

Recurrent Monitoring Survey 2 Executive Summary Findings



BACKGROUND

In response to the severe and recurrent droughts in northern Kenya, USAID partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Kenya (GoK) to form the USAID Feed the Future *Resilience and Economic Growth in the Arid Lands* (REGAL) program to address pastoralist vulnerability and resilience in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) in 2012. REGAL consisted of two 5-year projects: REGAL Accelerated Growth (AG) and REGAL Improved Resilience (IR). In 2014, REGAL expanded its scope and membership to additional humanitarian and development partners as well as more GoK partners. This expansion became the *Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth* in Northern Kenya (PREG)—subsuming REGAL.

PREG's three interrelated objectives are to increase household incomes, enhance resilience, and bolster adaptive capacity to climate change in northern Kenya. PREG aims to strengthen vulnerable pastoralist communities' resilience by sequencing, layering, and integrating activities and coordinating and harmonizing the resilience-building activities of humanitarian and development stakeholders.^{1,2} PREG's coordination platform requires a partner-driven approach to implement activities that improve livelihoods and governance; strengthen livestock value chains; enable access to water sources and water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from four rounds of data collection conducted as part of the second Recurrent Monitoring Survey (RMS-2), a component of the PREG Phase II (PREG II) impact evaluation (IE).³ The overall objective of the IE is to provide insight into the extent to which a

ABOUT PREG

Implementation Period:

- PREG Phase I: 5 Years 2014–2019
- PREG Phase II: 5 Years 2019–2024

Funding Source: USAID Feed the Future, \$400 million

Aim: To strengthen the resilience of vulnerable pastoralist communities

Intervention Area: Baringo, Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit, Mandera, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, and Wajir counties

Implementers: 19 partners¹

Government Partners: 8 national partners and 9 county partners²

¹ Implementing partners include ACDI/VOCA, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, AMREF Health Africa, Concern Worldwide, Chemonics, FHI 360, Food for the Hungry, International Livestock Research Institute, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Northern Rangelands Trust, RTI International, Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, Save the Children, UNICEF, WASDA, WFP, and World Vision.

² Government partners include the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (State Department of Livestock), Ministry of Devolution, State Department for the Development of ASALs, National Drought Management Authority, Ministry of Water and Sanitation (Water Trust Fund and Water Resource Management Authority), Ministry of Health (Public Health Department), Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

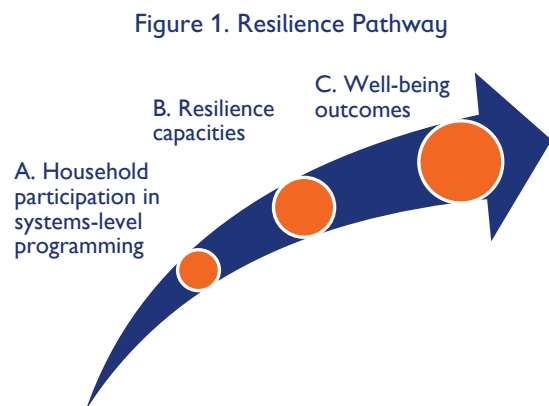
³The PREG II RMS-2 follows a baseline survey (September 2018) and Recurrent Monitoring Survey I (RMS-1) (September 2019 to June 2020). The PREG II endline evaluation is currently ongoing.

package of layered, sequenced, and integrated resilience strengthening activities implemented under the PREG II partnership umbrella improved key household resilience outcomes and strengthened the resilience capacities of food-insecure and vulnerable households. The RMS-2 analysis explored relationships between households' use of systems-level services provided by USAID and other donors,⁴ resilience capacities, and well-being outcomes. It is important to note that despite assessing exposure to and participation in PREG II activities, this study is unable to attribute outcomes or impact directly to USAID-funded services. This is a result of the geographic overlap of USAID-funded programming with systems-level interventions funded by other donors and a lack of information on the location and duration of various donor and GoK-funded activities. The goal of this study is to understand which activities and services were linked to improved resilience capacities, regardless of funding source.⁵

RMS-2 covers 12 months from February 2022 to January 2023, a period of unprecedented shocks and stresses in northern Kenya. The survey follows approximately 800 households randomly selected from approximately 3,000 baseline respondents across four survey rounds. Of these households, 87% participated in at least one type of resilience programming, and 82% received emergency assistance at least once. RMS-2 captured and analyzed data on household shock exposure and responses during the late stages of a multi-year drought, compounded by global price and supply shocks due to COVID-19 and the crisis in Ukraine, none of which were anticipated within the initial PREG II risk profile.

Overall, the analysis showed that despite an array of long-lasting shocks, **some households were able to maintain food security and cope with severe shocks**. Those households engaged in systems-level services provided by USAID through PREG II and by similar activities funded by other donors. Results suggest that using systems-level services can work to improve household well-being both directly and indirectly. The use of systems-level services works indirectly by increasing key resilience capacities, which may, in turn, improve well-being (Figure 1).⁶

The two well-being outcomes included in the RMS-2 analysis are *severe food insecurity during the past 30 days*, measured using the Food Insecurity Experience Score (FIES), and the *self-reported ability to cope with severe shocks and stresses*.



⁴Other donors across the nine counties include the World Bank, FAO, CARE, EU organizations

⁵ The initial intent was to have a comparison group that received only humanitarian assistance. Sampling from three of the nine counties where PREG partners were not implementing was supposed to achieve this. In 2012, REGAL, also known as 9-5-2, implemented a plan in which nine counties received humanitarian assistance (HA); five were included in REGAL AG and two in REGAL IR. This meant that four counties were HA only. Since then, donors other than USAID have been implementing resilience programming in those four counties, and one county moved from HA only to resilience programming. Households in all counties now have access to resilience programming. Note that the study does not have a control group. Households decided whether to participate in programming, and those that did may differ from non-participant households in ways that affect outcomes. For example, they may be more motivated.

⁶ Results are from two separate multi-variate equations: one estimating resilience capacities as a function of the use of systems-level services, and the second estimating well-being outcomes as a function of resilience capacities.

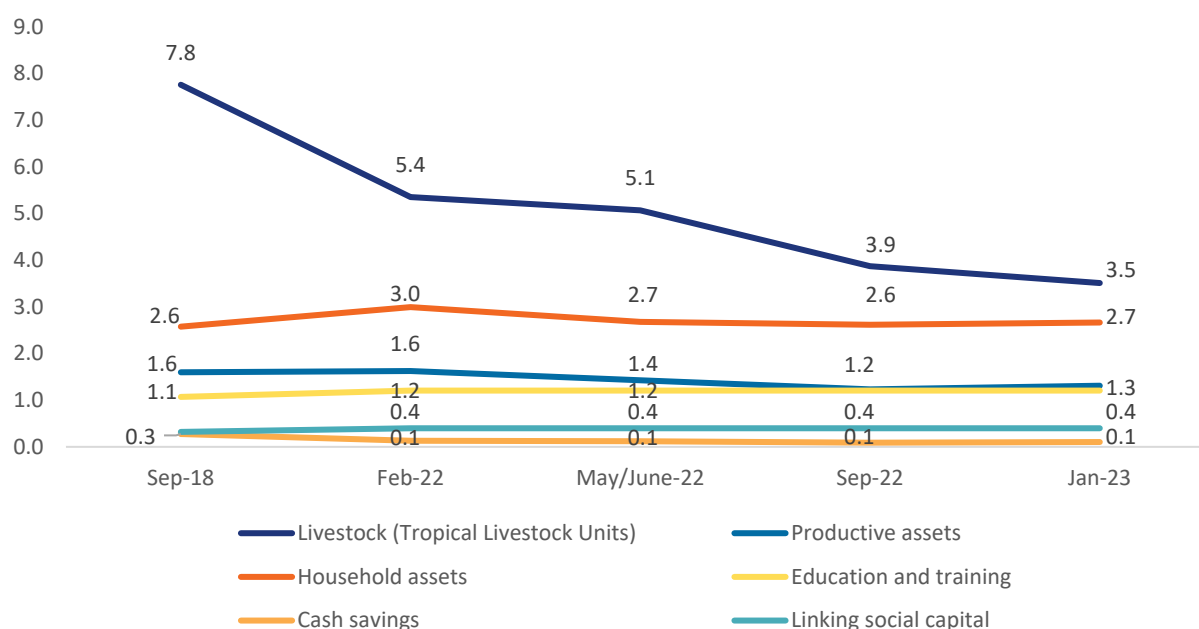
This summary is organized around three research questions from RMS-2:

1. Following the path from A to B in Figure 1, how did household participation in systems-level services affect resilience capacities?
2. Following the pathway from B to C in Figure 1, did households' resilience capacities increase their ability to cope with severe shocks and lower their probability of experiencing severe hunger?
3. Did layering resilience programming have a positive effect on households' ability to cope with severe shocks and severe hunger and their resilience capacities?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Of the key resilience capacities, livestock assets showed the sharpest decline from baseline through RMS-2. Household and productive assets decreased between February and May but maintained through the rest of RMS-2. Cash savings and linking social capital stayed at low levels throughout RMS-2.

Figure 2. Changes in resilience capacities, baseline through RMS-2



The percentage of households experiencing severe food insecurity rose from 60% in 2018 to 63% at the start of RMS-2 in February 2022 and continued to rise to 71% of households by January 2023. The percentage of households reporting that they were able to cope with severe shocks increased from 9% in February 2022 to 14% in January 2023.⁷

In addition to supporting hypotheses about the structure of resilience pathways, the analysis showed:

- There are different pathways to each well-being outcome;

⁷ Ability to cope with severe shocks was not measured at baseline.

- Pathways have shifted since 2018 when the baseline survey was conducted; and
- Layering services, including the layering of systems-level services with humanitarian assistance, is beneficial both within and across types of activities.

Figures 3 and 4 combine results from several multivariate analyses carried out in response to the research questions.⁸ They also show pathways from households' use of and participation in systems-level services to resilience capacities and from resilience capacities to the probability of severe food insecurity (FIES) and to households' ability to cope with severe shocks.

Related to resilience capacities that influenced well-being outcomes, the most important systems-level services were financial, livestock and crop services, governance,⁹ and WASH facilities. Financial services, especially village savings and loan associations, were hard hit by the shocks, but some continued to operate with increased donor support and reduced fees. There is some evidence that borrowing was an effective strategy during periods of high inflation.

Figure 3¹⁰ shows multiple pathways from PREG-supported groups, trainings, and activities through resilience capacity components to food security. Households that participated in one or more PREG II-supported financial services had more household assets, cash savings, and linking social capital than households that did not participate. These services include saving, borrowing, or belonging to a savings group.

The three resilience capacity components —household assets, cash savings, and linking social capital—were associated with less severe food insecurity. Specifically, participation in PREG II-supported financial services was associated directly with a 3% decrease in severe food insecurity. Participation in PREG II-supported financial services was indirectly associated with lower severe food insecurity through an increase in household assets, increased likelihood that a household has cash savings, and greater linking social capital. The increases in each of these capacities were associated with a decrease of about 1% in severe food insecurity.

In total, participation in PREG II-supported financial services was associated with a decrease of just over 6% in severe food insecurity. The figure shows similar results for participation in PREG II-supported crop production groups and trainings. Collectively, participation in these activities contributed to higher productive assets and a 1% reduction in severe food insecurity. Participation in PREG II-supported livestock production training, groups, and veterinary services; governance, including conflict resolution and peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction, and ward development committees; and the receipt of clean water and sanitation also led to increases in linking social capital, which is also associated with a reduction of about 1% in severe food insecurity.

Figure 3 also shows the importance of layering. Participation in multiple types of PREG II-supported groups, trainings, and activities had additive benefits, meaning that households

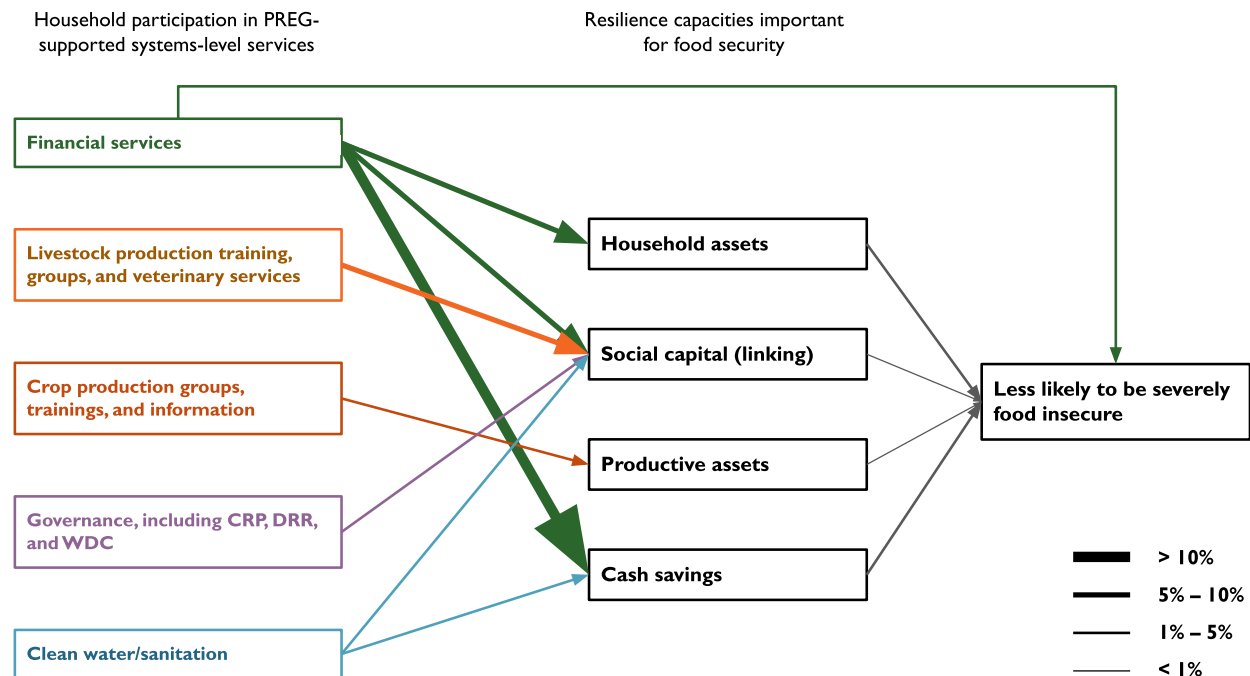
⁸ Equations estimated across four rounds, controlling for geographic, socio-economic, survey rounds, and assets in Round 1 to strengthen the finding that more assets are associated with higher levels of program participation. Variables measuring household use of systems-level services are cumulative and include use prior to and including the current survey round. Results with p-values of <0.1 are considered statistically significant.

⁹ Includes ward development committees, disaster risk reduction committees, and conflict resolution and peacebuilding committees.

¹⁰ Figure 3 shows the results of simulation equations using the results of regression equations. Note that all equations control for Round 1 assets.

participating in all five types of activities were more than 7% less likely to be severely food insecure.

Figure 3. Pathways from the use of systems-level services to resilience capacity components important for food security



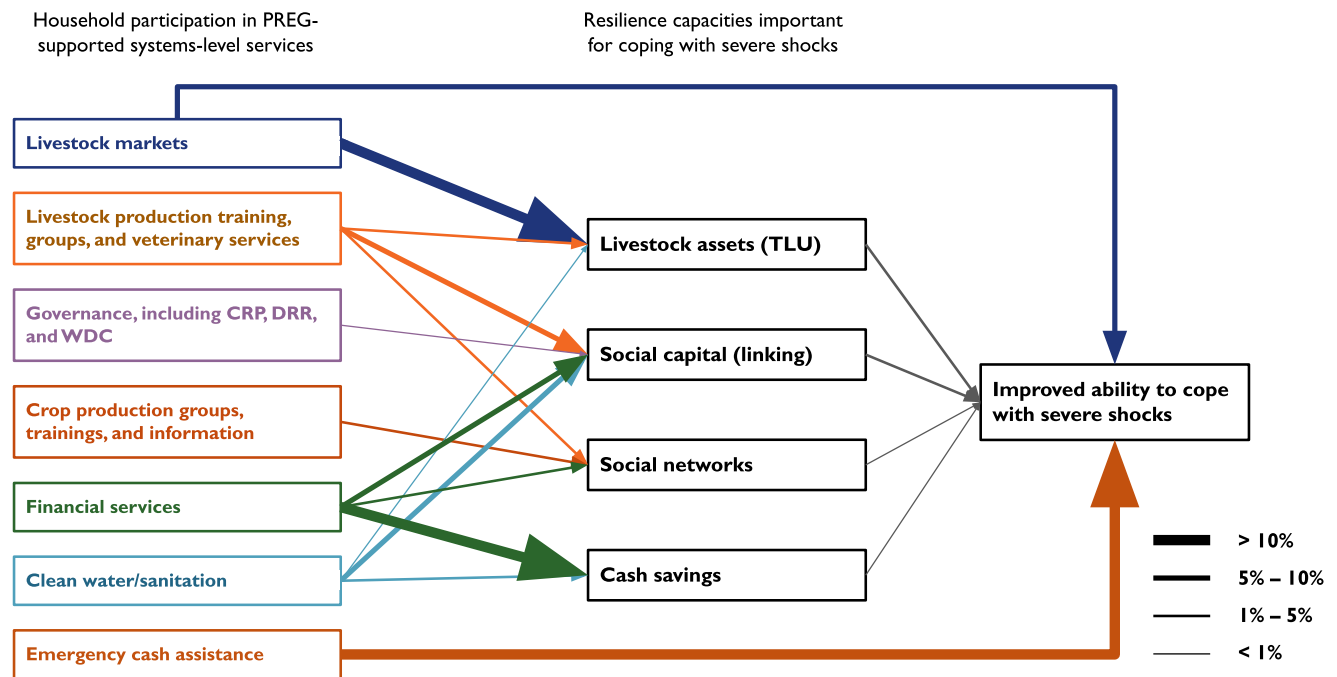
Similarly, Figure 4 shows pathways from participation in PREG II-supported systems-level services directly and through resilience capacities to an increased ability to cope with severe shocks. Analysis suggests that some resilience capacities linked to coping with severe shocks differ from those related to food security. For instance, livestock assets and social networks matter for resilience capacity components related to coping with severe shocks but, according to the analysis, are not strong contributing factors to food security. Cash savings and linking social capital matter for both improved coping and food security outcomes.

Relationships between participation in systems-level services and cash savings or linking social capital are the same in Figures 3 and 4. Figure 4 shows that households reporting livestock sales in PREG II-supported improved markets were 9% more likely to cope with severe shocks; those households also had more livestock assets than households selling informally or not selling, controlling for Round 1 assets, which translated to another 1% increase. Participation in PREG II-supported livestock production trainings, groups, and veterinary services was associated with increased livestock assets, linking social capital, and strengthened social networks. Each of these was associated with an increased ability to cope with severe shocks. Through its association with social networks, participation in PREG II-supported crop production groups, trainings, and receipt of information improved households' ability to cope with severe shocks. Receipt of clean water and sanitation was associated with increased linking social capital and cash savings, which were, in turn, associated with small (about 1%) increases in the ability to cope with severe shocks.

The analysis also looked at the integration of humanitarian assistance and development programming to better understand the contribution of both to household well-being. In May 2022,

a FEWS NET report recommended “a significant and sustained scale-up of humanitarian assistance to save lives and livelihoods.” Despite this, widespread cash assistance did not begin until fall 2022, two years into the drought. Figure 4 shows that cash assistance increased households’ ability to cope with severe shocks by more than 10% and that combining cash assistance with PREG II-supported systems-level services improved outcomes more than either one alone. According to both survey data and qualitative sources, cash aid was uneven across counties and was often delayed. Some of the counties within the *Nawiri* program operational area appeared to be able to implement cash distribution quickly. In other places, difficulties included the need to rely on banks to distribute cash, which forced recipients to travel and, in some cases, arrive at banks to find cash distribution systems down. Some officials also report confusion with multiple donors distributing different amounts of cash and that households were ineligible for larger distributions if they had previously received cash. Key informants report that several households used cash aid to purchase feed for livestock. Others noted that food aid may work better than cash aid in households where women have little decision-making power.

Figure 4. Pathways from use of systems-level services to coping with severe shocks



Comparing results to earlier analyses¹¹ shows a shift in resilience pathways since the baseline in 2018 and the RMS-1 in 2019. In earlier studies, bonding and bridging social capital and remittances were associated with improved well-being. Alternatively, RMS-2 findings indicate that the severity of shocks reduced households’ ability to share within a community (bonding social capital). In past shocks, households could reach out to friends and relatives in communities

¹¹ TANGO International. (2022). Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) II Impact Evaluation: Baseline Survey. Washington, DC: Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award. <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource/partnership-resilience-and-economic-growth-preg-ii-impact-evaluation-baseline-survey>
 Bower, T., Mueller, M., Downen, J., Finan, P., and Langworthy, M. (2022). PREG II Impact Evaluation Report of Recurrent Monitoring Survey 2019–2020. Washington DC. Resilience Evaluation and Learning (REAL) Associate Award. https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/STC_REAL_PREGII_RMS_Report%207.26.22.pdf

unaffected by the shock using bridging social capital and remittances. During RMS-2, the severity and geographic extent of the drought, the aftermath of COVID-19, and shocks related to the crisis in Ukraine dried up resources for nearly everyone, limiting households' ability to share with households within their own or other communities. Inter-community disputes over land and grazing also limited bridging social capital. Qualitative data show reverse remittances (Turkana), where households sent food and cash to herders who had migrated with animals.

During RMS-2, households appear to have moved to more communal support (informal social networks) and to support from people connected to government and NGOs (linking social capital). The importance of social networks for households' ability to cope with severe shocks is supported by qualitative reports of communities pooling resources to hire *tuk-tuks* to bring water, communal agricultural harvests, and agencies like the Kenya Red Cross buying livestock and distributing meat to the community. Linking social capital was also shown in RMS-2 to contribute to improved well-being outcomes in ways it did not in earlier studies. RMS-2 findings suggest the additional benefit of participating in PREG II-supported natural resource management training and user groups, participating in financial services, participating in governance, and participating in WASH services. This type of participation in PREG II-supported activities creates opportunities for contact with government and NGO officials whom households can ask for help.

RMS 2 analysis shows that household participation in and use of PREG II-supported activities, groups, and trainings increased resilience and helped households maintain food security and cope with severe drought, exacerbated by other unprecedented shocks. Using PREG-supported financial services, selling livestock in PREG II-supported improved livestock markets, and receiving clean water and sanitation from PREG II-supported programs had the biggest impact on well-being outcomes during the late stages of a prolonged drought and unprecedented economic shocks. The analysis also showed the benefits of layering and combining cash assistance and resilience programming. Combined results indicate that it would be beneficial to expand financial services such as VSLAs, livestock market support, clean water provision, and cash assistance during periods of extreme drought and/or extended shock exposure.



About the REAL Award

The Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award is a consortium-led effort funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. It was established to respond to growing demand among USAID Missions, host governments, implementing organizations, and other key stakeholders for rigorous, yet practical, monitoring, evaluation, strategic analysis, and capacity building support. Led by Save the Children, REAL draws on the expertise of its partners: Mercy Corps and TANGO International.

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