69. LANDSCAPE RESTORATION FOCUSED ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT UNITS

ACTION AREA	CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS
SOLUTION CLUSTER	CLIMATE ADAPTATION, MITIGATION & RESILIENCE
THEMATIC AREA	INNOVATION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION
SUBMITTED BY	WORLD VISION

WHAT IS THE RISK, SHOCK, STRESS THAT THE SOLUTION IS TRYING TO ADDRESS?

Landscape degradation is a major issue, particularly in dryland areas where rural households are heavily reliant on natural resources. Over-grazing and over-cutting of trees are particular issues in common areas; without vegetative cover, rainfall is unable to infiltrate, causing erosion and gullying on sloping land and flooding downstream. Since the problem is complex and large-scale, individual communities struggle to adequately reverse these drivers; consequently, rural poverty is especially high in these areas.

Climate change is further exacerbating human drivers of landscape degradation and will place further pressure on households in these areas.

As a result, many communities in these areas face conflict over use of natural resources while out-migration is contributing towards youth unemployment in urban areas. Farmers are reluctant to invest in their farming systems if seasonal rainfall is erratic or it is unclear whether the action will improve profits. With fewer trees, many households use manure as fuel, preventing the return of nutrients to their fields. Moreover, governments and private sector are less likely to invest in dryland areas due to their low productivity, and this further exacerbates the drivers of degradation.

Due to the food system linkage, there is a knock-on effect of landscape degradation into the surrounding areas. Markets then rely on products brought in from other regions and rural farmers struggle to compete.

Landscape restoration seeks to address the drivers of landscape degradation, reduce the risk of conflict and help communities adapt and transform in the face of climate change.

HOW DOES THE SOLUTION IMPROVE OR ENHANCE RESILIENCE OF FOOD SYSTEMS?

Landscape restoration is more than just land restoration: it seeks to restore and build resilience in an integrated and holistic manner.

Landscape restoration can enhance the resilience of food systems by: (1) building environmental resilience through a set of agreed actions within the catchment, off and on farm, that improve water buffering, reduce erosion, and allow local communities to manage the natural regeneration of their woodlands and to undertake pruning and selective harvesting; (2) building social resilience, ensuring landscape restoration is community-led, participatory, action-learning oriented, and with associated group-based processes that allow communities to better manage and govern their own natural resources; (3) building economic resilience through more efficient linkage of producer groups, associations or cooperatives with markets.

Landscape restoration applies systems thinking; it seeks to draw on all stakeholders within a catchment or watershed, and to benefit from both local and specialist knowledge on how to address the natural resource issues. Shared experiences generate solutions that are community-owned and managed. Government policies that support these practices are linked to the area, while local by-laws are designed to foster local ownership.

IS THE SOLUTION RELEVANT TO BUILDING FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE?

Absorb, respond/cope, Adapt to shock-affected scenarios and evolving risk scenarios, Transform the Food System when the current Food System is no longer sustainable

IN WHAT REALMS OF INTERVENTION IS THE SOLUTION DESIGNED TO ACT ON RESILIENCE?

Household, Community, Land/sea-scape

WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS THAT WOULD PUT THIS ACTION INTO PLACE?

Policymakers (government), Private (businesses, etc.), Civil (NGOs, etc.), Farmers, Scientists, Indigenous groups

WHAT IS THE POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA? DOES THE IDEA HAVE ANY MEMBER STATES OR POLITICAL INTERESTS? ARE THERE ANY STAKEHOLDERS WORKING ON IT?

This decade is the UN's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which reflects broad political concern over the issue of landscape degradation and it's impact on food systems. However, these issues are complex and require context-specific solutions, as well as strong community buy-in. Our concern is that a one-size-fits-all approach to landscape restoration, such as treating it merely as land restoration, will not suffice. Moreover, sector-focused actions, such as improved water harvesting, need to be tied with the economic system to incentivize the community to sustain their environment. A multi-sector approach is essential.

Groups such as World Agroforestry, Global Landscape Partners, WRI and others (such as World Vision) are increasingly looking to work with local communities to find ways to address landscape degradation. (An example of our work is published here: http://www.etfrn.org/file.php/506/4-2-sola.pdf.)

IS THE SOLUTION APPLICABLE AT GLOBAL LEVEL, OR SPECIFIC CONTEXTS & PARTICULAR COUNTRIES?

The solution proposed is transferable to all contexts, particularly dryland areas. Our experience has been built on programme interventions in drylands of Ethiopia and Kenya.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THIS SOLUTION?

Landscape restoration requires governments to commit funding for landscape restoration and to build an enabling environment that places the community in the centre of these actions. Local partners and stakeholders need to form committees to spearhead implementation.

ARE THERE ANY FINANCIAL SOURCES / FUNDS THAT IS SUPPORTING THIS IDEA?

Climate finance would be supportive of the idea due to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change through landscape restoration initiatives.

HOW DOES THIS SOLUTION CONTRIBUTE TO (A) EMPOWER WOMEN AND COMBAT GENDER INEQUALITIES, AND (B) THE FULFILMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND THE RIGHT TO WATER, (C) MAKE USE OF INNOVATIONS (TECHNOLOGIES, INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES)?

With processes that are gender-responsive and community-led, landscape restoration offers a way to empower women, such as prioritizing women-led value chains, securing women's opinion on water points, establishing savings groups for women, or fostering user rights for women groups

More sustainable linkage to markets through landscape restoration has proven to be a way to reduce out-migration and lower incidence of hunger in target areas, thereby assisting these rural communities, who are often lacking government or private-sector investment, to improve their own human rights.

Use of adaptive and co-learning processes, such as those employed by civil society, can also ensure that solutions and innovations are tested and evaluated by the community before scaling-up.