



Diversified Income for Pastoralist Women in Northern Kenya

Location:

Kenya

Partners:

Impact

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PfR supports women's groups in Laikipia and Isiolo in diversifying their income.
Photo credit: Marlou Geurts/ PfR

Landscape Laikipia County
Photo credit: Marlou Geurts/ PfR

PfR Kenya supports local women's groups in diversifying family income, reducing dependency on pastoralism.

Pastoralism is becoming more challenging due to climate change (drought) and increased competition for water in Ewaso Nyiro river basin.

To strengthen community resilience PfR Kenya supports an alternative livelihood programme for pastoralist women in the two counties where PfR is active - Laikipia and Isiolo.

Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) occupy approximately 89% of the country's landmass. This area is home to about 36% of the population, 70% of the national livestock herd and 90% of wildlife.

Climate change is having serious effects on the way of life in the ASALs. Traditionally pastoralism is the source of income for the local communities in northern Kenya. However, due to recurrent long periods of drought and increased water competition due to investments upstream in the Ewaso Nyiro river basin, this way of life has become increasingly challenging. Future infrastructure projects planned upstream will further impact the lives of pastoralists and farmers living in the ASALs. Therefore, alternative livelihoods need to be found. PfR Kenya supports pastoralist women in diversifying their family's income.



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The alternative livelihood programme of Twala Women Group. Photo credit: Marlou Geurts/ PfR

The alternative livelihood programme for Women Groups show a significant paradigm shift in supporting family income.

The alternative livelihood programme of the Twala Women's Group in Laikipia County has been championed by both PfR and the Climate Smart project supported by PfR alliance member Cordaid and its local CSO partner IMPACT since 2017. Through the Climate Smart project, trainings were provided and seed money to invest in the communities plans for their alternative livelihood activities. Presently, assistance to the women's group continues, but focus has shifted from direct support towards further capacity strengthening and networking. The women's group is now better connected to relevant stakeholders, which enables them to mobilize support from government, and to have improved access to markets. In addition, they attract more tourists to their community eco-lodge and camp.

The fact that women are earning their own money shows a significant paradigm shift in supporting family income, traditionally a task of the pastoralist men. The involvement of women in decision making has improved with the initiation of projects that aim to engage women in development and livelihood diversification.

The women's group is made up of 203 women from six different smaller women's groups within the locality. The group consists of one overall coordinator, a core group of six women, 10 paid staff, and members who work on a rotation basis. Together the women are responsible for the management of the eco-lodge and the camping area, as well as for the souvenir shop, the production of Aloe Vera, farming, and maintaining bee hives. It is also a place to visit and learn more about the Masai culture.

The money earned from the above activities is split between; spending on girl's education (10%), administrative issues (20%), and the remaining 70% is paid out to the Twala women's group members as dividends twice a year in January and December.

