fostering
RESILIENCE
initiative

...a holistic approach to
child & youth development

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING
*for*RURAL YOUTH *in*KENYA

fostering RESILIENCE initiative

About us

The Fostering Resilience Initiative:
Our interdisciplinary team works to ensure positive outcomes for children and youth facing adversity.

By measuring and addressing risks and assets at the child-level, as well as within homes, schools, and communities, we promote a holistic approach to child and youth development. Our goal is to create environments that not only fulfill children's and youth's basic needs, but also promote nurturing relationships, socio-emotional skills, and civic engagement.

We work with non-governmental organizations, policy makers, communities and other stakeholders in seven countries: Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Peru. Our initiative focuses on three key areas:

1. Learning and Development

Improving learning and development of children and youth, both at school and outside of school.

2. Risk Measurement

Developing, validating and piloting measurement tools to assess risks, assets, and outcomes across several countries.

3. Global Network for Resilience

Building a global network of actors who foster systemic resilience.

Neil Boothby
Director, Fostering Resilience Initiative

Background

In Kenya, the Fostering Resilience Initiative (FRI) is working with partners to better understand how youth development, vocational training and economic opportunity may be expanded and sustained in rural regions where opportunity is limited. These challenges are being explored in depth in Mugunda Ward, Nyeri County, where systems are in place to upstream learning to county and national levels.

Photo by Wilfred Wachira

Mugunda is a collection of rural communities in central Kenya with close to 25,000 residents, spread across 50 villages. The environment is categorized as arid or semi-arid, and water and other resources are scarce. Despite limited resources, Mugunda has a history of civil society mobilization, especially on behalf of children and youth. Community members have united to build up infrastructure such as schools and clean water systems, to sponsor educational scholarships for youth, and to construct an Olympic training center for sports development and mentorship. These efforts have been self-directed and mostly self-funded.

Over the course of several meetings in Mugunda between FRI staff and local leaders, stakeholders identified the need for expanded educational and economic opportunities for youth between the ages of 15-24 years as the community's first priority. There is currently a perception among youth that the only option for advancement is to migrate to urban areas where schooling and employment are seen as more accessible. This attitude has led to demoralization and threatens to drain the community's most valuable resource, their youth.

The Juhudi Initiative was created with the objective of generating new local knowledge with a special focus on supporting local educational and economic opportunities for Mugunda youth. Juhudi means energy in Swahili and reflects the program goal of seeking to tap youth enthusiasm and effort towards an improved quality of life. Juhudi's starting point revolves around a methodology known as Community Asset Mapping, which strives to identify existing assets, skills and resources at the village and sublocation level that can be mobilized to address a common concern.

More specifically, Community Asset Mapping for Rural Youth allows organizations and communities to:

(a) understand the full range of services, talents and infrastructure available to youth within a community,

(b) improve the quality and efficiency of support services for youth by integrating or combining services from multiple systems, and

(c) develop new services and programs to overcome existing gaps.

Project Development – Introducing Juhudi to the Mugunda Ward

A community meeting with local representatives was held in early August 2018 to introduce the concept of Community Asset Mapping and to assess interest in collaboration and partnership.

Sam Mukundi from Logos consult convened the meeting. Nine local leaders, primarily Assistant Chiefs of Mugunda sub-locations, and the Assistant County Commissioner, joined FRI staff. An instructor from Nairutia Polytechnic served as a facilitator.

This meeting was fundamental to obtaining a better understanding of the landscape, and to achieving community buy-in and support from local leaders as we sought to engage attendees to reflect upon how to make good use of existing assets and resources. At the same time, this strategic meeting served to ensure that the approach to youth development was appropriate for the communities, and to promote an interest and commitment to the welfare of youth from these pivotal leaders.
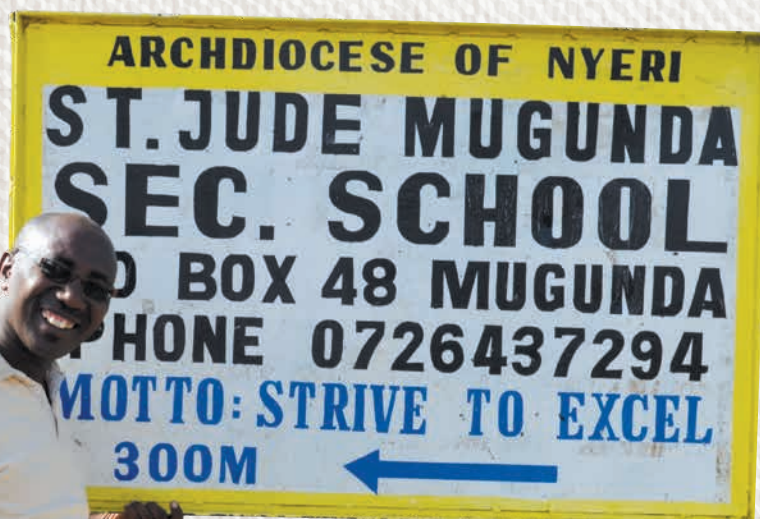
Photo by Beth Rubenstein

Community Asset Mapping: Training

The Juhudi Initiative and the Community Asset Mapping project were officially launched in August 2018 through a partnership between the Fostering Resilience Initiative, ZiziAfrique Foundation and Logos Consult.

The team identified seven sublocations in Mugunda where the project was welcomed by the communities. Two volunteers were selected as representatives from each sublocation to ensure complete coverage and strong community engagement. Within each of the seven sublocations, the volunteers then selected two villages for implementing the Community Asset Mapping activities.

From 10-17 August 2018, the 14 volunteers participated in a four-day training led by three Kenyan and three American facilitators. The

training covered asset mapping techniques such as appreciative interviewing, positive deviance, capacity inventories, and mapping of physical and natural resources, institutions, groups and associations. In addition, the training emphasized a positive youth development approach by placing youth as the main experts in their communities and ensuring wide participation of youth in all exercises. The training also included ample time for the volunteers to practice these techniques in the classroom and the field.

Photo by Wilfred Wachira
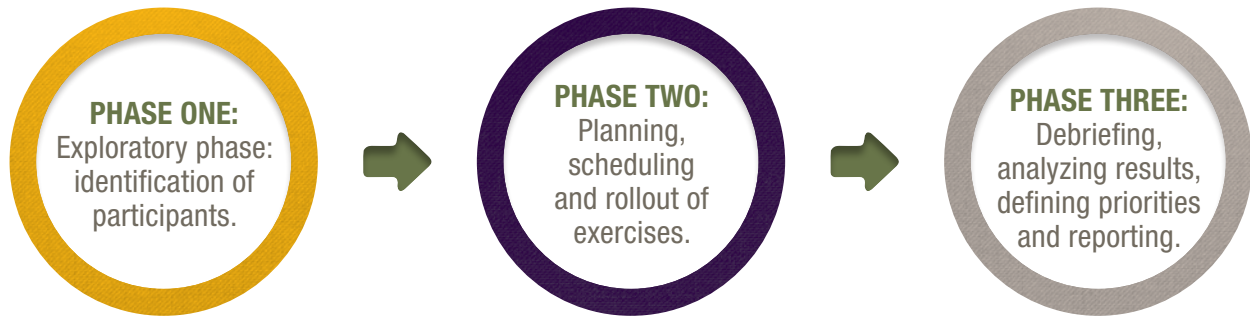
Community Asset Mapping: Implementation
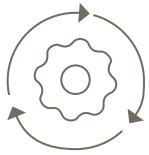
Once the training was completed, the rollout and implementation of Community Asset Mapping was led by the training team from Logos Consult, with support from the volunteers from the different sublocations. The Community Asset Mapping exercises and meetings were conducted from October to November 2018 and involved over 800 participants from Mugunda ward.

Photo by Wilfred Wachira

Implementation was divided into three phases:

PHASE ONE:
Exploratory phase: identification of participants.

PHASE TWO:
Planning, scheduling and rollout of exercises.

PHASE THREE:
Debriefing, analyzing results, defining priorities and reporting.

CAM Activities were rolled out in 14 villages throughout Mugunda ward (two villages per sublocation). The villages were selected based on an assessment that took into account:

- **Village Readiness**, meaning villages that identified a need for community mobilization for youth development;

- **Stakeholder Representation**, meaning villages that had a variety of equally-invested stakeholder groups (e.g., men, women, youth) that all expressed a desire for community mobilization for youth development; and

- **Interest and Commitment**, meaning villages where community members were actively interested in this process and would like to take part.

14 VILLAGES
Selected based on:
- Village Readiness
- Stakeholder Agreement
- Interest and Commitment

3 MEETINGS PER VILLAGE
Objectives:
- Introduce CAM
- Take part of process
- Debriefing

Each of the 14 villages held three separate meetings:

- **The first meeting** introduced the Juhudi Initiative and the concept of CAM, while also allowing for discussions on community perceptions surrounding the most pressing needs for youth in their villages. These initial meetings mobilized a total of 806 community members from the fourteen sublocations.

- **For the second meeting** in each village, community members who expressed enthusiasm for CAM were invited to continue to participate in the process. It was during these second meetings that most CAM exercises took place.

- Finally, all of the participants from the second meeting were invited to take part in the **third meeting**, which was a debriefing along with other relevant members that the organizers and leaders considered appropriate. Around 375 people participated in the second and third meetings.
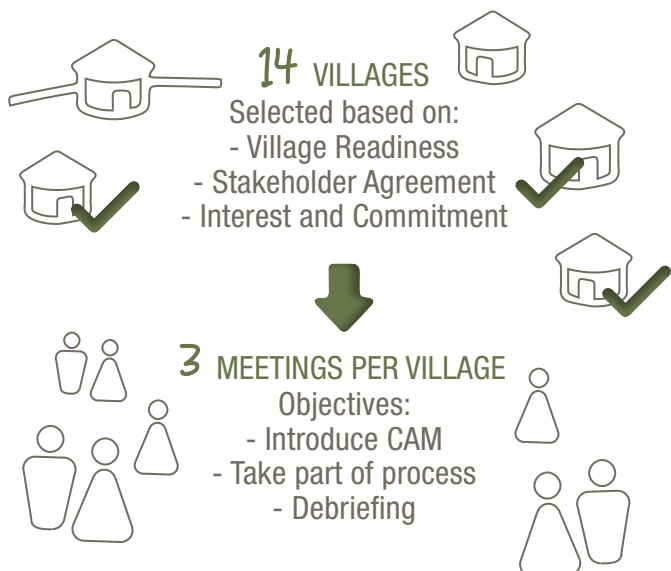
Youth were represented in every single meeting, though in some locations their representation was higher than others. In most villages, at least 30% of the meeting attendees were youth, and in some villages, youth comprised as much as 60% of CAM participants.

Findings

Mugunda's economic life relies primarily on agricultural activity. The CAM process reflected this reality. Villages shared the need to improve irrigation mechanisms and make better use of underutilized soil (through opportunities to improve boreholes and existing infrastructure), and requested support for helping youth gain farming skills. Other ideas also focused on cultivating farming activities with milk plants, bee keeping, poultry, and tree growing as the most common suggestions.

Villages also identified how they could take of advantage of existing social capital within their villages. By thinking together about the experience of *positive deviants* in their communities, they discovered inspiring stories and partnership opportunities for youth. Deviants are people in the village who are succeeding against the odds or leaders who are already working to support youth in some capacity. They have started and grown an egg or uji[1] production business; they have taken advantage of training opportunities to recover from devastating droughts; they have extended access to finance by starting and growing a small table banking business; they have organized members to establish a Water Community System; and they have formed organizations to expand dairy production. What can be learned from these community leaders? By learning about their stories, youth felt empowered to find similar opportunities. In fact, just three months after CAM, many youth participants have already reported engaging in new incoming-generating schemes inspired by what they were exposed to during the CAM exercises.

Photo by Ollivier Girard/CIFOR

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[1] Uji is an authentic Kenyan dish made of millet flour

Photo by Wilfred Wachira

Turning Assets into Opportunities - Village Asset Mapping Example

In the Village of Githura, located in the sub-location Kamariki, village members worked together to identify existing assets. Sixteen people participated in the CAM meeting where a map of natural resources of the village was drawn. Participants were challenged to identify positive deviants in their villages, as well as all the resources that were coming in and/or "leaking out" from the village. The latter was part of an activity called *Leaky Bucket* that was intended to help participants appreciate the value of some of these otherwise lost resources.

One important opportunity that was discussed among participating youth was the potential business opportunities for youth in horticulture. The Githura Potatoes Farmers' Group produces potatoes in 2.5 acres of shared land and also in members' individual land. They have taken advantage of county support for seeds. The objective is to create a market for crisp manufacturing since there is no production in the Nyeri region. Furthermore, during the meeting, some group members created a storage strategy whereby they agreed to sell more directly to the market instead of through middlemen. They also committed to continue to look for new strategies for better market access.

Finally, through these and other success examples such as a young man who invited members to visit his farm where he planted carrots, youth in the meeting learned about a "youth fund" which currently exists and provides seed green houses to youth groups and individuals to start a business. Youth asked to learn more about the process and sent a representative to find out more details so they can take advantage of similar opportunities.

Photo by C.Schubert

Photo by C.Schubert

Photo by Sam Mukundi

Conclusion & Next steps

The Community Asset Mapping process will be complemented by a household survey of nearly 400 youth in Mugunda ward later this year. The quantitative data from the household survey will be used to get a more statistically representative snapshot of youth issues than is possible from qualitative approaches like community asset mapping.

The long-term goal of the asset mapping and the household survey is to mount a locally-led, contextually-appropriate response to youth needs in Mugunda that is both effective and sustainable. For example, preliminary discussions about the development of formal youth training programs in agricultural skills are underway. Our hope is that CAM can serve as a model for youth empowerment in other communities in Kenya and globally.

Resources

Based on our experiences with the Juhudi Initiative, the Fostering Resilience Initiative developed a guide on Community Asset Mapping for Youth that can be used in other settings. The guide is titled "Unleashing Youth Opportunities: A toolkit for community asset mapping " and is av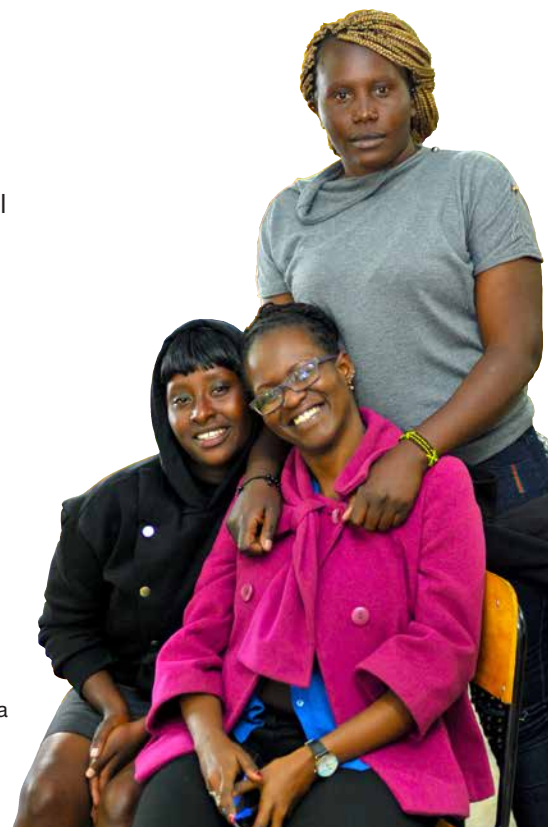ailable for free to interested organizations and individuals.