

Presentation on TBI's Community Engagement at Ileret in Astronomy Site Testing and Training Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

Good morning everyone.

My name is Ramsey Korie, also known as Kuute Joshua Koriye. I am a community development professional currently serving as the Community Liaison Officer at TBI in Ileret, Marsabit County, Kenya. I'm also a proud member of the Daasanach community, and I'm honoured to share the positive impacts and ongoing initiatives that TBI has in our community, particularly in Ileret.

Today, I'll be presenting on how TBI's community engagement is creating significant change in various sectors of our region. This includes astronomy site testing and training workshops, along with education, health, livelihoods, and other community outreach programs.

1. About Me and My Role at TBI

Ramsey Korie (Kuute Joshua Koriye)

A Daasanach community member from Ileret, an area located near Lake Turkana (eastern part) in northern Kenya.

Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Community Development, having already completed a diploma in the same field.

Serving as the Community Liaison Officer at TBI, where I bridge the gap between the community and TBI's development initiatives.

My background includes working in Nairobi, Marsabit, and Turkana, expanding my experience in community-based initiatives.

Public speaking and relationship-building are some of my core skills, which I use to foster collaboration among stakeholders and the community. I play a vital role in bridging the gap between field school students, researchers and the Daasanach community as a Liaison Officer at TBI. By organizing and facilitating activities like the astronomy field school and collaborating with institutions like Stony Brook University. During Astronomy field school visit, I organize stargazing sessions for the community, especially the students, I am providing them with a unique and inspiring opportunity to witness the wonders of the night sky. These events not only allow students to see planets and stars up close, but they also ignite their curiosity and aspirations, encouraging many to consider pursuing careers in astronomy. It's amazing how such experiences can have a long-lasting impact, broadening horizons and

opening up new possibilities for the students in the Daasanach community. It's great to see how I am nurturing their interest in science and expanding their ambitions through these meaningful activities! I ensure that both the students and the community can connect and learn from each other. My work in organizing cultural exchanges, like football and volleyball games, fosters positive relationships, allowing students and community members to engage with and understand each other better. Additionally, by liaising with community leaders and stakeholders, I am actively promoting TBI's mission at the community level and ensuring the safety and well-being of researchers during their fieldwork. My role clearly involves both logistical coordination and community engagement, which are key to making these research initiatives successful and impactful for everyone involved.

2. The Daasanach Community

The Daasanach are a semi-nomadic, agro-pastoralist ethnic group living along the eastern part of Lake Turkana in Kenya and the Omo River in Ethiopia.

Traditionally, their livelihoods have been closely tied to the natural resources around them.

In recent times, fishing has become a primary income source for many Daasanach people, with Lake Turkana and the Omo River now supporting much of the community's economic activities.

3. TBI's Role in Supporting the Daasanach Community

TBI has become a key service provider for the Daasanach community, offering more support than both the national and county governments combined.

I personally benefited from the TBI bursary program, which allowed me to pursue education from secondary school through tertiary levels. There are also many others

Daasanach elites who are TBI bursary beneficiaries, and they are now serving in various professional fields, contributing back to their community.

4. Key Areas of TBI's Support and Engagement

A. Education Initiatives

Bursary programs: TBI provides financial support for Daasanach students from secondary school through tertiary education.

TBI also supports local schools by providing resources and infrastructure:

Employment of teachers in three schools: one secondary school and two primary schools, Monthly sanitary towel distribution for all female students, Student mentorship programs during school holidays to empower and guide students.

B. Health Sector Initiatives

TBI has provided support to the Ileret Health Facility, ensuring that critical health services are accessible to the community:

Referral services from the health facility to the Ethiopian border for specialized care, Construction of a well-equipped maternity ward, Employment of cleaning staff to maintain hygiene in health facilities.

C. Job Opportunities for Locals

TBI actively provides employment for the Daasanach community. 95% of TBI's Ileret employees are from the Daasanach community, offering job stability and professional growth for locals.

D. Livelihood Support

Hydroponic farming training: TBI has trained over 10 individuals from various villages in Ileret in hydroponic farming over two years.

These individuals have since become trainers themselves, spreading knowledge on kitchen gardening to other community members.

Freshwater supply: TBI ensures that fresh water is provided to all institutions in Ileret, including schools, health centers, police stations, and other community facilities.

E. Community Outreach Programs

TBI conducts regular community outreach programs to promote health, education, and development. Efforts include initiatives focused on hygiene, environmental health, and community welfare.

5. Astronomy Site Testing and Training Workshops

As part of the astronomy site testing and training workshops, TBI has been actively involved in providing technical and professional training to community members.

These workshops offer a unique opportunity for the community to participate in ground-breaking projects and learn about astronomy and related fields, empowering them with new skills and knowledge. The engagement of the community in such specialized projects is a way to foster innovation, scientific literacy, and sustainable development in a region that has traditionally been marginalized in many sectors.

6. Conclusion

TBI's community engagement initiatives in Ileret have been instrumental in improving the livelihoods of the Daasanach people.

From education to health to livelihood empowerment, TBI continues to be a vital force in driving positive change in the region.

As a Daasanach community member and a beneficiary of TBI's programs, I am proud of the tangible impact these efforts have had and will continue to have for future generations.

Together, we are creating sustainable opportunities for the Daasanach community and paving the way for growth and development.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Q&A Session

[Invite questions from the audience and provide answers.]