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# The Organisation Profile

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The quest for Resilient  
Communities with  
Sustainable  
Livelihoods

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## **THE ORGANIZATION PROFILE**

COTRR is a women-founded, women- led grassroots Non-Government Organisation (NGO) registered in Kenya in 2007. The organization works directly with communities and families, and is committed to bridging community development gaps through its integrated approach by supporting household activities for resilience building, resource and livelihood enhancement for families of the last mile.

In line with its mission, COTRR has endeavoured to support communities to address the myriad of threats and risks to food and livelihood security by facilitating the implementation of an integrated livelihood support and resilience program. The program goal is to support targeted communities become less vulnerable to social, economic, environmental, cultural and health risks. The organization works towards harnessing unrealized economic potential, unutilized indigenous resources and knowledge. These interventions are undertaken in line with community needs and priorities.

### **Vision:**

Resilient Communities with Sustainable Livelihoods.

### **Mission:**

To support community strengths and potentials to initiate innovative and sustainable programmes for long term livelihood security.

### **Our Core Values**

- Participation by all stakeholders
- Empowerment of communities
- Accountability and Professionalism
- Equity and Justice
- Sustainability of programs

### **Program Goal: -**

To facilitate improved quality of life among vulnerable community members by reducing their exposure to climatic and other risks through utilization of available community resources and collective participation to plan, prepare, mitigate and respond to shocks.

## **Key Program Thematic Areas**

COTRR resilience building program is premised on the “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 - Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”, therefore the organization establishes an entry point into the community to learn about its people, traditions, beliefs, indigenous knowledge and way of life from a gender perspective. The organization also studies the community collective effort to overcome the challenges and risks in their lives. In learning, COTRR establishes a trusted relationship with the communities after which a network of community volunteers and farmer promoters is trained and entrusted with the implementation of program activities at the grassroots level. The result is a strong community structure that henceforth spearheads the community resilience strengthening through development and contingency programs.

### **Thematic Area 1: Strengthening Community Structures, Learning and capacity building.**

COTRR engages communities through the volunteer and farmer promoter system to create awareness on risk reduction, identify their hazards and empower the volunteers to drive the community resilient building vehicle. The volunteers are taken through various TOT trainings that enable them put into perspective how their everyday actions either destroy or enhance their capacity. Specific areas of focus include:- community organisation, group dynamics and conflict resolution, project and financial management, basics in Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction(CMDRR) , Community Managed Natural Resource Management (CMNRM) and community level education and advocacy campaigns. This forms the backbone of other activity related trainings. The volunteers are further facilitated to form legal entities (CBOs or self- help groups) that give them access to the government-devolved funds and other resource mobilisation avenues. The use of community own resource persons has ensured commitment to the process and the continuity of activities after the project period.

Program activities are therefore designed to ensure building on indigenous knowledge and skills, particularly on how communities select livelihood enhancement activities.

The organization also strives to build local capacities of existing community groups to adapt and adopt best practices generated by the national research bodies to improve livelihoods.

## **Thematic Area 2: Sustainable Livelihoods (Food Security, Economic Empowerment, Access to Water & Agribusiness)**

The overall goal under this program theme is to diversify and promote climate smart agro-practices among resource limited smallholder farmer groups and agro pastoralists for strengthened livelihood resilience.

### *Key areas of interventions:*

- Support for undertaking alternative livelihood while addressing threats to food and water insecurity.
- Build capacities to boost incomes and cope with drought in order to reduce vulnerability to risks and other threats to livelihood security.
- Assist small holder farmers to diversify their livelihoods through use of available community resources, indigenous knowledge and skills while tapping into relevant innovations.
- Participatory on-farm demonstrations on climate smart livelihood enhancement interventions to help build community resilience to food insecurity and other risks to community survival, targeting small scale farmers.
- Increase household resilience to drought through water harvesting and agro-forestry initiatives.
- Promote growing of drought resistant and economically viable indigenous food crops, high value shrubs and fruit trees.(Sorghum, Finger Millet, Cassava, Moringa Oleifera, mangoes and Avocados).

## **Thematic Area 3: Advocacy on rights Issues:(Education, FGM & Child Marriages)**

This program is three-pronged. On the one hand, COTRR implements scholarship and education support initiatives for 'at risk children' in all COTRR project areas. The program is already supporting over 30 children for secondary and primary school education, as well as 2 students at the university, some of whom were rescued from child marriages. Mentorship sessions are organized to ensure that these children get an all-round development.

On the other, the organization, in partnership with community stakeholders, conducts community advocacy and education campaigns on FGM and Child Marriages in support of pastoralist children access to education. In working with affected communities COTRR employs culturally sensitive strategies to facilitates community dialogues to disseminate information to encourage positive community norms while abandoning retrogressive cultural practices that infringe on children's rights.

Still, COTRR has partnered with SEP (Special Education Professional) and a network of community volunteers to advocate for the rights of children with disabilities. Through community awareness creation and education, the initiative strives to positively influence affected families and community attitudes towards children with special needs in order to reduce stigma and discrimination.

#### **Thematic Area 4: Mainstreaming Issues (Gender, Environment and Climate Change)**

In its endeavour to significantly contribute to sustainable development at grassroots level, COTRR is deliberate in mainstreaming key cross cutting issues of gender, climate change and This is achieved through taking into account women's and men's, boys and girls' needs, perspectives and knowledge as well as their experiences, skills and interests.

Apart from developing and applying gender sensitive criteria and indicators, the organization also engages in a deep analysis of the needs, priorities, roles of women and men as well as the integration of specific actions to address gender based biases.

Implementation of livelihood enhancement initiatives is heavily inclined toward climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions as well as environmental conservation strategies. The organization endeavours to partner with communities and other innovators to tap into resilience building innovations that support minimizing the effects of climate change, raise productivity and increase household incomes.

Participatory methodologies are utilized to embed gender mainstreaming and other cross cutting issues throughout all stages of the project cycle.

#### **COTRR Program Implementation Strategy.**

- Strong community engagement & participation of key stakeholders in community capacity building and organization. There is purposeful effort to transfer knowledge and skills to community volunteers and leaders through a TOT methodology to ensure availability of skills in the community. This also aids in knowledge management processes at the community level.
- Strive for inclusiveness of socially and culturally disadvantaged groups like women, resource limited farmers and other vulnerable populations. Due to its strong grassroots engagement, COTRR supports communities scan their social, cultural and economic environments to establish the factors that influence resilience building outcomes. That includes policies that hinder or enable progress, attitudes, social norms, practices.



- COTRR resilience building interventions target both communities and households vulnerability level reduction. The household level interventions are earmarked to influence livelihood enhancement decisions and actions. At the community level, resource limited farmers and at- risk groups are empowered on how to make decisions that improve individual and household survivability and community preparedness.
- Seek to have improved productivity and incomes through climate change adaptation interventions including diversification of sustainable livelihood streams in collaboration with government and academic research institutions.
- Generate learning for the organization and policy makers through continuous coaching, monitoring, evaluation and documentation for more impactful project management practices.

### **COTRR Resilience Building Conceptual Framework.**

The overall goal of the organization is to facilitate improved quality of life among vulnerable community members by reducing their exposure to climatic risks and improving their collective action to plan, prepare, mitigate and respond to shocks. This is done on the premise that improved capacity reduces exposure to risks thus improving the quality of life for target communities. COTRR identifies community organization and capacity building as a central thread in improving community resilience. It is the conviction of the organisation that organized and skilled people are able to mobilize and prudently use available resources to respond or adapt to livelihood threats. In pursuing this theory, the organization uses an integrated approach to economic empowerment, while providing for targeted attention to those at the extreme threat of social exclusion and marginalization, including girls, herder boys and ultra-poor households and those taking care of children with disabilities. Economic empowerment is aimed at building assets at the household level and involves use of appropriate approaches to save lives of household members whose assets have been eroded by climatic/weather shocks.