



BETTER POLICIES, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Regional initiative in support of vulnerable pastoralists and agropastoralists in the Horn of Africa

Djibouti | Ethiopia | Kenya | Somalia | South Sudan | Sudan | Uganda

The Horn of Africa (HoA) is one of the most food-insecure regions in the world. The 2011 drought affected more than 13 million people at the peak of the crisis, causing massive food insecurity and famine. Given the complex nature of crises affecting the region, which often occur simultaneously and can be protracted over a long period of time, coordinated action towards adopting a more holistic approach to disaster risk management is needed.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Pastoralist and agropastoralist communities depend on natural resources for survival, but because of an increasing population putting pressure on shared resources such as grazing land and water, these communities are now vulnerable to food shortages, violent conflict over resources and the loss of their livelihoods. The vulnerability of these communities is further exacerbated by increased climate variability, resulting in reduced water availability, agriculture yield, and suitable land for pasture. Recognizing the increased threats these communities face to disasters, along with their marginalization, is an important step which needs to be taken by all the stakeholders involved. However, addressing the problem will require developing mechanisms and policies that not only reduce their exposure to these risks but approaches that foster coordination and collaboration from every level—local, national, and regional. Building the capacity of these communities will ensure their long-term sustainability to cope with future disasters.

“Ending hunger is a huge task. That is why we need the renewed commitment of all stakeholders involved - governments, regional bodies, the private sector, civil society organizations, humanitarian and development actors, and the local communities themselves.”

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT DOING?

The project, funded by the European Union, aims to reduce the vulnerability of (agro)pastoralist communities by integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches to strengthen coping mechanisms on the ground and across the region. Activities are ongoing at three levels:

1. Local – Support to community planning processes that culminate into development and contingency plans to inform investments. Some of these plans are implemented through scaled-up Pastoral Field Schools (PFS) and Village Community Banks (VICOBA).
2. National- Sharing best practices to inform decision making and advocating to governments to consider communities as part of the solution.
3. Regional - Enhancing information flow to support the policy process as well as supporting the coordination of cross-border activities in tandem with IGAD's Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative.

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its partners began by taking stock of the situation and researching best policies and practices for building community and national resilience against external shocks. A series of activities were undertaken in order to better inform disaster management strategies. This included:

- Reviewing existing disaster risk management policies in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.
- Assessment on traditional institutions that are relevant to managing the use of common resources and reducing community vulnerability in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.
- Assessment of existing support structures and coping mechanisms among communities in Karamoja, Pokot, Turkana, Mandera, Marsabit, Borena and Somali regions.
- Capturing the volume and significance of informal livestock trade in the Ethiopia–Somalia and Kenya–Somalia corridors to highlight areas of potential government investment in infrastructure and security.
- Assessment of existing national coordination mechanisms and linkages to IGAD's Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Platform is ongoing.

Additionally, the project worked through PFSs to stimulate innovative, grassroots solutions to common problems and to empower communities to make their own decisions. A PFS can be described as a 'school without walls' where groups of pastoralists learn through observation and experimentation in their own context. A total of 42 men and women graduated from PFS Master Training courses in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. These master trainers are now capable

of training and mentoring other PFS facilitators as well as supporting the rollout of new PFSs and even VICOBA programmes in their communities. As part of the project's aim to encourage communities to develop better coping strategies for disasters and other threats to their livelihoods, communities in the region (namely Turkana, Karamojong, Dasenach, Borana, Somali and Pokot) have developed contingency plans which will be presented to local and national government authorities for consideration in prioritizing investments.

WHAT NEXT?

The project will continue to strengthen the resilience dialogue at the local, national and regional levels, ensuring information flow and feedback among all levels. Through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the project will facilitate the consolidation of cross-border development and contingency plans through traditional institutions, with endorsement by the national governments involved. Further assessment and dissemination of best practices at all levels will be undertaken to inform decision making and improve national and regional coordination, including access to the studies compiled by the project at its inception phase. The project will also continue to support national and regional dialogues through its ongoing support of IGAD's Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Platform, which is committed to ending drought emergencies in the region. This will involve conducting an assessment of national coordination mechanisms to explore linkages with the platform and encouraging information sharing and discussion through regional forums such as the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group's Livestock and Pastoralism sub-group. The project will also work with IGAD, its members states and partners in supporting appropriate policy processes that will build the resilience of the region's vulnerable populations.



KEY FACTS :

- 40 community-managed disaster risk reduction plans developed in the targeted regions of Karamoja, Turkana, Pokot, Somali, Borana and Dasenach.
- 45 PFS groups established and 42 PFS master trainers trained in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.
- 50 percent of PFS participants are women and significant changes in gender roles and behaviours have been observed in all countries.
- 90 percent of the PFS groups remain together beyond the learning cycle.

PARTNERS :

Agricultural and disaster risk management coordination mechanisms (in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, Cooperazione Internazionale, IGAD, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Managing Risk for Improved Livelihood, Participatory Approaches for Integrated Development, Pastoral Concern, Resource Conflict Institute, Rift Valley Institute, Veterinaires Sans Frontières (from Belgium, Switzerland and Germany).

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