

# AMALIMA LOKO BRIEF

## COMMUNITY VISIONING

Amalima Loko’s Community Visioning approach is the foundation on which the program builds people-centered efforts to improve food security and resilience, and to promote sustainable development. Rather than setting development priorities externally through a top-down process, Community Visioning empowers local residents to set a course for their communities by defining their own goals and priorities. Combining consortium partner ORAP’s locally proven community mobilization methodologies with global best practices from the Mercy Corps CATALYZE approach, this process serves as the program entry-point for intensive engagement with each of the 562 villages in the program area. Guided by exercises from a toolkit developed by Amalima Loko, this locally-led process brings together community members, civil society, government and traditional leaders to collaboratively determine each community’s unique resources, assets, challenges, and priorities and to create roadmaps, known as Village Action Plans, for achieving their goals.

This collaborative process is undertaken in three phases:

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- **562** Village Action Plans and **89** Ward Transformation Plans developed.
- **29,862** citizens participated (60% female, 40% male; 26% youth; 601 persons with disabilities)
- **99** villages have begun implementing collective actions from their Village Action Plans using community resources or through partnerships with private sector, government, and NGOs.
- **7,242** community members participated in collective actions.
- Amalima Loko has supported communities by delivering prioritized actions including drilling and rehabilitating boreholes and completing conservation works to reduce erosion threatening public assets such as schools, health facilities and grazing lands.

### 1. PREPARATION & PLANNING

Introduce Community Visioning process to a community and local government stakeholders, then support the community to assess their resources, challenges, and risks; identify development priorities, and create action plans to deliver solutions.



### 2. COMMUNITY ACTION

Community implements priority activities from their action plan using resources mobilized either locally or externally. Women, youth, and marginalized groups are intentionally engaged in these actions.



### 3. SUSTAINING

Amalima Loko continues to partner with the community to identify and build resources, skills, capacities, and linkages needed to sustain community planning and action after program support ends.

## 1. PREPARATION AND PLANNING STAGE

Amalima Loko begins the Community Visioning process by conducting introductory meetings at village- and ward-level to build understanding of, support for, and consensus around, the Community Visioning process with community leadership. Once a plan for rolling out the Community Visioning process has been defined, the program starts to engage the wider community, building trusted relationships and fostering a sense of local ownership and enthusiasm for the process. During this period, Amalima Loko works closely with each community to identify different socio-economic groups and intentionally ensure inclusion and representative participation of those groups.

## Situational Analysis and Vulnerability Ranking

The Community Visioning process itself begins with communities conducting a situational analysis and vulnerability ranking that articulates a common understanding of the village's history, resources, challenges, and aspirations. To do this, communities engage through a series of meetings and exercises to develop a **Village Profile** that outlines community dynamics, assets, and shared concerns – and establishes a basis for measuring development progress. This step deepens shared understanding in the community, surfaces core community values and identifies emerging trends and issues.

A Community Visioning toolkit (including participatory exercises such as: Historical timeline, Community Resource Map, Socio-economic Map, Seasonal Calendar, and Vulnerability Ranking) guides this situational analysis and vulnerability ranking. The tools were carefully assessed by Amalima Loko resilience, gender, and social inclusion specialists to ensure they are risk-informed and employ a social inclusion lens to effectively draw out resilience factors and social dynamics. Once complete, Village Profiles are shared with the wider community for further discussion and validation. Village Profiles serve as a launching point for communities to then discuss and agree development priorities that are aspirational yet achievable, starting at the individual level and layering up to community level. These goals are then collated and articulated through a **Vision Statement**.

### Village Action Planning Meetings

Using the Village Profile and Vision Statement, communities develop a comprehensive “road map” called a **Village Action Plan** which describes how the community will achieve their vision and objectives. Communities now move from identifying aspirations, challenges, needs, strengths, and capacities to defining pragmatic and practical plans. Community members develop a common view of specific issues and then agree concrete steps or actions that could be taken to achieve the vision they have crafted for their shared future. This collaborative problem-solving exercise is an important step in building consensus and local support for proposed interventions and solutions.

### Ward Planning Meetings

Amalima Loko brings local participants involved in the Village Action Planning and Watershed Cluster Planning processes together to represent the interests of their community and integrate their plans into ward-level development plans referred to as **Ward Transformation Plans**. Ward planning meetings include local leadership: chiefs, headmen, religious leaders, and government stakeholders including councillors, village heads, ministry officials, and Rural District Council (RDC) and District Development Coordinator representatives. Ward Transformation Plans identify, prioritize and plan development actions in a ward for the next five to ten years.

## 2. COMMUNITY ACTION STAGE

RDCs use Ward Transformation Plans to coordinate implementation of development activities in a ward. With ward priorities in mind, Village Development Committees work with Community Action Groups (including Village Savings and Loans groups, Care Groups, Community Health Clubs, Male Champion Groups, youth groups, and Asset Management Committees) to plan and implement activities outlined in their Village Action Plans. Amalima Loko supports government and traditional leadership to engage effectively with CAGs to deliver community- and household-level interventions using locally available assets and capacities. This empowers groups, builds confidence, and strengthens social cohesion. Amalima Loko also trains community leaders and volunteers on leadership, monitoring, accountability, conflict resolution, and team management. Amalima Loko provides direct funding and support for high-priority projects beyond the capacity of local communities, such as for improving: water management, land use, income generation, or nutrition and health.

## 3. SUSTAINING STAGE

As communities move from planning to implementation, Amalima Loko shifts focus to identification and development of the resources, capacities and linkages needed to sustain community planning and action after the program ends. Communities are encouraged to set benchmarks to monitor progress towards



achieving their vision over time. Activities in this stage include annual review meetings, periodic community progress review meetings, learning visits, and local celebrations and exhibitions to showcase achievements and motivate communities. As the program winds down, its support for Community Action Groups is throttled back as they, and local stakeholders, gain the support and capacity to drive their own development process.

