STRENGTHENING HUMAN SECURITY IN THE BORDER COMMUNITIES OF TURKANA, KENYA.
Strengthening Human security in the Border Communities of Turkana is a three-year project aimed at addressing the human security concerns of pastoralists living in extreme hardship and vulnerability to numerous threats in Turkana county of northern Kenya.

The project is undertaken in the context of UN inter-agency coordination and is implemented by UNDP, FAO, WHO, IOM, UNICEF and ILO, in partnership with local community-based organizations, peace committees, local governments and the Governmental National Drought Management Authority.

This project is based on a two and half year (July 2009 - March 2011) assessment and consultation in the context of Security in Mobility initiative which promotes integrated and comprehensive interventions that link relief to development in pastoralists’ communities.

The project focuses on strengthening the resilience of the dominant livelihoods in the ASALs of Northern Kenya in the face of natural disasters and other shocks, while providing alternative coping mechanisms through coordinated, sustainable interventions in the livelihoods, food security, education and health sectors.

Considering the mobile nature of pastoral communities, the project is providing opportunities to peaceful interactions.

Why Turkana?

This is one of the conflict hotspots of the larger Karamoja region which suffers from a climate-migration-conflict-nexus.

Recurring severe drought cycles leads to increasingly frequent out-migrations of pastoralists within Kenya and across the border, in search of water and pasture for livestock. This in turn leads to rising levels of violent inter-ethnic conflict through the region.

The project aims at improving the socio-economic situation of the target population, stabilizing fragile livelihoods and preventing disaster by building community resilience to frequent climatic, environmental and insecurity shocks, and promoting inter-communal peace in the region.
United Nations Children’s Fund and the International Labour Organization are working to increase access to education for pre-school and school-age nomadic children through the implementation of mobile schools and community mobilization, provision of supply to the government low-cost boarding schools, and improve life condition of children through mainstreaming child labour concerns into the project strategies.

World Health Organization is working to ensure access to basic healthcare for the communities with special emphasis on the most vulnerable.

International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programmes are working together to expand people’s livelihood choices and support livelihood diversification and promote peace and prevent recurring conflict among targeted communities through the provision of early warning information and peace building activities.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations aims to improve pastoral livelihoods and food security among the most vulnerable.
On Christmas Day in 2013, a number of children, reported to be 130, living and working in the streets of Lodwar town were hosted to a Christmas lunch by Turkana community leaders, led by the Lodwar Town Chief, Ms. Lomosingo and the County Executive in charge of Education, Ms. Margaret Kuchal. Everyone expected that after lunch the children would return to their ‘homes’ in the streets. This was not to be. Instead, they demanded to be accommodated in decent environment, and facilitated to return to school.

130 children eking out a living in a small town like Lodwar is not a small number. It manifests the magnitude of child labour problem that the Human Security Trust Fund project is confronted with. The good news though, is that child labour is something that children are not ready to engage in. They have a strong desire to live a decent life, aspire to be educated and transformed into productive members of society.

It is an eye opener therefore, that the problem is not with the children. They are victims of vulnerability brought about by ineffective child protection systems as well as other natural and man-made problems such as cultural beliefs, inadequate and inaccessible learning facilities, perennial drought, ill health and insecurity among others.

The design of child labour intervention in this project has a strong component on working with community leaders, parents and children to address these challenges. Numerous activities have so far been implemented to address the child labour problem, especially addressing community perception, with a view to fully engaging their participation.

Moving from denial that was reported during the baseline survey carried out in 2012-2013 to children demonstrating practical solution to the problem, an integrated stakeholder engagement may help in unlocking effective coordination potential in tackling child labour.

The International Labour Organization entered into partnership with two community based organizations, Turkana Women Advocacy and Development Organization (TWADO) and St. Peters Community Network (SAPCONE) to implement a wide range of interventions in tackling child labour. TWADO is working with grass root women groups to form a network of community based interveners.

A four days Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop was held for 35 participants representing six women groups from Lodwar, Kalokol and Turkwell. Among the trainees were Chiefs and representatives of School Management Boards.
An initiative to sensitize women groups against child labour was held shortly after the TOT, where 240 people were reached in the villages of Kotela, Lokiriama, Kalemunyan, Lolupre, Turkwel Namukuse and Long’ech.

Trained community members and leaders are engaged in interventions that should result in reduced incidences of child labour. In early May 2014, a total of 400 children will have either been prevented or withdrawn from child labour and enrolled in school, while their parents will be facilitated to engage in alternative livelihoods. This will be done in collaboration with FAO and IOM. The children will be enrolled in schools like Kanamkemer, Turkana Girls, Kachaimeri, Kalokol Girls Nabwel Primary schools. Additionally one mobile school has been identified as enrolment center for children not able to attend regular school. All these schools are benefitting from UNICEF interventions including capacity building for teachers and school managers.

On the other hand, SAPCONE - a local based organization - has joined hands with Turkana County Government to influence action on elimination of child labour at the County policy making level. As part of their planned activities, SAPCONE has documented cases of families with children in child labour. The documentation highlights the human security dynamics of the problem.

One of the documented cases is of a ten year old boy in Napekopo village, who lives with and herds his aged grandmother’s goats. Although he would like to go to school, the boy is weighed down by the need to work and cater for his aged and sick grandmother. Indeed, his hope of going to school seems to have diminished, and in his words, “I want to be a better herdsman so that I can inherit my grand mother’s flock.” The boy is entangled in survival trap where if he does not work; he and his ailing grandmother are at survival risk.

Interventions to uplift such a family will require long term interventions in health, education, livelihood and psychosocial support, that will go beyond the lifespan of the Human Security Project.

It due to the foregoing that ILO is also working closely with the County Government, devoting time and resources to enhance their capacity to plan and implement development programmes that will lead to sustainable means of preventing and eliminating child labour.

Meanwhile, the 130 former street children were in January 2014 enrolled in various schools, courtesy of the County Government.

Prior to the start of the Human Security Project, child labour in Turkana had never been prioritized. Today, with some advocacy, capacity building and continuous engagement, child labour interventions are enshrined in the County Government development plans for children. The street children intervention is one example of the County Government’s commitment to the Turkana children.

ILO will continue to work with the government and stakeholders to spread anti child labour wings.

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5.| Strengthening Human Security in Border Communities of Turkana, Kenya
In the spirit of “Delivering as One”, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has joined forces with five other UN agencies to address the human security concerns of pastoralists living in extreme hardships in the most vulnerable parts of Turkana County.

With financial support from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), FAO is implementing the crops, livestock, fisheries and natural resource components of the project in collaboration with VSF Belgium as the implementing partner.

The FAO approach builds on the already existing knowledge of the communities to provide tested interventions that will enhance resilience and mitigate against natural and manmade challenges.

Given the pastoralist orientation of the local communities in the county, the project has improved general health of their livestock herds and increased productivity.

FAO procured 40 basic animal health vet kits for Loima and Turkana Central sub-counties to enable community animal health providers to provide basic preventive animal health services in their own communities in remote locations. The kits constitute basic and unrestricted veterinary drugs and equipment approved by local sub county veterinarians.

The project seeks to also diversify the livelihoods of the people of Turkana so as to reduce their current overreliance on their traditional way of life. In this regard, FAO bought eight thousand day-old chicks that are being brooded for distribution to 1,600 vulnerable households. Bee hives were also procured to support forty women and youth groups.

Ten metric tons of drought tolerant crops that included green grams, cowpeas, maize and sorghum were procured and distributed in order to boost food production.

Four suitable locations were identified for tree seedling nurseries to enhance community-based environmental conservation.

All these interventions enabled FAO to contribute towards the goals of the larger project by ensuring food and nutritional security, an integral part of human security.
Lodwar town was engulfed in a carnival mood for two days, as IOM under the aegis of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security project held a safe migration and peace building outreach road show to raise awareness on the culture of peace, human trafficking and exploitation.

The town came almost to a standstill as approximately 4,205 residents came out in droves to participate in the roadshow held on 15-16 April 2014 that sought to empower mainly school going children by spreading peace building and safe migration messages, in an area which over the years has been identified as a hub and source for human traffickers and resource based conflicts.

The convoy snaked religiously through the towns of Lodwar to the delight of the residents who turned up in numbers and were left yearning for more. The residents were visibly excited by the caravan that awoke the rather dull town in North Western Kenya.

Messages on peace, safe migration, food security, child labour and trafficking dominated the highly charged caravan which staged numerous stop overs along the designated routes. IEC materials labelled, “Peace starts with me and you”, and “Migrate safely and orderly” were also issued to the audiences. To spice up the event, presenters of a popular local radio station Maata FM took part in the road show and actively disseminated messages.

The event featured a series of music performances by young local artists, dance competitions and free give away of presents which included T-shirts and solar radios.

“We thank IOM for this initiative. Our school going children will grow up better informed about the ills of human trafficking and conflict and instead they will concentrate on their education,” said 34 year old Jane Ajele.

Meanwhile, under the same initiative, IOM Project staff, David Lukiri and Augustine Lambert participated in a local radio station talk show at Maata FM to sensitize the resident on the perils of human trafficking and the need for safer migration.

The interactive one hour show saw 500 callers take part in the show that run for four days at 7.pm in the evening. The callers called from Loima Sub County, Turkana Central and South and parts of Pokot County.

Winners who answered questions in the quiz segment of the show were awarded free T-shirts. The roadshows will continue in Lodwar.
IOM supported the Center for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE) and Turkana Advocacy and Development Forum (TUDOF) in organizing the Kenya pastoralist week in Lodwar.

The Kenya Pastoralists' Week is an annual multi-stakeholder partnership project that brings together an array of alliances drawn from individual pastoralists, pastoralists' associations, government, private sector, academia and mainstream civil society. They are tasked to articulate and jointly recommend solutions to the key challenges affecting pastoralists and pastoralism as a source of livelihood in Kenya and East Africa region.

Kenya's Deputy President William Ruto joined over 3,000 members of the public in marking this year's celebrations where he urged the pastoral communities involved in cattle rustling to shun the damaging practice or face the full force of the law.

"I would like to warn those still steeped in practices like cattle rustling that their time is up and that the government is closing in on them. They should take the opportunity presented by the vast resources in this region and the devolved funds to engage in viable economic activities," he said.

IOM supported community youth and women groups to showcase their cultural artefacts while selling them to the participants and visiting guests, while promoting awareness on safe migration and peace building among mobile border communities. IOM further used the forum to advocate for the establishment of linkages with developing partners, regional bodies and governments in order to invest more in appropriate initiatives that have climate adaptation integration into pastoralist areas. Some of the initiatives include provision of basic services like health care and education, livestock marketing, market infrastructures and encouraging alternative economic activities using other appropriate livestock products e.g. animal hides, milk and wool.

The theme of the four day event held in December was “protecting and promoting the interest and the rights of the pastoralists through devolved governance.”

"Insecurity among the Turkana/Pokot, Samburu/Turkana, Moyale and other counties occupied by pastoralists must end otherwise I can assure those perpetrating these acts that we shall get them," he warned.

Women and children suffer the effects of conflict and the resulting death, due to cattle rustling.
On a day to day basis, most women and their families in Turkana County face odd realities to access basic amenities. They have to walk miles on end to access water and other amenities like a clinic which perhaps explains the low vaccination rate and poor health statistics in the vast county. The health facilities are placed far apart given the vastness of the county. School-going children also have to walk longer distances than most children in urban areas.

Communities here are highly mobile due to their nomadic lifestyle and sometimes children miss on the necessary vaccination. The area also has poor infrastructure, hence inaccessible. Communities are also affected by migration movements from neighbouring Sudan.

These and more make health promotion and outreach activities critical for families and the communities in the area. Health promotion and outreaches are activities that healthcare workers use to deliver health care to populations that are far from health facilities, underserved or hard-to-reach populations.

Mobile health clinics are health services offered in a static facility taken to populations far away from a health facility. Mobile outreach involves services that are taken to populations in a specific location away from health facilities where services are offered and scheduled at regular intervals.

The health outreaches done in Turkana County have over the years helped to improve the overall health statics of served population. Funding for the outreaches was provided through the Human Security Transfer Fund implemented by the WHO and the Ministry of Health. A total of 48 were done between the month of October and December 2013 in Loima and Tukana Central Sub-Counties.

In addition, community mobilization and health promotion activities were conducted by community health extension workers. Topics covered in both activities included good hygiene practices like daily brushing of teeth with ‘eskeon’ (traditional brush), burning of rubbish waste, boiling of drinking water, cooking of food for a longer period of time, caring for the sick, lactating mothers and elderly.

Health activities carried out during the outreaches included promotion of exclusive breast feeding and use of long lasting insecticide treated nets, managing of diarrheal and fever cases. Women aged 15-49 were provided with family planning commodities, Vitamin A supplementation, referral of suspected HIV, Diarrhea, Unvaccinated/not fully vaccinated children, malnourished cases and children not dewormed.

The support from UN-HSTF and WHO helped increase the number of health promotion and outreach activities in Loima and Turkana central sub counties. “We have experienced great interest from the community and we are now recording more children coming for vaccination than before,” one health worker said. Sometimes they have to follow the families due to their mobile lifestyle. The activities are scheduled to continue for another one year with the intention of building health capacities of the communities.

Positive results have been reflected with an improvement in overall health statistics and especially in the number of vaccinated children which has increased from an average of 160 monthly to 255 in Loima Sub County and from 463 to 563 in Tukana Central Subcounty.
On 19 December 2013, a large ceremony was held at the St. Teresa Hall in Lodwar presided over by the Turkana County Deputy Governor, Mr. Peter Lokoel.

Among the participants were pastoralist men and women, representatives of youth groups, members of the District Peace Committees of Loima, Turkana South, and Turkana Central sub-counties, civil society organizations, government officials, and representatives of IOM, UNDP and FAO. The gathering was attended by the CEO of the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), Mr. James Oduor, the Team Leader of the Peace Building Unit of the UNDP, as well as the newly appointed Peace Ambassador for Turkana County, former Turkana Central Member of Parliament Mr Emmanuel Imana.

With the kind assistance of funding from the UNHSTF, the ‘Strengthening Human Security in the Border Areas of Turkana’ project disbursed grants totaling KES 6.3 million to at least 35 community, reformed warrior, women, and youth groups. This support is part of the UNDPs ‘Armed Violence Reduction Project,’ which works together with five other UN agencies including UNICEF, WHO IOM, FAO, and ILO to deliver ‘as one’ in the Turkana County, in a bid to maximize impact and enhance human security in the border region of the County.

These grants, called ‘Peace Dividends’, were geared to enable the beneficiary groups deepen and diversify their livelihoods in order to cushion them from effects of conflicts and natural disasters such as drought. Peace Dividend projects, which are granted to consolidate peace and building local capacity for peace, have the potential to encourage communities to embrace peace, and can also be used to lay frameworks for preventing recurrence of further conflicts. UNDP, working on armed violence reduction projects in northern Kenya since 2008, has gained considerable experience of consolidating peace through granting of peace dividends and supporting livelihood and natural resource projects.

The Deputy Governor thanked the Human Security Project for demonstrating that peace building is also about tangible projects and support that directly benefits the affected in the grassroots. He promised that in the next Financial Year, the County Government will provide matching funds to the groups which will be supported by UNDP to participate in peace building activities. Without peace, investors, and more importantly extractive and gas industry investors, now that oil has been discussed in Turkana, the County will not realize it’s County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP).

The County Minister in charge of Public Service, Decentralization and Disaster Management, Mr. Charles Lokyoto told the gathering said they were pleased with the UNHSTF project for involving them in conceptualization, implementation and monitoring of the Peace Dividend Grants. The Grants Committee which helps select beneficiary groups, includes the Areas Members of the County Assembly, Chairmen of the three District Peace Committees, two members of the County Government, the NDMA Manager in the County and representatives of IOM and UNDP.

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The beneficiary groups, who included women, youth, disabled and Village Community Banking (VICOBAs) groups, proposed to engage in such projects like bee keeping, honey processing and marketing, marginal farming, livestock trade, and small scale retailing of goods. Each group is assisted to implement their grants through technical advice from line Ministry experts, who are sourced by the NDMA, the implementing agency, while IOM assisted in the training the groups in enterprise management.

The reformed warriors promised to shun rustling and road banditry and concentrate on proposed income generating activities to improve their livelihoods, and work advance their families, their knowledge and skills. The Deputy Governor noted that already they have seen changes in terms of thinking and livelihoods amongst some reformed warriors, who have benefited from the training by IOM and the grants from UNDP. For instance, it was announced that a reformed warrior in Kangirisai, a hotspot within Turkana Central Sub-County, has gone back to school and rejoined Primary Standard Seven, the class he dropped from when he became a rustler.

Speaking during the ceremony, a representative of the beneficiary groups, Mrs. Paulina Lokwai, said that, “with this support, we are better able to support our families and relieve the pressures on our sons and husbands who go to raids as a means of livelihoods. I can assure you that with my contribution to family upkeep, my husband will be a reformed warrior.”

A representative of the Disabled Groups who also received the Peace Dividend grant said “today, we are happy that the forgotten people like us were remembered”. He added that most of the many disabled people in Turkana County were victims of raids that occasioned their disability, and that is why they are in the forefront in peace building. The Turkana County Peace Ambassador, HE Imana, said that over 30,000 drought affected Turkana herders were grazing peacefully across the border in Uganda, and that this was made possible by the prevailing peace between the Turkana and Methiniko community of Uganda. He challenged the gathering to think seriously on establishing such peace across the internal boundary with other Counties in Kenya.

The UNDP Team Leader for Peace building, Dr Roba Sharamo, told the gathering that UNDP will partner with other stakeholders and County and National governments to help develop policies and legal frameworks to address how the local communities and their governments can benefit from oil and mineral discoveries in Turkana. He said the UNDP will mobilize expertise in this emerging industry as well as support conflict sensitive exploration and mining of oil and minerals across the country.

It was agreed that the establishment of a County Peace Forum, and a Secretariat under the Office of the County Peace Ambassador to enhance coordination among the peace stakeholders in the County needed to be speeded up, to reduce wastages associated with duplication of efforts. The CEO of the NDMA informed the gathering that peace building was being mainstreamed in the IGAD regions ‘Ending Drought Emergencies’ Policy Document and the Government of Kenya’s Second Medium Term Plan (MTP II), emphasizing that peace and security were also national priorities.
The education component of the UNHSTF project is implemented by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). This component seeks to address accessibility of quality basic education for nomadic children in Turkana Central and Loima sub-counties. Improved access to education will strengthen community resilience to the complex hardships of the pastoralist way of life with its numerous threats to human security.

The education project has focused on building strong partnerships and capacities in Turkana County, targeting local NGOs, county education departments, teachers, as well as school management committees. These partnerships will strengthen the efficiency of local education systems and provide education services that are responsive to the nomadic lifestyle and related threats to education rights for pastoralist’ children.

Enrolment drive campaigns is a key highlight in this programme. UNICEF developed key partnerships with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) and Turkana Education For All (TEFA), a local county-based NGO, to increase access for out-of-school children (OOSC) and retention for most vulnerable boys and girls in the nomadic communities of Turkana Central and Loima sub-counties.

The enrolment campaign kicked off in December 2013. The County Education team spearheaded rigorous enrolment campaigns to sensitize participants on the need to improve enrolment, analyze and appreciate the current enrolment situation, enlighten participants on policy issues in education, identify and assign roles to key stakeholders; and identify strategies that can improve enrolment of children in schools in the targeted sub-counties.

The campaigns resulted in 7,000 boys and girls joining ECDE and primary schools. A total of 1,200 parents were reached through this intervention which has positively contributed to an increase in enrolment in schools by 7 per cent. Furthermore, a total of 20 schools were established to accommodate the first-time pupils following the enrolment drive.

Through the campaign, community participation was evident as exemplified by their willingness to construct a temporary shelter for school-going children. These temporary structures provided learning spaces for the children in some of the newly-opened schools.

UNICEF also provided 188 boarding supplies to 17 low-cost boarding schools in order to ensure safety and an inclusive environment for nomadic children in Turkana. A total of 376 children (216 boys and 160 girls) are beneficiaries of the supplies and now have a safe and secure place to sleep. This has improved school enrolment and retention for nomadic children in Turkana, especially girls.

“My concentration in class has improved because I sleep better and I am protected from scorpion bites since our dormitory is a thatched, mud-walled hut”, said Akai, a 15 year old girl in Class 8 at Nakiria primary school. Akai aspires to be a paediatrician when she completes her studies.

“Thank you for the beds in this dormitory which keeps the girls safe from crawling scorpions and spiders.”

The 14 mobile schools participating in the programme were supplied with mobile school kits, the nomadic children are more secure and protected from the scorching sun, rain and wind, hence a substantive improvement in the learning environment. Consequently, there has been an increase in enrolment with 3,103 nomadic children (1,751 boys and 1,352 girls) enrolling in mobile schools.

The multi-grade teaching by the trained teachers has led to the improvement of education in the three levels of learners (ECD, young people and adults) in the mobile schools. More specifically, the training has improved the teachers’ skills to manage children of different levels who are in the same class by grouping according to age or levels of understanding of content. Such close attention to the learning pace and needs of each child improves teacher- learner interaction as well as learning outcomes. This training was also key to mobilizing youth and parents (especially in the pastoralist communities) to enrol more learners in schools. The retention of learners in the mobile schools has improved as the teachers engage the community leadership and parents to allow their children to at least get basic literacy skills at the nearby mobile schools.
The Turkana Women Advocacy and Development (TWADO), one of IOM’s implementing partners in February selected 30 peace ambassadors to spearhead peace activities in three locations of Turkana Central.

The peace ambassadors who were selected by members of the community will now be the champions of peace and will work in close partnership with peace actors such as Chiefs, District Peace Committees, the County Government and Non-Governmental Organizations.

To promote sustainable peace, the envoys picked from Kalokol, Kerio and Lodwar areas will work with and encourage members of the community to report emerging cases of conflict and how to quell the same.

Among the initiatives lined up include; instilling peace values among school going children by initiating peace clubs in their respective schools. They will also be community peace watchdogs and will serve to identify law breakers within the community and neighbouring sub counties and escalate their concerns to local authorities.

Separately, TWADO led members of the local community in planting over 200 trees in an elaborate exercise meant to enlighten members of the community on the importance of conserving the environment. The three week event targeted Kerio and Kalokol areas in Turkana Central.

The initiative comes against the backdrop of rampant charcoal burning menace that has led to extensive environmental degradation.

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This joint United Nations Trust Fund for Human security is an initiative championed by six United Nations agencies. For further information, please contact:

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