

# **The Relevance of Participatory Rangelands Management in supporting livelihoods and natural resource restoration; The delivery framework of PRM in Kenya and Tanzania**

## **1. Introduction**

Piloting of Participatory Rangelands Management Project in Kenya and Tanzania was conceived from the perspective of a regional project with actual project sites in two countries but advocacy, learning and sharing at the regional and global level platforms such as, CELEP targeting Europe and EU parliament and member states. ILC on the other hand through the CBI No.3 Diverse Tenure System delivered through the Rangelands Initiatives Africa with direct link to the Global component which then rolls over to other parts of Asia, Latin America and globally through ILC membership. The program was a flagship of the Rangelands Initiative Africa for learning more about rangelands management and the PRM concept. It has contributed to the global campaigns including Global Land Landscape Forum, UNFSS, IYRP etc.

RECONCILE lead the in-country Kenya implementation and regional coordination of PRM work across the target sites. TNRF leads the same in 6 villages in Tanzania. However, in Kenya PRM was delivered through a broad-based Technical Working Group (TWG) comprising relevant departments of both levels of government. The TWG was tasked with joint planning and project execution (quarterly approval of budgets, reports, and work plans). A similar framework was established in Tanzania. Evidence from the field confirms that the TWG gave legitimacy to the implementation process by linking the government and target communities. Moreover, the TWG harnessed technical skills of government officers that, in turn, informs quality of project outputs. At the regional level, a Steering Committee performs a similar task to that of the TWG.

Together with other CELEP members, VSF Belgium is supporting advocacy capacity among local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) while also taking up advocacy issues at various levels including the EU, African Union (AU) and East African Community. Through strategic dialogue, PRM also managed to cement relations with specific lead agencies on matters rangeland management such as the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), and the National Land Commission (NLC). Moreover, PRM worked closely with the EU-funded “Support to the Attainment of Vision 2030 Through Devolved Land Reforms in Community Lands of Kenya” implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This project aims at improving land administration through implementation of the Community Land Act (2016) in Kenya.

## **2. PRM Tool, policy, and institutional development**

In the implementation of the PRM as a tool for rangelands restoration, rehabilitation and management in Kenya and Tanzania, policy and institutional framework defined the intervention. Policy and institutional structures underpin restoration and management through participation of policy makers, users, and community resource managers. As a framework policy, demonstrates the importance of the concept by inclusion as part of management tools or supporting the implementation. Examples are the Land use plan policy, Land Policy, rangeland livestock production policy, spatial plan guidelines etc. these provided opportunities and sustainability for the project implementation in Kenya and Tanzania.

There exists community level land and natural resource management structures, they include, rangelands management, grazing committees and water users' associations these are community led and managed structures. PRM recognized them as frameworks for community level resource management that needed awareness, capacity, and management to integrate and align their initiatives within the PRM concept. This in part defined the institutional capacity strengthening for sustainable rangelands use and management. It fitted within the first and second stages of the PRM tool.

## **3. PRM and ecosystem restoration in the context piloting in Kenya and Tanzania**

The application of PRM as a tool for ecosystem restoration in the project landscape first, remain strategic but second is consistent with the key tenets of PRM objectives. Piloting of the project aligned and responded to the growing traction for the need to save rangelands and pastoralism. More attention is being paid to ecological functioning and ecosystem services; functional restoration is beginning to assume a more prominent position. While evidence of a functional restoration entails an improved environmental state, for example, improved water quality, reduced weed populations, or increased plant cover, PRM applies these and in Baringo for instance, natural springs that had dried up, degraded rangelands are fully restored. This demonstrated that one remains an approach while the other is a tool with the goal of realizing a functional and healthy environment.

The rehabilitated and restored spring is benefiting more than 1,000 households (HH) from the Sukta springs while Tabarweche is projected to yield 10-12m<sup>3</sup>/hr from the current 1.2m<sup>3</sup>/hr. It takes no more than 2 minutes to fill 20L jerry can. This has the potential of reducing the burden on women and freeing up their time to engage in other productive activities

Biodiversity conservation and tourism: The project has seen greater impacts around the restored biodiversity with conservancies confirming dramatic landscapes teeming with a rich diversity of

flora and fauna. Target communities coexist well with wildlife by, among others, maintaining grazing reserves which provide critical dry season habitats for wildlife. The project sites lie on the migration corridor linking Laikipia, Samburu and Kerio Valley ecosystems and are home to a remarkably high number of species of mammals, birds and reptiles.<sup>1</sup> The conservancies also provide sanctuary to a number of resident animals that never leave, for example, the rock hyrax in Irong.

#### **4. PRM, its relevance conflict management**

Shared resources and conflict management: the project used the existing framework of Conservancy model. The project anticipated that the conservancy model would tackle violent competition over rangeland resources. This should be achieved through negotiated access to dry season grazing areas by neighboring communities. The prohibition of in-situ grazing in Kabarion Conservancy was also identified as a conflict mitigation strategy for it avoids the concentration of herders and their livestock a predisposing factor to resource conflicts. Kabarion lies on a buffer zone and is routinely affected by conflict. PRM supported positive interactions among the target communities, albeit indirectly. For instance, Pokots attended PRM trainings in Bogoria, a territory of the Njemps and Tugens. Similar trainings were held in Pokot territory, with attendance from their erstwhile rivals—the Njemps and Tugens.

PRM was delivered through a conflict sensitive approach. For instance, target communities have re-visited the “Karandille” practice that encourages reserving certain areas for grazing during the dry season. This promotes regeneration and rangeland elasticity. This experience presents two clear issues; PRM provides framework for dialogue in the second and third stages including agreements and secondly, community cohesion and safe mobility leading to sustainable pastoralism and the livelihood system.

#### **5. Lessons Learnt**

**Rangeland health has an indirect influence on community livelihoods. This is particularly useful when assessing the contribution of healthy rangelands to improved livelihoods:** PRM seeks to enhance livelihoods and nutrition status of target communities by improving the management of their rangelands. This indirect contribution must be seen through a trajectory of outcomes: improved rangeland health, productive rangelands, and improved livestock production that then leads to improved nutritional status among target communities. Complimentary activities initiated by PRM and partners including fodder production, expansion of water sources, breed

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<sup>1</sup> These include, among others, leopards, buffaloes, wild dogs, lions, hyenas, elephants, wild pigs, greater kudu, impala, gazelle, waterbuck, baboons, monkeys, snakes, giraffes, zebras, and a diverse species of birdlife

improvement, livestock marketing, and planting of appropriate crops (following soil testing) hold potential for sustainable livelihoods.

**Even with the knowledge that the participation of men, women, elders, youth and children is crucial in sustaining pastoralism; women's involvement in key rangeland management institutions is not always guaranteed.** Women often bear the brunt of under-resourced provisions of the range including water, food, and cooking fuel. Yet they seldom influence key decisions on access to, management, and utilization of rangeland resources. Nonetheless, PRM has shown that securing incremental change through consensus in rural areas where patriarchy still prevails, initiating livelihoods activities specifically targeting women, and increasing the participation of women in rangeland management institutions are steps forward in building better future for pastoral women.

**Any management model that parcels out rangeland resources and promotes exclusivity often meets with little success. The landscape approach holds promise for sustainable resource use and group cohesion.** As with other common property regimes, rangelands support multiple users with diverse interests.

**By infusing indigenous and traditional knowledge in range management, pastoral communities are best placed to navigate persistent or even emerging challenges that threaten the future of pastoralism:** Rising numbers of people and livestock, poor land use planning, rangeland degradation, resource conflicts, weakening of traditional institutions, and inadequate capacity on the part of formal institutions to enforce existing laws are just but a few challenges limiting the productivity of rangelands in Baringo and beyond. Policy makers will have to harness the contribution of both formal and informal institutions to address these challenges. PRM's resource mapping integrates both traditional and scientific knowledge. For instance, PRM deployed Land PKS, an open-source analytical tool that provides users with up-to-date and geo-referenced data—easily accessible through mobile phones. Pastoralists possess indigenous knowledge that has helped in the planning transhumance, sustained animal husbandry, and environmental stewardship for millennia. As climate change brings greater environmental uncertainty, infusing indigenous and scientific knowledge will prove invaluable in the management of these fragile ecosystems.<sup>2</sup>

**Learning and sharing often happen at the tail end of projects.** PRM project was not an exception. Coincidentally actual sharing of lessons suffered greatly from the COVID 19 pandemic. In-country learning and sharing have nonetheless continued.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://landpotential.org/about/>

## 6. Moving Forward

This documentation has highlighted many positive achievements of PRM. The project also navigated specific challenges with varying degrees of success. Bearing in mind that this was a pilot project, it is hoped that an extension will be granted to consolidate the gains made thus far.

**Conflict sensitive programming:** It was anticipated that the conservancy model would engender peaceful coexistence among target communities. The project even though has contributed to positive peace and there's a sense in which conflict over shared resources has been managed, the project never had conflict as a key intervention area. The impact has emerged as part of the larger PRM application strategy. In the next phase, PRM should explore inter-community dialogue, develop a mechanism for responding to conflict by mapping the conflict hotspots, and rehabilitation of 'peace' road.

**Rangeland management institutions:** PRM project at the pilot level has done a remarkable job in strengthening the capacity of rangeland management institutions to better discharge their mandate. While these are nascent institutions with limited revenue streams, they often incur relatively high administrative and logistical costs necessary for the day-to-day management of the conservancies.

**Biodiversity conservation:** Pastoralism is one of the few forms of land use that coexist with wildlife primarily because livestock and wildlife exploit different ecological niches within a given rangeland. Moreover, the benefits of biodiversity conservation are self-evident. Even though locals tend to live in harmony with wildlife, human-wildlife conflicts remain a recurring problem across the target sites. The predation on livestock by wild animals remains a persistent problem especially during extended periods of drought.

**Emerging risks:** The rising waters in L. Baringo, L. Bogoria and other Rift Valley lakes remain a concern in the project area. In Irong, displaced communities are already settling in conservancies, L. Bogoria Reserve and Kaptelin—a renowned breeding site for impala. The recent merger of L. Oloiden and L. Naivasha presents yet another ecological disaster because the latter is fresh while the former is saline. Even worse, expert projections indicate that L. Baringo and L. Bogoria will merge in the foreseeable future. The rising water levels are attributed to a combination of factors including geological activity, siltation in the lakes, and above-normal rains in the region. In future, we recommend a flexible project design that incorporates contingency planning and humanitarian response when such scenarios arise.

**PRM coordination and delivery structure:** PRM was delivered in a partnership involving local, regional, and international actors. Partnerships must contend with various dynamics. PRM will

do good to remember that projects are most effective when designed to enhance collaboration, efficiency and impact.

**Policy influencing:** No one can deny that the historic marginalization of Kenya's pastoral areas has led to weak or even non-existent service delivery by the government and, whenever services are available, they are mostly of poor quality.

More emphasis should be given to the lowlands to protect the highland dry season grazing areas from overgrazing and unplanned settlements. PRM has contributed to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG: End poverty in all its forms everywhere) by addressing these factors that underlie poverty in Baringo County.