

# Farmer Research Networks: Drylands FRN 2014-2018

## Respond to local context

### START HERE

The project **landscape** in West Pokot county, is **highly degraded**, and food insecurity and water scarcity are recurrent problems. Pokot are former pastoralists and livestock remain central to their cultural identity. Indeed, **overgrazing** by livestock is a key driver of environmental degradation.



Farmer exchange visit to view terraces in E. Kenya  
Photo author: Drylands team

## More farmers and organizations participating in multiple parts of the research process

2017: FRN members engaged in **participatory mapping** of the major erosion areas in the catchment to help target sites for conservation structures. They also identified community water points for future development.

## Covenings with emphasis on farmer participation

2015: **exchange visit** of 2 groups of farmers to formerly degraded landscapes in Ethiopia and E. Kenya that had been restored through **collective action** of the affected communities.

Capacity building on AEI

Community trained on **rehabilitation strategies**

Empower;  
Equity; Gender



## Stronger, more vibrant, rural organizations

- 2016-2017: 80 FRN members self-organized into **work groups, constructing terraces** on one another's farms.

- **Youth** were trained to help demarcate contour lines using simple tools (A frame) and use a spirit level to do the terracing. This seems to have given them a bit of **status** and made them more **engaged**.

- **Women** were very actively engaged in the project, which is a change from the first year when few women were involved.

- The project team supports the groups' efforts with the **provision of tools** (pick axes etc)

Reciprocity, mutuality,  
realistic engagement,  
nudge (generate  
movement)



## Increased use of contextually appropriate options by farmers

2018: the work groups:

- Dug approximately 10,000 meters of terrace lines (2 feet wide and 2 feet deep) on **28 member households'** farms.
- Constructed 2 sand dams, as well as a physical barrier to protect a borehole/ water pump that sand build-up in a pre-existing sand dam was threatening to overwhelm.



Multidimensional outcomes

## More resilient, multi-functional, sustainable, productive & self-provisioning ag systems

2017-2018: The **gullies have become more passable** due to sand build up. Sand dams are also succeeding at **slowing down the water** moving over the landscape and helping it to infiltrate, resulting in increased availability of downstream water for people and livestock. The FRN members recognize that they still have a long way to go, but they're **motivated** by the fact that, already, changes can be observed, "We can see the layers being formed, and the water is flowing at a slower speed. That is our analysis. We discuss these observations among ourselves. What is discussed is what we want to implement."

"As a group you have more profit than alone. It is to maintain our soil. Also we maintain the land to be fertile. And you retain the water. (shows plot) See this grass? This is the beginning of a terrace. You can see the moisture..."



COLLABORATIVE  
CROP RESEARCH  
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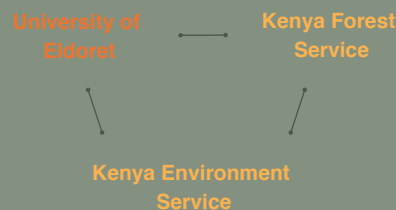
Gullies that are growing in the landscape due to severe erosion.

Photo author: Beth Medvecky

## East Africa Community of Practice



## Project Partners



University in Region

Governmental Organization