



Understanding Community Resilience: Findings from Community-Based Resilience Analysis (CoBRA) Assessments

Marsabit, Turkana and Kajiado counties, Kenya and
Karamoja sub-region, Uganda



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**Marsabit, Turkana and Kajiado counties, Kenya and
Karamoja sub-region, Uganda**

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

The UNDP Drylands Development Centre is a unique global thematic centre that provides technical expertise, practical policy advice and programme support for poverty reduction and development in the drylands of the world. The Centre's work bridges between global policy issues and on-the-ground activities, and helps governments to establish and institutionalize the link between grassroots development activities and pro-poor policy reform. The main areas of focus are mainstreaming of drylands issues into national development frameworks; land governance; making markets work for the poor; decentralized governance of natural resources; and drought risk management.

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Executive summary

In the last few years, as natural disasters and other crises have pushed communities to the limits of their adaptation and coping capacity, 'disaster resilience' has emerged as a key goal for governments and other development and humanitarian stakeholders in the Horn of Africa. It is in this context that the United Nations Development Programme Drylands Development Centre initiated the Community-Based Resilience Analysis (CoBRA) project, with financial support from the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). The CoBRA methodology is one of the first practical analytical tools developed to identify indicators for measuring community resilience as part of ECHO's wider Drought Risk Reduction Action Plan.

This report summarizes the findings of the first round of CoBRA field testing in four drought-prone locations in Kenya (Marsabit, Turkana and Kajiado counties) and Uganda (the Karamoja sub-region). It also reports on the outputs of subsequent validation sessions held in each of the four locations with local technical stakeholders and community representatives. Individual assessment reports for each location are attached as Annexes to this report.

CoBRA approach and objectives

The CoBRA approach is largely qualitative, based on understanding resilience from a community perspective. It does not identify any preconceived components of resilience but rather allows communities to define it, assess their progress in achieving it, identify households that are more (or fully) resilient and specify the interventions they believe best build resilience.

The CoBRA methodology has four broad objectives:

1. Identify the priority characteristics of disaster resilience for a target community;
2. Assess the communities' achievement of these characteristics at the time of the assessment and during the last crisis or disaster;
3. Identify the characteristics and strategies of disaster-resilient households; and
4. Identify the most highly rated interventions or services in building local disaster resilience.

A detailed CoBRA conceptual framework document and implementation guidelines have been developed to fully explain the model's logic and methodology.

Methodology

The CoBRA methodology uses participatory qualitative approaches – focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) (see Boxes 1 and 2). In each field site, 36 to 42 FGDs and KIIs were carried out by teams of facilitators. Following each assessment, feedback sessions were held with community representatives and local stakeholders to validate the findings.

Key findings

Four full CoBRA assessments have been completed to date, three in Kenya, in partnership with the National Drought Management Authority, and one in Uganda, in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister. The assessments have highlighted the following findings:

Box 1. Steps in conducting a focus group discussion

Step 1. Agree on the definition of resilience: What does a resilient community look like? What are the main hazards or shocks facing the community?

Step 2. Identify resilience characteristics: What are the characteristics of a resilient community?

Step 3. Prioritize resilience characteristics: What are the three most important characteristics of resilience in the community, ranked by importance?

Step 4. Rate the community's progress in attaining the priority resilience characteristics: On a scale of 0 to 10, to what extent has this community achieved each of these characteristics in the current period and in the last crisis period?

Step 5. Identify interventions that have contributed to household resilience: What interventions have helped to enhance households' level of resilience, and what additional/future interventions would help to build resilience further?

Step 6. Identify the households in the community that have achieved (fully or partially) the resilience characteristics and list their common features and attributes.

Box 2. Questions posed in key informant interviews with resilient households

- What factors or characteristics have contributed to your household's resilience?
 - How did your household become resilient?
 - Why do you think your family coped better with shocks and crises affecting the community?
 - What interventions do you think would best build wider resilience in this community?
-
- Throughout the locations, communities consistently highlighted several priority characteristics (described in approximately 20–30 statements) that identify a resilient community. Characteristics that were highly prioritized in all the assessment locations include:
 - **Education:** All children would be able to complete primary/secondary/tertiary school;
 - **Water:** The whole community would have access to sufficient, good-quality water at all times of the year;
 - **Peace and security:** The whole community would enjoy continual peace and security. Human health, productive livestock herds and farms, access to markets and credit, diversified incomes and roads were also highly rated in many of the locations. These

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