

Food Security, Agriculture & Disaster Risk Reduction

Capability Statement



George Kamau/Practical Action

ABOUT US

Practical Action is an international development agency working with poor communities to help them choose and use technology to improve their lives. Our work in Africa, Asia and Latin America is in partnership with poor people and their communities, building on their own knowledge and skills to come up with innovative, sustainable and practical technological solutions. Our work is people focused, locally relevant, environmentally sensitive and offers tangible ways out of poverty. Integrated into our work is a commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation, markets system development, gender equity and communicating our learning and knowledge through our Practical Answers Programme. Practical Action Consulting plays the important role of replicating knowledge and practice generated from the programmes and external assignments to partners.

Within Eastern Africa the bulk of our current work on Food, Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction (FADRR) is with pastoralist communities in northern Kenya (Somali Cluster- Mandera, Gedo Region of Somalia & Omo Blue Region in southern Ethiopia; and Karamoja Cluster- Turkana, Pokot, North Eastern Uganda and parts of Southern Sudan). Our expertise within the subsector has been developed over 24 years using local experiences enriched with global learning from across Practical Action. Our core competencies primarily focus on protecting the capital base (livestock for household food security), natural resources management, livelihoods diversification and disaster risk reduction (mainly droughts, conflicts and livestock diseases). Through our FADRR Programme we seek to establish productive and disaster resilient systems for food production and improved livelihood security, with climate proofing being a key feature. We are committed to enabling poor people living in fragile ecosystems in Eastern Africa to exploit and benefit equitably from new political, economic and technological opportunities.

WE PROMOTE

- Sustainable household food security
- Participatory approaches to development planning
- Community based extension systems (for animal health delivery)
- Resilience building and climate-smart food production systems
- Gender mainstreaming
- Integration of market approaches within programme
- Policy Advocacy

OUR EXPERTISE

Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation: Through the years we have built expertise around management and sustainable use of water and pasture resources in northern Kenya. We are also a leader on climate change adaptation at community level.

Livestock Development and Food Security: From Turkana to Mandera and Samburu, we have dependable expertise on livestock development (both animal health and husbandry) and food security. We are a leader in skills development for dryland farming systems.

Participatory Technology Development: We work with communities and partners to design, use and upscale appropriate technologies. An example is the Participatory Action Plan Development (PAPD) through consensus building currently in use in both Turkana and Mandera.

Vulnerability to Resilience (V2R): This is our unique approach to resilience building in different contexts using numerous entry points. V2R can be applied for needs assessments, vulnerability analysis, policy formulation, design of programmes and projects in addition to monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory Action Research: We have developed special skills for involving local communities in participatory research e.g. for community based adaptation to climate change and development of coping strategies. To effectively deliver this we have partnered with research institutions, environmental management agencies and academia.

Policy influencing: To ensure an enabling policy environment we have developed mechanisms for effective lobbying and advocacy either to formulate new policies or to translate existing ones into practice.

Working in partnerships: We believe in skills transfer and building a critical mass of actors and practitioners on the ground. To do this we work in various partnerships and develop capacity.

Leadership in peace building and conflict mitigation: Given the scarcity of natural resources and the increasing adverse impacts of climate change, we have developed expert skills

in facilitating local communities to effectively negotiate and share resources through social contracts and reciprocal arrangements in northern Kenya.

Practical Answers (PANS): Is our demand-led knowledge sharing service. We generate and share development education for learning and scaling up of Practical Actions' work in the region. We believe that access to technical information can create jobs, improve health and livelihoods.

Practical Action Consulting (PAC): This is the subsidiary arm of our regional work. It supports delivery of our work through fee-based, turn-key consultancies to enable pro-poor clients reach more poor people in the region. Practical Action Consulting plays the important role of replicating knowledge and practice generated from our programmes and external assignments to our partners in the region as well as outside.

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

The following is a summary of work done within the programme over the last few years.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION	APPROACHES
Participatory Planning	Building capacity of poor communities in Manderu and Turkana to participate in development planning and decision making. This is an on-going effort that organizes communities at landscape level to analyse their situation and problems; formulate solutions and package them as development plans for funding through the District Steering Groups (DSGs) and NGOs amongst others. The approach also has a component that holds leaders at all levels to account and builds local capacity for policy advocacy (mainly targeting local civil society).
Community based animal health extension systems	Mainly focused on protection of the capital base (livestock) through basic health care and technical linkages to public vets. Promoted community managed agro vet stores and business linkages to the private sector that is drug companies in Kenya and Uganda
Water technologies in ASALs for drought mitigation	Linked to our V2R approach, we have realized that durable solutions to improved water security in dry land ecosystems (especially during the dearth periods) depend more on appropriate technologies that effectively harvest and harness run-off water; and less on underground exploitation of aquifers. Building on these we have worked with local communities to build and manage various water infrastructures (such as water pans, earth dams, shallow wells and rock catchments). We have also built local capacity (water management committees) to ensure proper use and maintenance of the facilities.
Solar powered water pumping systems	Learning from the high failure rate of diesel-powered water pumping systems for dry land communities we have successfully piloted the use of solar powered systems in Turkana in collaboration with Davis & Shirliff. Our next strategy will be to help catalyse private sector interest to scale up the same within the region.
Hygiene and sanitation	Realizing that water provisioning alone does not deliver the desired impacts, we have promoted the use of various technologies and approaches to hygiene and sanitation that are appropriate to dryland communities. These include CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) and PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation)
Livelihoods diversification	Due to rising impacts of climate change an increasing number of people in ASAL areas are being dispossessed of their traditional economic mainstay (livestock keeping) as more and more livestock (mainly cattle) perish during droughts. To help address the plight of these environmental refugees (pastoralist drop-outs) we have successfully piloted livelihoods' supplementation programmes for examplealoe farming among women groups and business development among VICOBA groups in Turkana. Both need massive scaling up to deliver large scale impact at population level.
Climate change adaptation	Through our action research work we have also developed in-depth knowledge of community based adaptation in northern Kenya and are currently working on longer-term solutions to address the complex challenges of development in dry land areas. We are seeking to establish a closer match between development solutions and recurrent problems that have previously defied massive funding and development approaches. Working with us on this are strategic partners from research and academia. We are looking at the entire region Eastern Africa/Greater Horn of Africa- GHA.

OUR PARTNERS INCLUDE

Government Departments, EU, Cordaid, IDRC, USAID/OFDA, DFID, Comic Relief, USEPA, SIDA, DANIDA, Australian Aid (AusAID), World Bank/IFC, OPEC Funding for International Development, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UN Women, Christian Aid, GVEP International, SNV, JICA, AfDB, Energy and Environment Partnership Programme with Southern and East Africa (EEP S&EA), Various Embassies, Ministry of Energy - Rural Electrification Authority (REA), Parliamentary Energy committees, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), Kenya Bureau of Standards, UNDP, Project Gaia, TaTEDO, GVEP International, HIVOS, ETC Foundation Netherlands, UNIDO, AMREF, GIZ, GVEP, ICRAF, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and the University of Nairobi (UoN) amongst others.

Practical Action - Eastern Africa Regional Office
 Methodist Ministries Centre, Office Block C, (1st Floor.)
 Oloitoktok Road, off Gitanga Road | P.O. Box 39493 - 00623 Nairobi, Kenya
 Telephone: +254 20-2595311/12/13/14/15/16
 Email: kenya@practicalaction.or.ke

