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Interviewer: i wanted to talk to you because i heard that you are the elder of this community and i have seen that you are the one who understands the life of this community better and hence you are able to answer me this questions .what we shall do together is to draw the map so that i can get to understand how you know your life how water is interconnected with health and with food too , so i want to see how you understand it ,So we shall try to draw something like this for example if you tell me that it has rained i write down and the outcome of the rain if for example the garss grows and then you will tell me the magnitude of that relationship for example if its very strong , medium or once in a while and then i will indicate it as 1,2 or 3 .

To begin with what is your position in the community ?

Respondent: I am Ali Dima the elder of this community and also I am the committee of the peace and also I am among the committee of the chief so all this .

Interviewer: When we talked with the chief at Dukana he recommended us to talk to you ,

Interviewer : And this place is called ?

Respondent: Balesa Saru .

Interviewer : So if we can begin, i might ask you an obvious question question because i want to see how you will answer that question and i will be greatful?How does the issue of water , health and food interconnects ?

Respondent: Some while they are eating food , all this thing health water and food goes hand in hand and when one is sick they cannot eat food and without water nothing can be done and you cannot eat food without water .

Interviewer: let’s go into details, where do people fetch water from ?

Respondent: They fetch water from the shallow wells and there is no clean water that the people drinks because its salty and again the other well is dirty and its open and doesn’t have lid and its dirtied by the animals and normally people do not go to the latrines but instead release themselves in the bush and around the lagaa areas and when it rains all those feaces and dirt gets into the water through floods and so since water in other areas of the shallow water is salty people come to lagaa during the rainy season and drill some holes in the ground and drink water from there . And when you observe those areas its infested with feaces . Here in Saru people have no clean water to drink .and this borehole was drilled by the AIC church but it has not been opened yet .

Interviewer : will it get to your house through pipes and then taps ?

Respondent: yes they said so and they will bring it all the way from where we went to visit in the morning up to here .

Interviewer: Is the water not salty though?

Respondent : they said that its going to be a fresh water and for now there is no good drinking water its just problems .

Interviewer: You talked of people going to the bush to release themselves , Why are they going to the bush ?

Respondent: it’s because they don’t have latrines .

Interviewer: why do you think so ?

Respondent: There are also projects that have come here to create awareness on why people should not go to the bush but instead dig pit latrines but people from the reserve do not take the issue seriously and they don’t even care and its only the people that live in town that owns this latrines but the rest that we went to visit in the morning none have latrines .

Interviewer : They don’t see the need to dig the pit latrines? so that seems to be their routine?

Respondent : they don’t see the need .

Interviewer : you said that they came to create and teach people on the need to have pit latrines , who are those people ?

Respondent: They are the CARITAS people and so many others like SIFA , Solidarity they used to come every time and they even built us about five latrines in this village .

Interviewer Are they mostly from the government or the NGO’s .and the government just tells the chief something little ( 09:25-09:42 ) not clear

Interviewer : So those are the one that built you the latrines ?

Respondent : Yes

Interviewer: But not in every place?

Respondent: Not in every place but one in this area and others in different place and people dig the pit for themselves and they come to put the slab and the iron sheets .

Interviewer : if the latrines have been built do people go to those latrines or there are some who still don’t use it ?

Respondent: Yes they do all and no one is denied the chance to use it when the need arise .

Interviewer : is there separate latrines for the men and women ?

Respondent:there is nothing like that its used by both gender .

Interviewer: now that the latrines have been built do you think feaces getting into the water has reduced or?

Respondent:it has reduced in this areas with latrines but in other parts that doesn’t have latrines the issue is still same.

Interviewer: When people drink that dirty water what happens?

Respondent: people diarrhea and even diarrhea that comes with blood , you remember the old man we met at the camel in the morning?he was one of those that got diarrhea with blood just recently.

Interviewer: have you ever seen someone diarrhea to death?

Respondent: there was such cases before but not recently .those diseases have become very rampant.

Interviewer: Is there any disease that has emerged because of drinking contaminated water?

Respondent: there is diseases like typhoid ,and worms and when sick people go to the hospital he or she is told that they are suffering from typhoid .

Interviewer: is there an hospital around here?

Respondent: Yes there is a dispensary in this village and it belongs to the government .

Interviewer : is there a nurse or doctor here ?

Respondent: A nurse .but the problem with the dispensary is that there is no medicine the government brings very few medicines although the nurse are there.

Interviewer : What makes the medicine not to be available?is it because this place is far ?

Respondent:The government doesn’t bring the medicine and its not because of the road , during the time when this place was not under county government there was enough medicine in the hospital when National government being was in charge but this days since the county government overtook there is no medicine.

Interviewer : Do the NGO’s bring the medicine to the dispensary too?

Respondent: yes they sometimes chip in but not everytime hence not reliable.

Interviewer: Who built the dispensary ?

Respondent: its the government .

Interviewer: Now that you have the dispensary do you think that the matter of the health goes well ?or for example if someone is having diarrhea were it not for that dispensary will the situation of the person worsen ?

Respondent: Yes because with the little thst they can the doctor at the dispensary helps the sick person to stop the diarrhea as much as they can but if the medicine is there the person is given and if not one is advised on what medicine to get from the chemist .

Interviewer: Are there people that use the traditional medicines?for example a certain herbal medicine that are known to people to be taken incase of a certain diseases of the stomach or any other remedy?

Respondent: yes there are so many people for example one can take medicine that induce diarrhea that is believed to remove all the dirt from the stomach orto detox and cleanes it, some even slaughter their animals cook the medicine with the meat and drink the soup from it and then theyget subjected to diarrhea and get well .

Interviewer: Do you think people prefer that herbal medicine compared to the one at the dispensary?

Respondent : No , unless they fail to get the medicine from the chemist around and thats when they have lacked options and go for the herbs otherwise they prefer the medicine at the dispensary.at first when they get sick they first go to the dispensary.

Interviewer: Although the herbal medicine too helps right?

Respondent: Yes it does .

Interviewer: Does those herbs help with the problem of diarrhea too?

Respondent: yes it does with the milder stomach issues but not serious case like that of diarrhea that comes with blood.

Interviewer: Do people use this shallow wells more during the drought or the rainy season ?

Respondent:during the rainy season people drills near the lagaa area and drink that water but during the drought season they use the shallow wells water for consumption . And for the shallow well its already drilled and it has water all the time .

Interviewer: But is the shallow well water saline?

Respondent: yes its very saline and before this water was not salty and this salinity just occurred about 4-5 years ago because before the water was fresh and this wells that are here have low quantity of water in it and when the camels , cows and goats drinks it it then becomes dry and that water this days have increased in quantity and we don’t know where it comes from. And the water has overflow and changed its colour to dark green and the water has become contaminated and we even tried to pump it out using generators that we hired and paid for but the quantity is not reduced and there is no changes and for four years no one has used that well and its just stagnated and dirty even the animals are not drinking it .

( greeting someone from outside )21: 51

Interviewer : Do you think it’s the too much water that has brought the issue of salinity ?

Respondent: Yes because when the water was not too much the water was fresh and with no salt.

Interviewer: So does the issue if salinity make people go to look for water somewhere else ?

Respondent: Yes during the rainy season people drink from the holes near the lagaa but now during the drought season they put containers in the car and go all the way to Dukana to look for water to drink because there is a well in dukana with fresh water for consumption but for cooking the people use water from the shallow wells since it saline.

Interviewer: between the water being dirty and being saline which one mostly prevents people from drinking it?

Respondent: Its the one that is dirty .

Interviewer : So its the dirty water that pushes people to go and look for water somewhere else?

Respondent: Yes people avoid the dirty water but for the salty one they are forced to drink it .so they choose the salty one over the dirty one

Interviewer: Do you think during the drought when people go to well to fetch water the more they fetch the more it gets salty?

Respondent:yes it gets salty more during the drought because the water that people have been using have always been saline and even if you go right now its still salty and since it rained recently the lagaa part has water still ,so people just come to drill holes and get water from those holes at the lagaa and thats the water they drink but for the wells the water is still salty.

(Greetings from outside)

Interviewer: Is this water from the holes in lagaa clean and safe for consumption ?

Respondent: its not ,its only that people have no choice you know when the animals go to the lagaa they leave their feaces and urine there and all this dirties that water when the dirt is absorbed into the earth .

Interviewer: Do the animals go their to drink water or they just pass by the lagaa when they go to graze ?

Respondent: they drink water from there and they also pass through there while going to graze . And for instance the donkey goes to urinate there and it gets absorbed in the soil and people come there to dig holes and fetch water from there.

Interviewer: So do people come here during the drought from somewhere else with their animals or do they come during the rain?

Respondent:During the rainy season the animals move to other places to graze but during the drought season they come to ato graze around the town area.

Interviewer: Yesterday when i was in sabarei talking to people they said people are not there oflate?

Respondent: Because normally people go to sabarei during the drought and when it rains they come back . But here both during the rainy and drought season the people will still be here because the children are going to school and people have permanent houses here but the livestock migrates and people remain here when it rained so many goats and camels migrated but during the drought all those animals comes back here because there is water here and others migrate to sabarei upto Buluq . Because so many people come here .

Interviewer: When all those animals come here from different areas and this place become influx of animals does the water in the shallow wells become more dirty and lagaa dries up?

Respondent: Yes the lagaa has dried up and the shallow well water is alot but becomes dirty .

Interviewer: In your opinion the issue of diarrhea and health in regard to water does it raises during the drought or rainy seasons?

Respondent:Normally during the rainy seasons there is a lot of health cases .

Interviewer: Why do you think so ?

Respondent: we don’t know the exact reason but normally there is high infestation of mosquitoes during such periods and during the drought even if the water of the shallow well is salty and those shallow wells are enclosed and yes its salty but doesn’t have a lot of dirt like the ones that have not been closed like that of the missions that is enclosed and they have done piping and the water gets up to here

Interviewer : Do they do the hand pumping?

Respondent: No they use solar to pump the water and during the drought people drink that salty water and during the rainy season they stop drinking this and drink from the Lagaa by drilling some holes on the ground and fetch it and that is an open place that the animals walk on and defecate there and people drink from the same point .

Interviewer: Apart from the mosquitoes , the diarrhea cases does it become more rampant during the drought or rainy season ?

Respondent: mostly during the rainy season .

Interviewer: When the animals migrate to a far place are there any other issues that occurs during such times?

Respondent: Yes there are problems for instance if you go to samaree on your way you can meet with Amar Kokee, Arr boree ,dasanach and people sometimes get into conflict with all those people but now we are at peace with each other .

Interviewer: What led to the peace ?

Respondent: The project people brought people together and also the government and we do the peace building and we also go for peace meetings all the way to Ethiopia and also they come all the way and we also take them to marsabit and they are shown all the places and we also go to their places such as as jinkoo and now we are at peace with each other .

Interviewer : Because of the NGO and the government facilitating those meetings ?

Respondent: Yes and they give us some money for the transport too .

( interviwee talking to someone from outside)35:03: 35:16

Interviwer : is it mostly the government or the NGO or both?

Respondent: but those who do all that disbursement for the transport of those goings is the NGO but the government is just in partnership with this NGO’s .

Interviewer: Has that reduced the cases of insecurity?

Respondent: yes .

Interviewer: Is there anything else that has helped reduced this cases of insecurity?

Respondent: And now during the drought almost all the animals migrates to a far place hence getting access to the milk is difficult .

Interviewer : you said that during the drought the animals comes to stay around the town area and does that mean they come to the town for water and goes to a far place after drinking the water for grazing?

Respondent: Yes after they finish the grass that is here they migrate to somewhere else for pasture and they can go for water may be in sabarei and this water of this place remains unused since there is no grass to graze on .

Interviewer: You mentioned that when the animals migrate to a far place it means that people lack access to food and milk?

Respondent: Yes access becomes difficult

Interviewer :I am sorry there is this part that i have not captured ,during the drought people come here for the pasture once it finishes they go to somewhere else ?

Respondent : Yes .

Interviewer : So when people come with their animals it finishes the pasture that is here ?

Respondent: Yes

Interviewer : So when the animals migrate to a far place they lack meat and milk due to the distance?

Respondent:Yes they don’t get milk and meat .

Interviewer : Are there any effect on the people once the animals migrate to a far place ?

Respondent : Yes because when goats are around one can sell and get money if need arise but when they are far it becomes difficult to get that quick cash to buy food and end up hungry .

Interviewer: When the animals are away people do not sell them as much or they sell a lot ?

Respondent: They do sell but going all the way to get the animals for sell becomes tiring and becomes a problem but when you have some money with you you can just buy food but if not one is forced to go all the way to get the animal and sell it and since there is no market there you bring it all the way here to sell it and buy food.

Interviewer: between the time of the drought and the time of rain which time do people mostly sell their animals?

Respondent:during the rainy season .

Interviewer : is it because they need money to buy food ?

Respondent : Yes because of wanting money to buy food and you know during the rainy season for those that have the livestock can get milk from their animals and survive on that even without eating and during the drought season there is no milk so people sell their animals to buy food .

Interviewer: so that’s because milk and meat are not easily accessible .

Interviewer: During the drought what do people mostly buy ?

Respondent: They buy maize ,

Interviewer: Normally they don’t eat maize when the meat and milk are available ?

Respondent:They do but during the drought season people eat maize more and they also buy the maize flour , and also rice but what people consume here mostly is maize to cook githeri and ugali .

Interviewer: What about vegetables?

Respondent: it’s only meat .getting vegetables is difficult only may be when a car travels to marsabit people send those going to bring them vegetables or may be sometime people go to Dukana although its not all the vegetables that are found there too but this days there are green house that the projects have come up with and women in the women groups grows things like sukumawiki there and is now available in the market here .

Interviewer: So vegetables are not found here mostly because its not brought to this place from marsabit and Dukana ?

Respondent : Yes but now the NGO’s have come up with the green house now .

Interviewer : is that a project for a specific household or ?

Respondent: no it belongs to a women group .

Interviewer : Who begun that women group?

Respondent: Women on their own begun the group but the NGO are helping them where they could when they write a proposal to them and are given grants and there are also two green house that was built by the CARITAS and SIFA NGO .

Interviewer : is it during the drought that people buy the vegetables or during the rainy season ?

Respondent :The women group sells the sukuma wiki and people buys from them .

Interviewer: is it mostly during the rainy or drought season ?

Respondent: Even during the rainy season it’s available and people buys it even during the drought season its watered and it grows i saw them even yesterday selling to the police officers .

Interviewer : Now that the vegetables are available does that mean that the health of the people here has improved?

Respondent:There is no change since people started using it just recently but there is no negative outcome from it .

Interviewer: During the drought do you think so many animals dies here or do you think when people migrate to a far place they can find enough pasture that can sustain their animals well?

Respondent:There was a time when so many animals died during the last extreme drought in 2022-2023 but ever since they are okey now .

( interviewee greeting someone)

Interviewer: When conflict arises among the communities does the animals get killed or are they stolen ?

Respondent: they are stolen actually so many of them and there was a time my goats which were about 400 were stolen by the Ethiopian people and also together with other’s about 1000+ were stolen and that’s how we lost them all.

Interviewer : What other things kills the animals according to you ?

Respondent: Diseases for instance like even now large number of goats are dying .

Interviewer: Goats from where ?

Respondent: There are some goats that are here and the large number are in the other side and those that are there are dying randomly because of disease called PPR and for almost two years the goats have diarrhea and mucus coming from the nose and the eyes are stick together and couldn’t even see and becomes dehydrated in the whole body and eventually die .

Interviewer: What do you think leads to that diseases ?

Respondent:We don’t know but the doctors says that it has come from the turkana . We don’t know its source ourselves but that is the disease that is currently affecting our animals .

Interviwer : Does that disease come during the drought season or rainy season?

Respondent : its there in both seasons and the doctors says that there is no medicine for that disease unless may be vaccine.

Interviewer:Does the vaccine come from the government?

Respondent: Yes it comes from the government .

Interviewer: is that what you were told or it’s your own opinion?

Respondent: that was what we were told .

Interviewer : in your opinion what could you say ?

Respondent: We buy medicine from the shop and inject it and also this other medicine of “Sombess” but nothing is improved .there was a time when that disease came and this people gave vaccines to the animals and they got well .

There is also this other disease where the goat leg swells and gets wounds and the goats could not walk properly and when you even now move around you could see those goats that are unable to walk because of such problems .

Interviewer :When there is this disease and it kills so many animals does that mean that the locals do not have animals to sell and get money ?

Respondent : once people have known that your animals are sick they will run away from you and no one will buy your animals because they are afraid since they fear their other goats for instance might get the sickness too . And also when the government find outs about the sickness of goats in this area they block the road and no one could transport their goats to Nairobi.

Interviewer : And that means you will loose money that you would have gotten?

Respondent: Yes .

Interviewer: what other activities do people carry out to get money here ?

Respondent: ( greeting the someone ) 54:25-54:33 Even during the drought when the animals couldn’t get pasture they get thin and when you take them to the market people won’t buy from you and when its bought you will sell it at a throw away price.55:21( greeting someone from outside)

Interviewer: What are the other activities that people carry out to get money?by looking for jobs or making things and selling?

Respondent: Yes there are ,because there are shops here some people go all the way to marsabit or even Nairobi and buy food and come to sell here and also clothes .

Interviewer: Does that business belong to one specific family or its during the drought they lacked money since the animals are far away so they decided to try to do business or what do you think?

Respondent: Some people break the stones and sell it to people that want to do construction and others also go to cut the trees that have dried and sell them although unless the trees are dry they are restricted from cutting by the people who are the committee of the environment and iam actually the chairman of the committee .

Interviewer: Since i am interested in the issue of the environment tell me more about it then , you said that people are not allowed to cut trees that have not dried ?

Respondent : You know everyone has animals and the shed of this animals are built using the trees so if there is no environmental restriction and people do not plant trees then the environment will be destroyed and that’s why we came up with that committee that oversees this and when you want to build a house or a shed for your animals then you come to this committee and they show you which tree to cut and guide you for instance like this tree you cut the one that has bend down .and there is also trees that builds this traditional houses and they are mostly built using the trees that are found at the mountain and they are not supposed to be a dry tree so if you want to build that house for the wedding you meet with the committee you are given a permission form to fill and then you go cut it with supervision so you pay some small amount of money like 200-300ksh

And if for instance the person needs about 200-300 trees the person pays 300 ksh and if someone has not gone through that procedure and just woke up to go and cut the tree they are not allowed to cut the trees without that form from the committee .

Interviewer : Do you think that the issue of the water falls under the issue of the environment?

Respondent :Yes it does , we have not gone to school but those that have gone to school told us that the trees attract rain and places like Dukana that doesn’t have trees receives less or no rain .and its after two to three weeks that rain gets there after it has rained here .

Interviewer :So that is what you are told by the owners of the project and you as the elders have no knowledge on it or an agreement on it?

Respondent : Even us elders we know .for instance if this tree wasn’t here would you love to sit in the sun ? , so trees are essential .

Interviewer: i heard that before the gabra used to migrate with their animals and houses and the whole family migrates what happened this days that they are not doing that ?

Respondent: Even now they are those that are migrating and we advised them to stop migrating and we even held a meeting to stop them from migrating because when people migrate they go and cut trees to build houses for their animals and themselves separately depending on the type of the animal to be built the house for wheather goats camels or cows . So to avoid migrating every time and cutting trees we advise them not to migrate.( repeating exactly what he already said.

Interviewer: What are some of the changes that have occurred since people are not migrating anymore ?

Respondent: When people keep migrating they don’t take their children to school but this days since they don’t migrate they take their children to school . But for those that still don’t go to we go to their houses and involve the chief and get to know why the child is not going to school and we take the child to school forcefully together with the help of the government For instance a person that has one child takes the child to school but those with seven children do not take them to school, so we take them to school by force .

Interviewer: Is that done by you as the elders or the government or specific committee ?

Respondent: it’s the elders in collaboration with the government and also the chief and if for instance villages with those cases we are given a car to go to such places by the DC or other government bodies .before people did not use to take children to school but this days they do.

Interviwer: How different are those that goes to school from those that do not?

Respondent:Those that goes to school are learned and have knowledge of so many things and some even get employed in the government offices but those that have not gone to school their goats get killed by the drought and some of this people have over two thousand goats and they never saved their money and so they end up

In poverty after loosing their animals to drought and yet the person had over 200 camels .so to avoid all this we encorage people to go to school instead of just depending on the animals that might die because of drought anytime and not having something to rely on for survival but instead invest in school.those that have lost their animals and have children that are working because they went to school are bought food by their children who have money unlike those that have not taken their children to school end up in hunger .

Interviwer : as you said that those that went to school have got jobs and their people do not die of hunger ?

Respomdent : Yes they don’t. And also they buy pasture for their animals and sometimes hire a vehicle and transport their animals to somewhere else where there is pasture in areas like isiolo and those people who have not taken their children to school are unable to take care of their animals during that drought period.

Interviwer : How were people doing before ?

Respondent:Before they just used to die when the drought comes.

Interviwer: in your opinion you think that going to school have helped people ?

Respondent: Yes alot .When people have not gone to school they don’t even know how to organize themselves and end up in poverty after the drought sweeps away their animals .

Interviwer:What is the impact of permanent settlement in this area on health compared to when they used to live in a temporary settlement ?

Respondent: When people migrate to a far place in the bush their accessibility to

The health facility like even this dispensary becomes a problem and hence getting medical assistance becomes a problem unlike when they are here they can even get a car to take them to another hospital for further treatment. Migrating is not of any help it just leads to the destruction of the environment.

Interviwer: when people live in one area doesn’t that lead to water getting dirty ?so if so many people do not live in one place will that water get dirty?

Respondent:When it comes to water migrating might be good , but when people migrate and leave their latrines here and when they migrate they go to the bush to release themselves hence dirtifying the environment.its better to be in this permanent settlement with few latrines and to continue building more.

Interviwer:Do you think there is something important that we have left out in regard yo food water and health?

Respondent: i don’t think so i think we have exhausted the points i feel like we have talked about this more than expected.

Interviwer: i am really sorry its because i was trying to understand everything you were saying because we are trying to draw everything you have said in this project of ours so that even your grandchildren will come to understand what you are talking about and the changes that have occured ever since .

Interviwer: my other question is about the diarrhea In this area and how does it affect the livelihood of the people ?

Respondent: When people diarrhea , that is sickness itself and its brought about by the dirty water and when there is a dispensary people go and get treated there and if there is no medicine people go to the herbalist and get the herbs .

Interviwer : Do you have any questiom that you may want to ask me?

Respondent: you know we are pastoralist and the problem that we face is the goats that are sick and suffer from PPR and that of swelling the feet and if you could direct us to where we can get the vaccine .because its this animal that we depend on for our children school fees and food.

Interviwer : For that one we shall talk to our doctors and let you know .is paying school fees a problem?

Respondent : Yes its a problem.

Interviwer : i am wondering because i thought school is free .

Respondent : the primary education is free the problem is the secondary education because it requires alot of money.

(Thanking the interviwee for his time and ending the interview)