

PARTNERSHIP FOR RESILIENCE & ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NORTHERN KENYA (PREG II) PROGRAM

Impact Evaluation Brief: Endline Survey



Tommy Trenchard / Save the Children

The Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Northern Kenya (PREG II) program was implemented from 2018 to 2023 in nine counties of Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). The overall goal of the program was to increase resilience and economic growth among pastoralist communities in the ASALs.

The program's period of implementation was marked by escalating shock exposure with repeated episodes of both drought and flooding, restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and food price inflation. Livestock disease, theft, and losses were major downstream impacts of drought and flooding.

The purpose of the PREG II impact evaluation was to determine whether and how the program's package of interventions, including resilience interventions and humanitarian assistance, enhanced households' resilience to such shocks. Did it help them recover from the shocks they faced over the program period? Did it strengthen their resilience *capacities*—the underlying determinants of resilience? The evaluation also examined impacts on three key well-being outcomes: household food insecurity, poverty, and child malnutrition.

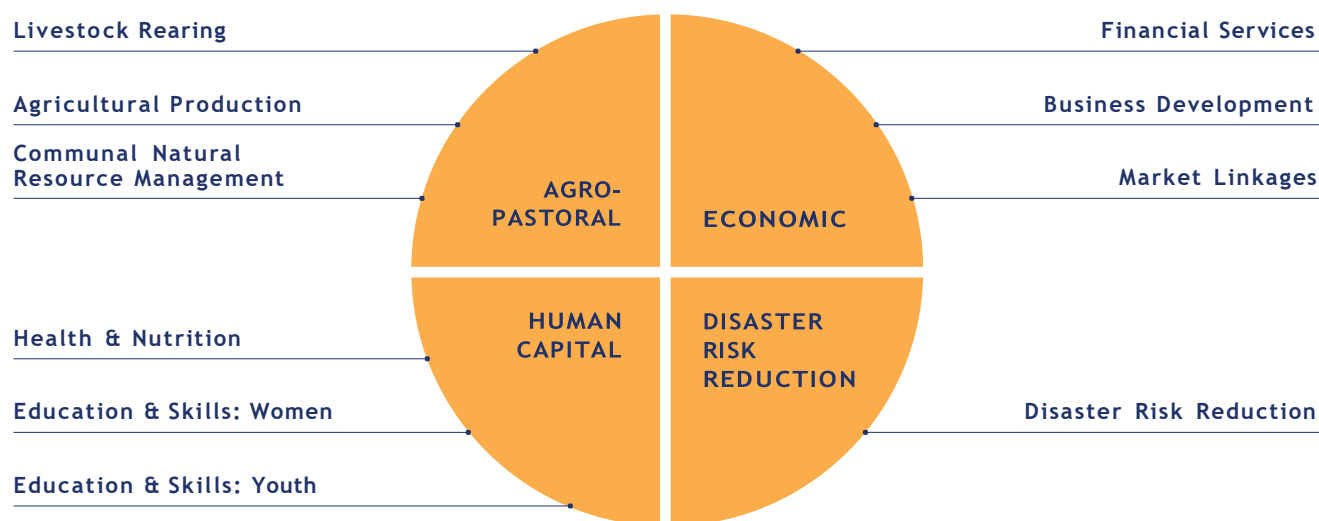
This brief reports the key findings of the evaluation, summarized here:

- The PREG II program had strong positive impacts on households' resilience to shocks. It did so by strengthening a broad range of households' absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities, essential foundations for sustainable resilience.
- It also reduced food insecurity, poverty, and child malnutrition in the ASALs.
- These impacts were achieved by implementing resilience-strengthening interventions spanning multiple sectors using the strategy of "Comprehensive Resilience Programming" (CRP) and providing humanitarian assistance in response to shocks as they escalated over the program period.
- Active participation of households in interventions, beyond simple exposure, was critical for strengthening households' absorptive capacities and reducing poverty.
- PREG II strengthened governance through improving county and ward government capacities to coordinate development partner activities and to provide services to communities.



PREG II Implementation Areas within Kenya

PREG II cross-sectoral programming: The ten intervention sets



PREG II PROGRAMMING

To enhance impacts on resilience and well-being, the program employed a strategy of sequencing, layering, and cross-sectoral integration of interventions, or “Comprehensive Resilience Programming” (CRP). A wide variety of cross-sectoral interventions were implemented, ranging from enhancing livestock productivity to disaster risk reduction. A central pillar of the program’s programming approach was support to governance capacities and practices. Another pillar was effective Humanitarian-Development-Peace coherence efforts through integrative programming and shock-responsive humanitarian assistance.

THE IMPACT EVALUATION

The PREG II impact evaluation was conducted in all nine counties of the program area. Quantitative analysis took place for a sample of 2,394 panel households located in 108 communities. Both household and community surveys were administered. Complementary qualitative data were collected in 24 of the survey communities at endline, as well as with county and ward government officials, through focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Asha Leila / Save the Children



Following the operational definition of resilience of the study—the ability to recover from shocks—resilience was measured using the indicator “Realized Resilience,” the change in food security between the baseline (September 2018) and endline (October/November 2023) surveys. A subjective measure of resilience, the *perceived* ability of households to recover from shocks, was also employed. Indexes of households’ absorptive capacities (**minimizing exposure to shocks and recovering quickly**), adaptive capacities (**proactive and informed choices about alternative livelihood strategies**) and transformative capacities (**systems-level factors, such as governance and infrastructure, for more lasting resilience**) were formed based on a total of 22 specific capacities. These specific capacities are the actionable policy levers for strengthening households’ resilience.

Evaluating the impact of a program requires a treatment and a comparison group, the latter representing what would have happened to households if they did not engage in program interventions. This evaluation identified treatment and comparison groups that were appropriately similar at baseline using a rigorous impact evaluation technique, Difference-in-Differences Propensity Score Matching. The technique was employed to identify matched treatment and comparison groups for household exposure to the program’s ten cross-sectoral intervention sets and to CRP, which is the main treatment for evaluating the overall impact of the program. Exposure to CRP is defined as living in a community in which at least seven out of the ten intervention sets were implemented. Because direct *participation* of households in interventions (e.g., joining a savings group) has been found in other settings to have differing, often stronger, impacts than only indirect *exposure*, separate treatment/comparison groups for participation in interventions were also identified. Finally, to evaluate the impact of humanitarian assistance, treatment/comparison groups were formed based on households’ access to four types: food aid, cash assistance, Food-for-Work and Cash-for-Work.

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FINDINGS

Between the baseline and endline surveys, the average household's food security declined by 22 percent, indicating that not all households were resilient to the shocks they faced. Meanwhile, households' resilience *capacities* improved over the period and poverty declined, yet food insecurity and child malnutrition¹ increased. With these trends in mind, the evaluation estimated the impact of resilience interventions and humanitarian assistance on the outcomes.

Impact of Exposure to Comprehensive Resilience Programming

IMPACT ON RESILIENCE. Household exposure to resilience-strengthening interventions spanning multiple sectors did indeed strengthen their resilience. Exposure to CRP raised the percentage of households resilient to the shocks they experienced over the program period by an estimated 15.5 percentage points (see figure).

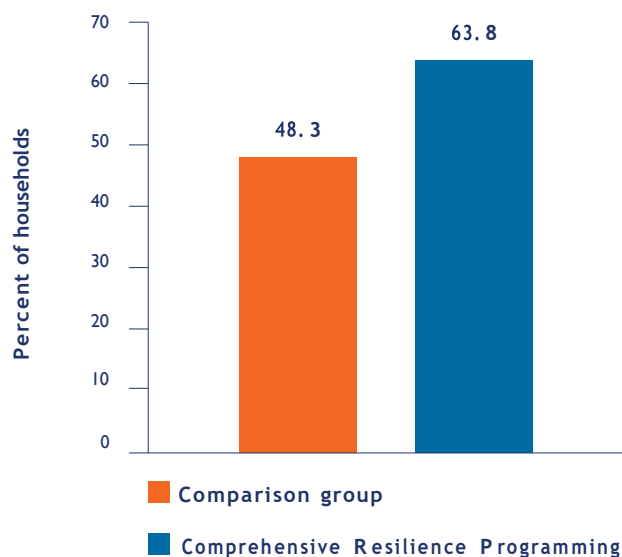
Further analysis of the data shows that the impact is not just due to an abundance of interventions, but because of the synergies generated by simultaneous implementation of cross-sectoral interventions in the same geographic locations.

IMPACT ON RESILIENCE CAPACITIES. CRP also had strong, positive impacts on households' absorptive and transformative capacities, contributing to the recorded improvements in them over the program period. It strengthened a wide range of specific capacities, including:

- Bonding social capital
- Access to informal and formal safety nets
- Availability of hazard insurance
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Access to financial resources, markets, and services
- Women's empowerment
- Community social cohesion
- Governance.



Exposure to Comprehensive Resilience Programming increased the percent of households resilient to shocks

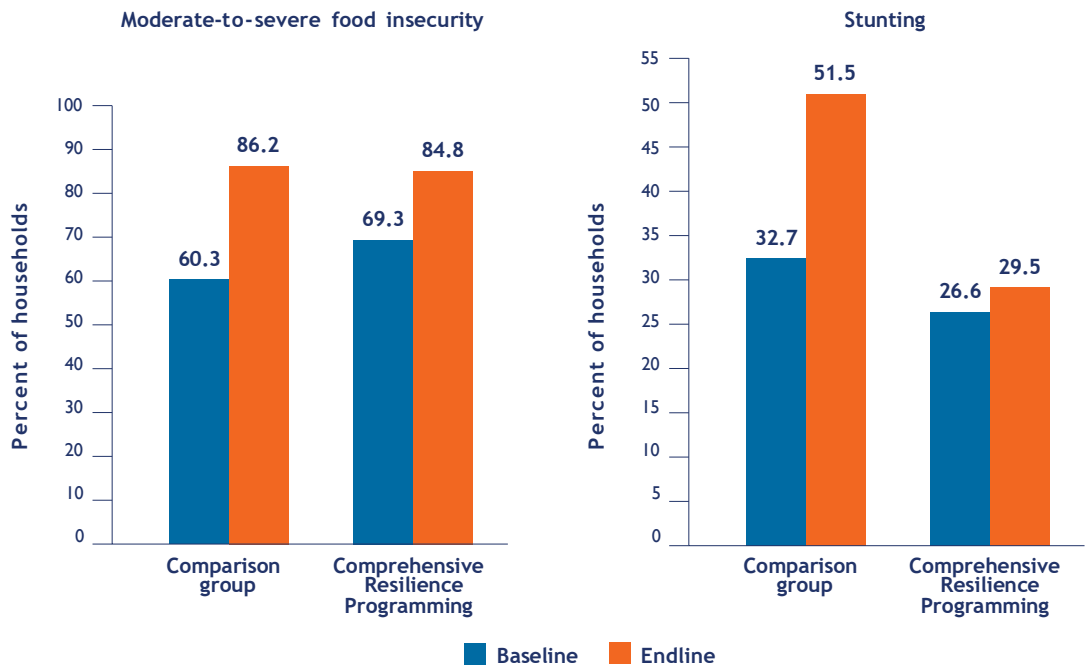


Among households living in villages where CRP was implemented, 63.8 percent recovered. Only 48.3 percent in the comparison group did. The difference is the estimated impact.

¹ This trend was found for households with children under five at both baseline and endline, the panel sample for which impact evaluation took place. Child malnutrition declined among the group of all families with children under five.

IMPACT ON WELL-BEING. Households exposed to CRP experienced smaller increases in moderate-to-severe food insecurity and stunting between baseline and endline than those in the comparison group. Among households living in CRP villages, food insecurity increased by only 15.5 percentage points. It increased by 25.9 percentage points in the comparison group. The difference is the estimated impact of 10.4 points. Similarly, the increase in stunting in the CRP group is only 2.9 percentage points while the increase in the comparison group is 18.8. The estimated impact is thus 15.9 points. Exposure to CRP had no statistically significant impact on poverty.

Impact of exposure to Comprehensive Resilience Programming:
CRP slowed increases in food insecurity and stunting



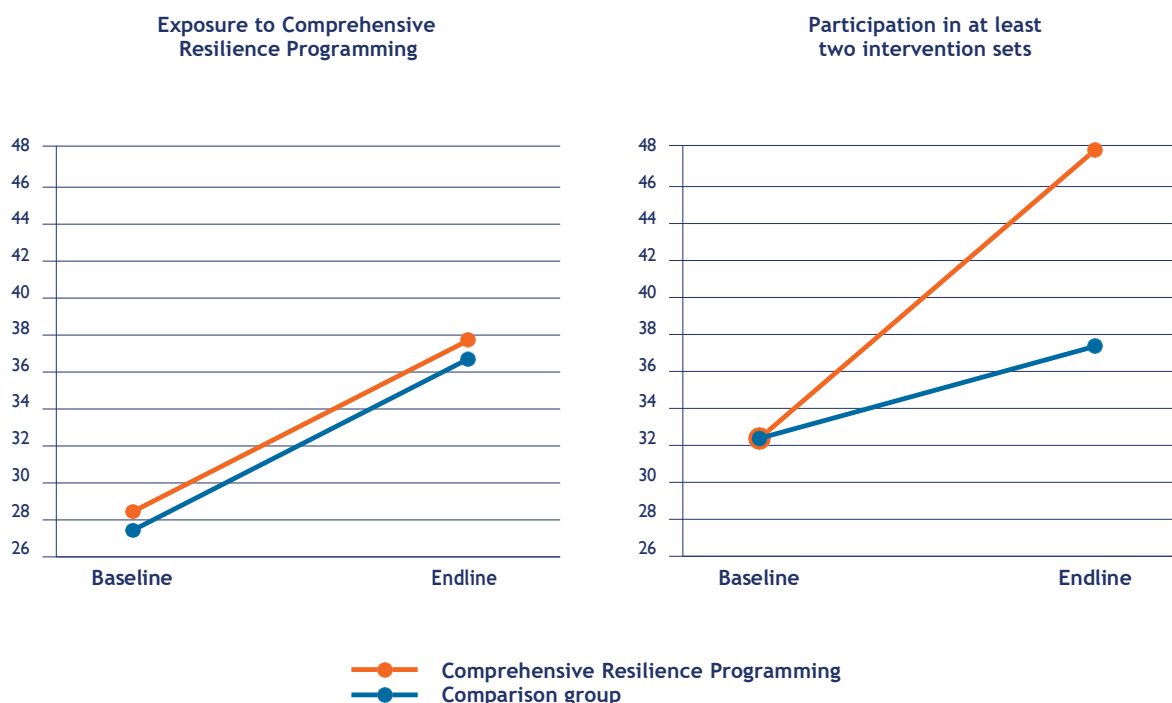
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Did Direct Participation of Households Make a Difference?

Direct participation in interventions had stronger impacts on some outcomes than indirect exposure and was critical for inducing any beneficial change in others. Participation in just two or more of the ten intervention sets led to a 7.6 percentage-point reduction in poverty and thus contributed to the overall reduction in poverty in the program area.

Direct participation by households in cross-sectoral interventions also had positive impacts on households' adaptive capacity, while exposure to CRP had no impact (see figure).

Direct participation of households was needed to strengthen households' adaptive capacities



For exposure to CRP (at least seven intervention sets), the treatment group (orange line) and comparison group (blue line) show no difference in trend. However for participation (in at least two intervention sets, a much lower bar), the treatment group has a far steeper upward trend.

The additional specific capacities on which direct participation had a positive impact are:

- Holdings of cash savings
- Asset ownership
- Bridging and linking social capital
- Aspirations and confidence to adapt
- Livelihood diversity
- Human capital
- Exposure to information.

Without such direct participation by household members, these improvements would not have taken place.

Mark Njoroge / Save the Children



What worked? Impact of the Ten Intervention Sets

To realize the greatest impacts on households' resilience, programs should focus on the interventions that have been shown to bolster households' resilience capacities and well-being the most. Examination of the relative impacts of the ten PREG II intervention sets, whether through exposure or direct household participation, found that all intervention sets had some beneficial impacts. Those with beneficial impacts on the most outcomes are:

- Communal natural resource management (CNRM) (4 outcomes)
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR) (4)
- Financial services (3)
- Market linkages (3)
- Youth human capital (3)

Beneficial impacts of the ten intervention sets on households' resilience, resilience capacities, and well-being

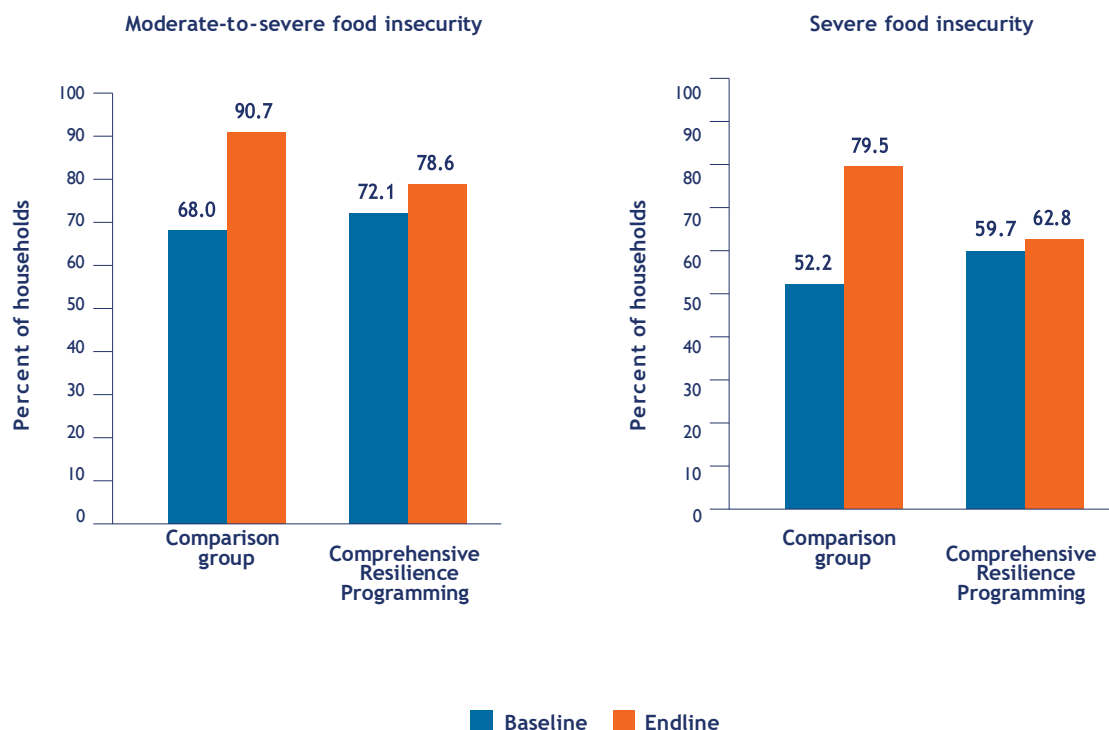
Intervention set	Resilience	Resilience capacities	Food insecurity	Poverty	Child malnutrition
Livestock Rearing				●	
Agricultural Production				●	
Communal Natural Resource Management	●	●	●	●	
Financial Services	●		●		●
Business Development					●
Market Linkages	●		●	●	
Disaster Risk Reduction	●	●	●		●
Health and Nutrition		●	●		
Women's Human Capital		●			●
Youth's Human Capital	●			●	●

Blue circles indicate a positive and statistically significant (beneficial) impact.
Orange circles indicate a negative and statistically significant (beneficial) impact.

Impact of Humanitarian Assistance

The evaluation found that the humanitarian assistance provided to households over the course of the PREG II program had widespread, positive impacts. All four types of assistance—emergency food aid, emergency cash aid, food-for-work (FFW), and cash-for-work (CFW)—strengthened households' resilience to shocks and reduced food insecurity. Access to food assistance, for example, raised the percentage of households resilient to shocks by 11.6 percentage points. Consistent with the longer-term livelihood goals of FFW and CFW, only these types of assistance helped to sustain households' resilience capacities over the period of escalating shocks. CFW also helped reduce child stunting.

Access to emergency food assistance reduced food insecurity



Among households living in CRP villages, moderate-to-severe food insecurity increased by 6.5 percentage points. It increased by 22.7 points in the comparison group. The difference is the estimated impact of 16.2 points. The similar estimated impact for severe food insecurity is 24.2.

Impact of PREG II on Governance Capacities

Qualitative data analysis showed that PREG II strengthened governance capacities at county and ward levels. Particularly beneficial impacts were improvements in county governments' effectiveness at playing a coordination role with all development partners and in staff capacity for service provision to communities. As a result of PREG II support, county governments are better able to assist Ward Development Planning Committees.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

What can we learn from the experience of PREG II to enhance the effectiveness of future resilience-strengthening programs in the ASALs? Based on this impact evaluation, recommendations for programming include:

- Scale up Comprehensive Resilience Programming to take advantage of the synergies achieved by implementing cross-sectoral interventions in the same geographic locations. PREG II interventions should be seen as demonstration activities to be scaled up by Kenya-based actors such as county governments and the National Drought Management Authority in the future;
- Support the direct participation of households in interventions (rather than only indirect exposure) to enhance program impacts in general, but especially to reduce poverty and strengthen households' adaptive capacities;
- Continue to focus on the types of interventions found here to have the most widespread impacts: DRR, CNRM, financial services, market linkages, and youth human capital. Determine how the impacts of the other types of interventions can be enhanced;
- Effective Humanitarian-Development-Peace coherence efforts are critical to resilience programming. Continue to respond to shocks with appropriate forms of humanitarian assistance (emergency assistance as well as food/cash-for-work) to help households maintain their well-being in the short term and enhance their resilience capacities in the long term.
- Strengthening the capacities of ward and county governments is important for the continuation of resilience building after PREG II programming ends.

ABOUT THE PREG II PROGRAM

Stated Goal: Increasing resilience and economic growth among pastoralist communities in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).

Reach: PREG II aimed to reach households in nine of the 23 northern Kenyan ASAL counties.

Primary Focus Areas: Livestock rearing, agricultural production, communal natural resource management, financial services, business development, market linkages, disaster risk reduction, health and nutrition, women's and youth's human capital, and governance.

Baseline Impact Evaluation Survey: Conducted in September 2018. Sample size: 2,820.

Recurrent Monitoring Surveys (RMS): RMS I was conducted from September 2019 to June 2020 in four rounds (N=616). RMS II was conducted from February 2022 to January 2023 in four rounds (N=729).

Endline Impact Evaluation Survey: Conducted from October to November 2023. Sample size: 2,394 households (panel with 15.1 percent attrition rate from baseline).

Funding Sources: PREG II was a five-year USAID program, financed through Feed the Future.

Government of Kenya Partners:

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (State Department of Livestock)
Ministry of Devolution
State Department for the Development of ASALs
National Drought Management Authority
Ministry of Water and Sanitation (Water Trust Fund and Water Resource Management Authority)
Ministry of Health (Public Health Department)
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Kenya National Drought Mitigation Authority
Country governments: Baringo, Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit, Mandera, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana and Wajir.

Implementing Organizations:

ACDI/VOCA, Act Change Transform (ACT) Kenya, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), AMREF Health Africa, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, Concern Worldwide, Chemonics, DAI Global, LLC, Deloitte, FHI 360, Food for the Hungry, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps, National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK), Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), Palladium Group, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), Research Triangle Incorporated (RTI), Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance (RACIDA), Save the Children, State University of New York (SUNY), Strathmore University, Tetra Tech, Turkana Development Trust (TDT), UNICEF, Urban Institute, Wajir South Development Agency (WASDA), World Food Program (WFP), World Vision.

The study reported on in this brief was conducted by TANGO, International and managed by Save the Children under the USAID Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) award.

The companion technical report is:

Smith, Lisa C., Doug Brown, Darren Hedley and Tim Frankenberger. (2025). *Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Northern Kenya (PREG II) Impact Evaluation: Endline Survey Technical Report*. Tucson, AZ: Technical Assistance to NGOs (TANGO), International.

