



**BUILDING BLOCKS OF POSITIVE COMMUNITY
HEALTH: THE CONTRIBUTION OF KENYAN
COMMUNITIES**

In Partnership with



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ABOUT US

STEMA is a disruptive research group promoting sustainability, health and wellbeing in low resource settings worldwide through community-led research and action within 5 key areas of disruption:

- Systems-thinking
- Resourcefulness
- Decision-making
- Participation
- Data innovation



HEALTH

+



COMMUNITY

+



AGENCY

+



SUSTAINABILITY



COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH



We believe communities may be the most effective and appropriate agents of change regarding issues that affect their health, and they work to strengthen their health amidst the challenges of limited local resources as well as broader social and environmental challenges.



A local and community-centered approach to interventions is essential for long-term sustainability and it needs to be based on resourcefulness, the capability of a community to mobilise resources effectively to improve their health and wellbeing.



Community members or local decision-makers face a lack of accessible data, and struggle to choose effective and sustainable interventions without a deep understanding of the local context.



THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POSITIVE HEALTH RESEARCH STUDY

STEMA partnered with three Kenyan organizations, namely SWAP, PDO, MAMA, to implement a research study aimed at uncovering building blocks (BBs) of positive community health and developing a set of innovative tools to support better decision-making for health.

STUDY DESIGN

- This study is a **multi-site**, research based on **qualitative and participatory approaches**.
- It is divided in three stages including conceptualisation (Stage 1), measurement (Stage 2), and tools design (Stage 3).





THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POSITIVE HEALTH: STAGE ONE

Stage 1 aimed to understand community concepts of positive health (BBs) and ways in which communities can pursue and sustain health agendas driven by local priorities.

RESULTS

FOCUS

- Understand the factors and resources involved in positive community health and identify the BBS.
- Develop a shared vision of health and wellbeing within the community.
- Identify challenges to achieve it.

METHODS

- **Focus Group Discussions.**
- Participatory activities including **cognitive mapping, resource mapping, tree diagrams, community timelines and walking interviews.**
- Participatory data analysis with partners.



By far the most frequently cited BBs of positive health were **the need for clean and accessible water, good nutrition (from locally available crops and livestock) and access to education.** Also **intangible** BBs (knowledge, religion, tradition) were included.



The BBs with the highest perceived importance received lower scores of availability. **Water and nutrition, were found to be the most heavily impacted by changing climates (droughts and floods).**



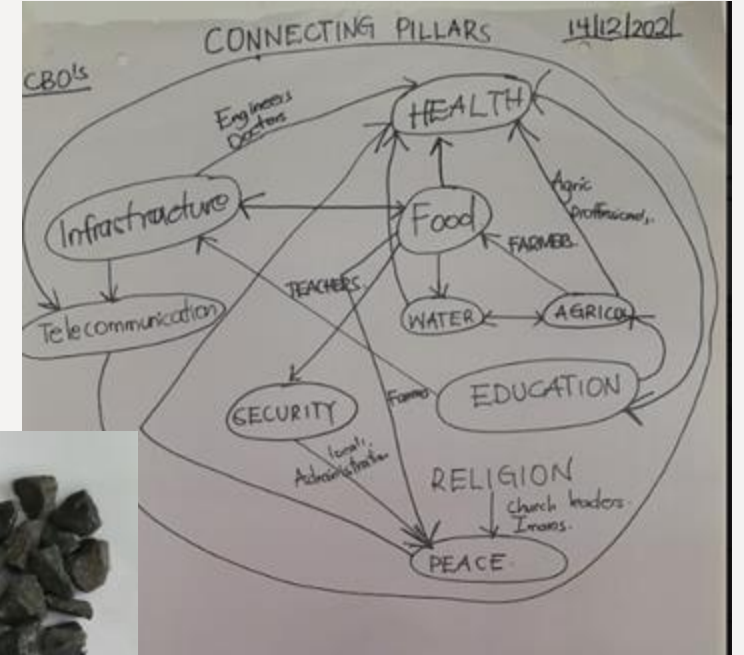
Many building blocks of health/Intangible are currently not captured by measurement frameworks. Communities gave valuable insights on how they would like to see building blocks measured.

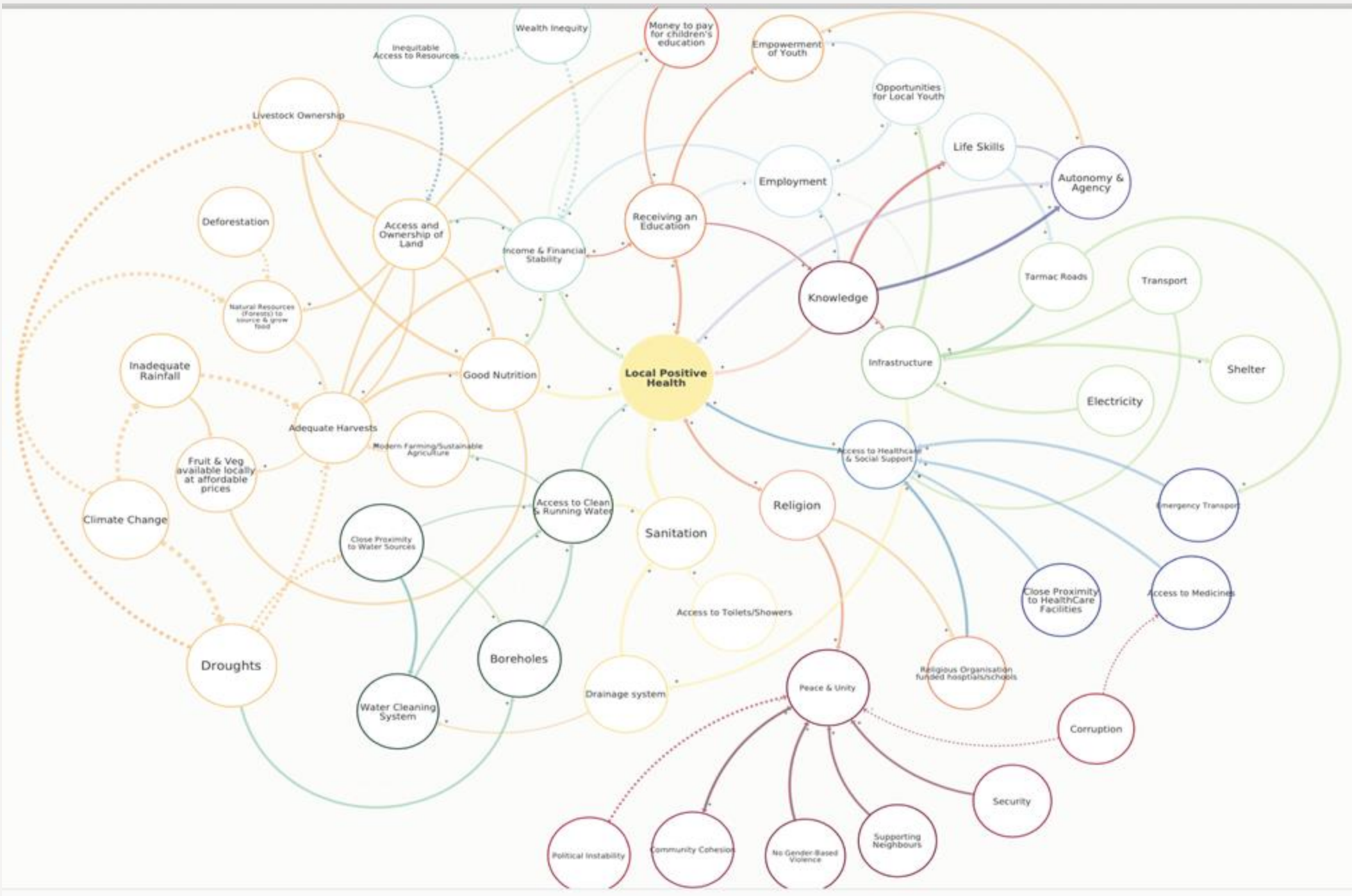


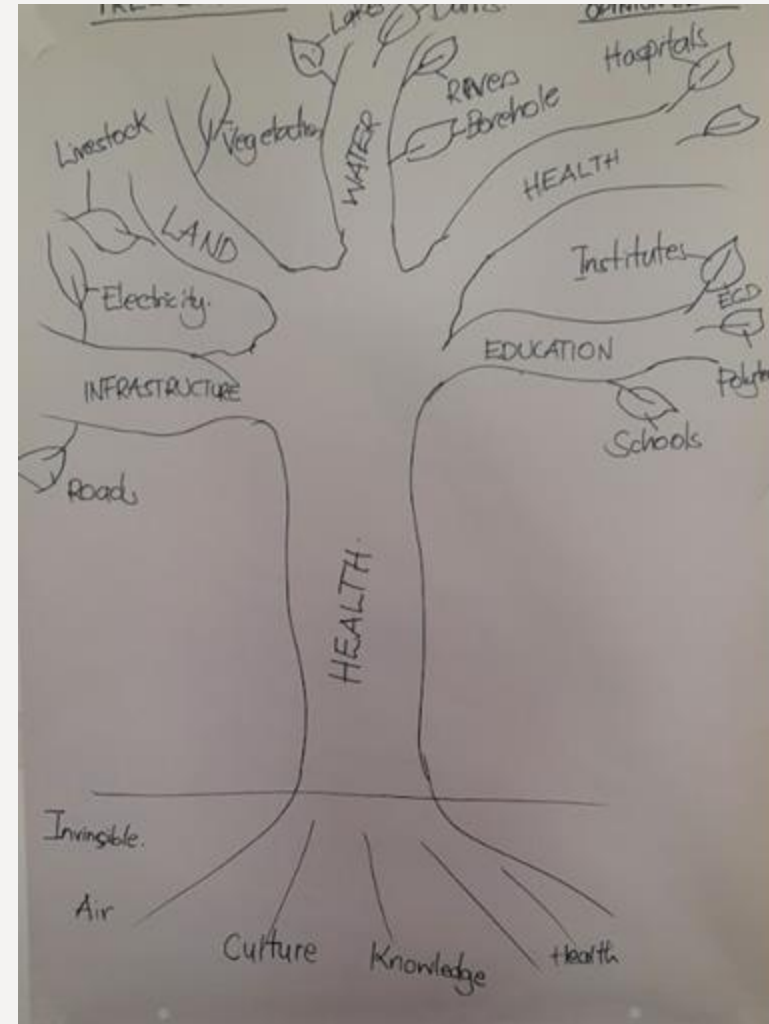
The availability, importance and agency of resources varies significantly throughout the seasons and across the lifespan.



COGNITIVE MAPPING







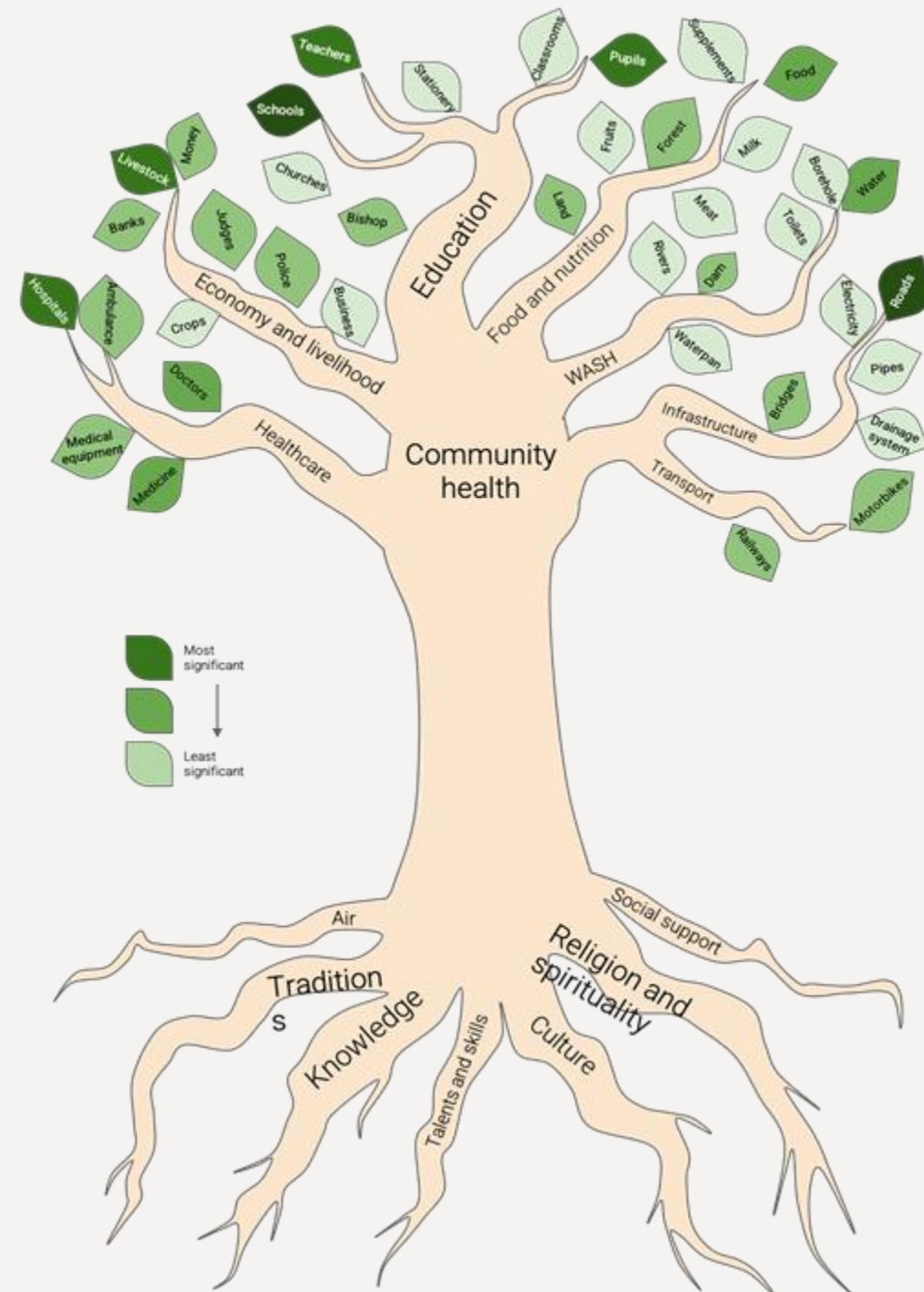


TREE DIAGRAMS

Focus groups were asked to draw a map of their community's health that showed:

- Invisible (Intangible) resources, such as knowledge, as the roots of the tree
- The domains of health represented as branches
- Individual resources for health as leaves of the tree.

The importance of each individual resource is shown by the darkness of the leaf.





DISCUSSION



Preliminary research findings from stage 1 highlighted that positive community health is closely linked with planetary health concepts and available natural resources (eg. water, local crops, land).



Systems-thinking allowed us to understand hyper-local challenges that are interlocked and exist in the midst of larger planetary health challenges.



Communities are full of resources that just need to be systematised, harmonised and mobilised to improve health outcomes and ensure local ownership and agency over decision-making.



It is crucial to enable communities to crowdsource information about planetary health challenges, in order to characterize and prioritize them for action.



NEXT STEPS

We are now currently initiating stage 2 & 3 of the research study which aims to:

- Understand how the building blocks of positive community health can be measured using innovative methods and data sources.
- Gain a deeper understanding of trade offs in achieving community priorities for health.
- Identify power imbalances driving inequitable resource distribution.
- Collaboratively design a set of tools to support better decision making for community health.



Thank you for listening.
To find out more:

www.stema.org

<https://mamacbo.org/>

<https://www.pdokenya.org/>

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