



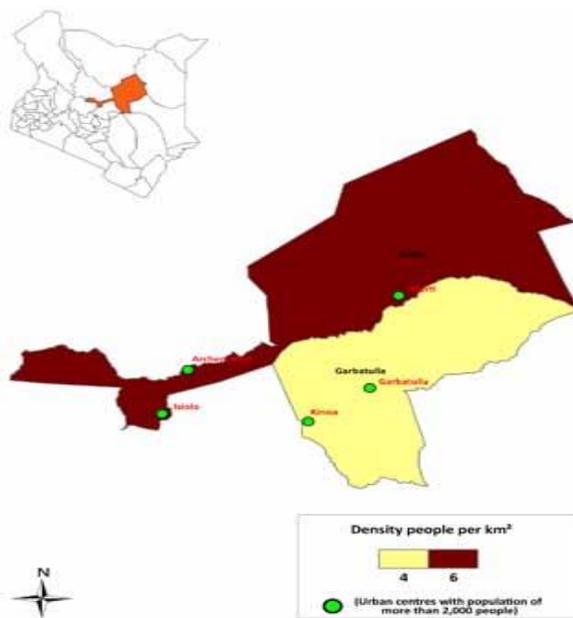
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN ISIOLO COUNTY

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Over view of Isiolo County

Isiolo County is located in the upper Eastern region of Kenya. It borders seven counties with Garissa to the East, Wajir to the North East, Meru to the South West, Samburu to the East and Marsabit to the North West, Kitui and Tana River counties to the South West and South East respectively. It has 10 wards, namely: Cherab ward, Chari ward, Kinna ward, Garba Tulla ward, Wabera ward, Bulla pesa ward, Oldonyiro ward, Burat ward, Ngare Mara ward and Sericho ward. The County covers an area of 25,605 Square kilometers with a population of 161,666 according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2009). The County's Twitter handle is @isiolo011 and website: www.isiolo.go.ke



Source: Commission of Revenue Allocation

In Kenya, the poor wealth category comprises the biggest population and also the most deprived of information. According, Human Development Report 2010, the national poverty stood at 45.9 per cent, against a rural poverty in Kenya of 49.1 per cent. Most of the labour force, at slightly over 18 million Kenyans, is way below 50 per cent of the estimated 40 million Kenya at the time, and it could be argued that the majority of these are in urban areas. This leaves the rural populations with the burden of poverty, with women and youth bearing the heaviest burden. Lack of adequate information and focus on emergency responses has left communities in upper eastern exposed to the effects of disasters. Building resilience in such a way that communities are able to withstand the effects of disasters is the way to go through efficient information provision.

Kenya's pastoralists face recurrent devastation from droughts, livestock deaths, loss of livelihood and conflict over resources. Information is critical to development and most Isiolo communities depend on local radio stations, Facebook group, WhatsApp group, county website, magazine, blogs and university students association to get information. Information flow in Isiolo County is improving: about 70% of the people listen to radio while about 25% read newspapers (Baliti FM/KCOMNET report 2014) .In the

education sector, the following statistics are available as of 2007: number of primary schools (91), secondary (11), and Tertiary (1); primary schools total enrolment (24,004); teacher to pupil ratio: 1:38.6. Public secondary schools total enrolment (2,155), teacher to pupil ratio: 1:26 (public schools), number of tertiary institutions: 1 (Isiolo Youth Polytechnic) and adult literacy classes total enrolment (1,158). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics *Monitoring the situation of children and women: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2008*. In Isiolo, only 22 per cent of the primary school entry age children are attending primary school, with twice the rate of females (29 per cent) as males (15 per cent) attending standard one. Primary school net attendance rate was 66% while secondary school net attendance ratio was only 11 per cent. The proportion of women aged 15-24 years that are literate in Isiolo is less than half (47 per cent).

Sources of information

1. Print media

Nuru magazine, Light of the Northern Kenya

This is a monthly magazine run by Ministry of Information and Communication in Isiolo County. The magazine covers all sectors of economy in the county but mostly education issues and is available for ksh 50 within Isiolo town. The magazine is produced monthly.

2. Radio

(a) Baliti 102.7 Fm: "Qonko Wor Isiolo" loosely meaning voice of isiolo people.

Baliti FM is a community radio station which broadcasts its programmes in Boran and Kiswahili, and covers Isiolo, Garba Tula, Kinna, Archers Post, Gotu, Wamba and Timau district and neighbouring counties like Meru, Samburu. With a mix of education, awareness raising and entertainment, the radio has played significant role in contributing to positive development in the area of its broadcast footprint. To date, the Baliti FM foot print is about 120 kilometre towards Garba Tula and Kinna parts of Isiolo County, 40 km towards Timau and about 100 km towards Archers post and Wamba areas. The station is run by a team of professionals and volunteers. Baliti programmes are magazine type laced with live interactive call in formats, as well as features that are produced to inform debates and discussions.

(b) Isiolo 107.2 FM: Kisima cha Nyika

Kisima is a Kiswahili word meaning well, thus if loosely translated it means well in the plains. The radio covers Isiolo town and its environs. It is a commercially run radio station in the county and broadcasts its programmes in English and Kiswahili languages.

(c) Shahidi 97.1 FM

This is a radio station started by the Diocese of Isiolo in September 2013 through its communications department which aims at spreading the word of God in all dimensions of life in Isiolo. The radio station based at Isiolo cathedral centre. It broadcasts its programmes in Kiswahili and covers Isiolo town and its environs only. It is a catholic - run radio.

Local Civil Society Organisations

a) Pastoralist Women for Health and Education (PWHE)

This is a local NGO based in Isiolo County PWHE was formed in June 1998 as a welfare group by a group of women from pastoralist background with an aim of promoting the development of women and children. The organization was registered with the department of social services as a CBO in 2005 and later in 2006 registered as a local NGO under the NGO coordination Act.

PWHE was started mainly to address the high illiteracy level, poverty, and unjust social system impeding girl-child growth and women development. The founders realized that the high illiteracy level, poverty, and unjust social system were impediments to girl-child growth and women development. It was also realized that during droughts and conflicts women and girls are mostly left behind to take care of the family. Traditionally, the pastoralist communities see the male-child as the ‘standing army’ of their communities. The organization envisions the empowerment of girl-child, the rural women in particular and their pastoral communities in general through peace building initiatives and provision of basic education to mitigate the impact of illiteracy, domestic violence and tribal conflict.

PWHE works in the following areas education, health, economic and livelihood empowerment, peace building and conflict management, governance and local democracy including budget tracking of public funds. PWHE has the following cross-cutting issues that it addresses; environment, HIV/Aids and gender. The organisation operates in the entire Isiolo County and implements its programmes by way of providing community trainings, peace dialogue meeting/trainings, civic education on the Constitution/ the devolved government, orphan and vulnerable children support, and seed capital to over 18 income generating- community groups.

b) Mid-P (Merti Integrated Development Programme)

Merti Integrated Development programme (MIDP) was formed when Action Aid Kenya (AAK) the only active NGO in Merti phased out in the year 2000. It got registered as an umbrella CBO with Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Its mandate was to coordinate self-improvement actions by various community based groups in Merti initially supported by AAK. It inherited assets of AAK Merti Development area including land, buildings and office equipment and two years funding for skeleton staff and office operation. As part of its growth plan MID-P was registered as a national NGO in 2003 with NGO coordination bureau with mandate to operate in Merti and Garbatulla districts.

c) Resource Advocacy Programme (RAP)

This a local CSO that operates in Isiolo south, Garba Tula district and Merti district. RAP promotes and facilitates community access and management of the resources upon which local livelihoods depend. RAP provides a platform for dialogue and shared learning between stakeholders towards equitable outcomes. RAP’s work focuses on advocacy for supportive policies at the county and national-levels. It also supports capacity building of customary institutions at the local-level. Daud Tari is the chief executive of the organization. The organization is the lead agency in the IIED led Ada Consortium promoting climate proof planning in Isiolo County.

Other NGOS working in Isiolo County

- **World Vision** it operates in Isiolo south. They are undertaking education and irrigation programme in Garba Tula Sub County. In some places like Rapsu, Kinaa division, they are helping locals to get piped water from the borehole.

- **International Medical Corps** is based in Isiolo town but its area of operation is Oldonyiro ward and Ngare Mara ward. It is undertaking nutrition projects in the area e.g. Ntalaban, Arimet, Kipsing, and Choka
- **Food for Hungry International's** area of operation is Isiolo town, Kinna division and Ngare Mara. Its main activities are livestock marketing promotion and initiatives to reduce HIV/AIDS.
- **Adeso** is based in Isiolo town and is implementing the five year REGLA-IR program in Isiolo, Wajir, Marsabit and Garissa counties. Its area of interest is livestock, conflict resolution and animal health.
- **Action Aid** is in Isiolo town and its area of interest is water and irrigation in Burat ward and community voicing in governance issues.

Students' Associations

Layshbu

This is an online student organization that was formed by like-minded students from Isiolo County. The memberships of the organization is drawn from students of Isiolo background studying in countries like China, Britain, USA, North Africa and local students studying in Kenya universities. The organization motto is inspire, equip and empower northern Kenya natives. Its main agenda is to redefine Northern Kenya and create more intellectual interaction to do away with culture of complacency with mediocrity and conflicts over petty issues. The organization runs a blog, twitter account and Facebook accounts to keep in touch with their colleagues. Layshbu can be reached at layshbuteam@gmail.com
Website <https://twitter.com/Layshbuclub>.

Waso University Student Association

This is an association run by students studying in Kenya University like the university of Nairobi, Egerton university, Mt Kenya university, Catholic university, Maseno university, Kenyatta university, Masinde Muliro university, south eastern university, Moi university, international university of Africa in Sudan, University of Manitoba among other universities. It was started in October 2014 and has been registered with Ministry of Labour in the County. It draws its membership from all corners of Isiolo County. The association main objective is to fight illiteracy among the school children by creating awareness on the importance of school to the students. The other objective is to participate in governance and devolutions issues and help the locals to actively participate in decision making through information sharing.

Internet usage

My observation is that most young people are techno savvy in Isiolo. They use social media to form groups, especially Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp group pages such as Eye on Isiolo County 2017 politics, Gaddis tokumaa, Okoa Isiolo County, Wusa, Layshbu and Baliti Borana among others. They push for their agenda, front their problems to the relevant government bodies, updating each other the activities going on in the county.

Traditional Institutions

Traditionally the institutions exist as the oldest informal associations with no clear set up or formal structures. There is "*dheeda*" a customary territorial natural resource management unit, which is sufficiently extensive to allow dry and wet season mobility of cattle. Within one *dheeda* therefore dry and wet mobility patterns can mean livestock crossing several boundaries can shift according to mobility patterns. "*Jars dheeda*" is responsible for decisions about mobility, addressing social disputes in conflict

resolution. Disputes and conflicts are solved by “*jaroles*” who are council of elders. The council of elders has a pivotal role in ensuring the solving disputes arising from all quarters.

Recommendations

72% of Isiolo’s population is poor, which shows the number of informed person is relatively low or the drivers/channel used to disseminate information is not properly utilized. An informed society can make good decisions that will lead and guide its daily activities. Isiolo has 10 wards that are distant from each other. There is need to use local radio stations and existing information structure to develop and produce programmes that would be able to educate and empower the women of Isiolo County on their rights, and also provide an avenue for them to learn and make use of available opportunities for development. The station would also be instrumental in creating awareness around the issues related to health, education, investments and microfinance, livestock marketing, weather forecasts and disaster early warning.

Most of the Isiolo County residents’ are not aware of the happenings in the county because the county government do not want to be question by the locals on how the CIDP will be implemented. DLCI and other like-minded organization needs to provide platforms for the local population to share information on various issues that are of direct relevance to them. The situation of public participation mechanism and consultation in the county government is centralised to Isiolo town only. The other far distant areas like Merti, Modogashe, Garba tulla, Kina, Sericho, Oldonyiro towns have been neglected completely. The county government do their own assessments without the input of the locals. No single public hearing for county bills were held in this area. This has made it difficult for the people to hold their leaders accountable, and thus the genesis of all sorts of problems that have plagued the county. Through local radio stations there is need develop programmes which include hosting of local leaders, which will significantly contribute to the participation of people in governance and development, as they would have shared their views on issues affecting them. In several instances, there is evidence that the county government has acted on some of complaints and or suggestions that have come through the radio programmes. For example last year in august, residents of Isiolo town complained of rising spate of insecurity and poor road networks in the informal parts of the town through the radio programme, “Jifunze haki yako” which loosely means enlighten yourself about your right. After two weeks, flood lights were placed in the area and earth movers were seen in the area carpeting the feeder roads.

References

http://www.childinfo.org/files/Isiolo_Report.pdf last accessed on 19th Jan 2015

<http://www.crakenya.org/county/isiolo/> last accessed on 17th Jan 2015

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