



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

### **BARINGO COUNTY**

#### **BARINGO: INTEGRATION OF PASTORAL FIELD SCHOOLS (PFS) APPROACH INTO PASTURE SEED BULKING/PASTURE ESTABLISHMENT GROUPS**



Lelnoi PFS training session. Credit: RPLRP Baringo County, Kenya.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Baringo County covers an area of about 11,015.3 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the population and housing census conducted in 2009, the population of Baringo County was, 555,561 (279,081 male and 276,480 female). The county is classified as arid and semi-arid and faces several hazards including drought, human diseases, livestock diseases, land degradation, human-wildlife conflict and flooding of seasonal rivers.

These hazards have continuously affected communities, particularly women and children. There is rampant land and resource degradation including degraded pasture resource areas in Baringo. This has mainly been due to inappropriate land use as agriculture encroaches

into marginal land, and the demand for fuel wood, charcoal and timber increases. The effect has manifested in increased bare ground and decreased cover by perennial trees, shrubs and grasses.

Reduced vegetative cover accelerates soil erosion. The composition, structure and densities of the vegetation have changed and are unpalatable. Invasive species have taken root, and further decreased the ability of the ecosystem to support livelihoods and economic development. In order to address this situation, the PFS approach is being used by the RPLRP Baringo, to support seed bulking/pasture establishment groups.

The integration of the PFS approach into seed bulking/pasture establishment groups aims at bridging the gap between pasture seed bulking/pasture establishment and continuous learning and research. The PFS approach has helped to determine the best pasture species in specific areas. It has also strengthened the capacity of local communities to analyse their livelihood systems, identify their main constraints and test possible solutions to the problems they face. The PFS approach in this context has been used to transfer knowledge and skills to pastoralists on seed bulking/pasture establishment; alternative livelihoods (bee keeping, poultry farming and livestock marketing); income generating activities; training and research.

The table below shows what has been achieved so far.

Name of Group	Number of Members			Enterprise for Experimentation	Technologies used in Pasture Development
	Male	Female	Youth		
Lelnoi PFS	11	10		PTD's for both were limited by low precipitation (rain)	Table banking practiced by both groups. Over Ksh. 45,000 transacted;  25 acres of land under pasture for each group.
Salabani PFS	7	10			
Lelmen PFS	30	23	7	Hay making	445 bales of hay produced. 25 acres of land under pasture.
Kamar PFS	17	13		To determine the best pasture species in the area (Boma Rhodes & Cenchrus)	Soil & water management through terracing, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – weed control through manual uprooting as opposed to chemical. Poultry production proposed as an income generating activity.  25 acres of land under pasture.
Mugurin PFS	16	14			
Kasaka PFS	22	16	6		Table banking practiced. Over Ksh. 30,000 transacted.  25 acres of land under pasture.

## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

#	Name of Group	Sub-county	Ward	Village
1	Lelnoi PFS	Baringo North	Saimo Soi	Kipcherere
2	Salabani PFS	Baringo South	Ilchamus	Salabani
3	Lelmen PFS	Baringo Central	Kabarnet	Lelmen
4	Kamar PFS	Mogotio	Emining	Kamar
5	Mugurin PFS	Mogotio	Kisanana	Mugurin
6	Kasaka PFS	Baringo Central	Kabarnet	Kapkelelwa

## STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The main stakeholders involved in the good practice are:

- The community members in the identified sites. Both men and women in the groups participate in various activities involved in pasture development, research and income generation;
- The Baringo County government through the Department of Livestock and ward administrators;
- National Drought Management Authority (NDMA);
- National Government through the Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs.

The stakeholders above have supported the groups in providing fencing materials and providing trainings. This is expected to ensure sustainability of the projects

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A PFS is a forum where farmers and trainers debate observations, apply their previous experiences and present new information from outside the community. The results of the meetings are management decisions on what action to take. Thus PFS as an extension methodology is a dynamic process that is practiced and controlled by the farmers to transform their observations and create a more scientific understanding of the crop/livestock agro-ecosystem.



Lelnoi PFS pasture reseeding site: Hay bulking demonstration using hay boxes. Credit: RPLRP Baringo County, Kenya.

A PFS is a process and not a goal. It constitutes a 52 weeks training with the following specific objectives:

- To empower farmers with knowledge and skills to make them experts in their own fields;
- To sharpen the farmers' ability to make critical and informed decisions that render their farming profitable and sustainable;
- To sensitise farmers in new ways of thinking and problem solving;
- To help farmers learn how to organise themselves and their communities.

## STEP-BY-STEP METHODOLOGY

1. Form seed bulking/pasture establishment group or any other alternative livelihood group and register the group;
2. Form a PFS comprising the same group members;
3. Begin activities geared towards seed bulking/pasture establishment or any other alternative livelihood objectives;
4. Train PFS Trainer of Trainers (TOT) from the established group and begin a 52 week training on various aspects demanded by the group members so as to make them experts in these areas;
5. Carry out group/community research on various aspects of concern to the group/community;
6. Start income generation activities for the group/community;
7. Graduate the group;
8. Replicate the activities to new groups.

## RESULTS

- Over 100 kg of pasture seed harvested and sold at between Ksh 400 – 600 per kg.
- Over 3,000 bales of hay harvested and sold at Ksh 200 – 300 per bale.
- After 52 weeks of participating in the PFS, beneficiaries have become

technical experts in pasture production, alternative livelihoods, research, resource mobilisation and establishing income generating activities. They are also better equipped to identify and solve problems.

- Some groups have secured resources from other partners towards construction of pasture conservation stores and fencing materials for their farms.
- Communities have recognised this approach as the best way to offer extension services. Consequently, more groups have come up to RPLRP office in Baringo to request for support through the same approach.

## **SUCCESS FACTORS**

The practice has developed a model where beneficiary communities go through a 52-week PFS training on technical topics or areas of interest such as proposal writing, business planning and research as they go through their group's objectives and other income generating activities.

Established groups are sustainable because members acquire knowledge in the course of implementing the group objectives as well as other income generating activities, therefore distinguishing them from others

## **CONSTRAINTS**

- This approach is constrained by the initial costs incurred in training PFS TOTs. This will be solved once the groups are running and have established income generating activities that can support them in a sustainable way.
- Initially, before groups establish income generating activities that will help sustain them, there may be challenges in ensuring all members of the group remain steadfast and focused towards achieving their objectives.

- PFS trainings, if not tailored well to support the demands of the community, may lead to group disintegration. Therefore the trainings should be demand driven.

## **LESSONS LEARNT**

Integration of the PFS approach into pasture seed bulking/pasture establishment groups or any other alternative livelihood groups develops beneficiaries/community members as experts in areas relevant to their interest. It ensures sustainability of these groups because as experts, they do not rely solely on extension officers for services that they become able to offer themselves. In addition, the income generating activities sustain the groups' activities thereby promoting sustainability.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

For sustainability, there is need to develop an extension framework that supports and allocates resources within the counties for initial support to this approach. With this initial support, the PFS approach is capable of sustaining itself. The practice has also introduces the concept of having income generating activities within the groups as a way of ensuring sustainability and cohesion.

## **REPLICABILITY AND UPSCALING**

The PFS approach is new in the county and there are plans to replicate the concept in new upcoming groups that have shown interest in the approach. Several groups have visited the RPLRP Baringo Office seeking support from the project.