

# “Come and Count Our Bones”

## *Community Voices from Lake Turkana on the Impacts of Gibe III Dam*

By Narissa Allibhai,  
Field Research Consultant,  
International Rivers

January 2015



# Acknowledgements

A big thank you to:

- Lori Pottinger, East Africa Program Manager, International Rivers, for assigning me this project and providing constant invaluable support, feedback, and ideas throughout;
- Ikal Angelei, Founder and Director, Friends of Lake Turkana, for facilitating my fieldwork, providing me with the necessary resources, and making me feel at home in Lodwar;
- Catherine Fong, International Rivers, for hours of editing, designing, formatting, and bringing everything together.
- Michael Peikan, Guide and Translator in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia, for doing more than just your job and being a brotherly companion throughout our work together;
- Each and every interviewee, for taking the time to speak with me and share your views.

# Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
BMU	Beach Management Unit
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
EEPCO	Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FG	Focus Group
FoLT	Friends of Lake Turkana
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICBC	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NORAD	The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
TWADO	Turkana Women's Advocacy and Development Organisation

# Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. COMMUNITY VOICES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. IMPORTANCE OF THE LAKE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. AWARENESS OF AND VIEWS ON THE GIBE III DAM</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>C. SUGGESTIONS ON ACTION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>D. MESSAGES</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>E. PERSONAL FEATURES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>APPENDIX I: LIST OF INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>22</b>

# 1. Introduction

Lake Turkana is the world's largest desert lake (Avery, 2013), a World Heritage site, and livelihood source to at least 300,000 indigenous peoples in Kenya (Carr, 2012). Hydropower and irrigation developments underway on the Omo River, upstream in Ethiopia, portend ecological collapse of the lake and fisheries, and threaten the delicate survival means of already resource-scarce communities.

The Gibe III Dam is the third of five planned hydroelectric dams on the Omo River in Ethiopia. Gibe III will be one of the tallest dams in Africa (Allibhai, 2014) and was designed to produce 1,870 megawatts (MW) of hydropower per year. As much as 900 MW will be exported, of which 500 MW will go to Kenya (Araya, 2013). The dam will also enable significant amounts of water to be abstracted from the river to irrigate large sugarcane and cotton plantations (Carr, 2012). The total planned irrigated land area is almost equal to the entirety of the current irrigated area in Kenya (Avery, 2013), and these crops are highly water-intensive.

Lake Turkana gets approximately 90% of its inflow from the Omo River. Studies by an independent water resources expert have shown that with up to half of this inflow being abstracted for irrigation, the lake level will drop by over 20 metres; its average depth is ~30 metres (Avery, 2013). The consequences from this drop will be catastrophic for Lake Turkana's delicate ecosystem and the lives of 300,000 people who depend on it, in addition to having far-reaching environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Ethiopian and international law requires that a comprehensive, transparent and internationally verifiable environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) is carried out for any proposed development activity prior to approval (FDRE, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2012). The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EPCO) released an ESIA three years after dam construction began. This ESIA was not independent and did not consider downstream effects of the commercial plantations, nor of the planned Gibe IV and V dams (Human Rights Watch, 2012), while impacts on Lake Turkana were ignored (Avery, 2013).

Ethiopia refers to its relocation processes as "voluntary villagization," but international bodies have documented severe human rights abuses in this process (Human Rights Watch, 2012). In 2010, after carrying out preliminary evaluations, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the EIB (European Investment Bank) withdrew considerations for funding Gibe III. Apart from investments directly from the Ethiopian government, the only known outside investors are the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), which is funding the dam's turbines, and the World Bank, which is funding power transmission lines from near the dam site to Kenya (Bosshard, 2012; Survival International, 2014).

International Rivers commissioned this research to record the voices of people in communities directly dependent on Lake Turkana. These people have not been consulted on the developments upstream on the Omo River, and have not been officially informed. There are currently no known plans to compensate them. The national, regional, and international conversations currently on-going on the Gibe III dam have mostly involved civil society and government. This research aims to bring in the opinions of some of those who will be most directly affected by the impacts of the Gibe III Dam and the irrigated plantations.

The fieldwork mainly consisted of travel around Turkana County, which borders Lake Turkana to the west, and interviewing individuals and focus groups, including women, men, youth, elders, fishermen, pastoralists and members of the county government. Interviews also included a focus-group discussion with residents and a mix of environmental CSOs from all over Marsabit, the county bordering Lake Turkana to the east. Questions were asked on the importance of the lake, awareness of the upstream

developments, thoughts on these developments, suggestions on what can be done, and messages to the government. The findings are summarized in this report as well as a short video available online.

Video link: <http://youtu.be/wireovN1L0k>

## 2. Community Voices

The bulk of this report consists of direct quotes by community members interviewed during a month of travel across Turkana, the county west of Lake Turkana. It is organized into the following sections:

- A. Importance of the Lake
- B. Awareness of and Views on Gibe III Dam
- C. Suggestions on Action
- D. Messages
- E. Personal Features

### A. Importance of the Lake

The 300,000 indigenous people living around Lake Turkana depend on it to carry out fishing, pastoralism, or agriculture. Fishing now forms a core part of local livelihoods, and fish are sold regionally – among other places, in Nairobi, the Rift Valley, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Uganda. During seasons with low fish catches (lower water flows), fishermen are forced to fish in areas that they know belong to other tribes (causing conflict), or in restricted areas like the Sibiloi National Park and paleontological site Koobi Fora.

“The lake is the source of our life.”

**Titus Ebei,  
Standard 8 student,  
Longech Island**

The women’s focus group interviewed in Kalokol described how their communities would have been wiped out by previous droughts (Namotor in 1960, Lopiari in 1980) had the lake not been there. During these droughts, the Turkana ethnic group who were mostly pastoralist were pushed closer to the lake. They gradually adapted their lifestyles to depend upon fishing, despite it previously being a livelihood looked down upon. Norwegian organization NORAD played a large role in bringing fishing equipment and knowledge from their own experience.



“The lake is like our farm.”

**James Losikiria,  
Pastoralist (goats and camels)**

**Paul Tago, Businessman**

“The lives of the people in this area depend directly on fish or fishing. Either somebody is fishing, or they depend on the fish . . . So if it happened that this lake was not there, the fish would not be there, and life in this place would almost be impossible. If you talk about cattle rearing, these days it is not doing well . . . Even us, you can see I am a Luo in Turkana – I have been attracted here because of the fish . . . The life of this place is fish.”

**Mark Lorukia, Treasurer at Longech Island BMU**

“The lake is like my mother who gave birth to and nurtured me . . . The lake is the backbone for so many poor people. It feeds more people than relief food from the government does . . . Our kids have been educated because of what we get from the lake.”

“When the lake overflows then recedes, grass grows on the lake shores, and we take the animals there to feed.”

**Esther Epoet,  
Inlaw of MCA, Nakurio  
pastoralist village**



**Moses Masheti, Charge hand at Ministry of Pastoral Economy and Fisheries - Kalokol Office**

“Everything here is fish. If we stopped fishing, within 1-2 days all business would stop.”

**Joshua Makelele, Congolese Fish Trader and Transporter**

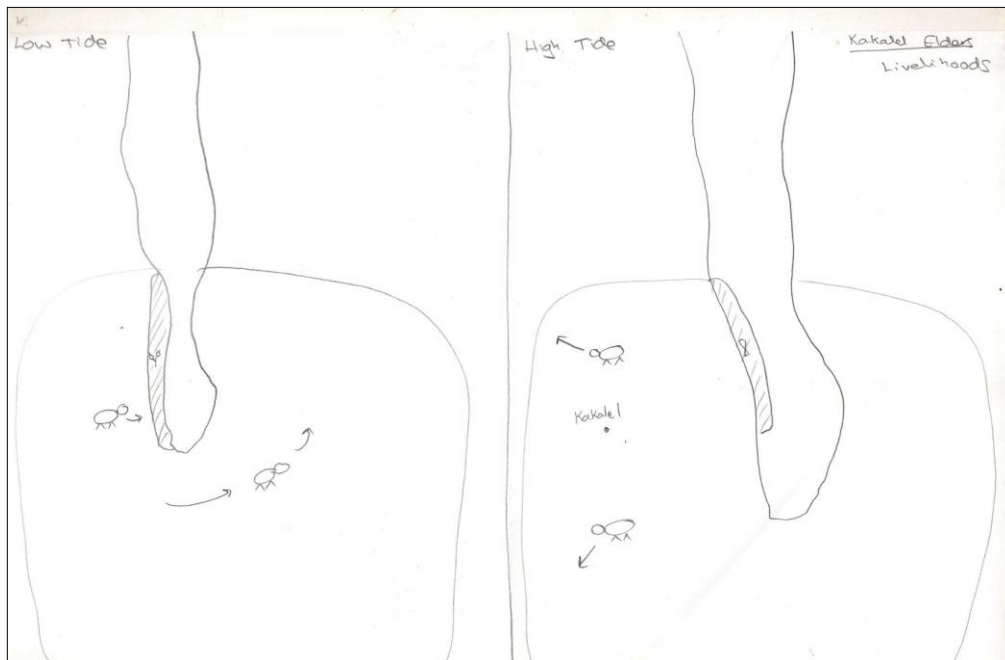
“If the lake was not there, we would not be coming here and the whole business would crumble.”



“If we have a bad year, pastoralists lose their livestock to drought or conflict, and the only major fall-back is the lake . . . some households even split, so a few members of the household fish in the lake, and make sure they complement the pastoralist activities of the other part of the household. So when you talk about Lake Turkana extinction or coming down to those 2 or 3 pools of water, you are literally denying even pastoralists their fall-back.”

**Hon. Peter Ekai Lokoel,  
Deputy Governor, Turkana County**

The lake's water is also used for agriculture, and as drinking water, despite it being unpalatable and causing stomach problems. Note the lake is already saline, and reducing its volume could increase salinity to levels that would make drinking it impossible.

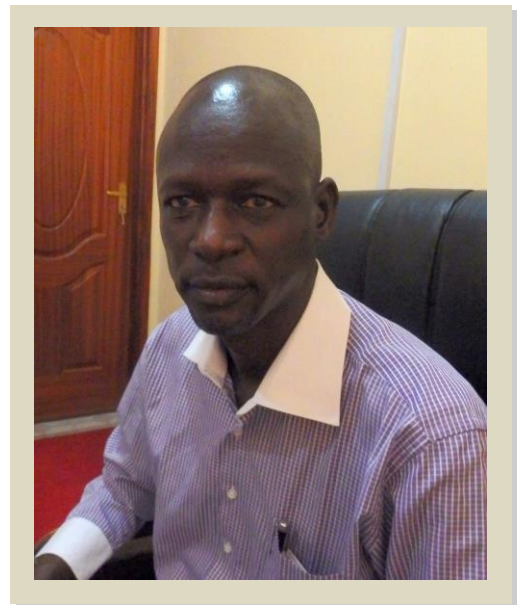


*Community mapping with Turkana elders in Kakalel, a pastoralist village west of the lake, to show their movements over the year. During seasonal periods of lower lake levels, Turkana pastoralists take their animals to find pasture closer to the lake and on the other side of the lake. Some crops are grown in the fertile soils where the lake has receded. During periods of high water levels, Turkana pastoralists move with their animals to their mountains, further from the lake. Fishing activities also take place in the lake.*

“We have four livelihoods in Turkana: we have the pure pastoralists, who practice extensive livestock keeping; we have the fisherfolk, who will be directly affected; we have the peri-urban, who have come to towns as a result of droughts and other related conflict problems, but they still keep livestock; then we have the agro-pastoralists, who do some kind of subsistence farming mixed with keeping animals along the riverlines of Turkwell River and Kerio River.”

“Majority of the fisherfolk communities that live along this lake, because of lack of good water sources, they actually draw water for drinking from the lake. The other thing is the vegetation cover around the lake – it also gets its water from the lake.”

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom,  
County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral  
Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**



Lake Turkana further plays a role in mitigating conflict, being a precious resource in this semi-arid area, and also by actually creating a physical barrier.



“Lake Turkana has provided separation between conflicting communities from Ethiopia and also locally between Turkanas and the Rendille on the eastern side of the lake.”

**Kisike Fabio,  
High school science teacher**

In Marsabit County, west of Lake Turkana, the lake holds cultural significance for several tribes. For example, the El Molo bless their animals at the lake, the Rendille celebrate warriors’ coming of age by taking their camels to the lake and feasting on goat, and the Samburu take their animals to drink the lake water to cure them of worms or ticks. Some of the Turkana see Lake Turkana as the place that binds the spirits of the ancestors and the living.

The older generation of interviewees spoke of how the lake has drastically reduced in volume over their lifetime, giving examples of how entire current villages like Impressa Beach, Lokitoenyala and Nachukui used to be underwater. They say famine has increased, and many pastoral communities are forced to survive on seeds and fruits, which may be unpalatable or cause stomach problems. They also spoke of how weather patterns have changed. Rain has become extremely rare and unpredictable, and comes in shorter, heavier spurts than in the past. Temperatures and wind have increased. When droughts occur, drastic reductions in the lake level follow (for example, Ferguson’s Gulf drying up such that Longech Island can be reached on foot). The elders also described how raids have increased over their lifetime.

“Before independence, people were living in harmony. But now that the lake has reduced, the other tribes have moved closer and raids have intensified along with killings on both sides.”

**Lokwai Ereng,  
Elder, Kakalel pastoralist village**







“We don’t accept this. We disagree with whoever is planning this. We will never agree to it.”

“Once the dam is functional, everything people feed on will disappear. Starvation will take over.”

**Rebecca Arot, Pastoralist**

## B. Awareness of and Views on the Gibe III Dam

### **Hon. Peter Ekai Lokoel, Deputy Governor, Turkana County**

“If it was just a dam, we would have said, ‘OK, maybe there will still be some percentage coming to the lake,’ but with the addition of the plantations, this is disastrous.”

### **Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“We cannot eat electricity. What we require is food and income for the Turkana community.”

### **Centryne Akai, Standard 7 student, Longech island**

“Without the lake, everybody will die!”

A majority of interviewees were extremely uninformed on the dam and plantations. It is evident that any consultations with local communities were either minimal or non-existent. People in the villages had either heard about the dam only through local NGO Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT)’s awareness-raising or through rumours; misinformation was rampant. Those in the towns were slightly more informed, especially the few with access to the internet – but even so, not one interviewee was sure of the details of the upstream developments, agreements, and progress.

### **Chuma Vincent, Kerio Ward Assistant-Chief**

“The agreement was by higher authorities without taking into account the impact on Turkana and Marsabit. No consultations were done.”

### **Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“A consultation should have been done . . . the Turkana community doesn’t know this. I am sorry to say that our Kenyan government which actually protects the rights and lives of people, went ahead agreeing with the Ethiopian government on how they can tap electricity from Ethiopia.”

“Our president doesn’t seem to be concerned. The government is quiet because they are selling our lake. That electricity cannot come to help us. Those farms can’t come to help us.”

**Peter Lapur, Pastoralist**



Many interviewees expressed fear over the direct impacts of lower lake levels – destruction of their source of livelihood, portending starvation and death.



“Whoever is intending to dam the River Omo will cause our starvation.”

**Jecinta Liwan, Pastoralist**

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“Drastic reduction of water volume . . . will really impact negatively on . . . the [fish] breeding sites in Todonyang.”

**Peter Kataboi, Chairman, Natogo Fresh Fish**

“We feel a lot of pain in our hearts because of these developments. There’s no way of mitigating the impacts, because this dam will kill us.”

“If the Gibe III Dam is constructed, the lake will dry up and this will lead to desertification and there will be depletion of resources: there will be no fish, no farming, and low humidity [and less rain]. If that is the case, the community will be finished.”

**Sylvester Ekariman, Chairperson of Council of Elders, Kakalel pastoralist village**



“If there is no lake, the people of Loiyangalani will die, because we get everything we own from the lake – our children are educated because of the lake, we get food from the lake, we sell fish from the lake for income . . .”

**Elizabeth Atimam, Vice Chair of East Lake Turkana Environmental Forum**



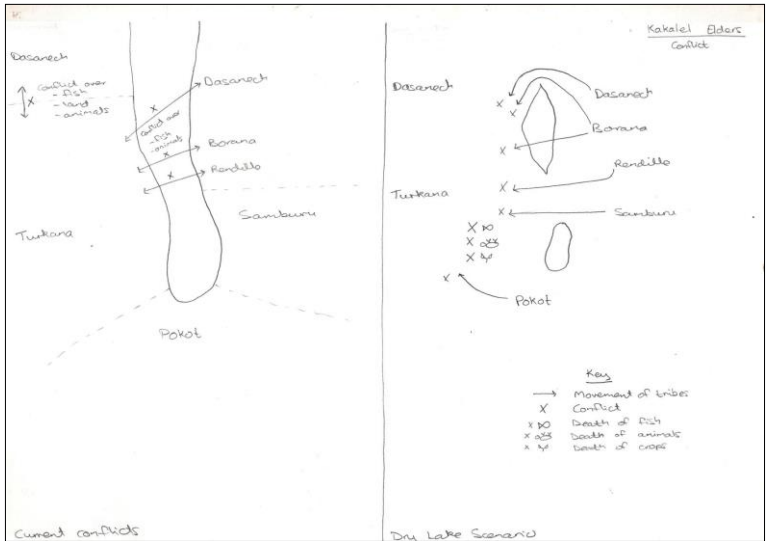
Interviewees also expressed concern over increased conflict that will occur once the scarce resource is diminished. The KWS officer also explained that lower water and fish levels will lead to increased human-wildlife conflict – crocodiles and hippos are already a danger to livestock and fishermen.

**Joseph Atach, Assistant Chief, Kanamkuny**

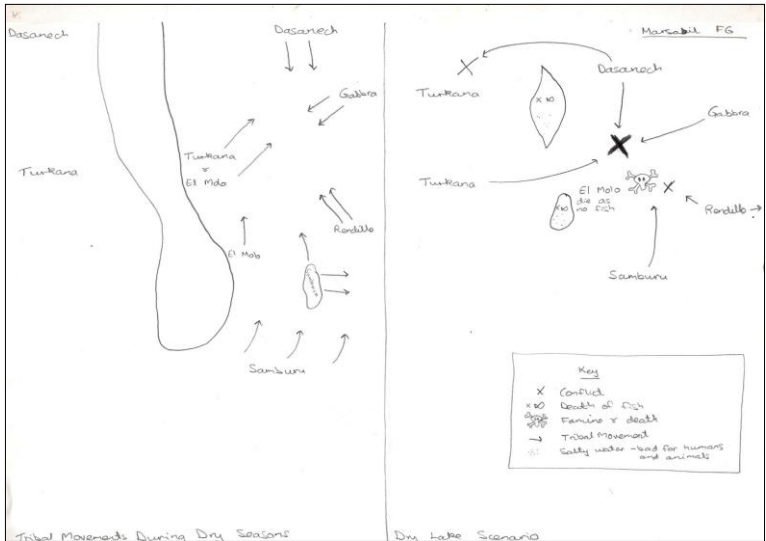
“This place will turn into an endless, uncontrollable battlefield.”

**Dennis Eregae Epem, Fisherman**

“When the lake goes back, our enemies, which are the people of Ethiopia, will be reaching here. They have weapons, but we don’t have weapons. How will we defend ourselves when the people of Ethiopia cross? This lake is our security.”



Community mapping with Turkana elders in Kakalel, a pastoralist village west of the lake, of conflict. The first map shows current conflicts that occur between the Turkana and other tribes. The second map shows conflicts they expect to happen in a drier lake scenario. The elders expressed fear in anticipation of various tribes coming to attack the Turkana. They also said that fish, animals, and crops would die.



Community mapping with a focus group of representative from around Marsabit, the county east of Lake Turkana, showing the movements of the various tribes living in the east. The first map shows how tribes move from their usual areas in search of pasture during dry seasons. The second map predicts movement of tribes in a drier lake scenario, as well as resultant clashes.

Communities around the lake feel extremely hard done by. Without consultation or permission, their inheritance is being taken away by people they have never met.

“Whoever is closing the lake is being selfish. He or she wants to benefit alone. He/she doesn’t care about others. The rest of us will die of starvation.”

**Selina Akiru,**  
Pastoralist and firewood seller



**Kadong E. Julius, Businessman**

“We don’t benefit from the dam. It is only those people at that far place, they are the ones who will benefit from the dam, because there is irrigation taking place. Here we are empty.”

**Michael Emekwi, Guide and Translator**

“If God knows that Turkanas are living along the shores of Lake Turkana, I don’t know why God is giving a chance to whoever wants to block the water to the lake. And if that Almighty God is there, please God, take him away, or take us away, and you remain alone God.”

## C. Suggestions for Action

There were several suggestions given on what could be done.

- Removing the dam

**Imojong Akal, Chairman of Village Council, Nachukui**

“Break those dams!”



“We will fight with whoever is coming to close the lake. We have our children here. They will destroy that electricity project. Have you heard me clearly? A person from another land can’t come and close our lake.”

**Alice Arukudi, Basket seller and pastoralist**

- Alternative energy

**Hon. Peter Ekai Lokoel, Deputy Governor, Turkana County**

“The answer now lies with the wind, the answer now lies with the sun, the answer lies elsewhere – with green energy.”

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“I am very confident that Turkwell gorge electrical power is sufficient to supply Lodwar with the electricity we require. The geothermal that is just a few kilometers from here should be developed and will go into the national grid. There is wind energy that will be put in Loiyangalani, Marsabit, across the lake, to benefit Turkana. We are not going to eat that electricity from Ethiopia, I don’t know what kind of

madness went into our own government that we are really badly requiring that one – no, there are a lot of discoveries here for electricity. Solar is god-given”

- Court order to stop the dam

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“The only mitigating measure will be going to court, whether it is ICC, to obtain an urgent order . . . The only option now is to get some legal stop to this kind of program.”

- Withdrawal of donor support for these projects

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“All the donors should be prevailed upon to stop funding [these projects], and conditions should be given to the Ethiopian government. There could be other alternative means of getting the water [for irrigation].”

- Threaten Ethiopia unless they consider impacts on Lake Turkana

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“Egypt is in record saying that if Kenya or Uganda will tamper with the flow of water of Lake Victoria, it will go to war with these 2 countries.”

- Calling on the Kenyan government to protect its people



“If the lake is lost, it’s lost because of the government.”

**Michael Basilin, Chair of Fishermen Cooperative Society of Loiyangalani**

**Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, County Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government**

“The Kenyan gov’t [should] just withdraw the agreement – it’s not in good light to do that, it is not good.”

**Hon. Peter Ekai Lokoel, Deputy Governor, Turkana County**

“Lake Turkana is not an affair of the Turkana people only, it is an affair of the national government equally, the republic of Kenya. We will need to work together to mitigate the situation.”



“What we tell Uhuru or any other person who can do something for us is that they should negotiate with the government of Ethiopia so they actually look at the welfare of the people living along the shores of Lake Turkana.”

**Amuroe Aperon,  
Secretary of Marsabit BMUs**

- Environmental flows/better river management (note that this would involve re-evaluating the irrigated plantations)

**James Losikiria, Pastoralist (goats and camels)**

“If those people must block the River Omo, let them at least release water at intervals.”

**Kisike Fabio, High school science teacher**

“We also need the cooperation of the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments to make sure when they are releasing water in their dam to give some gracing period of 1 month to leave the constant flow of water.”



“If I had the power, I would say stop the dam. But since I don’t, I ask them government not to completely cut off the lake’s water supply – close the doors for one week, open them the next, and so on.”

**James Erukudi, Fisherman and farmer  
(maize/millet)**

- Compensation

**Charles Ekai, Coordinator of Impressa BMU**

“A market share of the dam should be allocated to Turkanas” [read “to communities dependent on the lake.”]

**Chuma Vincent, Kerio Ward Assistant-Chief**

“They have to compensate us. What will we do? The lake is our source of everything.”

## D. Messages to decision makers

- To Ethiopia . . .

### **Peter Lapur, Pastoralist**

“You who wants to stop the inflow to the lake, if that electricity doesn’t reach us, we will all go to Ethiopia and fight to the death.”

### **Lokwawi Lomodei Ekiru, fisherman from Kangaki**

“Are they the only hungry ones?”

### **Chuma Vincent, Kerio Ward Assistant-Chief**

“This man in Ethiopia . . . is making power at the expense of killing others. He knows guys will suffer.”  
“They have to compensate us. What will we do? The lake is our source of everything.”

- To the national government . . .

### **Marco Loburuk, fisherman**

“It seems you have sold our lake.”



“The National Government has forgotten us here . . . If the National government will not react [to the dam], we will form our government and fight on that issue.”

### **Bernard Lokai, Businessman**



“Even the electricity that is coming, we don’t know whether all of us are going to benefit from that power. Now, people are living a poor life . . . What can you do with electricity in a local house like this? You can’t use it, you don’t have electronics to use. We are against this. The GOK has to intervene because people are going to suffer and definitely people are going to die – no food, not even small job opportunities from the lake taking fish elsewhere.”

### **Lydia E. Kamar, Nurse at Lodwar District Referral Hospital**





**Representatives from Turkana women’s groups**

“Tell the president not to allow those people to block the River Omo from entering Lake Turkana, which is our source of survival.”

“If we are eliminated, the enemies we are blocking will reach up to State House! These enemies walk by foot unendingly so they will reach Uhuru wherever he is.”

Another woman went on to describe how the resources they are blessed with – oil and water – are being transported out of Turkana, and asks therefore where their help should come from.

In a song the women said, “Tell our Ekwee, our Munyes, our Uhuru, our Ruto, our Nanok, our Emanikor, to tell the government to come and count our bones.”

**Imojong Akal, Chairman of Village Council, Nachukui**

“Uhuru Kenyatta, if you side with the Turkana people, just as we elected you to power, let the river flow freely.”



“What is the role of the government to the Turkanas as citizens of this country if it can’t protect us from the damming of River Omo, which will negatively impact the lake?”

**Lemuya Lokomar Frederick, Chairman of Kangaki BMU**

- To the international community and all national and regional stakeholders . . .

**Jonathan Lokai, Fisherman**

“We want people from outside to intervene to open water from River Omo for this lake.”

**Kisike Fabio, high school science teacher**

“To the government and the rest of the world, make sure that dam does not cut the supply of water from Lake Turkana.”

## E. Personal Features

**Lydia Kamar, Nurse at Lodwar District Referral Hospital**



Lydia is from Nakurio, a pastoralist village, but she works as a nurse at the hospital in Lodwar. She studied at Ortum School of Nursing in West Pokot, and later at Lodwar Medical Training College. She is currently looking for funds to continue to the next level. She worries about the people in her village because she fears once the lake dries their enemies will cross the lake and kill them with guns. She doesn't see the value and relevance of the electricity to her people, and instead requests development for the region, such as fish factories, job opportunities, and scholarships.

**Mapenzi Risiki, Congolese Refugee, Kakuma Refugee Camp**



Mapenzi is a Congolese woman who used to own a restaurant back in DR Congo. She fled to Kenya 5 years ago after police in her own country were harassing and extorting from her. She cannot return and has established herself in Kakuma refugee camp. Each week she travels to Kalokol to buy fish worth KES 20,000 and sells them at the camp for a total of KES 25,000, after paying taxes travelling between regions of KES 700. She does this because the food rations from aid organisations in the camp are insufficient. She has no other option of work about from this one that depends on a healthy lake. Without the lake

she would earn no profits and be unable to buy food.

**Helen Alogita, pastoralist and dune palm seed seller**



Helen is a pastoralist and dune palm seed seller in Nakiria village, in northern Turkana. Here's what she had to say:

“[Without the lake], the people from the other side of the lake will come and kill us and that will bring about enmity amongst us as we turn on each other due to hunger. Find the person [building the dam] and ask him/her where s/he expects our communities to go? And where are our Kenyan leaders? They just look for votes and don't protect us. If famine and hunger will make us die of starvation, where will they get votes from? We are very angry over these issues. Don't we have the government to intervene? Are we electing leaders for nothing? Do they want us to die while they remain living? The lake is an important resource that God gave us when he gave other communities farmlands. We don't accept this.

We don't want electricity. It is the lake that helps us. Now you are saying you are bringing us electricity. How did the electricity from River Turkwell find its way to Baringo? And now you are lying to us again that you are bringing us electricity.

All the tribes that are fed by the lake, we will come together and fight to the death with Ethiopia. Our government will be responsible for these repercussions. The Ethiopian government has realized that the Kenyan government is reluctant to act over our problems. They focus on their own interests.”

### **Peter Kataboi, Chairman, Natogo Fresh Fish**



Peter heads the Natogo Fresh Fish group. Fish are bought early each morning from Kalokol, transported to Lodwar by “piki” (motorbike), prepared, and sold at the fish market. Peter explained how people here don't have farms, but depend solely on the lake. He described the lake as his “mother and father,” and said it is the reason his kids go to school and have food and clothing. His future plans are to continue fishing so he can buy livestock and finish paying for his kids' education. Once he becomes old his children will take care of him. He has heard that the Ethiopians are building dams for electricity and fears that the decreased flow of water to the lake will risk the survival of the Turkanas.

### **Hon. John Lolimo, MCA Kalokol Ward**



Selected quotes from an in-depth interview:

“We fish at night, we fish during the daytime, so that we can get fish for our families. Now if they take all the waters, what are we going to do? There will be no life along the lake. And we are going to fight. We are going to fight. Even if the government is not going to do something, we will do it. Our people will do it.”

“Not a single country [should] harm the other one by taking its waters without discussing with the other countries, because water is life. It should not be decided by one country. That's why Egypt is ever ready to fight whoever will play with the Nile water, and the same thing should apply here with Ethiopia who should be told not to affect the water.”

“We have already told the government and international bodies to assist because there is international law that you cannot do things alone without considering the others' lives.”

“We were almost to go to fight Ethiopia. People started walking up to that place with some explosives to destroy the whole thing.”

“Who is funding these Gibes? They should withdraw their assistance or the loans they are giving. If they are China, I don't know, African Development Bank, I don't know.... But whoever is giving out the loans should stop it, should withdraw. It is not good to get some people dying because of some countries.”

“I blame the government. They are not doing anything! I also blame the international bodies, the international lawmakers for rivers, for lakes – they are supposed to act once and for all to stop it. What are they doing? Should they learn after we have died, there was a clan or a tribe that lived along this lake called Turkanas? ... And there is nothing growing here. If they can give us another alternative it is ok! They should find another alternative.”

### 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The voices of people from the communities living around Lake Turkana speak loud and clear. In summary, the lake is essential to their survival. Awareness of the dam's impacts and development process is extremely low. All community members are opposed to the dam and irrigated plantations, as it will deprive them of their livelihoods and lead to increased famine, conflict, and death. Suggestions for action range from using force to stop the dam, the Kenyan government standing up for the people of Turkana and Marsabit, engaging the Ethiopian government, donor withdrawal of funding, compensation for the affected communities, and finding alternative sources of green energy. Their messages to the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments and the international community reflect their despair, and feelings of helplessness, anger, and betrayal.

**Recommendations from the author include:**

- Extensive awareness-raising in the counties of Turkana and Marsabit, so that people are accurately informed and can act accordingly.
- Halting of all developments and carrying out of transparent consultations of downstream communities that will be affected by the Gibe dams and irrigated plantations.
- Study to determine the amount of compensation owed to affected communities to pay for damages to their livelihoods caused by upstream developments
  - A cost-benefit analysis of the developments that takes into account impacts on livelihoods, tourism, ecosystems, food and water security, conflict, etc. Such analysis should take into account independent studies such as those carried out by water resources expert Dr. Sean Avery.
- Release of documents to the Kenyan public as ordered by courts after Friends of Lake Turkana's petition, including those related to the high voltage power line from Kenya to Sodo in Ethiopia, and the Ketraco study on Gibe III downstream impacts.
- Lake Turkana to be listed as a World Heritage site "in danger".

## Appendix I: List of Interviews

Date (2014)	Location	Location Description	Interviewee(s)
<b>9th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Hon. Pete Ekai Lokoel, Turkana Deputy Governor
<b>11th Sept</b>	Impressa	Fishing village	Youth fishermen FG
	Impressa	Fishing village	Charles Ekai Nayam, BMU Coordinator
	Impressa	Fishing village	Pondo Abubakar, KWS Security officer
	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Moses Masheti, Ministry of Pastoral Economy and Fisheries Kalokol Office
	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Napetet Anna, Elder
<b>12th Sept</b>	Longech	Fishing island	Primary teachers FG
	Longech	Fishing island	Std 8 boys FG
	Longech	Fishing island	Std 7 girls FG
	Longech	Fishing island	BMU FG
	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Congolese traders of salted fish
<b>13th Sept</b>	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Women FG
	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Hon. John Lolimo, MCA Kalokol Ward
	Kalokol	Main fishing town	Michael Emekwi, Guide/Translator
<b>15th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Anna Kirya, Founder of women's groups TWADO and Maendeleo ya Wanawake Turkana
<b>17th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Esther Tioko, Fish seller
<b>18th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Peter Kataboi, Chairman, Natogo Fresh Fish Group
<b>20th Sept</b>	Kakalel	Pastoralist village	Youth FG
	Kakalel	Pastoralist village	Elders FG
	Nakurio	Pastoralist village	Lydia E. Kamar, Nurse; Esther Epoet, inlaw of MCA
	Kerio	Fishing/farming village	Chuma Vincent, Assistant Chief
	Kakuma	Refugee camp	Mapenzi Riziki, Congolese Refugee
<b>24th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Hon. Christopher Eporon Ekuwom, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Pastoral Economy & Fisheries, Turkana County Government
<b>28th Sept</b>	Lodwar	County capital	Marsabit County members FG, including members of Rendille, Samburu, Turkana, El Molo, and Gabbra ethnic groups.
<b>29th Sept</b>	Kangaki	Fishing village	Fishermen FG
	Nachukui	Fishing village	Fishing economy stakeholders FG (fishermen, crews, boat owners, traders, officials)
	Lokitoenyala	Fishing village	General FG
	Kanamkung	Fishing town	Joseph Atach, Assistant Chief Kanamkung Sub-Location
	Lowarengak	Fishing village	Frances Nalukowoi, Assistant Chief Lowarengak Sub-Location
<b>30th Sept</b>	Temokori	Pastoralist centre	Pastoralist Women FG
	Narukopo	Pastoralist area	Kamais Ekupurat and Amekwi Kamais, Village Elder and wife
	Nakiria	Pastoralist village	Village gathering FG
	Impressa	Fishing village	Alex Wafula, Fish Transporter

# References

- Allibhai, Narissa. "Downstream Climate Change Maladaptation Risks of the Gibe III dam and Kuraz Sugar Plantations." *International Rivers* (2014).
- Araya, Elleni. "Ethiopia: Transmission Lines for Gilgel Gibe III to Be Ready Within a Month." *allAfrica* . <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201303050057.html?page=2>> (2013).
- Avery, Sean. "What Future for Lake Turkana?" *African Studies Centre, the University of Oxford* (2013).
- Bosshard, Peter. "World Bank to Fund Gibe III Dam through the Backdoor?" *International Rivers* (2012).
- Carr, Claudia. "Humanitarian Catastrophe and Regional Armed Conflict Brewing in the Transborder Region of Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan: The Proposed Gibe III Dam in Ethiopia." *Africa Resources Working Group* (2012).
- Gibe III Hydroelectric Project. <[www.gibe3.com.et/](http://www.gibe3.com.et/)> (2014).
- Human Rights Watch. "'What Will Happen if Hunger Comes?' Abuses against the Indigenous Peoples of Ethiopia's Lower Omo Valley." *Human Rights Watch* (2012).
- "Proclamation No. 299/2002 Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation." *Federal Negarit Gazeta of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia* (2002).
- Survival International. "Omo Valley Tribes: Gibe III dam." <<http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/omovalley/gibedam>> (2014).
- UNESCO. "World Heritage List." <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>>