



## USAID Nawiri Learning Brief: Desk Study on Understanding the Market Systems Context and its Implications on Acute Malnutrition in Marsabit and Isiolo Counties

### Background

This brief presents key findings from the desk review that sought to answer two main questions:

- i) What major food commodities sold and purchased in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties have the potential to help address acute malnutrition?
- ii) What is the capacity of acutely malnourished communities in Isiolo and Marsabit to reach and benefit from food value chains?

The literature review was complemented with telephone key informant interviews and question guides sent via e-mail. A market-based systems approach was used as the analytical framework to identify ways of addressing underlying constraints in market transactions, their supporting functions and the institutional environment in which markets operate, with attention to factors which are preventing markets from effectively contributing to positive nutritional outcomes. The study findings are informing Nawiri Phase II program design.

### Summary Findings and Lessons Learned

- Marsabit and Isiolo Counties are served by the “North-Central market corridor”, through which food commodities flow from Nairobi food markets to Isiolo through Meru, from Nakuru to Isiolo, Samburu to Marsabit and Moyale, and through which mainly processed food flows from the Ethiopian side of the Moyale border back to Marsabit town.

- Key food commodities identified along the North-Central corridor include cereals and beans, fruit and vegetables, processed food (rice, sugar, maize meal, wheat flour, pasta, etc.), livestock and livestock products (meat and milk, eggs, chicken). Maize, rice and beans are the main cereals and pulses purchased and consumed in Marsabit and Isiolo. Fish is mainly consumed by fisher folk communities (e.g., the Dassanech community in Ileret, the Elmolo in Marsabit (Lake Turkana) and urban communities in Marsabit and Isiolo. The supply of milk and vegetables is highly seasonal, both being less available and more expensive during dry seasons. Like vegetables, milk is abundant during the short rains (October to December and long rains (March to May, when pasture and water is generally plentiful, unlike during dry seasons and droughts.
- In both counties, food availability, affordability, acceptability and appropriateness highly affect the capacity of vulnerable households and communities to access nutritious foods. Identified challenges to addressing acute malnutrition in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties include climate variability, post-harvest losses, limited producer capacity and poor extension services, weak hygiene and food safety risks, poverty/ low income, poor market access, limited market information, limited value addition/ processing, limited access to social security networks (SSN), minimal collective action, awareness and knowledge, lack of credit services, conflict
- The volatility of food commodity prices is also influenced by the distance of tertiary markets from hub markets in food producing areas. Transportation and transaction costs are passed on to consumers, making food more expensive and less affordable in remote markets which typically serve the most vulnerable communities. These issues are explored further in the accompanying CRS Nawiri Learning Brief on *Understanding existing and potential private sector and market systems' contexts, including how they impact and could impact on acute malnutrition in the ASALs, field assessment.*

## Applying the Findings and Lessons Learned

Key Lessons Learned	Adaptation or implication	Link to the DIP or TOC
Overall, food availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability and appropriateness highly affect the capacity of vulnerable households to access nutritious foods in rural parts of Marsabit and Isiolo Counties	Nawiri should support sustainable context appropriate, long-term approaches, to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the shelf life of food commodities, to help ensure year-round supply of nutritious foods.</li> <li>2. Improve supply side of the market by supporting private sector producers to enhance their production volumes, efficiency, availability and reach (for remote vulnerable community access).</li> <li>3. Support households to enhance milk, meat, eggs and fish</li> </ol>	P1 & P4

	<p>production and preservation to help bridge food deficits.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Enhance vulnerable household access to food, including by supporting contextualized IGAs.</li> <li>5. Enhance awareness and knowledge on nutritious foods through contextualized SBC approaches.</li> </ol>	
<p>Most foods consumed by vulnerable communities in Isiolo and Marsabit are highly seasonal, perishable and come from producing areas in other counties or from across the Kenya-Ethiopia border, where they are cheaper. Communities could be supported to enhance local food preservation and processing practice, to help ensure lean season availability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nawiri will adapt contextualized, locally appropriate food preservation and processing techniques to help ensure nutrient availability in lean seasons, to lessen the adverse effects of seasonal food fluctuations.</li> <li>• Nawiri will support supply side of the market improvements, e.g., by supporting private sector producers to enhance their production volumes (within vulnerable communities which fall under P4 livelihood interventions), and efficiency. This aims to help ensure improved food availability and access to remote vulnerable communities.</li> <li>• Nawiri food systems' interventions will foster Business to Business (B2B) market linkages, between nutritious food sellers from food source counties and businesses in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties. This seeks to contribute to reduced product costs, making nutritious food items more affordable and available in vulnerable communities.</li> </ul>	<p>P1</p>
<p>Food prices in the two counties are relatively higher than those in neighboring counties, primarily due to poor roads and long distances between producing areas and consumer markets. Relatively high food prices make many food items unaffordable to vulnerable households and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nawiri interventions will support women in particular to use household income to improve family health and nutrition, including that of young children, pregnant and lactating women and people with disabilities. Nawiri interventions will also support contextualized income generating activities (IGA), to increase vulnerable household income.</li> <li>• Nawiri household cash transfers under the Adapted Nutrition Friendly Graduation Model pilot will improve household access to foods offered for sale in the markets, by enhancing vulnerable household incomes thus increasing their purchasing power.</li> </ul>	<p>P1, SP 1.2</p> <p>P4 &amp; P1</p>

<p>Some households and/ or communities are not adequately aware of the nutritional benefits of some foods. E.g., where communities do not find fish desirable or acceptable, and/ or have suboptimal food preparation skills.</p>	<p>Nawiri interventions will enhance awareness and knowledge of nutritious foods through contextualized Social and Behavioral Change approaches, including on the health and nutrition benefits of locally available foods like milk, meat, fish, eggs and vegetables, to promote more nutritious food consumption among vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>P1 &amp; P2</p>
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[See the full Nawiri report on Understanding the Role and Potential of The Private Sector in Addressing Acute Malnutrition in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties Desk Review Report](#)



[See the full Nawiri report on Understanding the Role and Potential of The Private Sector in Addressing Acute Malnutrition in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties Field Study Report](#)

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