

It is increasingly becoming clear that climate change is affecting communities and countries across the world especially in East Africa. Kenya's coastal counties and counties in ASAL regions have been particularly hard hit given the frequent extremes of drought and floods. Of many effects of climate change, water scarcity and water access are demonstrable climate related challenges in Garissa and Kilifi Counties. Access to water is uneven in the two counties and is likely to worsen, as the extreme climate stays unchecked. In Garissa County, a paltry 23.3% of the population is guaranteed water access, while in Kilifi only 33.7% are guaranteed regular and reliable water supply. This acute shortage has led to stiff competition for this dwindling resource that inevitably leads to ethnic and inter-clan conflicts resulting in violent confrontations, deaths, loss of property and forced migration (internally displaced communities). This is indirectly related to access to land that is endowed with water resources, a commodity precious to both pastoral and farming communities.

Food Security for Marginal Communities

Policy Debate: In what way can county governments diversify their agricultural production and marketing in order to create sustainable markets while sustaining grassroots pastoralists and smallholder farmers?

Overview

The marginal communities of the northern frontier and other arid and semi-arid lands of Isiolo, Kajiado and Kitui among others are constantly faced with hunger pangs and protracted food related conflicts. This, in part, is caused by excessive reliance on rain fed crop production and weather driven livestock management. Besides there is a policy environment that is less responsive to the need of a more reliable food supply approach.



The sustained humanitarian approach, which to a large extent is justified owing to unpredictability in climate change, does not comprehensively address vulnerabilities that often disable local communities from making gains in state and non-state interventions. These communities oscillate between food security and insecurity throughout the year as there is no clear policy on how to mitigate extreme weather shifts.

JHC Contribution

For the past eight years JHC has conducted various researches geared to improving the agriculture sector. Some of this (largely funded by CAFOD) have included: a) Food security and climate change in Kenya, b) the effects of imports and exports on farmer produce and markets, c) Priming agriculture for domestic resources mobilization, and d) Election Issuefication: integrating citizen's voice in agenda setting in 2017 in which agriculture was a major component. As a result of the studies, our interventions have contributed to policy drafts such as the Warehouse Receipts Systems Bill (2016), the Food Security Bill (2016), the Agriculture Fund Bill (2017) and the Agriculture Crop Bill in Kitui (2017).

In the past six months we embarked on a baseline study focusing on grassroots pastoralists' levels of understanding of food security. In order to de-centre the dialogue from a Basic Needs Approach (BNA) to a Right Based Approach (RBA), JHC undertook a baseline survey to establish:

- The place of an effective pastoralist range management in access to food
- Factors that support a drastic and relevant paradigm shift from Basic Need Approach (BNA) to Right Based Approach (RBA) particularly in the pastoral communities.

The findings limited herein to Isiolo and Kajiado pastoral communities point to need for an inclusive dialogue between the government (both county and national), the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the pastoralists and crop smallholder farmers.

FINDINGS

The place of an effective pastoralist range management policy framework

The livestock sector contributes about 12% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 40% to the agricultural GDP and employs 50% of agricultural labor force. About 60% of Kenya's livestock herd is found in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), which constitute about 80% of the country. It is estimated that 10 million Kenyans living in the ASALs derive their livelihood largely from livestock. Livestock play important roles in Kenya's socio-economic development and contribute towards household food and nutritional security.



Most Kenyans consume a lot of red meat. The high demand for meat shows that livestock production is a source of livelihood for pastoralist communities. Regardless of this potential, the sector remains largely informal and less productive. These challenges are ascribed to climate change, lack of implementation of value addition policy, inadequate financing to the sector and multiple market intermediaries who depress earnings of the livestock keepers.

Besides, JHC study findings indicate that there is a worrying trend of diminishing grazing lands. This, to a large extent, is attributed to change in land tenure systems. Changes in ownership on designated areas of grazing, settlements, cultivation, growth in population and persistent drought have directly affected livestock production.

However, livestock sector generates gainful and productive employment opportunities in; transport, trade, value-enhancing activities, feed and input provision as well as veterinary services. The availability of employment opportunities results in poverty reduction and availability of food.

Action

We need to promote a conversation regarding two issues: first, the government's lack of comprehensive investment in the pastoralist system as provided in the ASALs policy of 2008. Second, the enactment of Community Land Act (2016), which is silent on the position articulated in ASAL policy for support of the pastoralists system.

Factors supporting a drastic and relevant paradigm shift from Basic Need Approach to Right Based Approach to food

Our findings indicate that most rural people do not know that access to food is their right. Article 43 (1) (c) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, on the Social and Economic Rights states that 'every person has a right to be free from hunger, and to have adequate food of acceptable quality' thus providing for a human rights based approach to food security in Kenya. Goodwill from the political leadership, intensified civic education through public open forums and village barazas, coordinated efforts by the government and civil society organizations towards policy implementation on food security are major contributory factors to food security as well as food sovereignty.

Furthermore, most rural small holder farmers such as in Kitui, depend on rain-fed agriculture. The crop yields have continued to decline due to change in climate pushing poor people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood deeper into poverty and vulnerability.

Our findings indicate that there is failure on the part of the state and CSOs to:

- ☞ Sensitize the public on existing policies, bills and laws on right and access to food
- ☞ Keeping county government on toes in executing schedule 4 (agriculture) of the Kenyan constitution
- ☞ Stir advocacy on the right to food based on the available county government budgets
- ☞ Inform and educate farmers at the grassroots on the connections between issues and specific policy actions that have potential their alleviate their food insecurity
- ☞ Demonstrate public support for specific measures proposed for legislation or those already in various stages of legislation.

Action

- There is therefore need for a holistic advocacy approach to the realization of the right to food.
- We need a paradigm shift from the traditional Basic Needs Approach (BNA) to the new Rights Based Approach (RBA). In what way can this be achieved in Kenya?

Learning from Experiences

Food Security or Insecurity? Which way for Pastoralist and Smallholder Farmers?

Human-Wildlife

In early March 2019, an elephant is said to have killed a three-year-old boy who was in the company of his mother and his elder brother while walking from a church in Ilkelunyeti village in Kiboko location. As they were heading home, they encountered some elephants which charged at them. Unfortunately, the mother left the younger child, and the child was knocked down.

He was taken to Masimba Dispensary where he was given first aid and was later transferred to Makindu Hospital where he succumbed. The community was angered and the conflict went out of hand, elephants were speared. They complained that the animals apart from killing people and destroying their livelihoods were also terrorizing them to an extent of affecting their children's learning and their daily activities. They said that herds of elephants were frequently invading them and causing a trail of destruction yet KWS has been slow to intervene.

Lack of Livestock Market

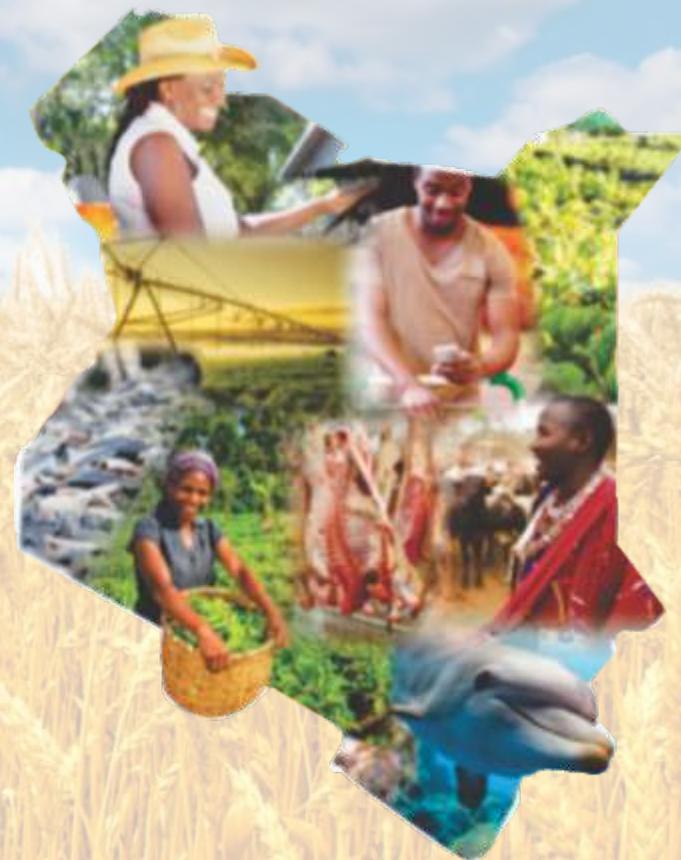
Between 2016 and 2017, a biting drought swept through the plains of Kajiado County and in its wake left massive losses to local farmers as thousands of their livestock died in droves. One such farmer is Philip Mokinyo from the largely pastoral community which is known for keeping large herds of livestock. Mr Mokinyo said as the drought ravaged the region, he and many others watched helplessly as thousands of animals dropped dead day by day. "There were ghastly images of carcasses all over. Even wild animals died. There was no pasture anywhere and the land was bare due to overgrazing. There was also no market to sell our cows" recalls the farmer who lost close to 100 animals.

Crop Growers-Livestock Keepers

In December 2019 there was an increased frequency of violent conflict between crop growers and livestock keepers. This conflict was linked to intense pressures on land because of the commercial centres' expansion is extended to arable land, destructive mining activities to the arable land, the disputes around the lapset corridor, destruction of common resources such as forests, pastoral rangelands and water sources. Climate change has worsened the relationships between communities, and between communities and animals.



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