

# Case Study Report



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# Key findings

*During the severe drought, 20l were sold for KSH 80, and the price for a cow dropped from KSH 30,000 to KSH 200.*

## Introduction of person and background

Mungasio, aged 45 years and a born again Christian, is a resident of Ngoso village in the Sekinani area adjacent to the Maasai Mara game reserve in Narok County. He is a Maasai pastoralist keeping livestock (cattle's, sheep goats and donkeys). Married to two wives with nine and six children respectively.

## Story

Mungasio's source of income entirely depends on his livestock to feed his family, educate his children and provide for other family members. If needs arise he sells his cows and sheep to sort out family needs, for instance to buy food, he sells sheep and is able to feed his family, he sells cows to raise school fees for his children. He has one other sources of income as part of his lands belongs to the older conservancy where he has leases out 70 acres of his land to be protected as conservancy and he earns KSH 2000 per acre per year, with this income he is able to build modern houses and purchase a motorbike and saves the rest for future use.

Mungasio relates that they survive on 2 meals a day (breakfast and dinner) and he spends KSH 1000 a day to feed the two wives and their children. Ngoso village is a pretty dry area, and there are no farming activities; the family depends on market day, which comes once a week, to buy food stuff like vegetables, potatoes, maize, etc. They buy food stuff that sustain the family for a whole week. They live in their own houses therefore they do not have expenses on rent.

*“On top of the dangers associated with collecting water, Maasai women must take care of the livestock and household - cooking, cleaning washing clothes. This leaves young girls little time to attend school, leading to low attendance and high dropout rates.”“The task of fetching water is mostly reserved for girls and women who have to*

*walk long distances to find water which they then have to haul back in jerrycans”.*

Ngoso village is prone to droughts and therefore water is often scarce. In the rainy season, the household depends on the water of the river which is about 1km away. They use the water both for domestic and livestock use. The family has a small pan dam that collects surface for use to water livestock and do their laundry. In Maasai culture, women are the ones who fetch water no matter the distance and time they take. That is their work, asserts Mungasio. Mostly in dry periods, women can go for an entire day searching for water and still come back and prepare meals for the family. However, lately, due to changing times, they can buy water from vendors, i.e. bodaboda, and sometimes use the family's cart pulled by two donkeys to search for water. Bodaboda vendors sell a 20l Jerri can for KSH 50 and for their 18 member household they usually need about 500 litres per day.

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They buy more water so that school-going children can have five litres to carry to the nearby school for drinking and handwashing as the school has no water connection or water source.

When the river flows, the water from the river is drunk by the family without boiling despite the fact that they share it with their livestock and wildlife. No cases of water related diseases have been reported so far. However, there are risks of wildlife attacks, Mungasio recalls how an elephant trampled a woman from his neighbouring village as she was close to the stream. At the time the group visited him, Mungasio related that this incident happened so recently that she was not even buried yet.

## Relationship to bigger picture

Water scarcity has become an especially urgent problem for the Maasai in Narok county, which is frequently plagued by droughts. The Maasai women are left with no choice but to walk for miles in search of water that is often contaminated. The Maasai people are in desperate need of water for their survival.

For the Maasai, livestock is more than their primary source of income. They are a cultural necessity. When Maasai greet each other, they do not ask about the other person's family; rather, they ask „*kejaa token oo enkeri*“, meaning



*„how are the animals and family?“ A Maasai prayer translates as „May the Creator give us cattle and children“.*

In Maasai culture, the men herd the animals. When there is a drought, they must take their herd to greater and greater distances, sometimes outside Kenya, in search of water and pasture for the livestock, leaving children and women behind. Their pastoralist culture has never included growing crops because they have always relied on meat, milk and blood from cattle for proteins and calories. However, as the drought scenario has worsened across Narok, a huge number of livestock have succumbed, and herds have become smaller than ever, and the Maasai have had to rely on purchasing rice, maize and potatoes in other areas.

Many Maasai villages are privy to information that it is their right to have access to clean, safe, and affordable water, which should be provided by the national government, the county government, the Office of the Member of Parliament and the office of the Women Representative. They still do not understand why they still cannot access water as required with all the funding available to their County Government, Mp and Women representative.