InfoNote

Participatory Rangeland Management: Inclusive learning and reflections from Kenya

Renee Bullock, Hamilton Majiwa, Joshua Okoth, Irene Mukalo, Irene Nganga, Tanaya DuttaGupta

November 2025

Participatory Rangeland Management supports inclusive governance

Exchange learning provides opportunities to build adaptation capacities and support rangeland restoration

Reflection sessions reveal shared and gender specific priorities that should inform pastoral development

Introduction

Rangeland management institutions (RMIs) are the formal and informal bodies, policies, and practices that govern the stewardship of rangelands. They provide a governing system to manage rangeland resources to meet multiple needs of people and livestock, while also ensuring the long-term health and productivity of the ecosystem. RMIs provide legal and administrative frameworks related to land use with strategies that consider ecological, social, and economic wellbeing and concerns. RMIs increasingly involve community members in decision-making processes through multi-stakeholder coordination.

Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) was piloted in Ethiopia in 2010 and scaled up in 2014 in Kenya and Tanzania with support of the Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE). PRM provides support to communities to manage their rangelands and relies upon inclusive planning and decision making with a group of representatives of all people within a rangeland unit (ILRI, 2020). The process is owned by participants who have control over key decisions while the role of external agencies is to support and facilitate (ibid). PRM builds upon existing customary institutions and incorporates members from those institutions in decision-making processes. Rangeland management plans (RMPs) are developed with communities to guide management, articulate by laws and action plans.

Historically, women's participation in customary rangeland management institutions, such as the committee of elders, was relatively limited (FGDs, Irong Conservancy and Paka Hills Rangeland, 2025, unpublished data; Bullock et. al., 2022). Both Paka Hills and Irong conservancy have traditionally been managed by community elders, who discuss and make decisions about seasonal grazing practices, for instance. Generally, women and young men's participation in these decisions is restricted. Elders share the recommendations and plan with the wider community through barazas.

PRM recognizes the interlinked ecological and social values of rangelands and the importance of engaging different users to support socially inclusive sustainable management outcomes. PRM "observe(s) the one third gender rule in all committees to ensure inclusivity in decision making" (RECONCILE, 2019; 20). Women assume leadership and decision-making roles in executive committees.

AICCRA supported scaling of PRM in Kenya and activities to strengthen inclusive governance of rangeland management institutions. This infonote

RECONCILE
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BARINGO
The County of Great Diversity
CGIAR
AICCRA
Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa

documents activities carried out in Baringo County with Paka Hills Community Rangeland and Irong Conservancy committee members. The overarching aim of the activities was to increase learning and networking around adaptation practices and to reflect upon PRM performance and plan future rangeland activities.

Site description

Paka Hills Community Rangeland is a community-based organization (CBO) that is registered with the Department of Social Services. The CBO was established in 2019 to improve pasture production and management, provide solutions for resource-based conflict, and improve community livelihoods. It operates in four locations, i.e., Paka, Naudo, Orus and Tangulbei. The CBO manages resources in Paka location including Paka Hills, that is designated for grazing during the dry season. Paka Hills is shared by three wards, Loyamorok, Silale and Tangulbei in Tiaty East Sub County. The rangeland committee is composed of 17 members including men, women, youth and persons with disabilities (Paka Hills Rangeland Management Committee 2023, supported by RECONCILE).

Irong Conservancy is divided into different sub-units that include Irong Hill, designated for grazing area during the dry season. Within the conservancy are swamps such as Kapnarok, Majimoto, Kiborgoch and Kamar. Lands around the conservancy are managed through private arrangements in addition to communal areas reserved for grazing.

In both locations common threats to rangeland health and livelihoods include degradation of resources such as soil erosion, deforestation for charcoal production, and poor distribution of water infrastructure and facilities.

Exchange learning to build capacities



Figure 1. Famiy led field day in Irong.

Family led field day events are a 2-step process, in which all interested and willing family members (primary adult members, casual labour), together with relevant and local stakeholders such as chiefs and PRM committee members, plan the field day activities. Field days are events to share information about climate smart agriculture and to discuss key issues and mobilize community action around certain social causes. Because the languages spoken in the two locations differ, a team of 8 translators, 50% of whom were women, supported translation in all field day activities into Pokot and Tugen.



Figure 2. Women's group demonstrating fodder production using machinery in Irong.

Two field days provided opportunities for Paka and Irong committee and community members to convene and learn from each other. The field days featured climate smart agricultural practices that support the restoration of rangelands and increase adaptation capacities. The field day in Irong was led by a husband, his wife, two daughters, two sons and members of a local collective. A total of 91 participants attended the field day, of whom 36 were women. The Irong field day showcased beekeeping and honey production. Value addition activities related to honey and fodder, such as hay production and storage were featured. Restoration activities were shown and included short and long resting and production of indigenous grass. Livestock management was discussed and herd management practices included improved breeding and reduced herd size.

The field day in Paka was led by a husband and his two wives. A total of 101 participants attended the field day, 44 of whom were women. There were 23 PRM committee members from Irong of

whom 10 were women and 17 PRM committee members from Paka, 6 of whom were women.



Figure 3. Showcasing local honey products.

Also present in the field days were 7 chiefs, 4 county extension officers and 4 community health promoters (CHPs). 17 CSA technologies and practices were showcased after which the PRM committee members met in sex disaggregated groups and discussed about PRM.

PRM reflections

Reflection sessions were coordinated through combinations of sex disaggregated groups and plenary sessions with Paka Hills and Irong Conservancy PRM committee members. A semi structured guide was developed to facilitate discussions about achievements, challenges, and gender and social inclusion.

Inclusion

Generally, committee members reported that gender equality in leadership exists. Women and men in Irong and Paka reported that women and youth are included in leadership, attend meetings and contribute in decision-making. Men in Irong reported shifts in women's participation in specific activities commonly reserved for men:

"Another big achievement is that even women in Irong take part in activities such as bee keeping, an activity believed to be dominated by men. And all this is courtesy of PRM." (Men's group, Irong)

Efforts to engage and increase youth participation were provided.

A male FGD participant from Irong conservancy said,"Youth should be part and parcel of the program and should be made active by engaging them in PRM activities and making them own the programme". Another male FGD participant from Irong conservancy added, "I may suggest that specific youth meetings are held parallel to the general meetings. This will build confidence amongst youth and sensitization will be smooth".

Awareness

Challenges to widespread awareness of RMPs include distance and infrequent meetings in rangelands (Men's group, Irong). Generally, committee members raise awareness of the rangeland management plans (RMPs) in Irong. Elders in the committee also share information about the plans in Paka, especially during meetings and ceremonies such as *sapana*.

Suggestions given were to increase sensitization and learning, especially with youth, through social media and youth specific meetings (Irong women's and men's groups).

Challenges

Irong's and Paka's main challenges differ. While in Irong both women and men cite challenges around sourcing fencing materials and low commercialization, women and men in Paka cited wider challenges such as migration and conflict.

Positive outcomes

In Irong, primary positive outcomes include pasture production and commercialization and women's inclusion in rangeland management. In Paka, women reported achievements such as strengthening community unity and collaboration and contribution to decision-making.

In the feedback sessions, all committee members expressed interest in updating the RMPs, that formed the premise of the next meeting.

Updating RMPs

A one-day meeting convened Paka Hills and Irong Conservancy committee members to evaluate the RMPs and provide suggestions for updating the plans.

Highlights from the previous meeting were shared and validated. Next, suggestions were discussed and documented in 4 sex disaggregated groups such that, if gender specific preferences for changes to the RMPs were made, they could be brought into planning in the RMPs (Table 1).

Table 1: Priorities highlighted by PRM committees (Source: breakout sessions)

Irong		Paka	
Women	Men	Women	Men
Protect springs	Capacity building on conservation	Water infrastructure	RMP sensitization
Pasture restoration	Restoration of rangelands	RMP sensitization	Pasture restoration
Livestock breeding improvements	Livestock and wildlife census	Pasture restoration	Protection of water
Reforestation	Review RMP	Reforestation	Remove invasive species
Beekeeping capacities	Resource mapping	Beekeeping capacities	Identify and protect cultural sites
	Water catchment protection	Livestock breeding, especially poultry	Group formation, especially farming
			Livestock breeding improvements

Generally speaking, women and men prioritized protection of water, pasture restoration, and livestock improvements through breeding. Women specifically highlighted interests around beekeeping and reforestation. Men in Irong mentioned an interest in conducting a livestock and wildlife census and reviewing the RMP. Women and men in Paka reiterated the need for RMP sensitization. Women in Paka expressed interests in enhanced capacities on livestock breeding, specifically poultry, and men highlighted the relevance of mapping cultural sites and the creation of more farming groups.

Next steps

A series of 5 community meetings, or barazas, are planned with communities to share insights about climate smart technologies and, moreover, to share the suggestions for changes to the rangeland management plans. Subsequent updates to RMPs will be documented and inform continued efforts to restore rangelands and improve livelihoods through inclusive management and governance.

References

- Bullock, R., Miriti, P. and Lopez, D.E. 2022. Participatory Rangeland Management: Understanding women's engagement and implications for social change. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI. https://hdl.handle.net/10568/119791
- Bullock, R., and Majiwa, H. 2025. FGDs to understand institutions that govern rangelands (Unpublished raw data). ILRI
- RECONCILE, 2019. Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) in Baringo county: Context and stakeholders mapping and analysis report. RECONCILE- Nakuru, Kenya.
- Paka Hills Rangeland Management Committee. (2023). Paka rangelands management plan, Baringo County, Kenya (Unpublished community report). Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE)

This series of briefs summarizes findings of an innovative bundling approach entitled *Building Resilience through Inclusive Dialogue, Gender-Equitable and Experiential Spaces (*BRIDGES), developed by gender researchers from the Livestock, Climate and Environment Program at the International Livestock Research Institute.

Author: Renee Bullock

Author: Hamilton Majiwa

Author: Joshua Okoth

Author: Irene Mukalo

Author: Irene Nganga

Author: Tanaya DuttaGupta

ABOUT AICCRA

CGIAR | AICCRA
Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa

Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture. It is led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and supported by a grant from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank. Explore our work at aiccra.cgiar.org

aiccra.cgiar.org | info@cgiar.org | CGIARAfrica