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“Exploring opportunities ...  
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

## Agro-pastoralists use participatory video making to reflect on their food environment in Turkana, Kenya

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### Abstract

The food environment (FE) is the context in which people select, acquire, prepare, and consume food. It is a determinant of diet quality and nutritional outcomes.

This study invited young (agro-)pastoralists in two communities in the drylands in Turkana County, Kenya, to reflect on their FE to identify opportunities for improvement. Eight groups of 18–24-year-old adults (mean group size=5; mean BMI=18.9 kg m<sup>-2</sup>) were trained on the use of smart-phones to produce videos of their FE. Data from 7-day-dietary recalls, videos, concluding workshop and interviews with leaders were used for analysis.

Low literacy levels did not hinder group members to create videos. On average, participants had one meal per day. Fruits and vegetables (F&V) were mainly collected from the wild. Final videos showed the need of income opportunities to be able to purchase food, the importance and challenges of wild foods, vegetable gardening as options to easily access foods, food preparation methods, the quantity and diversity of foods usually consumed as well as eating practices. The participants expressed interest to improve their FE by scaling activities in local F&V production but are challenged by lack of water sources. Restoration of wild food trees to become more food secure in drought periods was mentioned especially in areas where water is sourced by digging holes in seasonal rivers. Community leaders observed increased engagement of participants with their FE during video making. Five months later, leaders reported that as a result of the project individual participants began trading goats for income or started vocational training.

Digital inclusion motivated the young adults to explore and reflect on options to improve their food environment. Income generation opportunities are needed for youths who did not have access to formal schooling. F&V farming is important to improve accessibility to perishable foods, while wild food restoration activities could serve as an alternative income opportunity to improve food and nutrition security. Participatory video making is feasible in areas with low literacy and contributes to eliciting young adult's views on their FE. This is a first step towards co-creation of meaningful bottom-up interventions.

**Keywords:** Agro-pastoralists, diet quality, drylands, food environment