

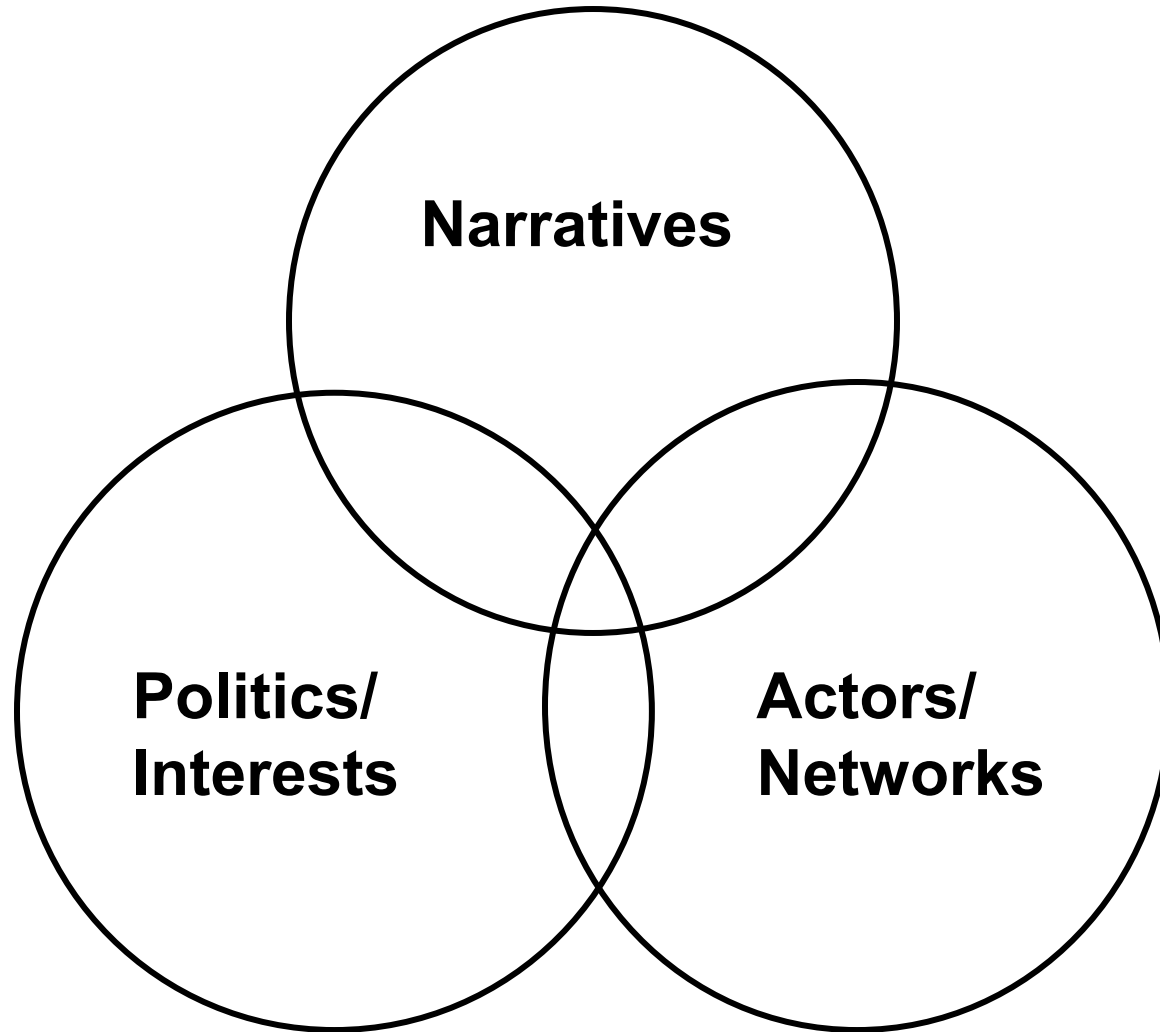
Why institutional actors, interests and policy networks are key in rethinking humanitarian and development for pastoral areas

Tahira Mohamed,

Regional Partnership and Engagement Lead,
Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action

Rethinking pastoral development in the face of persistent uncertainty in the drylands:
Second Drylands Summer School, Isiolo, Kenya, 12-16 April 2026

Policy processes: what needs to change?



Institutional policy networks in practice

Disasters

ORIGINAL ARTICLE | [Open Access](#) |

Institutional and policy networks in disaster management in the Horn of Africa: insights from Kenya¹

[Tahira Mohamed](#)

First published: 02 December 2025 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.70031> | [VIEW METRICS](#)

SECTIONS

PDF CITE TOOLS SHARE

Abstract

Disasters in the Horn of Africa have become more frequent and protracted due to climate change and the compounding factors that restrict resource access, leading to severe food insecurity and livelihood losses. While governmental, international, and regional partners have made significant progress in adopting disaster management policies and frameworks, challenges remain. Limited empirical attempts have been made to understand how diverse actors with differing goals and competing interests interact with one another and influence disaster management and development outcomes. Drawing on qualitative data collected over two years, this paper explores the diverse practices within and across disaster management in the region, using Kenya as a case study, and focusing in particular on drought as a national disaster. It investigates how multiple actors, networks, and other hidden dynamics shape disaster response outcomes. It establishes that various institutional barriers, rigid structures and mindsets, along with shifting priorities and insufficient resources, often result in fragmented drought responses, disjointed coordination, and siloed operations across multiple layers. This study highlights the importance of paying attention to these dynamics and recognising them as key grounds for improvement. It advocates for more introspection and new approaches to collaboration rather than new policy frameworks.

Odessa Centre

Pastoralism
Research, Policy
and Practice

TYPE REVIEW
Published: 24 January 2025
DOI: 10.3389/open.2025.14001

Check for updates

OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY
Carol Mearns,
University College London,
United Kingdom

*CORRESPONDENCE
Tahira Shariff Mohamed,
t.mohamed@cgiar.org

RECEIVED 29 October 2024
ACCEPTED 02 January 2025
PUBLISHED 24 January 2025

CITATION
Mohamed TS, Crane TA, Derbyshire S
and Roba G (2025) A review of
approaches to the integration of
humanitarian and development aid: the

A review of approaches to the integration of humanitarian and development aid: the case of drought management in the Horn of Africa

Tahira Shariff Mohamed^{1*}, Todd Andrew Crane¹, Samuel Derbyshire² and Guyo Roba²

¹Livestock, Climate and Environment, International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya
²People, Policies and Institutions, International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya

ILRI
INTERNATIONAL
LIVESTOCK RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

ILRI workshop brief
September 2024

Breaking down siloes: Towards effective integration of resilience and humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa

Tahira S Mohamed, Todd A Crane, Guyo Roba, Samuel Derbyshire and Rupsha Banerjee

- Key messages**
- Humanitarian crises are becoming more complex, multi-faceted, and protracted, requiring a more integrated response to climate-induced calamities, such as drought, floods and protracted conflict.
 - Aligning institutional strategies, policies and

January 2024

ILRI policy brief

42

Anticipatory action in the drylands: steps toward centring pastoralist knowledge

Samuel F. Derbyshire, Tahira Mohamed, Rupsha Banerjee, Rahma Hassan and Daniel Salau Rogei

Humanitarian and development agenda/interest in the last decades

Period	Framework	Aim
1980	Continuum	Linear transition: short-term to long-term
1990	Contiguum	Action occur simultaneously
2005	HFA via DRR	Reduce disaster by 2015 and comm' resilience
2011	HoA Resilience Agenda	System support : EU, DFID, USAID etc
2015	SFDRR, SDGs	Building resilience through DRM, BBB
2016	WHS, HDP	Agenda for humanity, NWOW, localization
2019	DAC recommendation	Coordination, programming, financing
2020 onwards	Anticipatory Action, Early warning 4 All	Effective early action

Overlapping institutions and policies with diverse interest

MOHAMED

Disaster Response Policy Frameworks in Kenya

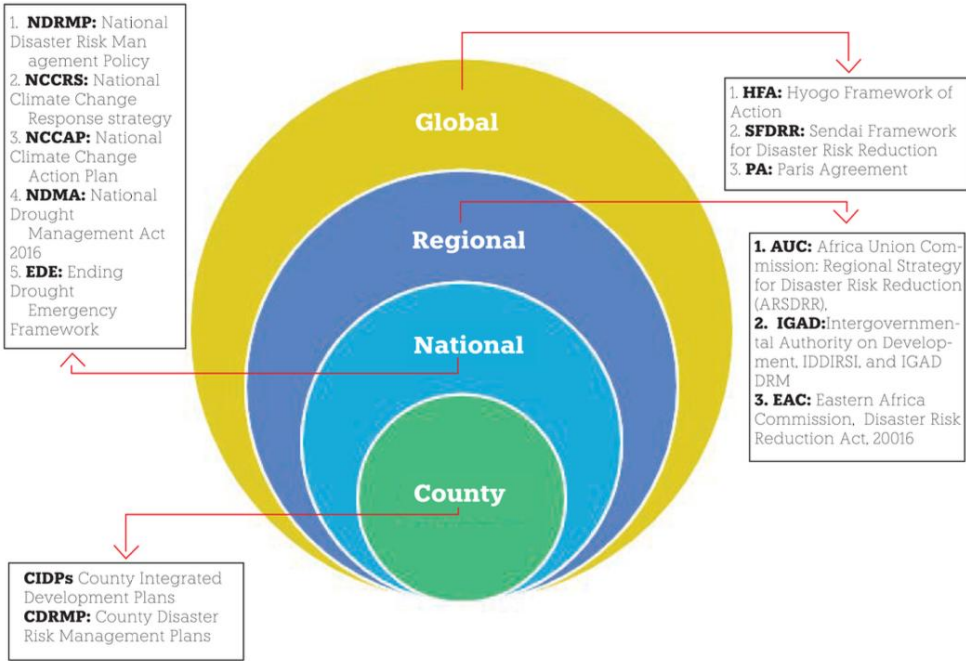
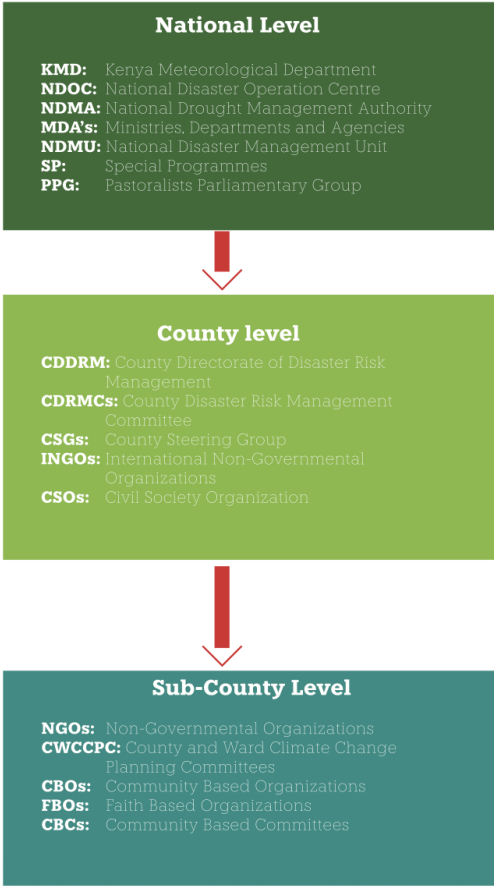


FIGURE 1 Diagram summarising disaster response policy frameworks in Kenya. Source: author.

‘Disaster Management Institutions in Kenya’



4 Diagram summarising the structure of disaster management institutions in Kenya. Source: author.

Policy network analysis

TABLE 2 Components and variables of policy network analysis.

Components	Variable	Description
Participants	Actors	Enablers, implementors, and beneficiaries
Relationship	Frequency of meetings	Interactions or no meetings?
	Direction	One-sided or mutual?
Operation	Preparedness	Cooperative or conflictive
	Response	Reactive or proactive
	Recovery	Inclusive or exclusive

Source: author, adapted from Kim and Hossain ([2013](#)).

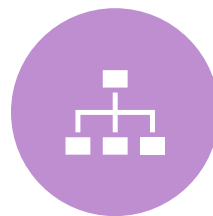
Summary of the interactions between actors

Actors	
Enablers (donors, governments, INGOs, UN etc)	Distant relationships between the actors e.g contracting and sub-contracting, annual/quarterly meetings and evaluation reports
Implementors/facilitators (NGOs, CSOs, Government departments, CBOs)	Increased interactions, but often rushed interventions to enhance ‘ burn rate ’ without careful consideration for disaster preparedness and recovery. Diversity of actors meets immediate response needs but lacks complementarity for sustained recovery and resilience (inflexible program timeline, funding bandwidth and siloed operations)
DRM committees	Community volunteers often trained in DRM, and play a crucial role in linking the community to actors, but tension exists (e.g ‘ labour of doing resilience ’ become burdensome, especially young women and elderly)
Beneficiaries	Responding to a disaster is a continuous process that involves relying on previous knowledge, practices and multiple social and economic relationships and oriented towards preparedness and recovery.

Why the disconnects?



Time pressure:
emergency vs long-term.



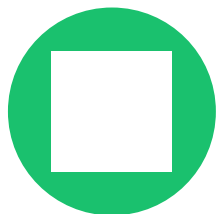
Institutional/ internal
structures/mandates



Incentives,
Motivation,
Financing



Multiple overlapping
frameworks (technical,
operational)



Complex aid system
and upwards
accountability



Mismatch between national,
regional and local
strategies/priorities.

Institutional mandates, interests and mindsets

The **mandate itself is an inhibitor**; we are naturally—and a little problematically—**short term** in our thinking. We suffer from a short-term programme cycle of two to three years. The first year is spent on **planning and assessing** community needs, which is more valuable; however, operational managers are evaluated on **delivery rather than quality**. We then prioritise what is written on the programming paper and mindlessly do things, sometimes, unfortunately, with **legacy minds and self-interest**’.



Trust in data

‘A lack of evidence does not limit us, but a **lack of trust** in the data [does]. We had 42 indicators for the 2022 droughts, and the drought warnings were flashing, but the investment came late. This is not the system's problem; it is operationalising the system’



Relationships

Bonding	Bridging
Thick trust	Thin trust
Single agency	Multiple agencies
Getting by	Getting ahead



How can we adapt strong bonding relationship based on trust, good governance and collective solidarity rooted in human relationships?

What incentives might facilitate such relationships?

Who are we accountable to?



'There was not enough reason to **change operations without incentives**. We lack such culture and are imbued with structures, frameworks, and plans'.



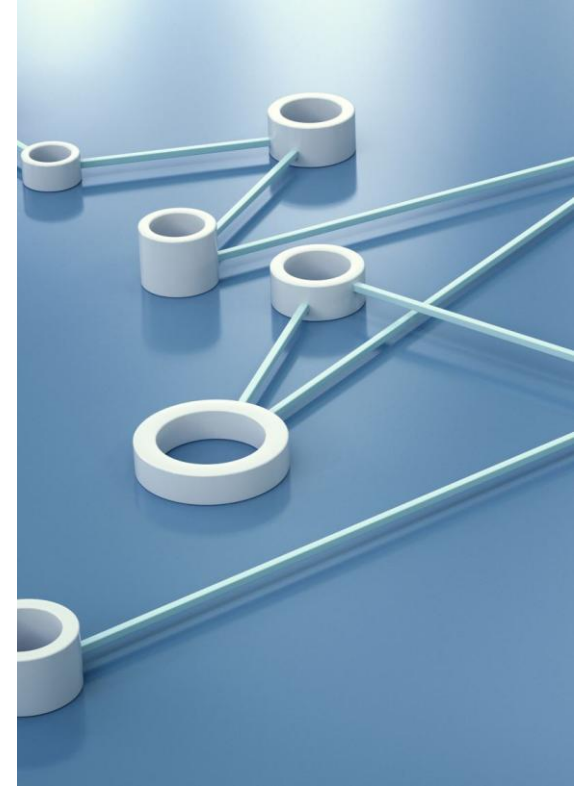
'Moral **values and honesty** should guide us to deliver **more than strategy** and frameworks for ending disasters. Unfortunately, emergencies are often seen as opportunities for theft because of reduced auditing'

'We cannot decide how an intervention is done; we just accept it; **after all, it is an aid**'. Accountability entails ownership of maladaptation and the capacity to ask the right questions for improvement'. KII

Funding issues

‘We have robust DRM tools and coordinating bodies, but they are often designed for resource mobilisation. When funds dry up, they lose focus and prioritise resource-seeking for survival’

‘Stop subsidising failures’ and instead focus on supporting the existing institutions and infrastructures. E.g livestock market facilities, abattoirs and persistence drought emergencies created ‘drought millionaires’ but have had a limited impact on the lives of pastoralists’,



Competition or collaboration?

- A strong underlying sense of solidarity, built around bonds of mutual obligation and shared responsibility, is what makes resilience possible.
- Competition and conflicting worldviews negatively shape efforts to reduce vulnerability to climate risk, creating **winners and losers** in situations that should be collaborative.



Food for thought

“Too often, Africa’s story at climate summits starts with what we lack—finance, technology, time, instead, let’s start with what we have.”
Abiy Ahmed at ACS-2.

International development and ‘perpetual present’: anthropological approaches to rehistoricization of policy (Lewis, D. 2009).

“Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” (Quran, chapter 13, verse 11).



Qsn: what do we have? Are we tied in perpetual present? What interest prevents us from adapting new change?

New ways of working with new narrative

- Rethinking how we work e.g **implementors/facilitators**, collaborators/competators, mindset/mandate.
- Doing **more with less based on existing resources**, funding, institution, solidarity and shared vision.
- Nurturing incentives & KPIs that reward collectivity, **accountability to the affected community**, transparent reporting and flexible resource allocation.
- Strong **leadership** that look beyond frameworks and old narrative to adapt the flexible and dynamics ways of operating in pastoral system.



Question for fish bowl

- What **incentives** and **motivation** can be in place to effect how we work with the new narratives based on collective solidarity, trust, good governance, and shared vision?
- How can we move from ‘**perpetual present**’ to rehistoricising knowledge, relationships, and what worked?
- What are more **flexible working** environments that allow actors to **improvise**, **learn from mistakes** and successes, and improve overall operations?
- What **changes** are needed, and by **whom**? and which institutions to support these changes?

Thank you

t.mohamed@cgiar.org

Twitter: @twahirah3

LinkedIn:



The Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action is an international partnership led by the University of Edinburgh collaborating with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Save the Children, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and Community Jameel.

Based at ILRI in Nairobi, Kenya, we combine the local knowledge and concerns of communities facing on-the-ground threats of hunger with innovations in data science and humanitarian action; teaming up to devise solutions that can predict, prepare for, and overcome climate-related food security and malnutrition challenges in dryland areas.

jameelobservatory.org / info@jameelobservatory.org

With a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence

