

CASE STUDY PIA 7: Coordination, Institutional Strengthening and Partnerships



HODI Building Resilient Communities Through Mala-Marii: One GOAL Thirty Household - The Untold Story of Kenya of the North	
INTRODUCTION CONTEXT	<p>The traditional meeting was a preserve of the elders, women and youth were categorized as children and they had no space under the tree. This was a huge hindrance to women participation in decision making even in issues that affected them due to the culture. Throughout the post-colonial era and before the current constitution, the country took legislative steps to provide ways for citizens to be active participants in the governing and development of their country. Most of these ways, however, were limited to local authorities and the implementation of laws incorporating citizen participation did not reach their full potential because citizens did not fully understand their rights or embrace the opportunity. The top-down system of control prevailed leaving no space for public participation in development. True public participation was not recognized and there lacked a structure through which the voice of the people could be channeled. People were not involved in decision making on issues affecting them from beginning and only got time to complain after decisions had been made. The Constitution supports access to information by all citizens, which is a key ingredient to effective and active citizen participation. People have the right to access timely and accurate information held by the State or public officials and public servants must share information with the public. In Marsabit District which is part of Northern Kenya the area has extensively continued to exhibit extensively low access, low participation of the community and low academic performance. Due to marginalization of the area many communities have limited capacity required to realize meaningful participation. Though faced with enormous developmental challenges they are constrained by lack of participation platform and channels through which they can voice their concerns and seek redress.</p>
LOCATION /GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE	<p>The initiative started out with 20 communities and increased to 30 after initial 3 months and currently we are working with 135 communities in Marsabit County over the past 3 years. Each community meets twice a month and takes action on the underlying issues already identified as increasing vulnerability.</p>
STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS Beneficiaries	<p>Most of the actions are geared towards increasing the capacity of the community in addressing the different hazards. The entire community benefits but the women now get to benefit too as they are at the core of decision making. Issues like water when resolved reduce distance covered by women</p>

	<p>going to fetch water; it improves the overall hygiene thereby reducing incidences of sickness. Men and woman play the same role in the dialogue process and also in action. The community is a very important partner in the process; the county government in Marsabit is also involved to a great extent and is in the process of adapting the process as a citizen participation approach. In the case of Maikona which is one of the best practices and the actions have yielded results it is more than 150 households benefiting from the tap water in the village now.</p>
<p>METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH Methodological Approach</p>	<p>Mala-Marii is a consultative dialogue that builds on the traditional practice of consultation and galvanizes communities to address underlying causes of vulnerability. Women and youth participation as well as the elder’s was very crucial and there was need for neutral space for the initial dialogue to happen. HODI put in extra effort to ensure the women and youth were engaged from the beginning and the process was not hijacked by the few literate from the communities. We started in 2013 and ongoing with support of Concern Worldwide who helped with initial training and capacity development of HODI staff and community facilitators on community conversations. The use of local language also helped in making the communities to understand the process faster and better. When the communities were selecting the facilitators there was a deliberate effort to have 1 elder; 1 woman and 1 youth. At the entry point this was well communicated with the communities. Mala-Marii involved relationship building with the community; data gathering and situation analysis; community dialogue; decision making; action; reflection and review. HODI’s role was to just facilitate the process and provide backup support where there were challenges. HODI staffs had more women training the entire community and this gave a deeper meaning and a place for the women in the villages.</p> <p>The Mala-Marii methodology relied on community conversations methodology with trained facilitators to initiate community entry and employ a series of tools for structuring dialogue; analysis and response. What is really crucial is the facilitation process as it builds the foundation for the outcome. There was also need for the organization initiating the process to have the community trust and thus it is possible for ownership by the community from the onset. HODI took time to work out the entry and there was deliberate effort to recruit even field officers from the same communities making it a seamless process. It has taken 12 months before the initial success factors started showing. Over the years we have together with concern worldwide reviewed and improved the methodology. In some communities there was need to adapted the method for the Moran and Kerro who are not allowed to sit with the elders. It starts with the relationship building; data gathering & situation analysis; community dialogue; decision making; action; reflection and review and in the entire process is the facilitated process. As HODI the DRR background was crucial going as far as identification of the most vulnerable households through the process and working together with the communities to reduce the vulnerability and increase capacity.</p>

<p>IMPACT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community meetings were a preserve of the elders and a few elites but Mala-Marii involves both men and women of all ages against the traditional contract and it belongs to the people. • Gender inequality and traditional gender roles placed women in the same category as children. This contributed greatly to marginalisation of women. Mala-Marii offers an innovative solution to women and the most vulnerable in the community by giving them a voice to heard. • The gender roles are also discussed and challenged by the community in the dialogue process. There is a deeper understanding on issues from the communities’ perspective and they are able to come up with own timelines on how to resolve them. • There was lack of information and the flow was even disrupted further by the gate keepers in the community. This innovation resolves this as every new thing is shared during the regular meetings thereby overcoming the barrier to information. • The ability to engage with the devolution process and timely meetings to coincide with county budgeting processes has created an impact. This has allowed the communities in Sagante for instance to develop action plans which were adopted by the county and became part of the county annual plans creating room for inclusivity in county budgeting and prioritization processes which also position women to ensure economic resilience.
<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p>Mala-Marii is built on the traditional meetings of the communities which are well structured. The initiative has ensured that it is systemic, inclusive and participatory with diverse elements. At the village level Community Entry, Situation Analysis and Community Action Plans are developed. The ward brings together many villages which calls for the need for consolidated community action plans; disaggregation by gender and sector; prioritization into short term; medium term and long term plans. At the Sub County level, the ward plans need to be consolidated and there is need to determine which one of the priorities is national and county government responsibility. It is possible to engage in national policy development on the process and develop plans informed by the community plans and come up with annual plan and budgets at national level as well. The role of the initiative and other stakeholders is more of facilitation and supporting the community to increase its capacity in addressing the existing vulnerabilities thereby offering sustainable resilience solutions more so by expanding space for women’s voices and needs to be prioritized in development processes of the County. The need to combine the Mala-Marii process with the disaster risk reduction helped in laying a stronger foundation and basis to mitigate the impacts of drought; conflict and diseases in the targeted communities.</p>
<p>UP-SCALING</p>	<p>One Goal 30 household is possible to replicate and scale up in any village, community, ward, county and even country especially where cultural and gender stereotypes constrain women from enjoying opportunities for development as equal partners and players. The Mala-Marii is giving back the power to deliberate on issues that affect the communities and offer sustainable resilient solutions to the issues that make them vulnerable shocks and threats. The initiative was started with 20 communities and scaled to 135 communities in Northern Kenya.</p>

**CONTACT
DETAILS**

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