

CRS is Supporting Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Turkana, Kenya



Members of Lokapel beekeeping group participate in a meeting. They find keeping bees can be more sustainable than resource-intensive cattle.

Turkana County is in the arid and semi-arid lands of the northern part of Kenya. The County experiences adverse weather conditions such as drought, flash floods, locust invasion. These conditions have led an increase in food insecurity and malnutrition leading to poor health.

CRS and the Diocese of Lodwar implemented the Enhancing Community-based Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Turkana East and South Sub-Counties in October 2020 to September 2021. The project supported seven communities in climate change livelihood adaptation and resilience through training and provision of grants, community managed disaster risk reduction and on increasing advocacy with the Turkana County Government.

Bees seen as sustainable

The Lokapel Bee keeping apiary group was established under this project. The group ventured into bee keeping because keeping livestock was becoming increasingly difficult due to the impact of climate change on their community.

James Ekunoi, the chairman of the apiary group spoke to us about the situation.

“The seasonal rivers have dried up,” he said. “There has been less pasture for our livestock leading to insecurity caused by conflict over pasture. We are no longer able to farm and rear goats as we used to do years ago. The weather patterns have changed, and we are receiving less rains.”

He said bee keeping is a good alternative source of livelihood. The Diocese of Lodwar with support from CRS trained Lokapel Bee keeping apiary group on dry land farming, value addition, business skills, and the on development of concept notes for fundraising.

The group will harvest high-quality honey and produce items such as bee jelly, and bee venom wax from the byproducts.

“Group members are the ones who check on the beehives to ensure that they are intact and undisturbed as they nurture plants that flower to attract bees. We plan to expand the project as we are only using a small section of the 10 acres of land which is available for our use.” James said.

Training and grants

At Elongol Women’s Group in Lopii, chairlady Farida Lokaale talked about the challenges brought by climate change. Families separated due to forced migration as men went looking for pasture. Young girls were married off as families sought to raise income from dowries — denying the girls an opportunity to go to school and leading to their sexual exploitation.

In search of alternative income sources, farmers increased charcoal burning which meant fewer trees. That led to soil erosion and further degraded the environment, causing riverbanks to break, increasing flooding from flash floods. There was conflict over pasture because traditional water sources dried up.

“Most of the population are nomadic pastoralists and their main livelihood of keeping livestock has been affected by climate change. It is no longer tenable to keep large herds of livestock because grazing areas continue to diminish,” Farida said.

The women’s group appreciated the training and grants received from CRS and the Diocese of Lodwar. Farida said they were using the grant to buy livestock and sell at a profit as their main means of livelihoods.

“Next week, we have some goats that we will take to the market” she said.

Climate change funding

They still face challenges, especially the lack of water and insecurity. She emphasized the need for peace between communities so that their livestock are not stolen, and to enable them to transport the livestock to the market safely so that their business can thrive.

The County Government is seeking to replicate and expand the practices and structures of this project to permanently increase community input into local climate change funding for greater impact and sustainability.

The County Assembly of Turkana is working towards passing a climate bill and policies and regulations which will pave way for the allocation of resources and establish climate change committees in the county.