



Responding to the triple challenge

Climate, conflict and COVID-19 in the Horn of Africa



PROJECT: Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa



TIMEFRAME: Phase 1 December 2017 – December 2020, Phase 2 March – December 2021



LOCATION: The Manderu triangle – 12 locations across Northeast Kenya, Southwest Somalia, and Southern Ethiopia



PARTNERS: European Commission (donor), Danish Refugee Council – lead partner working with World Vision, CARE and Tetrattech as implementing partners



GOAL: Promote economic development and greater resilience, particularly among vulnerable groups, including youth, women, displaced persons and persons living with disabilities.

Introduction

Climate change, conflict and COVID-19 are combining to make the world even more dangerous for already vulnerable children. The impact of the three Cs means even more hunger, poverty, displacement – and despair – for those affected. UNICEF’s Children’s Climate Risk Index estimates that 1 billion children live in extremely high-risk countries.¹ The impacts of climate change on children are significant, with the World Bank estimating that it could push more than 100 million additional people back into poverty by 2030.² Analysis over the last ten years shows the number of people newly displaced due to weather-related events, such as flooding, extreme temperatures, drought and wildfires, far outweighed the numbers newly displaced by conflict.³ And many of those countries most at risk from climate change are also affected by conflict, as well as hosting significant numbers of child refugees (with half of all refugees being children⁴) and internally displaced persons. In

addition, COVID-19 has led to more children going hungry, undertaking dangerous work, entering into child marriage, and being exposed to violence and poverty.⁵ In the Mendera Triangle, which cuts across Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya,⁶ approximately 80% of people are faced with frequent flooding and drought. These disasters not only result in loss for farmers, but also affect food supply to local markets. Shortages then lead to higher prices, which can then force people, with their livestock, to cross borders in search of water and grazing land. This places greater stresses on the natural resources within receiving communities, and as competition for these resources increases, so does tension and conflict. The area is also negatively impacted by inter-clan conflict and the activities of terrorist groups, particularly in the border areas. Into the mix of climate change, conflict and poverty has come COVID-19, with movement restrictions, heightened protection issues for women and children, and concerns of deepening poverty.

Our response to the triple challenge

World Vision is one of three organisations implementing the Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA) project in the Mendera Triangle, which has **reached 350,000 men, women, young people, and children since it began in 2017.**

Reducing levels of deforestation

Evidence from an independent project evaluation (March 2021) shows how the project worked to reduce levels of deforestation and its impact, as this is a key contributory factor in the drought and flooding experienced in the area. This work involved:

Switching to an alternative source of fuel, which has the added benefit of also being able to feed livestock in times of environmental stress.

Charcoal, the primary source of fuel, involved cutting down and burning acacia trees,⁷ leading to environmental degradation and deforestation. In the 1970s and 1980s, attempts to address this led to the introduction of Prosopis juliflora, a hardy and drought-tolerant tree. It has since

become an invasive species, pushing out the indigenous grass and tree species needed to help produce healthy agro-pastoralist farmlands and irrigation sites within rangelands. To address deforestation and the challenge of this invasive species, the project introduced the use of Prosopis rather than acacia trees for the source of fuel, by producing Prosopis fuel briquettes, providing machines and training to support this. **It is reported that 78% of households are generating income from alternative uses of invasive species.** In addition, Prosopis is also now being used to produce animal fodder to keep livestock fed during drought and dry seasons.

The evaluation found that the number of farmers engaging in fodder production, which provides vital food for livestock particularly at times of environmental stress, has substantially increased from 47% to 81% over a period of three years. This has led to 44% of those surveyed being able to now increase, rather than decrease, the numbers of livestock they keep.



The adoption of modern beehives

Traditional methods of beekeeping meant cutting down trees to make beehives, contributing to deforestation. But training beekeeping groups on the use of modern long-lasting beehives has significantly reduced the need to cut down trees. In addition, the groups have been trained on honey harvesting and processing, with the levels of honey production increasing as a result. One trainee, Mohamed, produced over 20 kilograms of honey in just four months, despite a drought, and has now set up a business which markets and sells honey, and constructs and sells modern beehives. He has provided employment to others and can now pay his children’s school and medical fees.⁸



To address the impact of climate change, and the related competition and conflict over vital natural resources, World Vision and its partners have worked to:

Rehabilitate degraded land and conserve pasture

Over the three-year project, **500 community members and 831 local government officials have been trained in Natural Resource Management (NRM).** Alongside this, **40 NRM groups have been established and nearly 4,000 people have helped to regenerate land,** through an income-earning Cash for Work scheme. The introduction of soil and water conservation techniques, and activities to reseed grasses, replant indigenous trees and establish dry season pasture conservation, have led to the **rehabilitation of 133 sites.**

Provide weather-based insurance

2,000 pastoralists took out weather-based insurance, an important backstop for families whose income is dependent on livestock. During times of extreme drought, insurance protection will help keep pastoralists out of extreme poverty by easing the shock of droughts, which can lead to the loss of their livestock.

¹The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children’s Climate Risk Index – New York: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2021
²Rapid, Climate-Informed Development Needed to Keep Climate Change from Pushing More than 100 Million People into Poverty by 2030 (The World Bank), 2015
³Global Internal Displacement Database (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council) and Climate change link to displacement of most vulnerable is clear: UNHCR (UN News), 2021
⁴Child displacement data (UNICEF), 2021
⁵COVID-19 Aftershocks: Out of time (World Vision International), 2020
⁶The consortium works across the three countries, with World Vision focussing on Kenya and Somalia.
⁷Destruction of Key Tree Species & Land Degradation – BORESCHA, 2018

TOP: Saynab picks fodder for her livestock from a World Vision constructed fodder store. Households share the fodder store for their milking herds.
MIDDLE: Mohamed (on the left) tending his beehives, with fellow beekeeper Hassan. © 2021 World Vision
BOTTOM: A community training on Index-Based Livestock Insurance led by trainer Ahmed. © 2021 World Vision

⁸Mohamed’s story – Making Money from Honey, BORESCHA, 2021

Diversify the options available to earn a living

Fostering new ways to earn a living and diversifying income generation choices may contribute to reducing tension over natural resources, and improve resilience when farming is affected by flooding or drought. Increasing ways young people can earn a living is also important as unemployment in the area is as high as 69% – which puts young people at risk of being recruited into armed groups. To diversify options for income generation World Vision, together with its partners, have achieved the following:

- Established 185 Village Savings and Loans groups, with a total of 4,562 members, of which over 80% are women.
- Provided vocational and educational training and start up business kits and grants to enable that training to be put into practise.

The results of these activities are impressive:

- 87% of surveyed households have taken up a new livelihood activity.
- 78% of those taking part in technical and vocational education saw their incomes increase as a result and 47% went on to start their own businesses.
- 92% of Village Savings and Loans members saw an increase in income, and household monthly savings increase by an average 136% across the three countries (from 6.6USD to 15.6USD per month).

In June 2021, the project also linked up with another project in the Manderia Triangle called 'Regional Approaches for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration', or RASMI. It seeks to promote peacebuilding, conflict management and conflict resolution in cross-border communities of the Manderia Triangle. 50 young people who had taken part in RASMI training enrolled on BORESHA Technical Vocational Education Training to reduce their vulnerability to recruitment into armed groups.



COVID-19

The arrival of COVID-19, affected cross-border trade movements of people and livestock, and household income derived from both. This placed greater burden on already poor households. In response, World Vision and its partners raised awareness of how to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, using messages on community radios which reached 1 million people, and supported schools to develop safety protocols. They also provided hand washing facilities and materials, gloves, and facemasks.

Conclusion

The second phase of the BORESHA project has enabled it to build upon the successes from phase one. This has helped to reduce deforestation and has enabled impressive results: 78% of households are now generating income from alternative fuel source, 92% of Village Savings and Loans Group members have increased income, and 47% of those who attended vocational training went on to start their own businesses. Due to this success, a 12-month extension to the BORESHA project (phase three) has been agreed.

Next steps

The whole consortium project will continue in the Manderia Triangle, focusing on those impacted by poverty, limited livelihood opportunities and local level conflict – exacerbated by climate change and COVID-19. The project will consolidate gains made so far, working with local community groups to strengthen their ability to manage cross-border and community tensions. It will also maintain new structures for water management – to reduce the risks of droughts – and continue with vocational training, livestock groups and savings groups, to ensure they continue to bring long term benefits to their members and communities.

LEFT: Daud repairing a motorcycle at a repair centre set-up by a Technical and Vocational Education and Training graduate. © Danish Refugee Council

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At World Vision, our focus is on helping the most vulnerable children, in the most dangerous places, overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian faith, we've worked together with communities, partners, local leaders and governments, for over 70 years, so that children – of all faiths and none – are empowered to experience fullness of life.

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COVER: Saynab picks fodder for her livestock from a World Vision constructed fodder store. Households share the fodder store to store feeds for their milking herds.
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