

# Action Research for Disaster Risk Reduction

Experiences with Pastoralist Field School (PFS)  
and Village Community Banks (VICOBA)



Institut für Auslands-  
beziehungen e. V.



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Experiences with Pastoralist Field School (PFS) and Village Community Banks (VICOBA)

Implemented by the VSF Consortium in the ECHO funded Project  
“Improved Community Response to Drought” – ICRD III

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## Acronyms

<b>ABCD</b>	Asset Based Community Development
<b>ACTED</b>	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
<b>AESA</b>	Agro – ecosystem analysis
<b>ALDEF</b>	Arid Lands Development Forum
<b>ALRMP II</b>	Arid Lands Resources Management Project II
<b>BMU</b>	Beach Management Unit
<b>CAHWs</b>	Community Based Animal Health Workers
<b>CARE</b>	Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>DPA</b>	Disaster Prone Areas
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECHO</b>	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
<b>FFS</b>	Farmer Field Schools
<b>ICRD</b>	Improved Community Response to Drought project
<b>IGA</b>	Income Generating Activities
<b>ILRI</b>	International Livestock Research Institute – Nairobi
<b>IIRR</b>	International Institute for Rural Reconstruction
<b>KNDP</b>	Kenya National Disaster Policy
<b>KSH</b>	Kenya shillings
<b>LG</b>	Local Government
<b>NAADS -GoU</b>	National Agricultural Advisory Services – Government of Uganda
<b>NGOs</b>	Non- Governmental Organizations
<b>PM&amp;E</b>	Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation
<b>PFS</b>	Pastoralist Field Schools
<b>RDD</b>	Regional Drought Decision
<b>SPM - IGAs</b>	Selection, Planning and Management of IGAs
<b>VICOBA</b>	Village Community Banks
<b>VSF B</b>	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium
<b>VSF G</b>	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany
<b>VSF S</b>	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse
<b>VS&amp;LA</b>	Village Savings & Loaning Associations
<b>UGX</b>	Uganda shillings



# 1. Introduction

Good practices documentation aims at sharing experiences on the concepts of Pastoral Field Schools (PFS) and Village Community Banks (VICOBA) as implemented by the VSF consortium (VSF- Switzerland, Belgium and Germany) in the ECHO funded Improved Community Response to Drought (ICRD) project. As part of the knowledge management process the documentation is expected to disseminate lessons learned among local authorities, humanitarian/development actors and decision makers. The intention is to communicate how such approaches can be used to share the experiences made in implementation and to measure their impact in regard to the communities' ability to reduce their risk of disaster and to create sustainable development initiatives in dry lands. Through the ICRD project, the VSF consortium has created an opportunity to consolidate good practices and lessons learned as presented in this document.

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium (VSF-B), Suisse (VSF-S) and Germany (VSF-G) are international non-governmental organizations whose mission is to improve the welfare of vulnerable populations in developing countries through improved animal health and production. With over 15 years experience in the implementation of short and long-term projects in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, VSFs focus not only on animal health, production and marketing, but also tackle the broader issues of food security, livelihood diversification, income generation, conflict mitigation, drought preparedness and advocacy.

**VSF-B** is implementing activities related to animal health and production, conflict resolution, livestock marketing and water infrastructure development in Kenya, South Sudan and Karamoja in Uganda. It is highly experienced in community based approaches, development and emergency interventions.

**VSF-G** has been implementing livestock related projects in South Sudan in the Toposa/Turkana borderlands of the Karamoja cluster since 1998. These projects focus on cross-border harmonization of livestock trade, conflict mitigation, pastoral radio programmes and veterinary interventions. It also supports programmes on animal health, marketing, alternative livelihoods, conflict resolution, water development and pastoral extension through PFS.

Since early 2008, **VSF-S** has been working in Isiolo, Mandera and Wajir districts of Kenya and in the border regions of Somalia. It has implemented various DG ECHO funded projects with a major focus on improving and diversifying pastoralist livelihoods through improved production and marketing of livestock and their products as well as the camel milk value chain improvement. Creating improved access to safe water through rehabilitation of water structures has also been an important component of VSF-S work. VSF-S is highly experienced in privatization of veterinary services delivery, holistic approaches to pasture rehabilitation and management as well as the implementation of PFS and VICOBA approaches.



*Location map of VSF consortium project areas*

The VSF consortium commissioned a five months study (March-July 2011) to document good practices and share lessons learned in the implementation of PFS and VICOBA approaches in the ICRD project areas. Qualitative and quantitative data gleaned from project documents, interviews with project staff, beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders informed the study's findings.

This document captures the study's findings as good practices and lessons learned that will help improve content and delivery of PFS and VICOBA approaches. It highlights the effects/impact of these approaches in the Karamoja, Oromiya and Somali ecosystems of ICRD project. It is anticipated that the knowledge captured through this document shall be used in programming of PFS and VICOBA projects.

## 2. Background

In the arid and semi-arid lands of the Greater Horn of Africa, drought is the most important natural hazard in terms of impact on lives and livelihoods. Although drought used to occur on average in one out of every five to six years, it has been happening more frequently and more intensely over the last 30 years. In Kenya, between 1975 and 2007, (KNDP, 2004), droughts have led to a decline in food production, changed migratory patterns of pastoralists, exacerbated resource-based conflicts, caused large losses of livestock assets and acute food insecurity among vulnerable households. Its impact is greater for pastoralists and subsistence farmers.

In the ICRD cluster areas most people are pastoralists. Their livelihoods depend on livestock. During drought pastoralist households use various coping strategies to survive. These include changing their consumption patterns, buying lower quality but cheaper cereals and seeking forms of social support. In the past decade, pastoralists' own ability to respond to drought has become increasingly limited. An increasing frequency and intensity of

droughts leave less time for recovery. On the other hand increasing demographic pressure has led to resource based conflicts as well as changes in access to land and water. Other shocks like floods, disease outbreaks and unreliable service infrastructure have in many instances decreased livestock assets to unsustainable levels and eroded traditional support mechanisms, forcing thousands to depend on food aid.

Pastoralists experience many livelihood challenges including insecurity, difficult access to food, water and grazing lands among others. However, drought has been the most significant of all these challenges. The impact of drought is experienced differently by different socio-economic groups in different regions. The poorer and middle wealth groups of pastoralists experience a food deficit of about 35-40% during drought periods whilst wealthier groups (owning 100 or more livestock) can experience a deficit of up to 20% of their food needs as the drought lengthens (KNDP, 2004). Drought will always remain a natural phenomenon in these areas. The changing global weather conditions are likely increase drought frequency hence intensify its severity. However there is increasing evidence that preventive non-food aid interventions and social protection instruments provide a more cost-effective and developmental approach to reduction of poverty, social risk and building of resilience.

The VSF consortium has implemented the ICRD in various phases:

ICRD I: January 2008 – June 2009,

ICRD II: July 2009 – June 2010

ICRD III: July 2010 to 31st December 2011 is ongoing.

The ICRD III locations are as follows:

#### Oromiya cluster

Location	VICOBA	PFS
Dessanach and Hamer districts of Ethiopia and Marsabit North district of Kenya	Several sub villages of Illeret in Kenya; Minongelti in Ethiopia – Hamer District.	Telesgaiye, Kenya Naikaya, Lokoro and Ocholoch, Ethiopia

#### Somali cluster

Location	VICOBA	PFS
Wajir East and Wajir South Merti Division, Isiolo District,	Diff, Dadajabulla and Konton in Wajir; and Merti and Bulesa in Merti district of Isiolo County.	Diff and Dadajabulla in Wajir; and Bisan Biliqo, Bulesa (Marabisan PFS) and Korbesa (Dadajalatha Fiindansa PFS) in Merti district of Isiolo County.

#### Karamoja cluster

Location	VICOBA	PFS
Matheniko counties of Tapac and Katikekile and neighboring areas of Turkana district.	Kaking'ol and Tapac parishes	Musupo, Namong'in, Lopelipel, Tapac and Kodonyo villages.

### 3. The PFS and VICOBA Approaches

PFS and VICOBA concepts use community participation, experiences and resources to facilitate introduction of required knowledge and skills. Community facilitation capacities are enhanced so that communities have leaders and facilitators for their own development process. Prior to this, the VSF consortium had relied on their staff to disseminate knowledge and skills on PFS and VICOBA approaches in target pastoralists groups. The VSF consortium has used the PFS and VICOBA concepts as tools to empower pastoralist communities hence help them protect their livelihoods from the effects of drought.

#### 3.1 Pastoral Field Schools (PFS)

PFS is an extension approach designed from the Farmer Field School (FFS) concept to enhance discovery based learning among pure pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. It is described as a 'school without walls', where groups of people learn through observation and experimentation in their own context, based on methods of adult learning. It's primary objective is to improve knowledge (what people know), build on skills (how people do things) and change mind sets (what people believe in) for productivity.



*A PFS session in ileret*



Among the pastoralist communities, PFS has sought to enhance communities' knowledge and skills thus making them experts in their own context. Through merging of their own traditional knowledge with external information, pastoralists can eventually identify and adopt the most suitable practices and technologies into their livelihood system and become more productive, profitable and responsive to changing conditions. PFS thus enables pastoralists' livelihoods to become more resilient and less vulnerable to disasters such as drought, facilitates pastoralist communities to learn new ways to solve problems and adapt to changes through participatory and discovery based learning.

The PFS approach, in contrast to most conventional extension approaches, strengthens the capacity of local communities to analyse their livelihood systems, identify their main constraints and to develop and test possible solutions.

### 3.2 Village Community Banks (VICOBA)

VICOBA is a concept that empowers vulnerable members of the community with knowledge and skills to fight poverty through mobilization of their own resources (i.e. savings) and utilization as loans to improve living standards from household to group/association level. It helps community members to discover and appreciate the types and amount of resources they have, develop their own organized system of resource mobilization and utilization for mutual benefit.

In 2008, VSF Belgium introduced the VICOBA concept as a pilot programme in pastoral regions under the ECHO funded project "Improved Community Response to Drought" (ICRD). It was modeled along Tanzania's Village Savings & Loaning Association (VS&LA) concept. VICOBA has since found widespread use in pastoral regions of Kenya - Wajir, Marsabit, Turkana and Pokot. In Uganda, VICOBA is developing in Moroto district of Karamoja - (Tapac & Katikekile Sub Counties).

The VICOBA approach enables needy people to form strong and cohesive groups, mobilize their own savings and use them as capital for their income generating activities and domestic needs. The approach builds capacities to manage own resources and activities, including easy and transparent book-keeping systems. This approach thus enhances the people's understanding of why they should be their "Own Savers, Own Bankers and Own Lenders".

The PFS and VICOBA process is in line with the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Assets owned and mobilized by the communities such as land, people (knowledge, skills, labour, networks), natural resources (pasture, water, forests) have to be employed for a better life.



The development of Group Savings and Loaning (GS&L) methodology in CARE Niger in 1991 is credited to Moira Eknes of (Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) - CARE NORWAY, as a tool for defending dignity and fighting poverty among the economically disadvantaged communities. In many parts of Africa, the microfinance model successfully evolved as Village Savings & Loaning Associations (VS&LA).

## 4. Study Findings

### 4.1 VICOBA groups and activities

The project targeted initially six (6) groups (2 per cluster). The study established an increased demand for VICOBA formation and support by the communities. A total of fifteen (15) new VICOBA groups were formed by communities – 5 in Oromiya, 3 in Somali and 7 in Karamoja. In July 2011 there were a total of twenty-one (21) groups. The growing popularity of the VICOBA concept has increased the involvement of pastoralists in providing solutions and options to their social and economic challenges. Direct beneficiaries of VICOBA activities in the ICRD project areas are 503 and they support about 3000 indirect beneficiaries (family members and other dependants). Women membership in VICOBA across the three clusters averages at 72%. In Oromiya, Somali and Karamoja clusters, women membership in VICOBA is 76%, 89% and 50% respectively. It should be appreciated that women have been the most active in VICOBA activities. Efforts need to be made to increase men's participation in these activities. These would involve addressing cultural values that somehow define gender roles in these communities. Overall the study established that the VICOBA approaches provided livelihood options and alternatives to the predominantly pastoralist communities in the project areas.

### The Karamoja Cluster

In Moroto, there were two (2) VICOBA pilot groups namely Kaking'ol and Tapac. By mid 2009, 5 new VICOBA groups emerged from the sub villages of Kaking'ol parish i.e. *Naroo B*, *Nakolichoko*, *Lopeduru*, *Lobobore* and *Rata* VICOBA groups. From Tapac parish, 2 new VICOBA groups were initiated i.e. *Loyaraboth* and *Seget* groups. In total, there are 9 VICOBA groups in Moroto initiated and supported by the first VICOBA facilitators trained in 2008.

All the groups in Moroto conduct their meetings on weekly basis to facilitate group planning, weekly contributions, loans repayment and taking of new loans. The time for meetings is



dictated by the schedule of activities of specific villages. Thus some groups meet in the morning while others in the afternoon on different days of the week. Out of the 9 active VICOBA groups, members of 7 groups have benefited from loans some even up to 3 times in a cycle. The study established that timely repayment of loans is done and members' retention in groups is very good. Many petty businesses are ongoing ranging from livestock trade, honey production, buying and selling of household commodities, quarrying of marble stones, selling of beverages and snacks and local brewing. All these projects are done at individual level. There are plans to introduce group projects and loaning after individuals have addressed their household related social - economic concerns.

## Oromiya Cluster

In this cluster the VICOBA concept was introduced in the Ileret and Watalii sub villages in August 2008 as pilot activities. By July 2011, 5 more groups had been initiated by pastoralists following the remarkable results of the pilot groups. Within Ileret locality, there are six (6) VICOBA groups namely *Ileret Women*, *Watalii*, *Nangolei*, *Baolo*, *Kerech* and *Telesgaiye* whilst the *Minongelti* VICOBA group is found on the Ethiopian (Oromiya) side.

In the Oromiya and Karamoja clusters, all VICOBA groups are run independently. There is no mixing of PFS and VICOBA concepts within the same group but pastoralists are encouraged to join as many groups as they can. These groups run their weekly meetings and activities on different days of the week.

Some VICOBA groups in Ileret meet weekly while others twice a month to mobilize group savings, loan taking, repayment and review of individual and group projects. The VICOBA concept can support both, individual and group projects. Three groups (*Ileret Women*, *Watalii* and *Baolo*) have pooled their resources to construct a guest house at Ileret trading centre. Financial support from the Arid Lands Resource Management Project and VSF-G has been used to help establish the guest house facility that is nearing completion.



*VICOBA guest houses in Ileret*

At the individual level most members have benefitted from financial loans offered by the VICOBA groups.

'I got a loan from the group to pay my sons school fees. The loan was worth Kshs 3000 and my son has been admitted to a secondary school in Maralal' says Ayo Kute, VICOBA member in Ileret. To some the loans have provided alternatives to the harsh economic realities that affect their livelihoods. They can access loans "to help them cope during drought" situations and seek better medical attention.

"I can access healthcare. I borrowed Kshs 5,000 to go to hospital" says Arturkach Nyewoi, a VICOBA member in Ileret.

Alongside financial loans, goods are also given out to VICOBA members in form of loans. This is another dimension in diversifying access to resources as provided by VICOBA. This system is good but constrained as goods from Marsabit, which is about 400km away, have to be transported to Ileret.

## Somali Cluster

There are four VICOBA groups in this cluster. The Al-Barakat, Kulmiye and Konton groups in Wajir hold monthly meetings to facilitate member's monthly contributions and their development agenda. The groups have had

The **Al-Barakat VICOBA Group** in Diff constructed and is operating a guest house to generate a sustainable income for the members. The guest house was an initiative from members based on the demand for accommodation facilities in Diff locality. The **Diff VICOBA** group members spent Kshs 75,000 of their savings to purchase a 100ft x 100ft plot with support from the area local administration. On its part VSF Suisse supported the group with construction materials worth Kshs. 100,000 to help finalize a semi permanent building containing 11 beds. The guest house has been operational since September 2010 and the cost charged per bed is Kshs. 200. Most of the revenue being collected is still ploughed back to the expansion of the facility.

The Diff VICOBA members have not started taking loans since savings and revenue obtained from the Guest House are ploughed back into its expansion. Concerning individual projects and livelihood activities initiated and supported by the VICOBA, seven (7) members operate a kiosk, two members sell milk, a member sells clothes, another member operates a hotel and two members operate butcheries.

The **VICOBA group of Konton** is trading (buying and selling) goats. However drought slowed down this activity. The group owns four camels and about twenty goats which have kids. The kids are to be sold after the drought. The group buys maize flour and cereals to

sell to migrating pastoralists. Eight (8) individual members benefitted from loans which they invested into small kiosks. They occasionally slaughter animals in the butcheries.

One such member is **Sarah Abdullahi**, a 27 year old mother of three and a business woman. She says her life has been transformed since joining the VICOBA group.

“VICOBA is a concept that empowers people who cannot access financial services from higher institutions. If it were not for VICOBA, my life would have taken a different dimension leading to suffering of my family”.

She has benefited from loans that have seen her save her business from collapsing .Initially limited to selling basic commodities; Sarah has expanded her business base and now dabbles in selling of livestock and veterinary products to cater for her increasing clientele. She says that she is able to order her goods from Somalia and Wajir and paying for them without any difficulty.

The **Kulmiye VICOBA group in Dadajabulla** combined PFS & VICOBA group and was constrained by effects of drought which led to pastoralists’ migration to other places in search of livestock resources. After a time of dormancy the group intends to engage in trade with goats and would like to supply goats to refugee camps in Daadab.

The **Merti and Bulesa VICOBA groups** were formed in March 2011. The Merti VICOBA started a shop and sells refrigerated soft drinks whilst the Bulesa group operates a commodity shop, sells goods to members at wholesale prices who in turn resell on retail basis and pay back to the group based on the profits made.

Table 1: Somali cluster VICOBA groups’ growth trajectory: Cash collected as at 31st May 2011

VICOBA group name	Active since	Cash collected (Kshs)
Konton	February 2009	76,000 (50,000 out as loans)
Dadajabulla Kulmiye	February 2009	60,000. (30,000 out as loans)
Diff Al-Barakat	February 2009	104,000 (Cash at hand is 15,000. Previous contributions and earnings have been reinvested and no monthly made contributions due to drought)
Merti	March 2011	43,000 (24,000 for the group fund; 9000 for the social fund)
Bulesa	March 2011	48,000

The figure below presents data on the percentages of members benefitting from loans in the 3 phases of ICRD project per cluster.

Table 2: Vicoba groups statistics

	list of Groups	commencement year	Women	Men	Total	savings from 2008 to June 2010	savings from Aug 2010 to Dec 2011
1	Illeret Women	Aug-08	16	1	17	98,200	138,531
2	Watalii	Aug-08	9	10	19	69,120	72,860
3	Nangolei	Feb-11	15	4	19	0	54,330
4	Baolo	Apr-10	6	6	12	64,950	30,00
5	Kerech	May-10	14	1	15	9,420	43,000
6	Telesgaiye	Mar-10	11	8	19	6,040	40,000
7	Bilbura	Apr-10	9	1	10	6,400	11,429
	<b>Totals</b>		<b>93</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>254,130</b>	<b>360,150</b>
	Minongelti	Sep-10	22	0	22	6,400	4,300

Since the start of the VICOBA approach in the 3 ICRD cluster areas, the pastoralists have done extremely well in resource mobilization to implement innovations to achieve sustainable economic empowerment. Despite limited financial resources, pastoralists through VICOBA are building an understanding for a money based economy and how best they can realize economic returns from their livestock assets. The capital for VICOBA groups is as presented in the figure below.

Figure 1: Total savings (Working capital) for VICOBA groups - ICRD project areas by July 2011. (Karamoja capital equivalent in Kshs.)

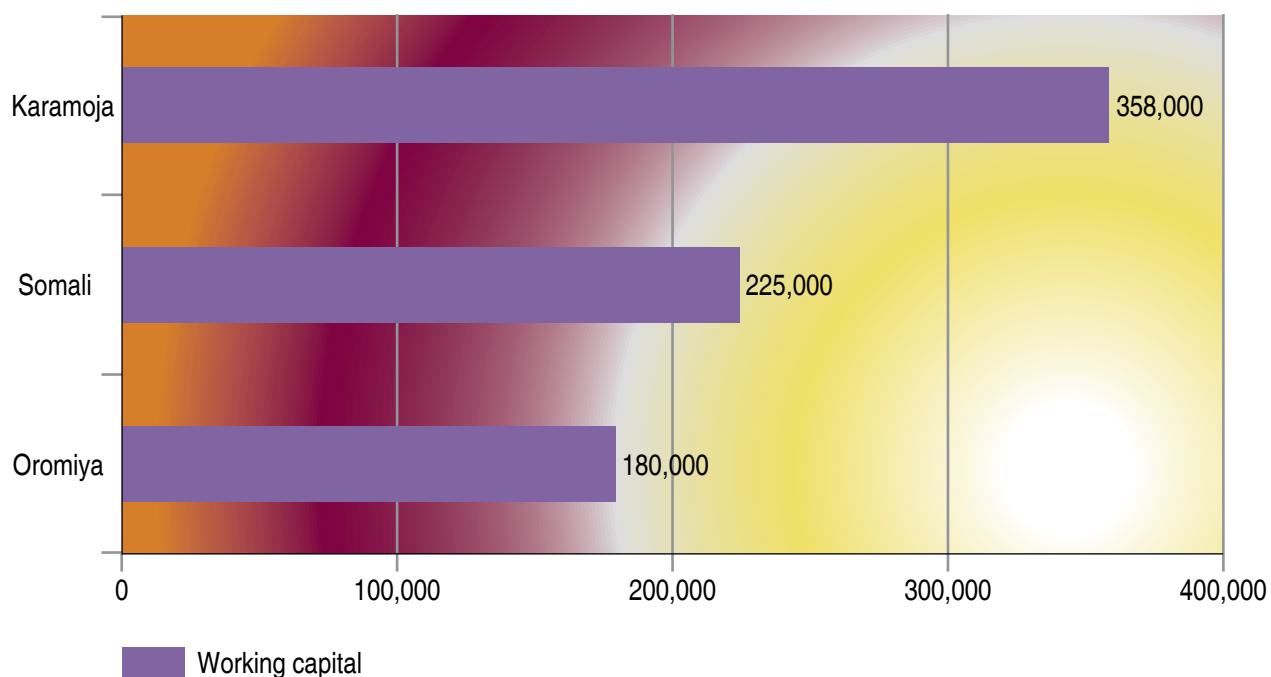


Table 3: VICOBA groups and members in ICRD project areas.

Org.	VICOBA Name	When initiated	Women	Men	Total	Working Capital	Loans taken
Oromiya	Illeret Women	Aug-08	16	1	17	60,000	17
	Watalii	Aug-08	9	10	19	19,000	7
	Nang'olei	Feb-11	15	4	19	10,000	3
	Baolo	Apr-10	6	6	12	10,000	1
	Kerech	May-10	14	1	15	37,500	4
	Telesgaiye	Mar-10	11	8	19	40,000	12
	Minongelti	Sep-10	22	0	22	4300	0
	Totals		93	30	123	180,800	44
Somali	Diff	Feb-09	20	0	20	35,000	0
	Dadajabulla	Feb-09	18	15	33	40,000	0
	Konton	May-10	28	0	28	30,000	8
	Merti	Mar-11	30	0	30	51,000	0
	Bulesa	Mar-11	30	0	30	69,000	5
	Totals (Ksh)		126	15	141	225,000	13
Karamoja	Naroo A	Nov-08	11	20	31	1,230,000	16
	Naroo B	Jun-09	13	17	30	1,150,000	14
	Nakolichoko	Jun-09	19	11	30	1,060,000	20
	Lopeduru	Jun-09	19	13	32	926,000	17
	Lobobore	Jun-09	12	17	29	1,230,000	14
	Rata	Mar-10	18	12	30	780,000	17
	Alakara	Nov-08	10	6	16	2,355,000	22
	Seget	Jun-10	6	11	17	560,000	7
	Loyaraboth	Jun-10	12	12	24	400,000	5
	Totals (Ugx)		120	119	239	9,691,000	132

An increase of VICOBA groups in an area leads to an increase in community involvement in membership (both men and women), increase in working capital and number of loans accessible. More members generate diversified ideas to explore different possible lucrative opportunities through VICOBA funds.

## 4.2 PFS groups and activities

Like in VICOBA, PFS target groups were six 6 i.e. 2 per cluster. By July 2011, PFS groups had increased to fourteen (14) - four (4) in Oromiya, (five) 5 in Somali and five (5) in Karamoja. The total membership in the existing groups is 509 members who support about 3000 indirect beneficiaries from knowledge and capacities enhanced by PFS. In the 3 cluster areas, average women membership in PFS is 48%. In Oromiya, Somali and Karamoja clusters, women membership in PFS is 41%, 53% and 51% respectively. (Average size of a family is 6 people).

### Karamoja Cluster

The two (2) pilot PFS groups in Moroto began their seasonal activities in November 2008. Musupo PFS group managed to complete their season long learning cycle and graduated in May 2010 with group objectives well achieved. Lopelipel PFS group did not graduate due to insecurity and frequent migrations. PFS group projects are: Poultry production, farming, growing of shade and fruit trees and goat production. Both groups learned about sustainable environmental management, conflict resolution, livestock diseases and forage conservation through organized grazing.

During ICRD I, study tours were conducted to Turkana and the Southern part of Karamoja for both, PFS and VICOBA groups. In Musupo, the PFS group succeeded with their lobby mission for construction of a primary school in the area that was facilitated by the Moroto Catholic Diocese. This effort has created an opportunity for pastoralist's children in Musupo and its neighborhood to have education nearby. An uprising demand for PFS in several villages of Moroto could not be met due to limited budgets and lack of facilitators to implement practical hands on learning through experimentation and participatory demonstrations.

## Oromiya Cluster

In Ileret, the Telesgaiye PFS group has gone a step further in enhancing PFS holistic approach in serving the pastoralists of the area. With the support of PFS resource persons from VSF-G, the group formed 3 subgroups specializing in fishing, crop farming and livestock management. The fishing unit formed two (2) Beach Management Units - BMUs with other non PFS members. The BMUs are mandated to manage fishing to avoid undersize fishing, ensure peaceful coexistence between fishermen and fish brokers, regulate fish prices, supervise fishermen to avoid overfishing in certain beach sites, maintain hygiene at the shore of the lake, participate in peace meetings on joint utilization of lake resources with neighboring communities of Dessanach and Turkana, and build livelihoods through the existing lake resource.

The two (2) BMUs have a total of 42 members (34 men and 8 women). Capacity building was carried out by VSF-G and the Fisheries department. The BMUs monitored the fish output. On average, fishermen in the 2 beaches generate an estimated income of Kshs 160,000 per month through small scale fishing. The revenue received by the BMUs per month from the fishermen is estimated at Kshs 40,000 (Kshs. 200 per person per month).

The BMU members say that they have realized benefits by virtue of their collective activities.

"Loans from the BMU account have helped me to pay school fees. I have paid school fees for my children to the tune of Kshs 10,000 to Marsabit Boys High school." says Mike Irggiena, a BMU member in Ileret.

The gains have not just been financial. Mike Gierich, a fisherman and BMU member in Ileret observes that they now experience peace during fishing since "we control fishing activities through BMU" hence it "helps us to protect the fishing grounds". On the hand the BMU members' peace-building and conflict resolution capacity has been enhanced hence their ability "to negotiate with Ethiopians when our fishing nets are confiscated".

The BMUs have contributed to increased cleanliness of the beach, better fishing methods and enhanced security for fishermen. Most importantly fishing has become an important source of income that has contributed to better interactions between men and women in the society.



“This is a source of income to my family. Men fish whilst we do the selling and save the proceeds. We later save these proceeds” says Ms Orip Nyaila, a BMU member in Ileret.

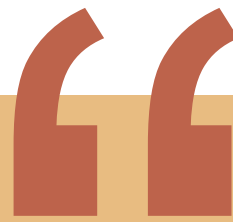
BMUs advocated for increment in fish prices from Ksh 20 to Ksh 50 per fish and individuals can make up to Ksh.6, 000 out of fish business per day. Fish is sold to local community of Ileret and traders coming from Turkana areas of Todonyang’ and Lowarengak.

Future plans of the BMUs as independent entrepreneurial groups, focusing on the utilization of lake resources, include the buying of fish from fishermen and selling them to traders coming to Ileret from Nairobi, other regions of Kenya and Ethiopia. They will need engine boats, office, store, designated parking site for fish transport trucks and more training on fish business management, alternative livelihoods, utilization of fishing economic returns and management of water resources.

Study tours to areas like Kalokol and Illiye springs in Turkana are planned to learn more on the fishing industry. There is a need to link the BMUs to other partners. It is through PFS that pastoralists explored the opportunity of utilizing lake resources in *Sies-Lucho* lake shore.

Despite the fact that many constraints caused migration and made it impossible to work with Naikaya PFS, the pastoralists still regard PFS as platform to provide solutions to their social and economic problems. Issues of livestock rearing in pastoral areas require adequate preparedness to proactively take measures that minimize effects of drought and maintain livelihood resources for the people.

More PFS groups means increased number of beneficiaries. Knowledge and skills improvement is a challenge that needs to be addressed to enhance productivity of pastoral assets. Attitude change is needed as most of the pastoralists still believe in their traditional practices resulting to slow value addition to pastoral way of life. PFS approach if expanded to different localities can cause a huge change to a considerable number of beneficiaries.



***More PFS groups means increased number of beneficiaries.***

Table 4: PFS groups and members in ICRD project areas.

Org.	PFS Name	When initiated	Women	Men	Total
Oromiya	Naikaya	Aug-08	12	28	40
	Lokoro	Mar-11	20	30	50
	Ocholoch	Mar-11	19	21	40
	Telesgaiye	Aug-08	17	20	37
	Totals		68	99	167
Somali	Diff	Feb-09	11	19	30
	Dadajabulla	Feb-09	18	15	33
	Bisan Biliqo	Feb-11	18	15	33
	Bulesa Marabisan	Mar-11	15	15	30
	Korgesa Dadajalatha Findasa	May-11	20	10	30
	Totals		82	74	156
Karamoja	Musupo	Nov-08	22	22	44
	Lopelipel	Nov-08	22	22	44
	Namongin	Jun-10	22	22	40
	Tapac	Jun-10	13	11	24
	Kodonyo	Jun-10	15	15	30
	Totals		94	92	186

## 5. PFS and VICOBA Social-economic impact

The VSF Consortium is building pastoralists' resilience to drought. PFS and VICOBA activities have shown considerable results in line with their respective objectives and intended outcomes. Through PFS, pastoralists have appreciated the importance of keeping poultry and use of poultry manure in enriching sorghum farms e.g. in Illeret and Moroto during rainy seasons.

**Hygiene** is an important issue with pastoralists in areas with PFS. Personal cleanliness, use of clean utensils in food preparation, boiling of water obtained from open water sources are now practiced by pastoralists. Utensils are kept on raised traditional shelves to avoid access by dogs and wild cats. In Moroto, individual PFS members are digging pit latrines and garbage pits. This is as response to lessons learned from special topics.

PFS and VICOBA groups have acted as locations where information is disseminated to pastoralists and learning takes place. Information on livestock disease spread, drought and insecurity is assembled and disseminated through these





groups. Pastoralists have adapted the culture of learning and comparing their traditional knowledge with modern innovations. Proper cooking of foodstuffs such as meat and fish now takes place especially in Ileret where cases of diarrhea outbreaks used to occur most commonly every wet season. Improved levels of hygiene at village and household levels reduce the incidences of such diseases associated with poor hygiene.

Peaceful coexistence between different communities is now regarded as important e.g. in Musupo area of Moroto, revenge is discovered as a bad practice that leads to escalation of conflicts. In Moroto where environmental degradation has been a major challenge, Acacia trees that were protected by PFS members from destruction have now yielded many pods that the PFS groups are harvesting to supplement *feed* for young stock during drought periods. Fodder harvesting is also practiced to help cope with effects of drought.

Grafting of fruit trees e.g. Mango and Lemon is done by Musupo PFS members with support from Agricultural officers of Moroto Local government. There is ongoing planting of such trees in Musupo area as PFS post graduation activity.

## 6. Implementation Challenges and Constraints in PFS and VICOBA approaches

1. ICRD project has done very well in adapting PFS and VICOBA approaches for use in pastoral communities. The result has been an increase in groups but there are not enough budgets to cater for this replication.
2. Sometimes a project ends when groups have not completed their implementation phase that runs for 18 months causing members to struggle to make their contributions to produce intended results.
3. Study tours and exchange visits are highly appreciated by pastoralists but budgeted in the proposals as single activities done once with less budget allocation. Out of the few study tours conducted, they still remain strong points of reference where new things were learned and adopted.
4. Failure to support the formation of self-facilitated PFS groups has created gaps between implementation and sustainability. Most of the PFS groups are doing far less activities after graduation than before. Lack of learning grants still remains the root cause of reduced functionality of PFS groups. Grants provide solutions to process related challenges in PFS groups such as facilitator's incentives, inputs for learning, support to post graduation phase e.t.c.
5. Linking PFS and VICOBA groups to other sources of funding e.g. National Agricultural Advisory Services - NAADS - Uganda, Njaa Marufuku - Kenya, ALLPRO, ALRMP, USA Development fund - USADF and other relevant government departments has not been adequately explored.
6. Linking other community groups such as CAHWs, PFS and Water users associations to banking with VICOBA is not exercised. The holistic livelihoods protection triad developed for ICRD is an opportunity because it gives a framework for linking different community groups up to support each other. If worked on, then future preparedness plans like funds mobilization and availability at the locality (community contingency funds) can be achieved.

## 7. Good Practices and Lessons learnt for effective implementation of PFS and VICOBA.

1. The implementation of PFS and VICOBA approaches is recommended to other consortia as they have proved to be successful in fostering self determined development of pastoralists.
2. Legalization/ registration of community based groups for recognition and government support is essential especially with relevant government departments.
3. Each and every VICOBA group has to undergo training on IGAs selection, planning and management to facilitate members' objectivity in maximizing lucrative business opportunities.
4. Strengthening the saving culture among pastoralists diversifies sources of income other than depending on livestock alone.
5. Strengthening the role of PFS & VICOBA in emergency responses. These groups have proven instrumental in pro-active development for solutions to cope with drought.
6. Internal and cross boarder study tours facilitate participatory hands on learning for pastoralists.
7. There is possibility to form strong group run PFS groups after graduation. Lack of sufficient funds has constrained PFS groups to achieve their post graduation plans. Combining VICOBA and PFS during the implementation phase will strengthen groups' financial capacity.
8. Involvement of government relevant departments can lead to sustainability of PFS & VICOBA through capacity building, funding and policy support.

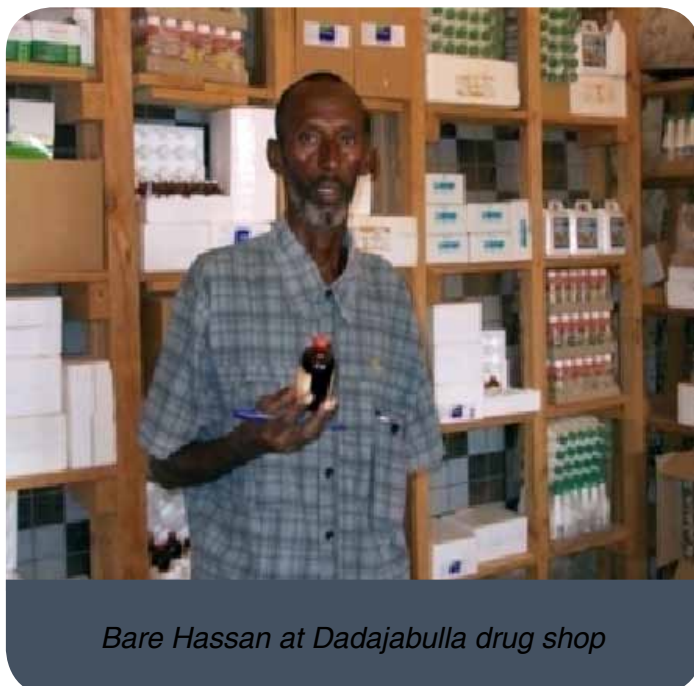
## 8. Recommendations

1. Grants should be given to PFS groups at once or in tranches (but timely) to avoid project level management of funds and delays when support is needed. The possible minimum grant for PFS group is USD 1,200 and VICOBA is USD 2,500. The objective is to build independent, strong and progressive community groups that take full responsibility of their own development.
2. Alongside emergency projects, long term development projects with strategies to integrate PFS and VICOBA into development programmes are important. Transforming communities, building sustainable livelihoods, improving resilience and changing perceptions all require time and adequate resources to enable expected changes.
3. Regular trainings followed by refreshers to update and address learning gaps. Inclusion of some group members other than the initial trained facilitators in ToFs and refresher trainings is worth considering for building internal capacity on facilitation roles for considerable number of PFS and VICOBA members.
4. VSF Belgium to increase the level of PFS and VICOBA activities in Turkana as part of a cross boarder consideration. VSF Germany to treat Beach Management Units (BMUs) as a component just like PFS and VICOBA. BMUs have great potential in escalating developments in ileret area.
5. Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction - CMDRR approach should be incorporated into PFS process to widen community understanding on Drought Risk Reduction measures and strengthening the PFS roles in emergency responses.

## 9. Case Studies

### 9.1 CAHW in Diff and the role of PFS and VICOBA in supporting his animal health services delivery

"I Bare Hassan aged 50 years a CAHW from Dadajabulla locality was trained by VSF Suisse in year 2005. All a long, my core business has been diagnosing and treating common livestock diseases and conditions as well as collecting revenue from drugs. When PFS and VICOBA concepts were introduced to the area by VSF Suisse, I got interested and joined. From PFS, I learnt extension approaches which improved my capacity as CAHW to know how to educate other pastoralists on disease diagnosis, disease reporting and collaboration with other veterinary service providers. From VICOBA, I learnt how to mobilize resources for initiating and expanding business opportunities.



*Bare Hassan at Dadajabulla drug shop*

In Dadajabulla, am affiliated to a drug shop that I support in dispensing veterinary inputs to clients in order to build experience that can help to manage one of my own when the current drug kit grows to a drug shop. By joining both PFS and VICOBA groups as CAHW, I have seen an increase in the number of clients seeking veterinary services from about 50 per month before to about 250 (80% increase). Clients not only seek for veterinary inputs but also advisory services. Drug kit value increased from an estimated Kshs. 16,000 to a value of about Kshs. 30,000 (47% value increase). My popularity as CAHW is improving indicated by pastoralist from other areas coming to seek for services. There is increase in drug turnover whereby the kit is replenished 2 times in a month (when pastoralist have migrated in) and once per month (when pastoralists have migrated out).

I anticipate a growth in my business activities in the near future. Hopefully upon increase in VICOBA working capital, I will access a loan to set a drug shop as PFS is giving me enough knowledge and skills to deliver quality animal health and production related services. I would like PFS and VICOBA to consider supporting CAHWs and other community groups through linkages and collaboration because each concept makes a contribution to the realization of the intended individual or group targets.

### 9.2 Achievements of Telesgaiye PFS group in ileret

Telesgaiye PFS group members apply farming, poultry and animal health skills they have learnt in PFS to produce lucrative and drought resilient livestock. Knowledge and skills obtained by PFS members is on monthly basis disseminated to other pastoralists and fishermen in the 7 sub villages of ileret. For purposes of utilizing the existing opportunities,

PFS subgroups have categorized into subgroups of farmers, livestock keepers and fishermen to facilitate of enough knowledge and skills to support pastoralists in their respective fields of production.

The system in this case is each PFS subgroup reports to the main group their findings and submit plan of action to conduct either demonstration or extension on specific subjects. Fishing subgroup is managing Ileret and Selicho beaches where they mobilize fish waste (offals) from the beaches and demonstrate to pastoralists how to make poultry feed from it. Revenue collected from trucks ferrying fish from Ileret beaches is a full truck carrying about 7,000 fish is charged Kshs. 5,000 and about 5 trucks are received on monthly basis. Upon registration of the fisheries subgroup of the Telesgaiye PFS by the department of Social services, VSF-G trained the group on better management of fish business. The PFS group through the support of the local leaders started lobbying for increase of fish prices (especially tilapia) which was increased from original Kshs. 20 to the current Kshs. 50 per fish which is 60% increase in prices.

Livestock keepers have learnt different ways of livestock parasites control and especially the use of veterinary drugs to control ticks and worms from the subgroup concerned with livestock issues. This is as a result of the positive changes they observe after using these drugs in comparative experiments conducted together. PFS livestock subgroup participated during livestock mass de-worming and destocking campaigns supported by RELIVE project. Farming subgroup has benefitted from planting sorghum, beans and maize in the last rainy season i.e. about 150 kgs of sorghum that was sold to generate money for the group and part of it stored as seeds to expand the group plot during the next rainy season. Telesgaiye VICOBA group was formed in January 2010 whereby about 70% of PFS members have joined. As well as benefitting from VICOBA loans, the PFS members will gain knowledge and skills to fund and expand PFS group activities.

### **9.3 VICOBA is a beneficial, replicable and easily adaptable approach**

In November 2008, VICOBA training of facilitators organized by VSF-Belgium for the VSF consortium under ICRD1- ECHO funded project was conducted in Kisumu Kenya. Upon return to their localities, and in this case Kaking'ol village in Moroto district, the first group called Naroo was formed by 61 pastoralists members (47 men 14 women). After the first operational cycle, the 61 members had benefitted from loans. Income generation activities undertaken included petty trade (buying and selling of household commodities) done by 16 members, livestock buying and selling by 8 members, honey production for sale in Moroto by 5 members whilst a member had cereals grinding mill supported by VICOBA loans. About 50% of the members took loans to address their social / domestic needs such as medical, school related costs, family shopping, restocking. During liquidation at the end of 2009, Naroo VICOBA had accumulated a working capital equivalent to USD 3,000.

The rest of the community appreciated the improved way of life of the VICOBA members and their beneficiaries. In early 2010, 5 more groups were formed with 132 members (69 women and 63 men). By March 2011, the members who had taken loans from the new groups were 108 accounting for 82% of the total members, 54% of them being women. In reference to the same month of March 2011, (6 months after formation of groups) the combined working capital for the 5 groups was equivalent of USD 3,500.



VICOBA initiative in Kaking'ol has brought social and economic changes among pastoralists. Insecurity due to resource based conflicts is reducing. Women and men are doing different petty businesses that have resulted to improved money availability in the area. Families are stabilizing because problems arising are attended to through loans, social funds and ideas from group members.

With VICOBA members, there is no more borrowing of "table salt" as it used to be before. Children are taken to school as parents are able to afford basic primary school requirements. Kaking'ol is a working community and pastoralists have realized the benefits of resource mobilization, combined effort in working towards an economically stable community. Before VICOBA, Kaking'ol pastoralists used to get their supplies from Moroto town situated 25 KM away. The direct beneficiaries from Kaking'ol VICOBA groups are 193 who support about 1158 indirect beneficiaries. VICOBA is an option for empowerment of the pastoralist communities.



*Kakingol VICOBA members doing Petty trade.*

#### **9.4 Experiences from Turkana - PFS and VICOBA successes**

The Turkana region is the epicenter for PFS. In the course of project implementation, VSF-S Wajir and VSF-B Moroto conducted study tours to learn from the application of PFS and VICOBA in the drier areas of Turkana. Through study tours, community members practically witnessed what can be achieved and drew lessons and formed their own aspirations on possible practices to create more resilience against the effects of drought and other emergency situations. The 2 success stories represent the rich experience in application of these concepts in Turkana.

##### **9.4.1 PFS Projects in Turkwell Village – Turkana**

Turkwell PFS is one of the very first pilot PFS groups by VSF Belgium. It was established in 2006 as an extension led PFS group supported by a livestock officer trained as facilitator. Their learning cycle was based on a developed curriculum that began in April 2006 and ended in June 2008 when all the participants graduated with expertise in goat and cow milk production.

Comparative experiments with goats showed that local goats supplemented with varieties of local forage and kitchen remains produced on average a litre of milk per day during the dry season while the control goats did not even have enough milk to satisfy their young ones. Turkwell PFS group continued with activities to generate income upon graduation. They continued learning about special topics and to deliver outreach extension services. Because of its outstanding performance the Turkwell group has attracted about 450 visitors from different parts of Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia coming through FAO and VSF Belgium. It is a learning point for PFS.



From the just concluded EC food facility funded project in dry lands of Kenya through FAO, Turkwell PFS group received seeds of *Cynchrus serialis*, Napier grass and Sudan grass. The PFS fodder production project comes to the rescue of pastoralists who purchase grass for their animals that cannot move long distances in search of forage. Currently, the group holds about 4,000 bales of hay for sale but a sustainable market is not yet identified.

Turkwell PFS members have acquired knowledge and skills in fodder production and can do such projects in large scale if support and funding is received. The closeness to Turkwell irrigation scheme and semi permanent Turkwell River ideally positions the PFS to produce fodder as livestock emergency response and Disaster Risk Reduction. Knowledge adopted from the PFS is widely applied in Turkwell area and its neighborhood in raising healthy and productive livestock using locally available resources. This group benefitted from ICRD funds shifted from Moroto for emergency off take in Turkana - 2009.



Selina Lokaale - Nakukulas

**9.4.2 Selina Lokaale - VICOBA member - Nakukulas - Turkana**

“As a widow, I appreciate the introduction of VICOBA to Nakukulas area, one of the underdeveloped areas of Turkana East District. VSF – Belgium through the Drought Mitigation Initiative project (DMI) supported our group formation and capacity building on livelihoods, income generation and financial management. In 2010, I took a Kshs 10,000 loan to start business of buying and selling of hides and skins. After successfully repaying the loan, I took

another loan worth Kshs 20,000. Combined with the profits made from the hides and skins business, I now have a kiosk containing different varieties of locally needed commodities.

My business is generally doing well but is constrained by a number of challenges that might hinder its growth. The nearby trading centre to replenish supplies is Lokichar, which is located about 35km from Nakukulas locality. The cost of transport is high and there is no reliable means of transport even for hire. Insecurity and migration whenever they occur lead to poor turnover for commodities. If it was not for VICOBA, what could the widows of *Nakukulas* area be doing to support their single families? Wait for relief food? Beg friends and relatives for help? Despite problems I am able to feed and take my children to school. VICOBA is a wonderful concept that I appreciate”.

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