Mercy Corps, along with Pact Inc., is implementing a USAID-funded program called PEACE III that works with local organizations to resolve conflict and build peace in the Horn of Africa. PEACE III’s approach to peacebuilding takes into account the close nexus between natural resources and conflict that exists in many areas of the region. Communities with strong internal conflict management capacities, and thus greater stability and peace, are expected to also have increased resilience to climate stressors and shocks.

One approach used by PEACE III to strengthen communities' capacities to manage conflict is through the signing of natural resource sharing agreements. One such agreement was signed in 2016 in Loyoro sub-county between the Dodoth of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya. Since this time these two communities have been living in peace with one another, which they overwhelmingly attribute to the resource sharing agreement.

Background

The Dodoth and Turkana have long been in conflict with one another due to interethnic tensions and other factors. Increased levels of drought have affected major parts of the Uganda-Kenya border, reducing the availability of natural resources and exacerbating conflict between the two groups. For the Turkana in particular, available grazing land and access to water in Kenya have been severely diminished, causing them to migrate into Uganda to graze and water their animals among the Dodoth. With competition over scarce natural resources, conflicts often erupted in violence, cattle raiding, and disputes. And with no formal system in place to deal with these climate disruptions, conflict continued.

In response, PEACE III partners CECORE, DADO, and Mercy Corps collaborated with the Kaabong District Government to facilitate a natural resource sharing agreement. On March 3, 2016, Dodoth and Turkana leaders signed the agreement.

In order to enable peaceful coexistence, the agreement outlined
the following eight conditions (taken verbatim):

- Turkana should not enter Uganda with illegal guns.
- Turkana Kraal leader to notify local government representatives and community of their entry and exit of Uganda.
- Turkana Kraal leader to settle in one grazing area for easy monitoring.
- Communities and government institutions should strengthen collaboration in promoting peace.
- Turkana be allowed to graze and draw water from Loyoro River on condition they adhere to above conditions.
- Need for regular visits from Turkana leaders to Turkana in Uganda Kraals.
- Next meeting be held in Kamion in the next two weeks.
- Recovered calves of Dodoth from Turkana be handed back to the owners on day of this signing.

Impact

During January 2017, both communities, along with DADO and PEACE III convened and reviewed the progress of the sharing agreement after a year of implementation. Some key findings from the review include the following:

- **Increased Trade.** Due to the new peaceful co-existence between both groups, the Dodoth and Turkana have begun trading livestock and other goods in a shared marketplace. The marketplace has allowed increased interaction, both formal and informal, with a result of stronger bonds and dependency on one another. The market serves as a peace dividend that they created themselves and has increased friendship and trust between the groups.

  **Challenge:** Both groups expressed concern about increased prices due to transportation costs and animals getting sick during travel.

- **Increased and Improved Communication.** Communication between the Dodoth and Turkana has significantly improved with the creation of committee leaders. These leaders are able to discuss progress or challenges in a timely manner and work together to mitigate and solve issues.

  **Challenge:** There is still room for improvement in communication. For example, the Dodoth stated that they want more consistency from the Turkana regarding when they plan to arrive and return during the rainy and dry seasons.

- **Improved Relations Between Governments.** The resource sharing agreement has strengthened relations between the Kenyan and Ugandan local governments, specifically with their respective sub-counties.

  **Challenge:** The Turkana said that the Kenyan local government needs to be more involved in the process.

Outcomes of Resource Sharing Agreement

The signing of the resource sharing agreement has brought about many positive outcomes. It has also:

- Increased trade via creation of a marketplace.
- Improved communication between Turkana and Dodoth.
- Strengthened relations among the Ugandan and Kenyan local governmental actors.
- Built resilience to climate shocks and stresses.
- Reduced violent conflict and raids.
Desire for Shared Peace Dividends. Following the successful creation of the shared marketplace, both groups expressed the need for the creation of a dam as another mechanism for sustaining peace. This means that both groups wish to work together to advocate for a collective need, rather than just for their own group’s needs.

Challenge: The Turkana and Dodoth both communicated a continued desire to live peacefully, but they lack reliable access to water and must resort to digging very deep into the land. They often share the water with their animals and get sick.

Elected Leaders. Both groups, as outlined in the agreement, agreed to elect a member from their group to be spokesperson. These leaders successfully created a plan for coordinated grazing on the shared land. They agreed that the Dodoth will graze on the eastern side of the Loyoro River while the Turkana graze on the western side.

“Double Win” of Natural Resource Sharing Agreements

Natural resource sharing agreements serve as a critical entry point for communities in conflict to combat and mitigate two important issues simultaneously.

Resilience to Climate Stress and Shocks: These agreements formalize a clear structure and set of conditions that enable communities to effectively and collectively manage natural resources, especially when climate change negatively affects their land and water access. This allows the affected communities to build resiliency to shocks and stressors that result from climate change. In the case of the Turkana and Dodoth, with the introduction of an agreement, the Dodoth are prepared to share utilization of resources, and the Turkana have a plan of action when they experience severe drought or lack of access to grazing land.

Peacebuilding and Reduction of Conflict: They also help to resolve existing conflicts and reduce the risk of future conflicts over natural resources erupting. With the absence of a sharing agreement, communities facing scarcity of resources may be forced to migrate across the border and compete for resources. With no clear agreement on how to manage the usage of these resources, groups often resort to violence to secure access.

Next Steps

Follow-up discussions between the Turkana and Dodoth produced the following recommendations for improving the existing resource sharing agreement:

Dodoth and Turkana leaders stand in solidarity following the January 2017 community discussion reviewing the agreement.
1. Address challenges outlined above, including the communication gap between groups when the Turkana go back to Kenya.

2. Urge Ugandan and Kenyan local governments to allow grazing and watering to happen after 8PM.

3. Regularly revisit completed and outstanding commitments from resource sharing agreements.

**Recommendations**

**BUILD ON NATURAL RESOURCE SHARING AGREEMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE**

PEACE III implementing agencies should:

1. Focus on the creation and effective regulation of peace dividends to complement resource sharing agreements, such as marketplaces and dams for collective access to water.

2. Work closely with the local, and perhaps national, governments on both sides of the border to formalize communication and action.

Members of the donor community should:

3. Support the growth of natural resource sharing agreements and management systems with additional funding.

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