



October 2012

## Addressing poverty through mobilization of community resources

### MAIN SOURCE:

Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project (CKDAP). *Taming Scarce Resources for Smallholder Livelihoods in the Dry Areas of Central Kenya* (IFAD 2011)

### COUNTRY:

Kenya

### PROJECT NAME:

Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project

### PROJECT DATES:

2001-2010

### TOTAL COST:

US\$18.1 million

### DIRECT BENEFICIARIES:

36,400 households

### TARGET:

Rural communities with poor access to safe water, smallholder farmers

### CONTACT:

Samuel Eremie  
ESA Division, IFAD  
email: s.eremie@ifad.org

In parts of Kenya, local communities have been empowered to take control of their own development. The success of the project rests on community involvement and mobilization of local financial, natural and human resources.

In the dry areas of central Kenya, the scarce availability of water represents a major concern for rural communities, affecting their health, sanitation, agriculture and food security. Through an inclusive and participatory approach, the Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project (CKDAP) provided assistance to establish new health care facilities, irrigation and domestic water supply schemes, and to promote farming technologies. An innovative structure made up of representatives from the communities, the Focal Development

Area Committee (FDAC), was put in place to coordinate the implementation of community action plans. Community resource mobilization has been crucial in promoting local ownership of the services provided and ensuring the sustainability of the project's initiatives. Through their participation in over 1,096 thematic groups, beneficiaries received training and guidance that improved their knowledge and skills and empowered them to positively transform their livelihoods and living conditions. Training focused on sustainable farming techniques, construction and maintenance of water facilities, basic health care and the management of small projects. The project trained 192 officers in project management and helped set up 15 FDACs. The project has published a book that collates the experiences and success stories shared by key project implementers and stakeholders.



Farmers group meeting in Narumoru Agothi, Kieni East Division.



©IFAD/Giacomo Pirozzi

Health Centre in Narumoru,  
Kieni East Division.

## Results

- 213,000 community members benefited from better access to health care services.<sup>1</sup> This has reduced mortality and disease incidence among rural communities.<sup>2</sup>
- Around 8,500 households now access piped water.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, 86 per cent of the households targeted by the project now have access to water resources within less than 5 kilometres.<sup>4</sup>
- Households affected by chronic food insecurity decreased from 64 per cent in 2006 to 4 per cent in 2010 in the project area,<sup>5</sup> also due to the promotion of affordable farming technologies, the introduction of high-value crops and livestock, and the establishment of marketing centres.

## Main lessons

- Response in terms of community participation is not always immediate. The partner agency needs to build trust among participants through regular information sharing.
- Engagement of community resource persons needs to be planned ahead in order to include incentives for their participation in project initiatives (e.g. by introducing income-generating activities and providing adequate working tools).
- Devolution cannot work without decentralization. It is important to plan ahead and detail the role, function, available facilities and status of the new local structures created, and provide them with adequate support.
- A long start-up time for project interventions can cause apathy, unless strategies for renewing the scope of the project and project membership are put in place.

## Main challenges addressed

CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS	BENEFITS
1) Erosion of communities' trust in development agencies because of previous negative experiences with other development actors.	The project was marketed to communities by clarifying details about expectations, roles and contributions.	Communities regained confidence and were mobilized to participate in planning, design and implementation of activities under the project.
2) Quarrels among some groups concerning dishonest appropriation of funds in previous projects.	Regular meetings were held to update community groups on accumulation and spending of funds.	Once their confidence was restored, the community groups re-started their cash contribution to the project.
3) Unsatisfactory performance of most existing community groups in the first stages of project implementation.	New groups were formed according to specific agricultural focus, for example poultry, tissue culture bananas.	Group members were involved in activities with a renewed focus resulting in improved performance and resource mobilization.
4) Some of the FDACs had a weaker role and this resulted in withdrawals, in part because volunteer members were forced to engage in other activities for their subsistence.	Because scarce operational resources limited some groups, project staff considered providing support to members to start income-generating activities. FDACs were also invited to take part in planning meetings.	The link between the officers and the community was strengthened, and cooperation between community and government staff was also enhanced.
5) It has been difficult to encourage women to participate and take leadership roles in mixed groups. This has not been a problem in women's groups.	A system of rotation of leadership roles has been established.	Within the groups, attitudes have changed and some cultural codes regarding men and women's roles have also shifted towards greater equality.

## Background

Water scarcity is a major obstacle to rural development in Kenya. On average, the distance people need to travel to reach water sources ranges from 2 to 12 kilometres. Even when water sources are available, but at considerable walking distances, water quality is poor and often contaminated as a result of being shared with wild animals and livestock. This affects the health and agricultural practices of local communities. In rural Kenya precarious farming conditions and difficult access to water largely affect women. In fact, women are tasked with fetching and transporting firewood and water, and often they run farms alone as their husbands are in paid employment elsewhere. In 2000, IFAD negotiated and formulated the Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project (CKDAP), as an extension of the previously implemented Nyeri Dry Areas Smallholder Community Services Development Project. By adopting a demand-driven approach, the project identified the areas of intervention based

on consultations with and the participation of local communities. Beneficiary communities identified the water issue as their biggest problem.

The project was implemented in five districts of Central Province, specifically: Kirinyaga, Maragua, Nyandarua, Nyeri and Thika. The objective was to improve food security, nutrition and farm incomes, as well as lessen beneficiaries' vulnerability to disease. The strategy has been to enable rural communities to be the drivers of their own development by unlocking community resources, providing capacity-building and creating local structures to facilitate the coordination of development initiatives within the community.

### Fostering ownership and sustainability

To promote local ownership, the project adopted the following strategies:

(i) Participatory and inclusive planning and implementation; (ii) Communities were encouraged to take control of their own development, identify priorities and develop their own solutions to challenges;

## USEFUL LINKS

IFAD operations in ESA:  
<http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pf/index.htm>

IFAD operations in Kenya:  
<http://operations.ifad.org/web/ifad/operations/country/home/tags/kenya>

Rural poverty in Kenya:  
<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/kenya>

Voices from the Field. *From lighter loads to better business: empowering rural women in Kenya.*  
IFAD Rural Poverty Portal:  
[http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/voice/tags/kenya/kenya\\_ruralwomen](http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/voice/tags/kenya/kenya_ruralwomen)

(iii) Communities contributed to the cost of setting up the facilities and shared the operational and management costs; (iv) Community management committees were established, and through capacity-building processes participants acquired the necessary skills to organize themselves and contribute to project maintenance; (v) The need for compliance with the Water Act (2002) encouraged communities to achieve self-sustained water systems and accept responsibility for their maintenance.

To ensure the project was sustainable the following elements were fostered:

- Consistent sensitization and mobilization of the community to contribute financially and actively to the new system.
- Provision of technical training to community members and artisans on the operation and maintenance of the new facilities.
- Establishment of income-generating activities to replenish some community group supplies; the group then becomes cohesive and can continue to manage the new services put in place.
- Promotion of drought-tolerant crops in order to reduce agricultural vulnerability to changing weather conditions.
- Commitment of the ministries involved to continuing projects and services for the beneficiaries after the CKDAP closing date.

## Replication and scaling up

Overall, the project used a participatory approach. By involving communities in the identification of priorities, project planning and implementation, the project built the basis for local replication. Some of the best practices for replication and scaling up have been the activities promoted in favour of primary health care, such as ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines and kitchen gardens. A spontaneous replication took place among women in neighbouring communities around the areas of the project's implementation. Other groups not targeted as direct beneficiaries requested the assistance of the community health workers to initiate and implement similar health and sanitation activities. The project also promoted partnerships among different stakeholders to facilitate the replication and scaling up of the agricultural services put in place. For example, farmers linked with buyers of goat milk from the private sector, and tissue culture banana farmers have been linked to the National Banana Association and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology for purposes of accessing planting material.



International Fund for  
Agricultural Development

Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy  
Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463  
E-mail: [ifad@ifad.org](mailto:ifad@ifad.org)

[www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

[www.ruralpovertyportal.org](http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org)

 [ifad-un.blogspot.com](http://ifad-un.blogspot.com)

 [www.facebook.com/ifad](http://www.facebook.com/ifad)

 [www.twitter.com/ifadnews](http://www.twitter.com/ifadnews)

 [www.youtube.com/user/ifadTV](http://www.youtube.com/user/ifadTV)

## References

- 1 IFAD (2011a). *Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project (CKDAP) – Project Completion Report*, p.28
- 2 Ibid, p.39
- 3 IFAD (2011b). *Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Project (CKDAP). Taming Scarce Resources for Smallholder Livelihood in the Dry Areas of Central Kenya*, p.24
- 4 IFAD (2011a), p.22
- 5 Ibid, p.34