



**DPM FIELD REPORT FROM 6TH TO 13TH JUNE 2000**  
**FIELD REPORT FOR KAKUMA, TURKANA**  
**DISTRICT**

**Appraisal of ongoing activities in view of the prolonged drought in the area**

**Members of the Team**

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**Report prepared**

**by**

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## **Introduction**

The field trip was aimed at monitoring the project activities in light of the prevailing drought in the area. Turkana District and most of the areas in Kenya were undergoing through a dry spell that was occasioned by lack of the long rains in the month of April and May. The local community was affected by the drought through losses of their livestock and loss of the crops they had planted

### **Objectives**

1. Assess efforts done by the community in forest protection
2. Review agricultural activities
3. Establish how the community cope with drought
4. Complete socio-economic activities

### **Methods**

1. Discussions with EVC officials and the local residents
2. Transect walk in the forest and agriculture areas
3. Joint ranking of ekwa followed by rewarding
4. Discussion of uses of trees and coping strategies during drought

### **Meeting with EVC officials**

The meeting was done on 8<sup>th</sup> June in DMP site office. The agenda for the meeting were;

- Review of DMP activities
  - Focus on project goal and vision
  - Criteria for rewarding successful ekwa owners
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- Members were reminded the project goals and visions. The project aims at community participation in forest conservation and protection that will ensure sustained use of the resource and thus revert the desertification trend in the area. He emphasised on the importance of the local community especially EVC Officials to have the project vision so as to translate the same to the other people.
  - There has been reduced destruction of the forest inspite of the prolonged drought. This shows that the community is starting to appreciating the role of the forest.
  - The planned transfer of the forest nursery to the area where the handpump is located is likely to cause problems. The ownership of nursery has to be discussed with the ekwa owners. The area is also prone to livestock grazing and flooding. There could be competition for water between the people, livestock and trees.
  - Chairman requested for agriculture tools and training. Some members could be invited to attend social forestry training course in KEFRI hqs or in Kitui.
  - Members agreed on the need to diversify the activities of the project. Originally the members had viewed the project in terms of forest nursery. When the nursery

activities failed, members realised that the project has other diverse activities aimed at the environment and improving their welfare. The following activities were proposed :

- During the current dry spell, members can be trained on water harvesting techniques that they can use to improve yields from agriculture.
- Members can acquire tender to supply firewood to Kakuma refugee camp as a way of income generation. DMP will assist the members in registration of the group. The chief indicated that there are areas within the location where dry firewood is available and so the tender to supply firewood will not lead to destruction of the environment.
- Registration of the association will require the minutes of the organisation showing the officials, objectives . In addition the 4 officials need to travel to Lodwar to register. The name of the association will be ``Lopuski community environment conservation and development association`. Mr. Oyugi was to make arrangements with the District Social Service officers in Lodwar to facilitate fast registration. A budget of K.sh. 3000 was set aside for registration. This was to cover registration fees, transport and lunch for 4 officers. The registration was to done in the following week.

➤ **Motivation for members participating in the project**

- Members discussed the issue of allowances for officials attending DMP activities. It was agreed that the activities are mainly voluntary. However it was felt that a small token could be given as motivation for the officials during the meeting. This is not a must for all meetings. The Local community should be discouraged from the dependency syndrome that has been a norm in the past projects in the area. The officials advised DMP staff to stop giving tobacco to Locals during meetings. Members participating in the project will be the first beneficiary of any of the project input. It is also expected that the farmers will get harvest from their crops.

➤ **Office Furniture**

- DMP office requires furniture to make it operational. One table and 3 chairs are required. Mt. Kagombe will liase with Mr. Oyugi to check for furniture either in Lodwar or Nairobi.

➤ **Status of Forest**

- Mr. Gachathi gave the status of the vegetation in the forest based on the species composition assessment conducted earlier. The forest has 56 tree species distributed in 13 families. The rate of destruction increases as one travels from Lopur to Kakuma. Most trees in the forest belong to the same age and have no regeneration. Lack of regeneration is the biggest problem facing the forest since it does not assure sustainable resource in the forest in the future. Lack of regeneration can be attributed to overgrazing due to overstocking of the livestock

in the area. Fencing off some of the area can be one method to encourage regeneration.

➤ **Fencing**

- DMP staff and EVC officials agreed on the concept of fencing off some selected areas to join to give room for regeneration. The fence will be temporary for a period of 3 - 4 years to allow young seedlings to reach the stage where browsing/grazing will not have big impact on growth. EVC officials will discuss with ekwa owners to select the site and on maintenance of erected fence. In some ekwa's natural regeneration will be supplemented by enrichment planting.. Fencing will commence in September in readiness for the rain season.

➤ **Agricultural activities**

Mr. Kanyenji led in discussing agriculture activities. Though the farmers prepared and planted their farms with various crop seeds as per the last report, the rains failed and so no growth of crop seed took place. A visit on farm areas revealed that no crop germinated in the whole area. Members discussed on the activities that can be carried out during the drought period. These include:

- Water harvesting techniques through construction of floodgates that would retain water and construction of canals.
- Developing gene bank for the seeds
- Undertaking food dynamics in the community and how the community copes in difficult situation like when there is drought. The following item will be considered as part of the survival strategies for the community.
- Other methods that community adapts to survive during drought season
- Family dependency in the community
- Motivation for those cultivating and how are they regarded by those who don't cultivate.
- Do loss of livestock lead to increase in cultivators and do leave agriculture after restocking.

*Mr. Kanyenji was to discuss the survival strategies and coping system and give results as a separate report*

➤ **Awards to Ekwa owners**

- In the last visit to the area in March, DPM staff promised to award the best and best improved ekwa owner as a motivation to continue protecting the ekwa's. Each category will choose the best, second best and third best for award.

- -The criteria for selection of the best will include the one that is more stocked and with little damage to the trees. Indicators to be used are, stocking percentage in an ekwa, signs of charcoal burning, cutting of branches and animal damage.
- -Mr. Kagombe and Mr. Oyugi accompanied by the EVC official made an extensive 10 km transect to the ekwa's for purpose of assessment. In most ekwas, the owner were present to discuss with officials on the progress and problems in the ekwa. The visit was accompanied by knowing the local usage of the species. Mr. Gachathi did this and it will be reported separately.

There were more efforts in protection of the forest compared to the scenario in March. The widespread charcoal burning noted in the March report was not noticed. The state of an ekwa largely depended on the efforts the ekwa owner was making to protect it.

A brief description of the ekwa's visited is given below

#### **EKWA 1:**

- Neighbours Kakuma sublocation on the way to Kakuma
- Owner: Luchilia Nangolia
- Cover: 25%
- Charcoal burning: 5 spots. There were freshly cut trees that were stacked for Charcoal production.
- The owner was blaming the destruction on the community in the sublocation that was not covered by DPM project. A walk in the neighbouring sublocation revealed several trees that were cut for charcoal production.
- Tree cutting 1
- Tree burning 4
- No regeneration

#### **EKWA 2:**

- Location across the lagger on the upper side
- Owner: Elcumolo
- Cover: 40%
- Tree burning- 1
- Tree cutting - 4
- Charcoal burning-2
- No much destruction in the area

#### **EKWA 3:**

- Owner: Tupus

- Cutting tree branches- 4
- Charcoal burning - 0
- Tree burning -0
- Tree branches were cut as foliage for goats. There is need for tree Management to know the optimum number of branches that can cut without adverse effect on tree growth.
- Ekwa has regenerated but the young regeneration is cut for firewood and charcoal  
No. of young regeneration cut were 8.
- Charcoal burning 1
- Cover: In mature trees cover was 10% and in young trees cover was 50% but with high rate of destruction.

#### **EKWA 4:**

- Owner: Akuilim
- The Ekwa uses to be a good forest with high stocking. Destruction was done after the former ekwa owner left. The chief and elder had to come in to stop the destruction. The present ekwa owner is maintaining the ekwa.
- Cover 50%
- Charcoal spots - 1
- Tree cutting - 4

#### **EKWA 5:**

- Located on the lower part of the nursery.
- Owner: Natoti
- Cover - 70%
- No recent cutting
- No charcoal burning

#### **EKWA 6:**

- Located between tree nursery and water pump.
- Owner: Samuel Esekon
- Charcoal burning - 1 (tree stump)
- Has young regeneration of *proposis*
- As you move towards the pump the *salvadora* becomes dominant
- Debarking of tree - 1
- Cover - 60%
- Tree cutting - 1

#### **EKWA 7:**

- Located at the water pump

- Owners: Lokitaung and Thomas
- Charcoal spots - 3
- Cover - 85%
- Dominated by same age trees
- No regeneration
- Owner has chased away tree cutters in the ekwa after marking trees for cutting
- Well managed.

#### **EKWA 8:**

- Owner: Lotea (owner since 1982)
- Charcoal burning - 5
- Tree cutting -1
- Cover 65%

#### **EKWA 9:**

- Homestead of farmer chief of the area.
- Cover 45%
- Area used to be well managed when the chief was staying there but destruction started when he shifted from the area. Current owner is making efforts to stop destruction.

#### **EKWA 10:**

- Owner: Ekuleny
- Ekwa has a lot of *proposis* regeneration that has turned to a bush. Large portion of the ekwa has been taken by the lagger
- Cover 70% but useful trees are only about 30%
- There is need for management Programme for *proposis*.

#### **EKWA 11:**

- Across the lagger
- Owner: Keem
- The ekwa shows improvement compared to march scenario
- Few trees cut
- No charcoal burning
- -Cover 50%



## Awards to best ekwa

### ➤ Best ekwa

Position	Ekwa no.	Ekwa owner	Award
1	7	Thomas/ Lukitaung	400
3	5	Natoli	300
3	6	Samuel Esekon	200

### Best improved ekwa

Position	Ekwa No.	Ekwa owner	Award
1	11	Keem	400
2	10	Ekulany	300
3	4	Akuilim	200

All the E kwa owner who never got the above awards were given a commendation award for maintaining the ekwa. They include:

1.	Locholia Nangolia	100
2.	Elcomolo	100
3.	Topis	100
4.	Lotea	105.
5.	Ngulimo	100

### Other issues discussed and observations

- The DMP staff promised to prepare certificates for the best ekwa owners during the next evaluation of the ekwa.
- It was noted that the ownership of the ekwa was a joint venture between the ekwa owner and the residents in that ekwa. The EVC officials were given an assignment to record the existing ekwas and the resident the specific ekwa. This would guide in knowing the number of people who share benefits from the ekwa. Benefit sharing of the products from the ekwa is a prerequisite to proper community management of a natural resource.
- There are a number of young people in the area who can be useful in implementing DMP activities. A number of them can communicate well in kiswahili and some in English. However they tend to hide their talents during public meetings, choosing to talk only in Turkana. Mr. Kagombe discussed with them after the meeting. It was agreed that they should be considered for any DMP assignment in the future. They agreed to compile a list showing their names and their highest level of education.

## **Conclusion and way forward**

The prolonged drought in the area has had negative impacts on the community and their livelihood. The community has lost almost all their livestock that forms the backbone of their livelihood. The crops that were planted did not germinate and this has led to loss of the crop seeds for planting in the consequent season. The residents were surviving on the relief food assistance that was given by government and donor agencies. The community will require support in restocking and provision of crop seeds once the rain season starts.

The community earns a big credit for maintaining their forest despite of the prevailing drought. The forest is one of the alternative sources of income for the community. The community recognise that the forest acts as the lifestay for their livestock especially goats and sheep during drought season. Goats feed on leaves and seeds from the trees and use them for the shade. The partial utilisation of the trees has more long term benefits than cutting the tree. The community realises that the forest is an important component of their survival since it's the only vegetation that remains during the drought season. There is need to increase and diversify non wood tree products from the forest to ensure that the community continue getting benefits from the forest without necessarily cutting down the trees for firewood and charcoal. The quantification of non-wood tree products contribution to the society will justify conservation of the forests in the area.

The EVC have played a leading role in protection and conservation of the environment. They need to be given more motivations as trade-off for their conservation efforts. One of the motivations that also doubles up as alternative source of livelihood is the support of agriculture activities. This has worked well in past when there was enough rain but was not effective during the dry spell. More alternative sources of livelihood need to be explored. The community came with the idea of getting orders for firewood provision to the refugees' camp. This could increase their income but need to be controlled to ensure that firewood is got from the dry trees. The EVC was registered as a community based organisation to enable it take its rightful role conservation of the environment and attract any form of assistance.

Efforts in forest protection and conservation need to be supplemented by fencing off some areas to improve the regeneration coupled with enrichment planting. The community agreed on the fencing and committed themselves in protection of the fence.