**PROPOSAL FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN ILLERET WARD, NORTH HORR SUB-COUNTY, MARSABIT COUNTY**

INTRODUCTION:

Illeret Ward is the furthest ward in Marsabit County. The Ward is 600km from Marsabit County headquarters. To access the area, one has to drive through a very rough terrain, a journey which takes about two days. The ward is totally cut off during the rainy season. The weather is very harsh and hot with temperature of between 350 to 400 Celsius during the dry month. The area is also prone to floods during the rainy season. Most of the seasonal rivers which originate from the Ethiopian highlands empting into Lake Turkana traverse through Illeret Ward which is situated on the plains East of Lake Turkana which is susceptible to floods. Drought occurs every two years out of ten, which has serious effects both on livestock which is the mainstay of Daasanach people the only inhabitants of the Ward thus causing famine and diseases among the community.

Who are the Daasanach?

Daasanach are Eastern Cushitic speaking community, totaling about 12,000 people in Kenya but also others straddle the Kenyan Ethiopia boarder, the Ethiopian Daasanach number about 18,000 people. To the both Kenyan and Ethiopian Daasanach the international boarder is just an imaginary line, since communities on both sides of the boarder are either related through kinship or affinity.

Due to climatic factors and the terrain most of the development organization shun away from operating in Illeret. Also the neighboring counties are hostile to each other raising actors of risk for travelers.

CULTURAL ROLE AMONG THE DAASANCH

Daasanach have male dominated culture where decisions are made by elders, who have final say and control on use of natural resources and assets, yet women and youth have only access to but with minimal or no control on both assets and resources but women have certain disparities in their role.

* High level of poverty
* Extensive responsibilities dealing with caring of others
* Domestic violence
* Traditional women’s occupation

**Disparities that increase risks for youth in management**

* Occupational segregation
* Internalized masculinity norms
* Roles in the family and defense level

**Gender experiences that increase capacities for managing disasters situation**

* Women – social networking
* Caring abilities
* Extensive knowledge of communities
* Management of natural environmental resources
* High level of risk awareness

**Youth**

* Professional and work contacts
* Technical abilities
* Limited child care responsibilities

A greater workload is placed on women and youths shoulders, some women spend up to 8 hours a day in search of water (Duncan, 2007) while youth spend up to 14 hours herding the highest recorded in pastoral area.

**Spheres of influence as pertaining to youth and women roles**

* Traditional influence
* Educational influence
* Change of lifestyle
* Religious influence
* Sedentarization
* Erosion of environmental and cultural management
* Outdated cultural practices
* Conventional and traditional collision of environmental/ritual management