THE KENYA CASH CONSORTIUM LOCUST RESPONSE MARKET MONITORING INITIATIVE

ASAL Counties of Kenya - September 2020

Funded by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid

BACKGROUND

The ongoing desert locusts in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) counties as of September 2020 is the worst invasion the country has experienced in the last 70 years.[1] The invasion posses an unprecedented threat to food security in the area affecting huge population of locals already experiencing food insecurity.[2] The desert locusts have affected large expanses of cropland and pasture, leading to increased likelihood of food insecurity, exacerbating the vulnerabilities and needs of local communities. This has had ripple effects on other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing and service industries in these areas which has caused negative changes in the markets.[3]

The first case of COVID-19 in Kenya was confirmed in March 2020, after which the pandemic has continued to spread across the country. Kenya has been undertaking various measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 including restrictions of movement, closure of public spaces with high human traffic such as schools and public events, dusk to dawn curfews, ensuring basic hygiene and social distancing.[4] These precautionary measures continue to have negative economic impacts on businesses, markets and workers with the country witnessing job cuts accross various sectors and income of businesses and available working hours falling significantly.[5]

To understand the local market systems and inform humanitarian programming in the light of the desert locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kenya Cash Consortium (KCC) led by ACTED in partnership with Oxfam and Concern Worldwide (CWW) with the support of IMPACT Initiatives conducted the third and fourth rounds of the joint market monitoring exercise in local markets in Turkana, Mandera, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit and Wajir counties in September 2020. This round followed the [second round (R2) of market monitoring] that had run from 24-26 August 2020 and the first round (R1) conducted between 10-12 August 2020.

The KCC works with local implementing partners including: The Pastoralists Community Initiative and Development Assistance (PACIDA) and Sustainable Approaches for Community Empowerment (SAPCONE) working in Marsabit and Turkana respectively on behalf of CWW, Merti Intergrated Development Programme (MIDP) and Wajir South Development Association (WASDA) in Isiolo and Wajir respectively on behalf of Oxfam and Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance (RACIDA) in Mandera on behalf of ACTED. In Samburu, ACTED is implementing the activities directly.

This factsheet presents an overview of the median prices and the change in median prices of food and non-food items (NFIs), stock levels, days required to restock and the challenges experienced by local community members and vendors in the assessed ASAL counties in light of the locust invasion. The findings are **indicative** of the assessed locations and the timeframe in which the data was collected.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection for the third (R3) and fourth round (R4) of data collection for the September market monitoring excercise was facilitated through phone interviews with **175 (R3) and 294 (R4) vendor key informants** (KIs), selling food and NFIs in the assessed ASAL counties. R3 took place between 15-17 September while R4 data was collected between 28 to 30 September 2020.[7]

KIs were asked about the prices of food items, critical NFIs and challenges experienced in the market due to the locust invasion. Items were selected to support the calculation of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), a context specific set of key food items and NFIs that the typical six person ASAL county household (HH) is likely to prioritize on a regular/seasonal basis. A total of 29 items were assessed.

LIMITATIONS

- All findings are indicative rather than representative of the affected communities in ASAL counties. Therefore findings should ideally be triangulated with other sources before being used to inform programming.
- All numeric figures are averages of estimates given by KIs at the time of data collection. Additional data cleaning has been done to remove outliers.
- Some questions had a 30 day recall period which is a relatively long recall periods might impact the accuracy of answers given by KIs.

ASSESSED ASAL COUNTIES

ASAL HUMANITARIAN NETWORK Building Resilient Communities
RACIDA Building Resilient Communities for Sustainable Development
PACIDA Pastoralist Community Initiative and Development Assistance Building on Indegineous Knowledge and Institutions
Merti Intergrated Development Program Collective Action: Better Society
SAPCONE EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES
WASDA

TRACKING OF PRICES FOR KEY ITEMS IN SEPTEMBER (KES*)[8]

Category	Assessed items	R3 Sept 15th - 17th	R4 Sept 28th -30th	% change (from Sept 2020 R3)
Food items	White maize 1Kg	50	50	0%
	Maize flour 1Kg	70	70	0%
	Sugar 1Kg	120	120	0%
	Beans 1Kg	100	120	▲ 24%
	Salt 500gm	25	20	▼ 20%
	Onions 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Kales 1Kg	70	60	▼ 14%
	Vegetable oil 1L	200	200	0%
	Cowpeas 1Kg	120	140	▲ 17%
	Wheat flour 1Kg	80	80	0%
	Tea Leaves 50gm	25	25	0%
	Traditional vegetables	80	100	▲ 25%
	Rice 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Pigeon peas 1Kg	170	180	▲ 6%
	Spinach 1Kg	80	60	▼ 25%
	Cattle milk 1L	100	100	0%
Non-food items	Pen 1pc	15	10	▼ 33%
	Pencil 1pc	5	5	0%
	Rubber 1pc	5	5	0%
	Sanitary pads 8 pack	100	100	0%
	Jerrycan 20L	200	200	0%
	Cloth masks 1pc	50	50	0%
	Surgical masks 1pc	50	50	0%
	Bucket 20L	150	200	▲ 33%
	Kerosene 1L	110	150	▲ 36%
	Bar soap 200gm	20	30	▲ 50%
	20L jerrycan with clean water	20	20	0%
	32 pages A5 excercise book	10	10	0%

The median prices of most items remained unchanged between R3 and R4 of market monitoring in September 2020. For food items, traditional vegetables recorded the highest increase in median reported price of (25%) while beans increased by 24%. For NFIs, the median price of bar soap increased by 50%.

CHANGE IN MEDIAN PRICES OF KEY ITEMS BETWEEN AUGUST (R2)-SEPTEMBER (R4) (KES*)[8]

Findings suggests that prices relatively commonly increased quite considerably for food items and NFIs alike between August and September, particularly, the median reported prices of cowpeas (+40%), soap (+50%) and rubber (+50%). At the same time, the median reported prices of maize flour and salt hinted at a decreasing price trend (-13% and -20%, respectively) which will be further monitored in future rounds of data collection.

Category	Assessed Items	R2 August 24th-26th	R4 September 28th-30th	% change since 2nd Round
Food items	White maize 1Kg	50	50	0%
	Maize flour 1Kg	80	70	▼ 13%
	Sugar 1Kg	120	120	0%
	Beans 1Kg	100	120	▲ 24%
	Salt 500gm	25	20	▼ 20%
	Onions 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Kales 1Kg	50	60	▲ 20%
	Vegetable oil 1L	200	200	0%
	Cowpeas 1Kg	100	140	▲ 40%
	Wheat flour 1Kg	80	80	0%
	Tea Leaves 50gm	20	25	▲ 25%
	Traditional vegetables	80	100	▲ 25%
	Rice 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Spinach 1Kg	50	60	▲ 25%
	Cattle milk 1L	100	100	0%
Non-food items	Pen 1pc	20	10	▲ 50%
	Pencil 1pc	10	5	▲ 50%
	Rubber 1pc	10	5	▲ 50%
	Sanitary pads 8 pack	100	100	0%
	Jerrycan 20L	200	200	0%
	Cloth masks 1pc	50	50	0%
	Surgical masks 1pc	50	50	0%
	Bucket 20L	150	200	▲ 33%
	Kerosene 1L	120	150	▲ 25%
	Bar soap 200gm	20	30	▲ 50%
	32 pages A5 excercise book	10	10	0%

MARKET SUPPLY AND DEMAND CHALLENGES (R4)

The overall proportion of KIs that reported experiencing challenges while restocking increased from 72% of KIs in R2 to 89% of KIs in R4 with unusable roads being the most commonly reported challenge to restocking, cited by 86% of the KIs who reportedly experieced challenges in R4. In addition, movement restriction was also a commonly cited challenge to restocking (70% of KIs experiencing challenges), indicating that the COVID-19 preventive measures were still negatively affecting local markets in ASAL counties by the end of September.[4]

Most commonly reported restocking challenges by % of KIs reporting facing such challenges:

	August (R2)	September (R4)
Unusable roads	63%	86%
Lack of a means of transport	56%	72%
Restriction of movement	69%	70%
Increased prices of commodities	73%	66%
Shortage of commodities	13%	26%
Theft and damage of commodities	15%	18%
Cannot afford to restock	12%	14%
Increased demand of commodities	12%	13%

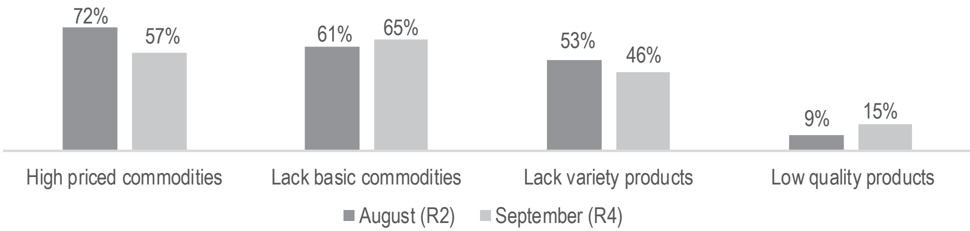
All interviewed KIs reported perceiving that community members experience challenges while accessing major markets in the ASAL counties, with the most commonly reported challenge being long distances to reach markets. In August, fear of contracting COVID-19 had been the most commonly reported challenge, which was slightly less commonly reported in September.

Most commonly reported challenges faced by people accessing markets, by % of KIs:

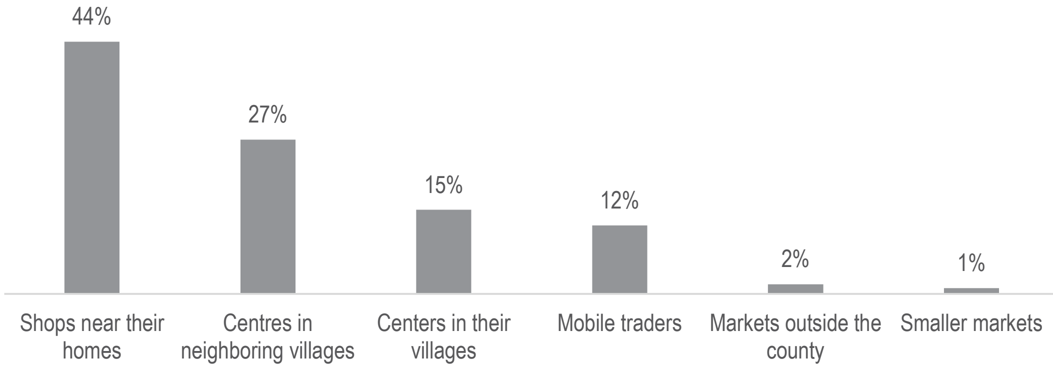
	August (R2)	September (R4)
Long distance	53%	69%
Fear of contracting COVID-19	74%	68%
Products are too expensive	61%	68%
Low purchasing power	42%	56%
Restricted opening hours	29%	52%
Lack of items in the market	36%	51%

When the major markets are inaccessible the community members reportedly source their goods and services from alternative sources such as shops near their homes and small market centers in neighbouring villages. However, such alternative sources might not be fully comparable to major markets and are likely accompanied by additional challenges for local communities, such as relatively higher priced commodities, and a lack of basic commodities, reported by 57% and 65% of all KIs, respectively.

Most commonly reported challenges faced by community members when major markets are inaccessible by % of KIs:

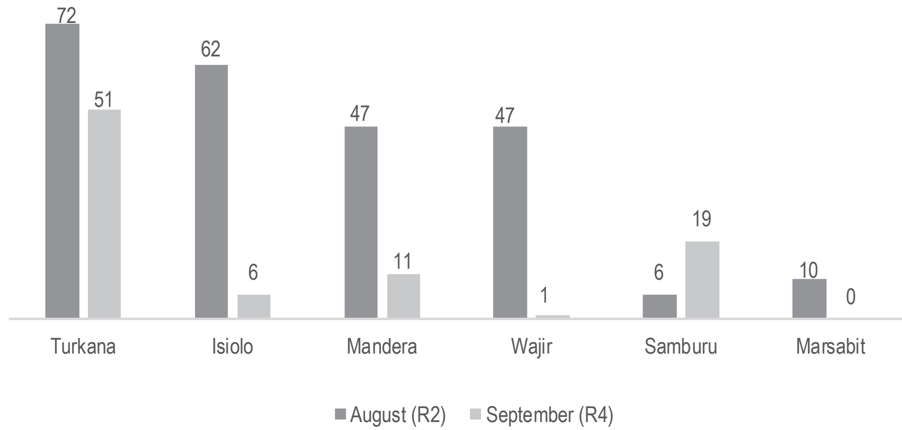


Alternatives to major markets for community members to access goods and services when major markets are inaccessible, by % of KIs:



Overall, 81% KIs reported that the number of customers purchasing from their shops had changed in the 30 days prior to data collection, of whom reported a decrease in customers. In addition, 65% of KIs reported having observed that other vendors in their surroundings had closed their businesses in the 30 days prior to data collection, likely as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Total reported number of businesses that had closed down in the last 30 days prior to data collection:



MARKET CHALLENGES IN LIGHT OF THE LOCUST INVASION (R4)

Overall, the number of KIs reporting perceiving a change in prices as a result of the locust invasion had slightly increased, from 46% in August (R2), to 51% in September (R4). Of those 51% of KIs, the majority (94%) reported that prices had increased, suggesting that the desert locust indeed negatively affected markets in the ASAL counties.

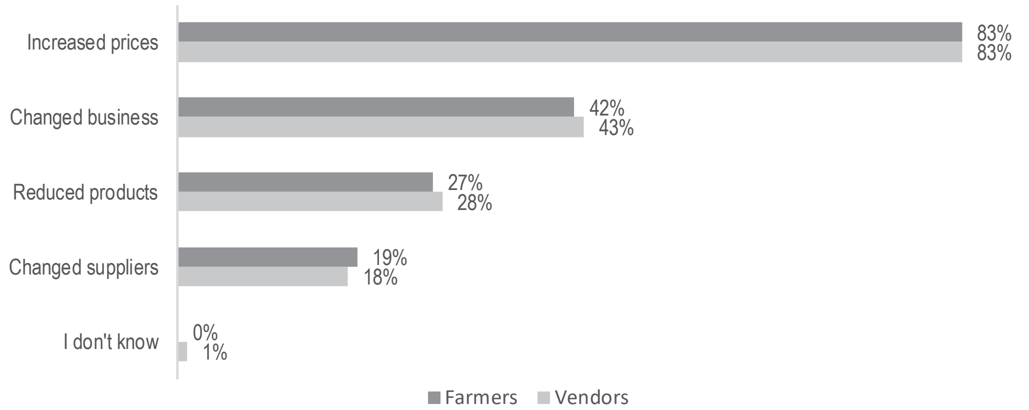
The proportion of KIs that reported the locust invasion had negatively impacted the availability of some key items in the market increased from 45% in August (R2) to 51% in September (R4). Those KIs reporting a negative impact most commonly reported this to affect the availability of key food items such as sugar, flour, rice, and beans.

Most commonly reported items of which the availability was negatively impacted by the locust invasion, according to KIs perceiving a negative impact:

	August (R2)	September (R4)
Sugar	67%	77%
Wheat flour	71%	76%
Rice	68%	75%
Maize flour	83%	75%
Beans	80%	75%

KIs were asked to list the coping strategies used by themselves and other vendors, as well as those strategies they believed were used by local producers and farmers.
Overall, the number of KIs reporting increasing prices as a commonly used coping mechanism among farmers increased slightly by 8% between August and September. Other commonly reported coping mechanisms included changing suppliers, reducing the variety of products they sold, or keeping their business open during the locust invasion.

Most commonly reported coping strategies used by vendors and farmers/producers during the locust invasion by % of the KIs



About IMPACT Initiatives' COVID-19 response

As an initiative deployed in many vulnerable and crisis-affected countries, IMPACT initiatives is deeply concerned by the devastating impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have on the millions of affected people we seek to serve. IMPACT initiatives is currently working with Cash Working Groups and partners to scale up its programming in response to this pandemic, with the goal of identifying practical ways to inform humanitarian responses in the countries where we operate. COVID-19-relevant market monitoring and market assessments are a key area where IMPACT initiatives aims to leverage its existing expertise to help humanitarian actors understand the impact of changing restrictions on markets and trade. Updates regarding IMPACT Initiatives' response to COVID-19 can be found in a devoted thread on the REACH website. Contact geneva@impact-initiatives.org for further information.

End Notes

1.The FAO, locusts watch, retrieved from: here
2. Food Security Cluster, retrieved from: here
3. Economic and policy issues in Desert Locust Management by Steen R.Joffe FAO, pg 25, retrieved from: here
4. BBC News, the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya, September 28th 2020,retrieved from: here
5. Development Initiatives, Socio economic impacts of COVID-19, page 2, retrieved from: here
6. All vendor key informants are retailers.
7. Additional data for a few NFIs and food items was collected on 12-15 October to help meet the 3 prices per item per county threshold.
8. 1 USD=107.15359 KES in September 2020
9. The data reported in this report is a comparison of August (R2) and September (R4).

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