



A POLICY BRIEF FOR REDUCING CLIMATE RISKS AND VULNERABILITY FOR THE WOMEN, GIRLS AND SMALL HOLDER FARMERS AMONG PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES



PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

Investments especially mining in pastoral areas across the Horn of Africa countries, while important for national development entails serious environmental impacts and pose climate risks that increases the vulnerability of marginalized groups of people who are already disadvantaged by the semi-arid topography. The women, girls, youth, and smallholder farmers are particularly affected given that their fragile livelihoods are nature-based.

The current regional initiatives aimed at building resilience of the affected communities have not adequately addressed the linkage between livelihood systems and sustainable environment management. The initiatives at national and regional levels tend to use traditional orthodox approaches of “environmental conservation” as sacrosanct for addressing all climate risks.

It is critical that any initiatives to reduce the vulnerability caused by the investments must consider that providing decent livelihoods for the most vulnerable groups is the key to achieving an environment conducive for investment. The interventions proposed in this brief, if well implemented, will address this issue; providing sustainable livelihoods while promoting economic investment

1. Background

Disasters, both natural and man-made, have strongly increased in both frequency and impact, with climate change as one of the main contributors to more extreme, frequent, and unpredictable weather. Degradation and loss of ecosystems intensify natural hazards. In some areas, economic investments and certain socio-economic practices have greatly contributed to degradation and loss of ecosystems. This was apparent in study areas which comprised Karamoja Region in Uganda and West Pokot, Loima and Kapenguria in Kenya. The impact of climate risks in these areas has negatively affected livelihoods of the local communities especially the women, girls and smallholder farmers particularly, the youth. This is largely manifested in erratic weather leading to poor food production/food insecurity. All the countries in the “Horn of Africa” as a regional setting are affected.

Through country and regional programs, Partners for Resilience Strategic Partnership (PFR SP) have been implementing initiatives seeking to influence implementation in the Horn of Africa (HOA), focusing on Integrated Risk Management (IRM)-related principles at a regional level. The partnership has contributed to building the capacity of the national governments including lobbying for allocation of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) resources. The aim is to build and strengthen community resilience in the “Horn of Africa” by integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA).

IRM has been defined as the systematic process of reducing disaster risks through anticipative, absorptive, adaptive and transformative actions, taking into account the effects of climate change and the role of ecosystems. It addresses the drivers of risk, the capacities and assets of communities and individuals, and their enabling environment (*Partners for Resilience - CARE Climate Change*).¹ The aim is to reduce the impact of natural hazards on the livelihoods of community members to mitigate disaster risk and enhance livelihoods, particularly by addressing climate change and ecosystem management and restoration.

2. Issues

Weather variability especially changing weather patterns has negatively affected farming activities in the study areas thereby increasing the vulnerabilities for the smallholder farmers in the affected areas. The resilience of the communities has been eroded as they adapt to the new situation. The more investments are established in the already vulnerable areas (semi-arid), the more the environment is degraded and ecological balance disrupted; which in turn, occasions vulnerabilities on the livelihoods of the communities especially the smallholder farmers, the women and the girls. Apparently, the present frameworks/initiatives have not effectively addressed the prevailing climate risks and their disastrous consequences.

1- <https://www.partnersforresilience.nl/en/>

3. Methodology

This brief is based on analysis of data collected through field visits to the cross border pastoral communities in Uganda and Kenya. In Uganda the districts visited were: Amudat, Moroto and Kaabong. In Kenya the visits were to West Pokot, Loima and Kapenguria counties. In addition, wide consultations were conducted with stakeholders including policy makers from central government and local governments in the study area. Women, girls and small holder farmers were actively engaged in open group discussions. Extensive literature review backed up the primary sources. The study focused on understanding investments that increase vulnerability to women, girls and small holder farmers and climate risks of these categories.

4. Analysis of the causes and manifestations of climate risks and vulnerabilities

- i) Mining is the major economic activity that has contributed to the increasing climate risks, manifested in land degradation and disasters in the cross border study area. Mining activities characterized by heavy excavations have reduced biomass, destabilized the ecological balance and weather patterns, worsening and disrupting farming seasonality, with deleterious effects on smallholder farmers.
- ii) Cumulative degradation; reducing vegetation cover and contaminating water sources has increased "nomadism" as cattle keepers have to not only move more often but also to longer distances in search of fresh pasture and water. This has exacerbated insecurity due to conflicts over pasture and water resources, destabilized the family setup as the men are away from home for a long period. This has increased vulnerability as competition over these scarce resources intensifies. It has also created insecurity particularly to the girl child whose parents spend most of the time away.
- iii) Commercial gold mining is undertaken by foreign and domestic (Ugandan /Kenyan) owned companies. However, being deemed highly lucrative, gold mining has attracted many people; especially women and children into artisanal and small scale mining (ASM) as a means to support their day-to-day survival. This apparent shift (from cattle keeping and crop farming) to artisanal gold mining has undermined the earlier more sustainable way of pastoral life.
- iv) Artisanal gold mining has largely impacted the family negatively; there is increasing gender based violence (GBV) as spouse's biker over money from mining; high school dropout rates especially for the girls as children have been lured to make "quick money"; watering down of social values and increased inappropriate social

interaction and risky behavior that led to increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS among other maladies.

Family livelihood profiles reveals that the boy child is largely involved in cattle rearing while girls are involved in attending to gardens. Both activities have significantly contributed to low school attendance.

5. Weaknesses and gaps in the present approaches to build resilience

Broadly:

- 1) The linkage between livelihood systems and sustainable environment management is not adequately addressed; note should be taken that the primary focus of the communities is to eke out means of survival;
- 2) The initiatives at national and regional levels tend to use traditional orthodox approaches of "environmental conservation" as sacrosanct for addressing all climate risks.

Specifically:

- i) In the study areas, activities for adaptation to climate change are largely supported by the CSO sector with little participation of government; implying that the activities to address climate risks and its effects are not prioritized.
- ii) Coordination of policy mechanisms between the relevant implementers is weak. For instance, the study was unable to find evidence that the National Climate Change Policy under the Ministry of Water and Environment (in Uganda) interacts with other relevant institutions of government (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries) that have a mandate on climate change.
- iii) Adaptation strategies supporting smallholder farmers are "scattered" across many sectors. As a result, lack of harmonized implementation has reduced the efficacy of the strategies rendering them unable to deliver tangible outputs;
- iv) Politicization of projects on climate change such as provision of water storage facilities has been curtailed by corruption, manifested in embezzlement and diversion of public funds for implementation of mitigation measures against climate risks. In this circumstance, women, girls and small holder farmers have suffered the full brunt given their high levels of poverty.
- v) The systems for managing data on climate and weather forecasts at regional level have not been able to efficiently provide harmonized data to guide

decision making.

- vi) Limited access to accurate and reliable data on climate/weather, such as weather forecasts has compelled stakeholders to adopt a crisis management approach providing relief or emergency assistance to the affected areas or sectors instead of "early warnings";

The framework for governance, coordination and financing of climate change response plans at all levels under the various arrangements such as IGAD is weak. Consequently, governments under these arrangements are not prioritizing climate issues.

6. Strategic Interventions

- a) This Policy Brief is in regard to interventions for reducing vulnerability for vulnerable groups namely: women, girls and smallholder farmers arising out of investments that pose climate change, manifested in weather, variability and increased natural disasters. The policy is aimed at ensuring sustainable management of the pastoral ecosystem upon which women, girls and smallholder farmers derive livelihoods, while encouraging harnessing of the local natural resources through commercial investments. The recommended interventions are based on a study of the cross border pastoral area in North Eastern Uganda (Karamoja) and North Western Kenya (west pokot, Loima and Kapenguria). In addition, wide consultations were conducted with various stakeholders in the study area. The recommended actions are aimed at addressing the identified gaps in the present approaches; identifying the drivers of climate risk, addressing related vulnerabilities to women, girls and smallholder farmers with a view to strengthening their capacities for resilience and adaptation. Recommendations are in two parts namely; Overreaching and Specific. Recommendations:

a) Overreaching Recommendation

There is need to encourage both public and private investment while ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the vulnerable groups

b) Specific Recommendations

- i) Preserve the fragile ecosystem in the pastoral areas;
- ii) Balance the competition for land between people and wild animals in the protected areas;
- iii) Support provision of sustainable livelihood options for the vulnerable groups (women, girls and SHF);
- iv) Improve access to social services (school attendance, particularly for girls and boys) in the communities;

- v) Support security efforts particularly addressing cattle rustling;
- vi) The implementation approaches presently used to address climate issues should be reviewed.
- vii) Monitoring compliance of investors to adhere to human rights practices in responsible business enterprises.

7. Implementation

It is envisaged that the implementation of the proposed interventions will be a responsibility of PfR with the support of the national governments in the Horn of Africa (HOA). The countries involved are Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Development partners and relevant CSOs will be lobbied to raise issues to the attention of policy makers and wider audience for them to understand and take action.

8. Justification

The PfR partnership has been targeting national and regional bodies and institutions, including IGAD, AU and EAC for implementing programs promoting resilience. In the Horn of Africa, Partners for Resilience Strategic Partnership (PfR SP) have been implementing climate risk initiatives under country programs.

However, it is apparent that not much has been achieved in building the resilience capacities of the targeted populations to reduce their vulnerabilities. Investments in the area continue to threaten the livelihoods of the women, girls and smallholder farmers. This will require engendering approaches and prioritize programs/ investments that mitigate weather variability and attendant risks and vulnerabilities to women, girls and smallholder farmers.

9. Timing

Given that global climate change and its deleterious consequences is a reality, the need for addressing climate risks is a matter of urgency. The HOA, with vast coverage of arid and semi-arid landscapes is highly vulnerable particularly the women, girls and smallholder farmers. It is therefore proposed that these interventions should be implemented in a period of five years starting in 2020.

10. Key Recommendations

- **Broadly**, it is recommended that the impact pathway for successful investment in these highly susceptible areas should be premised on generating decent livelihoods for the local communities as a means to sustaining future resource flows. The decent livelihoods generated will shield the people in the locality against investment related vulnerabilities.

- **Households:** Inculcate among the local communities the need to sustainably use natural resources, while enjoying the benefit stream from resource flows.
- **Local Governments:** Establish and strengthen communication amongst the various stakeholders, namely: environment, water, agriculture as well as the political leaders in regard to climate risks and vulnerability caused by investment; to women, girls and smallholder farmers. This includes regulatory frameworks addressing negative impacts of the said investments of climate change on environment, agriculture, water and other sectors.
- **National Governments:** Develop and widely disseminate climate/weather related information to promote adaption activities to address risks and vulnerabilities, particularly in regard to women, girls and smallholder farmers. Decentralized monitoring of this function is pertinent as it should ensure timely feedback for decision making and effective early warning systems.
- **Regional level:** Ensuring regional security through developing common strategies based on promoting national-based approaches to adaptation but with intergovernmental approval. In addition, conduct research to generate knowledge on uncertainty as a

means towards developing cross-border monitoring indicators and carry out assessment of the effectiveness of joint actions taken.

11. Conclusion

Conservative approaches based on “environmental conservation” models, amidst household poverty shall not yield robust results. A fundamental consideration, not adequately addressed presently, is that the local population must have decent livelihoods in order to achieve an environment conducive for investment. The interventions proposed in this brief, if well implemented, will address this issue; providing sustainable livelihoods while promoting public and private investment.

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