fundraising.

Overcoming water challenges: The case of Sericho WRUA

Mounted metallic and plastic water tanks are the first sight that welcomes a first time visitor to Sericho Township in Isiolo County.

A closer look reveals that all public institution buildings are fitted with gutters that drain rain water into reservoirs where women and children can be seen heading with jerricans.

A short distance away is a borehole where solar panels have been fixed. Not far from here is a fenced water pan with a livestock watering trough constructed a few metres away.

"All that you see are the fruits of the formation of Sericho Water Resource Users Association (WRUA). We secured a grant from the Water Sector Trust Fund in 2015 which has greatly assisted our community to have various sources of water," says Ali Duba, a WRUA committee member.

The WRUA was registered in 2014 and has 30 members drawn from two locations of Sericho and Eresa Boru.

It is through the support they received from the Water Resources Authority and PFR programme that the members managed to develop a SCMP and source for funds that have been utilized towards provision of clean water throughout the year.

"WRUA members were invited to Merti Town by MID-P for a training workshop. After this training to build our capacity, we successfully applied for Ksh5million.

First we received Ksh2.5million and after a year, the other half was channeled to our bank account and utilized as per the SCMP," adds Duba.



Sara Adan

The money was used in rehabilitating a borehole that had been sunk in 1986, purchase of eight 10,000 litre tanks that have been placed in local schools and dispensaries. Part of the money went into purchasing solar panels to replace an old generator at boreholes in Sericho and Iresa Boru and fencing off the water pan. Generators are expensive to maintain and produce greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. Using renewable solar energy saves on fuel costs.

"By putting up a fence, we ensure that livestock and wild animals do not contaminate the water. During heavy rains, the dam fills to

capacity and we are assured of a steady supply over a long period," says Sara Adan, a committee member.

With several sources of water and utilizing rain water harvesting technology, the community residing near River Ewaso Ng'iro has managed to address the problem of water shortage even during drought seasons.

"Formation of WRUA was the first step towards addressing water related challenges. Other benefits have come along including trapping the river water to utilize it in farming and bee keeping," adds Sara.

But with an increasing population, Sara says the community still requires an additional borehole and is appealing to the Water Department at the Isiolo County Government for support.



Rural livelihoods hard hit by Covid-19 pandemic



In January 2020, 15 members of Badha Cultural Centre in Merti Sub-County received loans totaling Ksh450,000 from their Savings and Credit Cooperative Society-Biliqo Bada Sacco.

The group runs an income generating project initiated through support from Partners for Resilience Programme (PFR1).

The Ksh30,000 disbursed to each of the beneficiaries was previous year's savings from their conference facility, lodges, hotel services and sale of artifacts to guests visiting the community centre located at Bisan Biliqo Shopping Centre.

But the outbreak of the coronavirus in March put the plans and expectations in disarray. There were no guests to hire the conference hall after the Government enforced measures to curb the spread of the deadly virus. The members' weekly meetings for a merry go round cum savings project were also suspended.

"Before the Covid-19 pandemic, this project was generating on average Ksh3,000 per week. Times are hard now for us where for several months we have made zero earnings and we are not certain when normalcy will return," says Habiba Tadicha, a member of the group.

Nearly 200 kilometres away, in Isiolo Town, another women group engaged in an income generating activity is lamenting the negative tidings brought about by Covid-19.

For nearly a decade now, Anolei Women Group had been carrying out a profitable business of collecting camel milk from the villages in Isiolo County and transporting it to Nairobi for sale.

Like many other small enterprises, industries and corporate across the globe, the Covid-19 pandemic did not spare this cooperative society which has 100 members, all women.

"Our milk collection and sale declined by 50percent following the issuance of guidelines by the Government to contain the spread of coronavirus," says Fatuma Fatar, the vice chair of the co-operative society.

Prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus, the women group could collect up to 6,000 litres of milk daily, store it in a cooler then ferry it to Nairobi, about 300 kilometres away by public transport means and a private van.

The new guidelines announced by Ministry of Health included restriction of movement to and from some counties and imposition of a curfew by the Government.

"Our main market is in Nairobi and the capital city was one of the counties put under partial lockdown by the Government. It meant that we could not market our milk to Eastleigh, Koma Rock and South C estates where most of our clients reside," explains Fatar.

Incidentally, the lockdown of some counties and estates coincided with the onset of the long rains (March to May) when camel milk production is high owing to adequate pasture. The restriction also came at a time when Muslims were observing the Holy Month of Ramadhan and the milk was in high demand.

With a shrunk market, large volumes of the milk went into waste and camel farmers who depend on the earnings for livelihood were feeling the pain, at times going for weeks without pay.

The women group has six employees who report to work at 2am to repackage the milk in plastic jerricans which are then loaded into buses by 3am. With the night curfew in place, the workers had no way of assessing the milk cooling plant on time.



Anolei Women Group's camel milk cooling plant.

Why it may take years for pastoralists to recover from Covid-19 effects



Over the years, the pastoral community of Isiolo County have been afflicted by severe droughts and livestock diseases depriving them off their main source of livelihood.

But none of the two disasters has caused much devastation, economically and socially like the Covid-19 pandemic which prompted closure of 15 livestock markets spread across the county as a way of preventing spread of the deadly virus.

The livestock farmers look forward to the weekly market days to sell their animals to traders, some who travel from as far as Nairobi.

“Our livestock markets receive animals from northern Kenya counties including Marsabit and Wajir. All these markets were closed down for months, a situation that left both herders and traders in an awkward position,” says Jarso Halkano, Chairman Isiolo County Livestock Marketing Council.

The chairman explains that on a single market day, the average amount of money that exchange hands is Ksh5million, a big boost to the region’s economy.

“So many activities take place on a market day, creating a ripple effect on economic growth. There are transporters, food sellers, hawkers, dealers in veterinary drugs and other categories of traders, all of whom make earnings during market days,” adds Halkano.

Established suppliers who regularly supply meat to schools and restaurants were equally affected by the closure that lasted for five months from April 2020.

A number of middlemen who as act as the link between buyers and sellers, earning between Ksh500 and Ksh1,000 per animal might never return to their occupation.

“You can be sure most of those brokers were edged out of this business completely since they had to adapt to new ways of survival. I know several women who never came back even after the markets were reopened in September,” says the chairman.

The Chairman of Isiolo Chapter of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) Hussein Jama says beside the livestock trade value chain, other sectors of the economy at the county were hard hit by the coronavirus.

“Our survey which is not backed by scientific data revealed that tourism, retail trade and transport recorded losses of 75percent, 50percent and 40percent respectively.

Enforcement of social distance on commuters using public transport discouraged traders operating in far flung areas such as Sericho and Merti Towns to source for goods in Isiolo Town. Operators of public service vehicles hiked fares to compensate for the reduced number of passengers per trip.

Low business leads to job losses to employees at private investments. The affected workers are not able to service their bank loans or remit their monthly contribution at their respective Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs).

Jama opines that recovery path for the community from the adverse effects of Covid-19 is going to be long and rocky unless County and National Governments make interventions.

“There are hundreds of small traders who lost their livelihood due to this global pandemic. They are now relying on hand outs from well wishers and unless interventions are made by Government and other development partners, we are staring at a bleak future,” says the KNCCI chairman.

Support and Intervention during Covid-19 pandemic



When the initial cases of global pandemic Covid-19 were reported in Kenya, the news was received with mixed reactions.

Some, notably in the rural areas were in total denial of the existence of the deadly Coronavirus and disregarded the guidelines issued by World Health Organization to minimize its spread.

The denial and stigma associated with the disease posed a challenge to the department of health at the counties where there was a risk of medic being overwhelmed by patients in case of mass infections.



“Controlling the spread of this virus is not the work of a single institution or individual. It calls for concerted effort and that is why we are glad the civil society organizations have joined in the sensitization campaign,” said Wario Galma, County Executive Committee Member in charge of health at the Isiolo County Government.

He noted that at first, people were alert but after few weeks, they had thrown caution to the wind to a point that no one was adhering to the health ministry’s guidelines on protection.

MID-P, a representative of Isiolo Civil Society Network at the County Emergency Response Committee stepped in to support the department of health.

“We received financial support from the PfR programme through Cordaid and engaged 50 university students and college students from Merti and Garbatulla Sub-counties. The students were trained by health workers on how to sensitize the community at the village level on personal and collective measures in an effort to minimize spread of the

virus,” explains Ibrahim Kabelo, MID-P Programme Officer.

During the one week training, MID-P staff distributed face masks, sanitizers, hand washing soaps and water jerricans to the community, health workers and National Government officers.



One of the youthful volunteer Garo Abdullahi from Garbatulla Township said an entire family had been discriminated after one of their kin tested positive for Covid-19.

“After this training, we are now empowered to move to the villages to sensitize community to stop stigmatization and adhere to WHO guidelines,” she said.

Mr Wario, the CEC Health termed the role played by civil society played under the leadership of MID-P exemplary and worthy emulating noting it had made a big difference.



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