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THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

The Role of Vernacular Radio in Building Resilience of Communities in Wajir East Constituency, Wajir County, Kenya

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Abstract

Frequent exposure to climate change make the livelihoods of communities living in arid and semi-arid environments in Kenya vulnerable. These communities need access to climate information and support services, especially in their own language, to build their adaptive capacities. Vernacular radio stations, therefore, are critical in disseminating climate information which helps communities to make informed decisions about climate change interventions. The study reviews factors that influence uptake of vernacular radio as channels of delivering climate information and support services. It examines existing approaches of information dissemination in Township and Barwago wards in Wajir East Constituency of Wajir County by pastoralists and small-scale farmers. The study was guided by the technology acceptance model and adopted the case study research design. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants 310 pastoralists, farmers and stakeholders working on climate change adaptation and resilience building in Wajir East Constituency. Questionnaires and key informant interviews were the main sources of primary data employed. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicate that the community relies on the vernacular radio station to access and use information on climate change advisories that has helped them make informed decisions on alternative livelihood options and adapt to extreme climatic stress. The study concludes that vernacular radio remains powerful, accessible and affordable media for reaching large numbers of people in isolated areas. Even far removed villages in Wajir East Constituency have access to vernacular radio that build on the prevalent oral tradition in the region. The findings are useful to the government and development practitioners working with pastoralists and rural farmers to build resilience communities.

Key words: climate change, vernacular radio, information, resilience, communities