



(B)eat the Locust Project

Narrative Progress Report



MID OF YEAR 2023 REPORT

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Project Title	(B)eat the Locust.
Name of Grantee (NGO/CBO)	Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement & Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)
Project Partners	Cordaid and ICIPE
Name and phone number of Project Coordinator	Mali Ole Kaunga
Reporting Period (from what month to what month)	1 st January 2022 – 31 June 2023
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1.) Brief introduction to the project

(B)eat the locust project targets communities in four Kenyan counties in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL): Isiolo, Samburu Laikipia and Marsabit. These counties are typical breeding sites for the desert locust, and lay-over sites on their travel route between Ethiopia and Somalia towards Uganda and South-Sudan. The counties are also relatively stable when it comes to the political situation and security as compared to other counties in the North-East of Kenya (Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera) which are also severely hit by desert locust outbreaks. This stability is needed for the innovative approach in this project to work.

Within the target counties, this project will focus on the hotspots of desert locust outbreaks. Desert locusts breed in soft and humid soil, which mostly occur in river banks or close to water bodies. Since water is scarce in many places in the ASAL regions, it is not coincidental that desert locust breeding hotspots largely overlap with agricultural lands and human settlements. The exact hotspots have been mapped in the target area as the first activity.

The target group for (B)eat the locust is pastoralists (especially youth and women) who have fallen out of pastoralism and are in need of complementary source of income and livelihood. Most ethnic groups in the target areas, such as the Maasai, are pastoralists. Due to internal (armed) conflicts and climate change, there is an increasing group of people who lose their cattle and fall out of pastoralism. Getting back to this culturally important way of living is difficult since huge investments are needed to buy new cattle. Many former pastoralists therefore move to urban or semi-urban areas to build new livelihoods, which is the main force behind the rapid urbanization of Northern Kenya. Creating income opportunities is often difficult for former pastoralists in their new environment, and especially women and youth do not have as much access to opportunities as compared to men. Therefore, this project aims at talent-ful and high potential entrepreneurs for cricket rearing and desert locust collection (when they invade again).

2.) Activity Summary

The following activities were undertaken during the first half of the year 2023:

a. OPINION LEADERS' ENGAGEMENT TO CREATE STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP (ACTIVITY 1.1.1 AND ACTIVITY 4.5.1) - 9TH JANUARY, 2023 - 18TH JANUARY, 2023 SAMBURU, ISIOLO, LAIKIPIA AND MARSABIT COUNTIES.

After the Meeting with the County Government officials, the next activity was heavily influenced by the recommendations made by the Government Officials; where on analyzing the innovativeness of the project, a lot of sensitizations had to be done in order to ensure project ownership, sustainability and impact to the community.

On discussions at partner level, a road map was developed of having a core team of community opinion leaders had to be constituted.



The team engaged in workshops in the four target counties drawing participation from Village administrators, Ward Administrators, Chiefs, Desert Locust Monitors, Community Elders, influential Women and Youth from the FAO identified Desert Locust Hotspots from within the target counties.

The project team presented the findings and the recommendations of The Desert Locust Crisis in Kenya research report of 2021 done by Shared Lands and IMPACT Kenya as the

precursor to the (B)eat the Locust Project introduction with the message of building community resilience through nature-based solutions.

From this activity, the team noted the following key outcomes:

- The 56 participants from the 4 counties were established as the project ambassadors of the project.
- A Database of 56 Individuals who are willing entrepreneurs.
- The team gained community entry through the sensitization of these 56 community members.
- Communication channels were developed for each of the four Counties.

After this activity, the clearest direction for the sensitization to be effectively done through the selected was for them to get an exchange visit to the ICIPE Research Facility to have a firsthand experience of insect-based value chains and insect physiology.

b. COMMUNITY VISIT TO ICIPE (ACTIVITY 1.2.3:) - 21ST – 25TH FEBRUARY 2023 AT ICIPE RESEARCH FACILITY



Following the opinion leader's engagement activity meant to create strategies for community engagement, that were held earlier in January 2023, the key outcome was the formation of the Community Project Ambassadors who took this mantle of being the fore

front advocators and community educators for the project at the community level. From the recommendations picked from all the four counties, there was a high need to do a workshop at the ICIPE facilities where the Ambassadors will get a better understanding of what these insect-based value chains are all about and in turn give them a better background of information while sensitizing communities at the grassroot level, also, the information generated from these visits will form the basis for the agenda for the stakeholder meetings. From the initial 56 who were established as the Community Project Ambassadors 34 were picked under budgetary constraints and travelled to Kasarani, Nairobi County, and were trained on the insect physiology, nutritional contents and finally taken through a planned step-by-step training on what insect rearing is all about for both Crickets and Desert Locusts and also taken through the Black Soldier Fly, Mealworms (yellow and black) and the different types of bees available on campus.

The key outcomes were;

- Insect rearing was demystified to the Ambassadors.
- The 34 Ambassadors were trained begin rearing crickets.
- Roles of the ambassadors were developed
- 4 Target sensitization audience mapped
- Possible challenges and risks identified
- Solutions to the risks established
- Potential partners in Government (County and National), Nonprofit and Private sector were assessed.
- Schedule for sensitization developed
- 3 individuals per county elected to represent the county teams for smooth communication.

With this training, the Community ambassadors were ready to commence the sensitization exercise and insect rearing.

“If I could collect blood and other organic materials disposed at our local slaughter house, I will be making money to increase the income of my household through black soldier fly farming, knowing that I have a ready market in my home as I also rear chicken and this will in turn boost egg production and chicken health” said Benjamin Galwaha a Community Member from Laisamis, Marsabit county.

c. PARTNERS REVIEW MEETING - 15TH MAY, 2023 AT LUKENYA GETAWAY

Following the conclusion of the first project year in March 2023, the project held the first Partners review with the objective of ensuring effective implementation of the project, evaluation on the progress of the project and to identify areas for improvement by gathering all the partners and holding a collaborative meeting.



The partners also exchanged their insights, developed potential resolutions, and developed a shared workplan to guarantee a prosperous outcome.

Reflections were made on the individual contributions of each partner and efforts were synchronized towards achieving the project's objectives.

The meeting was attended by project partners representatives from all the 3 partners (IMPACT Kenya, ICIPE and Cordaid)

The meeting focused on reviewing the progress of the project during its first year of implementation. Discussions centered on the successes and challenges encountered in introducing insect-based value chains, particularly desert locust harvesting and cricket rearing.

d. DESERT LOCUST HOSTSPOT MAPPING (GEOMAPPING AND SAMPLES COLLECTION) - 25th of June to the 4th of July 2023

ICIPE and Impact undertook this activity with the recent resurgence of desert locusts being spotted in different locations, the team undertook the activity through the four target



counties (**Laikipia** – Chumvi and Ngare Ndare, **Samburu** – Shabaa village, Loosuk, Siambu, Ngilai, Soito Oibor, South Horr, Anderi, Kurungu, Loonjorin and Seren, **Marsabit** – Loiyangalani, El boru Magado, Laisamis, Marsabit town, Dambala Fachana and **Isiolo** – Ngare Mara, Leparua, Aremiet, Merti, Gotu, Garba tula and Kinna).

The team had a target of locating Desert locust breeding grounds where a number were collected including individual locust samples from Chumvi and Aremiet even there were unconfirmed reports of sightings of locusts in a number of areas. The other main agenda was to collect samples of Vegetation, soil and Water from the locations for lab testing on the presence of synthetic pesticides especially the ones used during the most recent multiagency control of desert locust.

3.) CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- Security issues in areas of Louwai and Nkaimurunya Laikipia County forced the team to postpone the visit.
- Distance between hotspots is quite vast, the team covered distances of around 2500KMs in one of the activities and with the rough terrain reaching all the target areas was quite hard.

4.) LESSONS LEARNED

- The project has a high acceptance rate to the literate members of the community, which is an opportunity for entry into the community as they also are opinion shapers.
- A lot of caution is need when it comes to be introduction of this project to community members as rushing it will most likely be met with resistance
- Sensitization on the insect-based value chains will need to be done extensively to ensure the target community members prior to fully rolling out the implementation plan.
- If the communities had knowledge of insect-based value chains they would have taken advantage of the last DL invasion, there is some degree of interest of in converting the plague into something more useful.
- For the Areas with security concerns, it is best to stay away until confirmed reports of resumption of normalcy are received will do.
- The team will need to engage other existing partners, actors and structures on the ground to ensure efficiency in visiting target areas to save on time in field visits.