



Good Practices and Innovations from the Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project (RPLRP)

LAIKIPIA COUNTY



Yaaku-Seek Pastoral Field School headed by James Matunge explains the use of different hives to the county assembly and the CPTL.

COMMUNITY-BASED PASTORAL FIELD SCHOOL FACILITATORS

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral systems are the main livelihood option for providing food, income and employment in challenging territories such as arid and semi-arid areas. Pastoralism, which is characterised by seasonal mobility of livestock in search of nutritious pastures and water, is widely believed to be uneconomic, environmentally destructive and no longer able to provide pastoralists with sustainable and decent livelihoods. This is because pastoral communities in the drylands of Eastern Africa are increasingly vulnerable to food and livelihood crises. Many reasons have been cited for this, including climate change and increased climatic shocks such as droughts and floods.

The recent droughts in Eastern Africa seem to confirm this, prompting policies, particularly in the face of global climate change, to settle pastoralists and introduce them to modern agricultural and livestock production techniques. In many arid areas, the number of qualified extension staff often does not suffice to provide quality extension services. The vastness and the remoteness of the areas and the sparse human population density also contributes to this problem. Poor infrastructure, insecurity, fewer extension staff due to non or staggered-recruitment by the government, extension staff unwilling to work in remote areas, poor distribution of extension

staff, and nomadism, are other factors that affect extension provision.

This deficiency leads to certain risks for the pastoralists, related to the shortage of proper capacity to deal with the hazards in the arid areas. To deal with this challenge, the approach of community-based pastoral field school facilitators was developed. Selected by their community and in collaboration with supporting bodies, such as projects and non-governmental organisations, community-based pastoral field school facilitators are members of the community and often livestock keepers themselves. They are in charge of disseminating certain farming techniques and methods in order to optimise animal production, and they play an important role in pastoral communities.

They receive training in basic livestock production. Once they graduate, they establish a school and provide basic extension services and husbandry advice to pastoralists. They build upon the knowledge, participation, and needs of livestock-owning communities, often in association with or supervised by an extension staff or master trainer.

This approach fills a gap in the provision of extension services especially among the pastoralists, who are often considered marginalised. It ensures access to important extension messages at a reduced cost.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Laikipia North and East Matanya, Doldol

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists living in Laikipia and its environs, particularly the Maasai of Laikipia, Yaaku, Kikuyu and Samburu communities are the target groups.
- The Laikipia County Government, Department of Agriculture provides human capacity; other development partners, such as FAO reinforce the human and material capacity of the county.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

- Baseline surveys or consultations with community members are done to carry out a needs assessment and get acquainted with the extension situation in the area; and to create a better understanding between the communities and the implementing agency.
- The community selects trainees, making sure that both men and women are included. In Laikipia six facilitators were selected -five men and one woman.
- The selected community members are trained.
- A community dialogue workshop is held to discuss the Pastoral Field School (PFS) concept and define the roles of the facilitator and participants.
- The PFS is established and starts operating under the supervision of extension staff. The facilitator is provided with material support for the training.
- During the initial stages, intensive monitoring is carried out to assess whether the PFS facilitators are following what they were taught and whether the objectives are being met.
- Refresher courses are conducted at regular intervals based on the findings of the PFS facilitators' assessment during the monitoring.
- It took approximately one year for lessons to be learnt and key success factors to be identified.

RESULTS

Outputs and results were monitored through focus group discussions with community members who participated in the PFS, and interaction with individual students. Indicators that relate to the degree of adoption of the new practice provided guidelines on the impact of the good practice.

- The county has trained 234 people (100 male and 134 female). This process resulted in the development of six PFS plans, and revitalisation of the schools in Matanya. Three of the schools graduated 100 participants, out of which 55 percent were female.
- An internal assessment launched by Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project (RPLRP) with master trainers in two sites in Laikipia found that at least one of the facilitators had complied with the processes while one had not adhered to all processes.
- As a result of their participation in the PFS, pastoralists have started adopting new practices, such as the Kenya top bar hive for improved beekeeping. Improved husbandry practices like planting or managing grass have also been noted.

SUCCESS FACTORS

- The practice is cost-effective. It costs between Ksh. 90,000 and Ksh. 140,000 to train the CPFS facilitator. Thereafter only about Ksh. 45,000-52,000 financial support was required to enable the facilitator train pastoralists for 45-52 weeks.
- Extension workers have been prepared to work with government and other stakeholders, thereby creating a centre of knowledge generation on sustainable development and livelihoods and directly influencing the extension process.

CONSTRAINTS

The environmental and socio-economic characteristics of the target area presents an operational context that is fraught with many uncertainties and unknown variables that can have an effect on implementation of the practice.

- Successful implementation of PFS requires community mobilisation of representative members. However, insufficient funds are a constraint to inclusion of community members and stakeholders in the process.
- PFS is time consuming in implementation and requires flexibility in order to accommodate participants who may have conflicting time schedules.
- Lack of a responsive attitude, mutual trust and awareness of the community priorities when developing community action plans affects their quality.
- Gender gaps are still pronounced due to culture. There is need to incorporate gender awareness and mainstreaming activities.
- Deep rooted perceptions, low levels of education and lack of exposure is a significant concern.
- Lack of standardisation with respect to training community members makes it imperative to build in a strong supervision component, provide standard training material and harmonise reporting and identification of gaps.
- Temporal migration of community members.
- The work of the CPFS facilitators is resisted by professional associations.
- Competition with other stakeholders.
- Lack of vehicles to reach the remote areas.
- Facilitators are sometimes committed with other activities.

- Irregular attendance by students especially during incidences of drought.

LESSONS LEARNT

- The link with government extension is possible and the government is interested.
- There is still need to closely follow the facilitators and monitor implementation and impact (with weekly, monthly and final assessments).

SUSTAINABILITY

Key factors promoting the sustainability of CPFS in Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs) include:

1. Partnerships to promote, develop and implement the PFS strategy. Partnerships are essential to:
 - Guarantee the buy-in of government and other organisations;
 - Build the capacity of the community members;
 - Strengthen PFS quality by providing inputs and comments from high level partners;
 - Promote community acceptance and ownership;
2. Cost-effective PFS practices that motivate farmers to continue applying the practices.
3. Budgeting PFS activities within the national extension for long-term engagement by local governments and private sector engagement.
4. Promotion of sustainable women empowerment, which increases gender equality.

5. Regulatory support to ensure institutional, social, economic and environmental sustainability.
6. Development of education material in the local language

REPLICABILITY AND UPSCALING

The practice is applicable in all areas, and has been made possible by the availability of reference material. To build an enabling environment for the training and embedding of more facilitators in the community, other relevant organisations should continue to assist the counties in enhancing capacities and mobilising resources necessary for establishment and for strengthening implementation of the practice. National or county government should include funding of PFS in their budgets.

The required conditions for replicability are deep and meaningful participation of pastoralists at all stages of the training; adoption of an innovative and adaptive approach; ensuring cultural sensitivity; cost-effectiveness and demonstrable impact; involvement of more women; and improving conditions for facilitators.

Harrison Saikong resides in Mkogodo west near Doldol. Following a Baraza held in Doldol by RPLRP on PFS, he registered to take part in a PFS the class on bee keeping. The facilitator took them through the concepts of bee husbandry. During the sessions, they carried out a practical experiment on hives that gives the best harvest. After the training, Saikong decided to adopt new improved hives. The hives are now occupied and the bees are also a deterrent to elephants, which would normally come to his compound. He has harvested honey and improved his income as a result. Harrison attributes these changes to the facilitation provided by the local PFS facilitator who was always easily available for consultation.

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