

What defines Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Areas: A Case Study of Baringo Basin, Kenya

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Dryland areas are some of the most vulnerable regions in the world- susceptible to not just poverty owing to lack of livelihood opportunities but also to extreme climatic events. Desertification has been recognized as one of the fastest growing threats to the human population with multitudes of organizations coming together to fight it, one of the most notable being the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Having made this point, it is of importance to note that indeed, there have been some positive and interesting developments in arid regions over the last few decades and the Rehabilitation of Arid Environments Trust (RAE Trust) is an example of one such initiative. Based out of Baringo, Kenya, RAE trust has rehabilitated over 8000 acres of arid land by converting them into productive pastures. This research was conducted with the RAE Trust between June and August 2016.

The question that this research has attempted to answer is what defines sustainable land management in dry land areas, specifically, in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions. Breaking this down further, there has been an attempt to arrive at specific land management strategies that have been put to use on different types of pasture fields. These strategies have all lead to income generation in Baringo and the research has attempted to explore that relationship. This research followed a mixed methodology approach- semi structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to collect qualitative data and RAE Trust's internal database was accessed for quantitative data.

The results of this research point out that it would be impossible to arrive at a certain factor that best describes land management for dry lands. It is a combination of off- field management decisions, group dynamics, and community relationships and on- field factors like strong fencing and no overgrazing. It has further shown that management styles vary depending on whether or not the piece of land in question is a common resource and that there are different development implications for both.