

Using Songs and Dramas to Sensitize the Community to Invest today for a safer Tomorrow

One of the most difficult aspects of proactive risk reduction is to convince people to act and invest today for a better tomorrow. It is not easy even in a developed world where people are better informed and have better capacities to invest mainly because it demands action based on uncertainties. People tend to forget what happened a year ago and continue business as usual. The communities in PfR operational areas in Kenya are repeatedly affected by drought; witnessed the ugly face of its impact when it wiped away thousands of livestock and put households in abject poverty, suffering and death. However, most of them still stick to their traditional livelihoods, take little/no decision to improve their situation, even failed to learn from those few who managed to cope better. That is why awareness raising, sensitization, thorough and regular reflection is important in a community where DRR projects are being implemented.

KRCS and NLRC have been discussing on the best ways of sensitizing the community and convincing them on the benefit of investing today on risk reduction to avoid suffering the consequences of disaster tomorrow. Different communication strategies were reviewed and the one used by Cordaid (songs in local language) to promote Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) approach found to be successful. KRCS and NLRC met the local artist (Mr. Abdi Godana) who was working with Cordaid to compose songs on PfR approaches. He was made to participate in various PfR trainings to get the general idea and goal of the programme. Then he managed to compose five songs in Borana language which are focusing on the importance of early warning and early action, livelihood diversification, and environmental protection. Mr. Abdi has already played these songs in various PfR events (platform establishment community conference, in pastoralist day, in community discussions etc) and the receptions by the community members were really high. During the pastoralist day when Mr. Abdi was singing the PfR songs from PfR/Cordaid booth, the entire visitors were gathered around the booth to listen to the songs and even dance totally abandoning the many booths of various organizations. Motivated by Mr. Abdi, a local youth group from Merti area prepared a drama that shows the impact of drought on the community and stress the importance of taking early actions well ahead of time before another drought strike the community and claim the lives and livelihoods of many people. They also performed their drama to the public in various occasions and got good moral support. All have been doing this on voluntary basis.



Mr. Abdi Godana, a local musician, signing songs about PfR and community members listening and dancing

The songs and drama have already triggered discussion among the community and even at the household level. They are more people who would like to hear more about better risk reduction practices and technologies and we are hoping that it will lead many into actions.

In order to reach as many communities as possible and as part of documentation, KRCS and NLRC decided to record the songs and drama on a CD and to distribute it to the target communities. The songs were recorded in a professional studio in Nairobi and the drama was shot by Public Relation team of KRCS. KRCS finalized the synchronization, editing and adding sub-titles recently. It will be replicated and distribution will start soon.



Merti Youth Group showing PfR drama to the community in Merti