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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC



# Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development (RAPID+) Program Learning Brief 2022-2024

A Compilation of Program Stories



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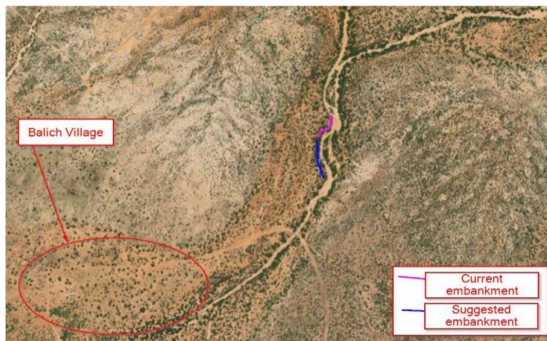
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## Garissa County: Flood Mitigation in Balich with Half-Moon Bunds

Balich village, located 35 km from Garissa town along the Tana River within Sankuri ward and part of the Kanyang-Balich sub-catchment, is one of the Resilient Arid Lands Partnerships for Integrated Development (RAPID+) program intervention sites. A Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) has been in place since 2014, supported by a sub-catchment management plan. During a review workshop facilitated by RAPID+ in July 2023, the WRUA identified flood protection from Kanyang Laghas as a priority.

In recent years, heavy rains have caused significant flooding in Balich, resulting in the destruction of housing and businesses and rendering the village inaccessible. Although the WRUA initially suggested extending an existing embankment, this approach was deemed financially unsustainable.



**Left: Location of Balich village; Right: Balich WRUA members meeting.**

Instead, RAPID+ collaborated with Acacia Water to implement an alternative solution: the construction of half-moon bunds. These semi-circular basins dug into the earth and are designed to reduce peak water discharge and minimize soil erosion and provide cost-savings when compared to constructing an embankment. RAPID+ facilitated demonstrations and training that resulted in the construction of 350 half-moon bunds in the identified section leading to the town.

Community participation in the construction process fostered a sense of ownership and unity. The immediate outcomes included the regrowth of vegetation, improved soil health, and enhanced water retention in the bunds during floods. These interventions have provided significant relief from climate-induced disasters. In a post-intervention site visit, Doll Hassan from the WRUA confirmed that the bunds, combined with the existing embankment, have successfully prevented flooding in the village, as was observed during the March-April-May (MAM) rainfall in 2024.



**Left: Half-Moon bunds; Right: Fodder growth within the bunds**

## Garissa County: Haso Innovation Hub

Hassan Yussuf, an innovative farmer from Garissa, identified a gap in the county's fodder market. As a member of the Jamhuri group farm on the outskirts of Garissa municipality, he recognized the increasing demand for livestock feeds due to recurring droughts and shrinking grazing lands. Motivated by this need, Hassan ventured into irrigated agriculture in 2021, focusing on fodder, vegetables, fruits, and cereals. The expansion of five livestock markets in the county presented further opportunities, especially for alternative animal feeds.

Hassan planted ten varieties of fodder, including Panicum, Super Napier, Calliandra, three species of Brachia Ria (including Mulato), Nandi Grass, Sugar Graze, Guatemala Grass, and Starke Ayres. Facing water challenges due to his farm's location 2 km from the Tana River, Hassan invested in a shallow well and used a gasoline-powered pump to irrigate his 2.5-acre farm. However, the cost of fuel—averaging KES 18,000 per month—increased over time due to rising fuel prices. Additionally, Hassan lacked expertise in fodder value addition, further limiting his farming potential.



Photo: Gasoline powered water pumping generator at Haso Farm

### Program Intervention

With funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), RAPID+ addressed both water and rangeland challenges faced by the Haso Innovation Hub. The intervention included the installation of a solar pumping system and a 5,000-liter elevated storage tank. RAPID+ also organized training sessions on fodder production and value addition for 15 farmer groups from across Garissa County. Farmers were introduced to various fodder types, their production methods, and nutritional benefits.



Photo: Orientation of Hassan and other farmers on the use of a chaff cutter

As a result of these interventions, the hub now saves KES 18,000 per month on fuel costs. The solar-powered irrigation system also allows Hassan to share water with a neighboring horticultural farm growing mangoes, limes, pawpaws, and bananas. With reduced pumping costs, Hassan expanded his farm by half an acre and planted 100 passion trees and vegetables.

During the intervention, RAPID+ partnered with other institutions, including:

- Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP): Supported the procurement of a chaff cutter and organized training for fodder farmers.
- SOLO Organization: Funded the fencing of Hassan's farm.
- County Government of Garissa: Facilitated training for Hassan and brought other farmers to learn from the model farm.

## **Impact**

The following outcomes were identified and observed as a result of the program and subsequent partnerships:

- Hassan now saves KES 216,000 annually on fuel costs, previously spent on powering the diesel generator.
- He expanded cultivation by ½ acre, planting passion fruit and vegetables.
- The farm has become a model of best practices, having trained 25 farmers through RAPID+, with support from other organizations for additional study visits. Training areas included fodder production, storage, silage processing, and baling.
- Three farmers of the initial 25 trainees have replicated this model on their farms, and more are expected to follow.
- A steady income has been generated through periodic sales of fodder to the Garissa Livestock Market, a regional hub. Since January 2024, Hassan has earned KES 36,000 from fodder sales, although his 2023 sales were lower due to the oversupply of humanitarian livestock feeds by the government and other organizations.



## **Marsabit County: Dololo Dokatu**

The Dololo Dokatu community consists of settlers from Boru Haru Drip Location. They faced severe water scarcity, which affected both their livestock and household income. Determined to find a solution, the community settled around a borehole in Dololo and formed the Dololo Dokatu Farmer Group. Their goal was to establish a table banking system to provide financial support for education and healthcare among the members. To enable table banking to be successful, they needed to have seed capital and income that would be remitted to the group account. One particular source would be to utilize the water for productive use, and members would get income that would be remitted to the group.

The RAPID+ program stepped in to support the group by solarizing their borehole. This critical intervention significantly reduced water pumping costs, ensuring a more reliable water supply. Additionally, the program facilitated the piping of water to neighboring farms, enabling the group to engage in horticultural production and diversify their livelihoods.

Unfortunately, their progress was interrupted by a period of insecurity caused by conflicts with neighboring communities. The group members were forced to abandon their farms and relocate to safer areas for approximately three years. However, in 2022, peace negotiations led to a breakthrough, allowing the Dololo Dokatu farmers to seize the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Upon their return, the group reached out to RAPID+ for further support in horticulture production and pasture establishment. The program conducted a needs assessment exercise and collaborated with the Marsabit County Department of Agriculture to provide training for the group. The topic covered included the status of forage and pastures in the region, pasture varieties, fodder improvement methods suitable for the area, pasture, and fodder conservation, and the identification of suitable grass seeds for reseeded. The training also emphasized maintaining soil fertility through practices such as the use of manure and other organic fertilizers.

### **A Resident's Story: Ms. Qabale Bonaya**

Ms. Qabale Bonaya, a single mother of eight and a member of the Dololo Dokatu Farmer Group, also manages the group's farm. She recounts how the farm has transformed her life:

"Most of my older children were unable to finish school. After separating from my husband ten years ago, I struggled to manage their school fees alone. I tried to support their education by selling charcoal and crushing stones for concrete, which I sold for money. However, these businesses were physically demanding, and at times, I barely earned enough to sustain us. When conflict broke out in 2019, we left Dololo for a safer area, and my children stopped attending school. But after the peace negotiations in 2022, our family returned, and I resumed my charcoal business. Transportation remained a significant challenge, as boda-boda operators would take earnings from a third of my goods for transportation costs. Only three of my children managed to attend school occasionally due to the uncertainty of paying school fees.

Things changed when the RAPID+ program, through Food for the Hungry, helped establish the Dololo Dokatu farm. Not only did I benefit as a group member, but the group also employed me as the farm's caretaker, earning me Ksh. 4000 each month. Additionally, my youngest son, Barack, received a school uniform, and another staff member registered him for possible education sponsorship. I've also gained valuable skills since becoming the farm's caretaker, such as checking for pests, spraying pesticides, pruning plants, and bookkeeping for farm sales. Eventually, I was able to establish my maize farm."



## **RAPID+ Intervention**

The RAPID+ program initially provided training to the farmer group on fodder and crop farming. Subsequently, the program arranged for regular visits by officers from the county's Directorate of Agriculture, offering ongoing mentorship to the group throughout their farming journey. The program also supplied fruit trees and banana seedlings to help the group establish a model farm. To support fodder irrigation, the group received two water tanks and 400 meters of piping. RAPID+ further advocated for additional support from partners. For example, the Center for Research and Development in Drylands assisted in constructing a hay barn. At the same time, the county government donated maize and green gram seeds to support their agricultural efforts.

## **Current Status**

The group currently earns an average of Ksh. 19,000 monthly from crop sales. They cultivate various crops, including tomatoes, pawpaws, bananas, kale, spinach, and hot peppers. They also seasonally plant maize, green grams, and beans. The produce is primarily sold within the local community, with some sold along the way to the market. Due to distance, none of the produce reaches the market directly. The group pools its earnings into a shared account, allowing members to request loans when needed. At the end of the year, a portion of the earnings is distributed among the members, while the remainder is reinvested into the farm for further development.

In addition to crop farming, the group received apiculture training from Nature Apiaries, a private partner engaged in the program. Following the training, the program supplied and helped the group set up beehives on their farm. Nature Apiaries has committed to purchasing honey from the group once the harvest is ready. The World Food Program is also supporting the group by installing and setting up a fishpond.

## **A Brighter Future**

Qabale, her family, and the community are hopeful for a brighter future. They aim to sustain their progress while seeking new opportunities. They plan to expand their farmland, diversify their crops to access broader markets, and increase their income. They have already stored hay bales in the barn and plan to harvest more for storage while allowing some to mature for seed harvesting and bulking in the field. The group's goal is to ensure that households are food secure, establish reliable income streams, and foster a thriving, self-sufficient community.



**Photos: Harvested fodder and food crops at Dololo Dokatu**

## Isiolo County: PAYGO Models to Improve Access to Solar Irrigation Equipment

Jotham Kirema is a farmer who has lived in Isiolo since 2009, having relocated from Meru County. Living on his farm with his wife and one child, he grows a variety of vegetables and fruits, including spinach, kale, tomatoes, onions, oranges, lemons, and papayas.

The RAPID+ program team visited his farm for a fact-finding feedback session. They gathered under a lemon tree, surrounded by semi-ripe lemons hanging overhead and the scenic view of abundant fruit trees around them. To start the conversation, they asked Kirema where he sells his farm produce. "People come to my farm to buy my produce. I don't need to go to the market. The prices are good—I sell my tomatoes for no less than 30 Kenyan shillings per kilogram."

### How did you learn about the PAYGO model?

"Catholic Relief Services (CRS) invited me to a seminar in September 2023. During the seminar, staff from Davis & Shirliff made a presentation about the Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) model, which got me interested, so I signed up. They demonstrated how it works, and we even visited a farm using a water pump purchased through PAYGO. I was impressed by the fact that the pump came with a two-year warranty, unlike most other pumps that don't usually come with a warranty. I also liked that after purchasing tokens to run the pump, the customer eventually owns the pump. This is what I prefer about buying PAYGO tokens compared to electricity tokens for running a pump."



**Photo: Kirema waters vegetables on his farm. The water pumping kit was provided to him through PayGo**

Kirema continued, "I got the PAYGO pump in February 2024. However, it's been raining, so I haven't started using it yet. Come back in the dry season, and you'll see how it works. When the rains stop, I plan to use it to grow onions, tomatoes, kale, and spinach on my one-and-a-half-acre piece of land."

### How would you describe your experience as a farmer?

"It has generally been good. We have subsidized fertilizer from the government, but high-quality seeds are expensive, and farmers need them to increase their harvest. We also need more support from the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, many farmers need training in modern farming techniques, such as drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting, especially now that it's the rainy season. Farmers also need access to credit because modern farming methods are more expensive."

### The PAYGO Model and Its Impact

The PAYGO model is a partnership between CRS and Davis & Shirliff under the RAPID+ program, aimed at facilitating access to solar-powered irrigation solutions for crop producers. The Davis & Shirliff branch representative in Isiolo, who was part of the visiting team, explained that the partnership enables farmers to access small-scale irrigation solutions that promote efficient and cost-effective solar-powered pumping systems. Farmers acquire the system on credit from Davis & Shirliff, with CRS paying the initial 20% deposit. Farmers then pay for the remaining balance in

installments, measured in kilowatt-hours, over a two-year period. Payments are made using the PAYGO App, which allows farmers to complete transactions from their mobile phones.

This system not only instills a sense of ownership but also helps farmers diversify and increase their farm production, thereby widening their profit margins. Another benefit is the significant reduction in fuel and maintenance costs—by as much as 70%. The representative mentioned that smallholder farmers in the pilot phase have significantly reduced the costs of running fuel-powered systems, maintenance expenses, and losses due to frequent breakdowns. This was exemplified by Racha Buke, one of the first cohort members enrolled in the program, who reported in 2023 that she used to spend over USD 131 every month on fuel for her generator. Now, she spends as little as USD 31. This reduction has lowered her production costs and increased her farm's profit margins.

“The plan is to enroll ten farmers into the model and learn from their experiences to better customize the product. As of April 2024, we have seven farmers in the system. In addition, we plan to enroll more farmers from other counties with the assistance of RAPID+ to gather representative feedback on the product,” said the Davis & Shirtliff representative.

## Isiolo County: *Prosopis Juliflora* management in Merti, Isiolo County

Kenya experienced a prolonged drought between 2014-2017, which led to loss of vegetation cover, leaving lands bare in major parts of the Northern and Eastern regions. Isiolo County was among the affected counties, especially in the Cherab, Chari, Sericho, and Garbatulla wards. The prolonged drought was followed by rains above average in 2018.<sup>1</sup> Following the rains, the Merti community in Isiolo County found itself amidst a serious invasion by *Prosopis juliflora*, which earlier presented itself as the best and most tolerant plant in the area. The weed rapidly spread across the wards along river Ewaso Nyiro, invading the grazing areas and cutting off accessibility to community assets such as boreholes, mosques, and schools. The plant, popularly known as *Mathenge* or *Biskuti mjinga* was introduced in Merti around 1988. The plant is said to have been introduced in good faith through government agencies and other development partners as a solution to land degradation in the ASAL areas. This rapid spread and invasion were witnessed after the 2018 rains when the community realized that the plant was invasive. Earlier, little was known regarding its negative contributions until it engulfed the rangeland and limited access to key community assets.

### Negative effects associated with *Prosopis Juliflora*

- Increasing resource-based conflicts because of shrinking rangeland assets, colonized grazing fields, and water sources. The tree completely suppresses undergrowth and blocks access because of dense thorny thickets.
- Lowering the water table with its deep-root system of up to seventy (70) meters.
- Infectious human and livestock diseases such as Leishmaniasis and Katika disease in donkeys. The thorns are poisonous, causing unhealing wounds which the community associate with 'cancer'. It also provides suitable breeding grounds for biting insects such as Sand flies and mosquitos.
- Increased wildlife menace due to encroaching *Prosopis* forests which can host dangerous carnivores.
- *Prosopis* forests function as hiding grounds for criminals. Cases of rape and theft have been on the rise.
- Too much consumption of *Prosopis* pods cause tooth decay in livestock and constipation in children because of its high sugar content.
- Loss of vegetation diversity of mainly useful native flora and fauna.

"After some years of introduction, the plant colonized almost the entire land such as Merti town, homesteads, grazing fields, and water sources. We lost grazing fields and rivers in addition to health complications to both human and livestock associated with the invasive plant. This did not sit well with us hence we made a clarion call to address this menace. Firstly, the focus was to clear the plant to open pathways to grazing fields and water points as well as reduce the encroaching forest to the homesteads. We came out and used whatever tools were at our disposal as well as our own creativity to reduce the invasive species." - Halima, Coordinator, *Prosopis* Management Groups

### Addressing the *Prosopis* Menace

**Three women groups** of about **sixty (60) members** were established to address the challenges resulting from the rapid spread of the *Prosopis*. The three groups started by clearing pathways

used by livestock to access water and grazing areas and managed to restore three pathways successfully. Due to the benefits realized from these three groups, many other groups were formed. Currently, there are twelve **(12) groups** with a membership of over **one thousand two hundred (1200) members**. The groups have so far cleared over **twenty (20) acres of land**.

RAPID+ program and the Woody Weeds Plus program conducted assessments of the area and met the members of this self-driven women initiative. The Woody Weeds Plus program provided technical insights and approaches to improve the work the women were doing. It linked them with the County Implementation Group tasked with implementing the National Prosopis management policy.



**Left: Cutting and burning of Prosopis; Right: Farm established upon clearance of the Prosopis.**

The RAPID+ program continues to work with these groups to accelerate the management of invasive plants. The program has supported training and processes towards the formalization of these women groups as Community Based Organizations (CBOs). RAPID+ has also provided improved safe handling equipment, including gumboots and gloves to hasten the reclamation of areas invaded with Prosopis. It is also supporting the women's groups to set up livelihood activities on the reclaimed parcels of land.

These groups also received support from the government administration through the Deputy County Commander's office on addressing matters resulting from conflict over cleared lands.

"The women groups have done a superb job redeeming and restoring the image of Merti town and its environs. The women are highly motivated and full of energy when coming out in masses to work despite their limited capacity in both skills and equipment. As the chairperson of the Merti Sub-County, I will do my level best to ensure the women groups capture government attention and receive support from both government and other development partners. Working with the chiefs and assistant chiefs in the Sub-County, we will sensitize members to dedicate themselves in fighting this weed. We will ensure the women are allowed to utilize reclaimed lands to derive livelihoods such as fodder production, bee keeping as well as tree planting as committed by the president of Kenya. My office appreciates RAPID+ program for the commitment and great support that they continue extending to the groups. Many partners too will be encouraged as this calls for a concerted effort." - Michael Kioni, Merti Deputy County Commissioner



## Turkana County: Reclaiming the Pelekech Ranges

Pelekech Ranges are found in Turkana County, the second largest Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) county in Kenya. Turkana County covers approximately 77,000 square kilometers. Communities in Pelekech have dominantly been livestock keepers and depend on nomadic pastoralism as their main livelihood and economic activity. Pastoralism has increasingly been under threat because of drought, famine, and the changing land use and management. These factors have led to reduced forage growth rates and defoliation due to increased demand for firewood by Kakuma residents and refugees and increased stress on indigenous vegetation attributed to overgrazing.

As a result of the changing ecosystem, many pastoralists have been displaced from their communities and forced to find alternative livelihoods such as charcoal burning. However, this has exacerbated desertification by increasing soil temperature, which reduces the water supply through increased evaporation and soil microbial activity and affects the dormancy of indigenous seeds, facilitating the spread of invasive species like *Prosopis Juliflora*.



**Left: A degraded field in Pelekech with minimal vegetation cover; Right: Construction of half-moon bunds to mitigate soil erosion and address gullies in Pelekech.**

From observations in 2023, loss of ground cover had increased surface runoff due to the little precipitation received, leading to soil erosion and making the rain less effective in providing soil moisture for plant growth. The loss of livelihoods by the communities in Pelekech has resulted in dependency on relief supplies while those migrating with their livestock become suspects or victims of conflict.

To mitigate these impacts and provide an alternative livelihood, 20 community members (12 female and 8 male) from Pelekech established the Pelekech Environmental Group. The women-led group focused on reclaiming degraded and *Prosopis Juliflora* colonized areas by establishing enclosed plots for fodder production for their livestock and economic gains. Having neither land restoration nor fodder production knowledge, the group commenced revegetating a 5-acre plot near the village. However, yielding was challenging as natural phenomena like wind and surface runoff swiped the seeds. Poor tilling and management of weeds would result in invasive species and weed colonizing of appropriate fodder. In addition, for those that grew, migrating pastoralists would have their livestock graze on them, and this led to conflict.

"Honestly, I almost gave up since there were so many challenges. I was happy when it rained, as we expected our seeds to grow, but we found that the water had eroded the topsoil and left big gullies. Community members would openly graze in the field disregarding our efforts, and we had to keep going to report to the Chief." - Ekal Nagilae, member of the Pelekech Environmental Group

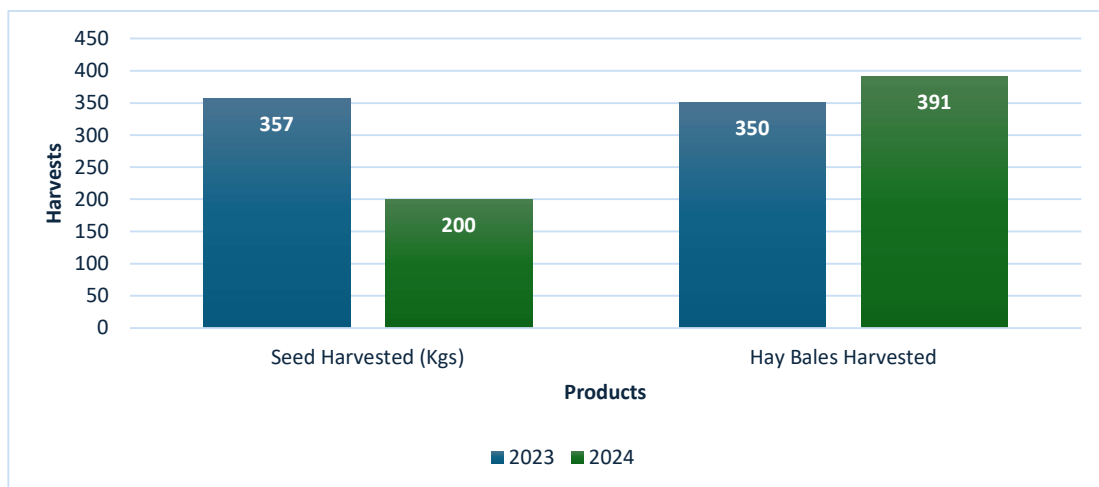
In collaboration with the Ministry of Livestock Development, RAPID+, with primary funding from the SDC, trained the Pelekech Environmental Group on appropriate fodder production and land restoration approaches. This included soil covering crops and construction structures like **check dams, dykes, and half-moon bunds**. The program facilitated the groups in rehabilitating 4.8 acres and establishing 16 bunds integrated with check dams on strategic locations within the farm, which were informed through a topographical survey.



Left: Ongoing seed harvesting in the replenished area; Right: Value addition for the hay bales.

The bunds were planted with fodder grass '*Cenchrus ciliaris*' and Leucaena '*Leucaena leucocephala*' trees to enhance water harvesting and filtration and mitigate erosion. Gradually, the half-moon bunds harvested surface runoff water and mitigated erosion. Water retention has improved soil moisture and oxygen, facilitating forage growth. Capacity building on early weed identification, weeding, pruning, and gapping was strengthened to ensure maximum production.

In 2023, the group harvested 357 kg of seeds and 350 Bales of hay, enabling them to sell 300 kilograms of seeds to the local markets. With increased production, RAPID+ further trained the group in marketing and value addition, which was aimed at enhancing income generation and management by the group.



Graph: Production increases in Pelekech.



## Turkana County: Strengthening Service Delivery at Turkana Urban Water Company

Turkana Urban Water Company, formerly known as Lodwar Water and Sanitation Company Limited (LOWASCO), is a corporate entity that was established in 2007 under the Companies Act, Cap 286 Laws of Kenya. The core business of Turkana Urban Water Company is the provision of efficient and affordable water and sanitation services to over 120,000 residents of Lodwar municipality, as defined in the Service Provision Agreement (SPA). The utility has a total of 9,575 household water connections and uses a manual system to bill its customers. Over the years, this system has posed a major operational impediment to utility.

To strengthen water services delivery, RAPID+ consulted with the Turkana Urban Water Company team and some of the clients, which established that over 70% of the customers were dissatisfied with the current utility billing system. This finding was congruent with the customer care reports, which indicated that most of the complaints and claims were related to billing issues. Additionally, clients required scheduling an appointment with the line departments of billing and revenue and in-person attendance to address these claims, resulting in a time-consuming and frustrating client experience. The system was equally prone to billing errors during manual entry of the meter readers' report, contributing to utility non-revenue water rates.

RAPID+, through a collaboration with Wonderkid Multimedia Limited, facilitated a business-to-business meeting with Turkana Urban Water Company to deliberate on viable water billing solutions geared towards addressing the billing constraints. The parties agreed on the installation of Utility Master Billing Suite, which integrates customer management and billing systems automation. Turkana Urban Water Company funded 70 percent of the cost of the system, while RAPID+ facilitated the installation of integrated capacity building for the utility staff by Wonderkid Multimedia Ltd. Other partners like Practical Action also supported the training of utility meter readers to gain knowledge on the digitization of bills.



**Left: Turkana Urban Water Company meter reader training; Right: Business-to-business meeting with Wonderkid Multimedia Ltd.**

Following the installation of the system, the company has realized a significant improvement in its customer management process. Bills are automatically issued to customers via mobile short message service (SMS), while actual and real-time meter readings have improved meter reader route performance. For the 6 months, bill complaints have gradually reduced from 75% to 5%.



**Photo: Automated household meter reading.**

#### **Factors that led to increased revenue collection:**

- Community members or customers are accessing water throughout the day. Previously, the kiosks were only open for 10 hours a day.
- All clients are paying for the water service. Prior to the installation, some accessed water on credit and could not pay the monthly bill.
- Transparency in handling the funds collected by the kiosk management. Before, the total revenue from water sales was not appropriately accounted for.

“Since I started using a smartphone to read meters, my work has been easy because the IT office automatically uploads the meter routes, and all we do is scan the meter reading. I am no longer obliged to write down the reading on the paper and then submit it to the office. This has also saved me time used to distribute the bills to customers clients manually, reducing possible human errors.” - Mr. Benson Lokuruchana, Meter reader at the Turkana Urban Water Company

The project has successfully helped the company enhance revenue collection, reduce non-revenue water, and, on average, double its revenue from the two water kiosks. With this outcome, the company has resorted to scaling up the intervention, targeting four other kiosks. Through a collaboration with RAPID+, the company will invest 80% of its revenue towards the purchase of water meters. At the same time, the program will fund 20% to support the capacity needs of the technical team in the repair and maintenance of the meters at Turkana Urban Water Company.

“Turkana Urban Water Company has made great strides following the automation of water supply at Kiosk no.3 and Kiosk no.12. Immediately after the installation of the prepaid water meter, our average monthly revenue from these two water kiosks has doubled. This clearly shows that we have been losing much revenue through unaccounted sales. Our resolve is now to scale up this initiative to cover additional water kiosks and eventually automate all 16 water kiosks. We are grateful to Kenya RAPID+ for having offered the initial support and for their willingness to walk with us in our journey of strengthening water service delivery”. - Mr. Francis Adome, the Technical Director at the Turkana Urban Water Company, comments on the automation of one of the utility water kiosks.

## **Wajir County: Promoting Peace through Dialogue, a Story from Ademasajida**

### **Background**

Prolonged drought forced pastoralists from Wajir West, Eldas, and Wajir North to migrate into Isiolo and Marsabit counties, seeking water and pasture. Their arrival near Kone and Hawaye in Isiolo sparked tensions with local host communities, as competition for dwindling resources like water and grazing land intensified. Despite earlier efforts, disputes between pastoralists from Ademasajida in Wajir County and Sericho in Isiolo County persisted, threatening peaceful coexistence. Conflicts arose over livestock theft, restricted grazing areas, poor communication during migrations, and resource disputes. Additional issues including bushfires, cross-border trafficking, and animal diseases compounded the tensions. With water sources such as the Ewaso Ng'iro River nearing depletion, disagreements escalated, increasing the need for swift intervention.

### **Intervention: Intra-Community Peace Dialogue**

The Directorate of Peace, Ademasajida Rangeland Management Committee with support from RAPID+, has convened intra-community dialogues in Ademasajida ward. The meeting aimed to resolve outstanding disputes as a precursor to a larger inter-county dialogue between Wajir West and Sericho Sub-County in Isiolo. Key participants have included the Assistant County Commissioner, local chiefs, peace committee members, youth, women, and elders. The dialogue furthered open discussions about resource access, theft, and social issues affecting the communities. Key resolutions were agreed upon as outlined below.

- **Inter-County Peace Dialogue:** A broader meeting between Wajir West and Sericho will be organized to address deeper issues.
- **Early Warning Systems:** Elders will monitor tensions and report emerging conflicts promptly to prevent escalation.
- **Rapid Response Mechanism:** The Directorate of Peace will respond swiftly to any disputes.
- **Improved Communication:** Regular cross-border meetings will be held to enhance coordination and trust between communities.

### **Impact: A Shift Toward Peace**

The intra-community dialogue has led to tangible improvements in relations between the pastoralist communities. Pastoralists have begun notifying elders and leaders before moving their herds across territories, reducing friction over shared resources. The efforts have also curbed livestock theft, with market monitoring measures introduced to prevent reselling of stolen animals.

During the recent migration season, pastoralists from Ademasajida reported fewer incidents of violence, attributing the peaceful period to enhanced coordination between peace committees. "We now understand each other better, and our meetings are helping us solve issues before they become problems," remarked Mr. Abdi Mohamed, a local elder.



Photo: Ademasajida community peace dialogue.

