

Oxfam's Somaliland-Ethiopia Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project



By Abay Bekele

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Oxfam's Somaliland-Ethiopia Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project is implemented as a component of Oxfam GB's 15-year regional pastoral initiative that covers six countries in the Horn and East Africa¹. This initiative is divided into 3-year phases. In the Somali region of Ethiopia, implementation started in 2002 and is now in the second phase, whilst in Somaliland the first phase started in 2005. The first phase of Oxfam's Ethiopia-Somaliland Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project (see map) ran from January 2008 - June 2009. The second phase, which was funded under the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) Regional Drought Decision (RDD), was a 12-month project implemented in partnership with HAVOYOCO (Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee) and ended in June 2010.

The regional pastoral initiative is based on the idea that the key issue in reducing poverty and marginalisation in pastoral communities is increasing the level and quality of pastoralists' participation and representation. At the heart of the programme is a concern to build strong, representative pastoral organisations, through which pastoralists can better understand and claim their rights and manage the development services they need. Strengthening drought management capacity (at technical, organisational and institutional levels) and working to reduce vulnerability to drought is a central aspect of the pastoral development programme.



A community birkad in the Harshin-Somali region

The ECHO RDD support for the second phase from July 2009 to June 2010 was seen as the time to consolidate the activities, learning and outcomes of the first phase.

Background to the project

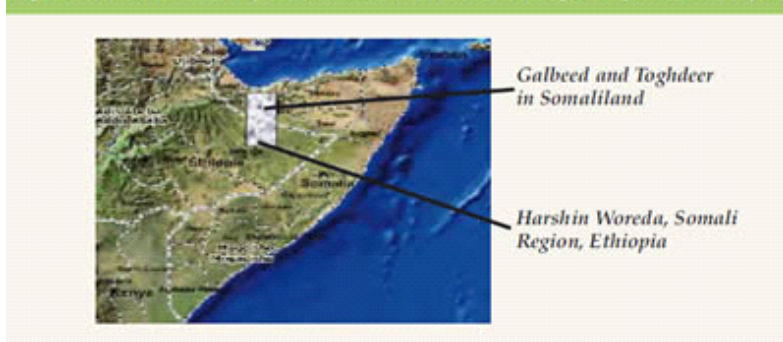
The pastoralist populations in Ethiopia and Somaliland are exposed to multiple hazards. Continued and increasing frequency of drought combined with a weakened asset base and coping mechanisms has resulted in high levels of risk. Frequent droughts lead to inadequate access to and availability of both water and pasture. Rapid population growth and a declining natural resource base have exacerbated the negative impact of the recurrent droughts.

The major water source for pastoralists and their livestock is surface water collected in water catchments (birkads) during the rainy season. There is also an increasing trend of expanding underground cement water tanks. Some of the water facilities in pastoral communities are privately owned although a large number are communally owned, particularly water pans/catchments. Though communally managed water facilities offer good coverage to various social groups within pastoral communities, there are increasing concerns in terms of their maintenance. Overall, the existing water sources are inadequate to provide water for human and livestock needs, even during normal times. The situation worsens usually during periods of water stress. During this time, competition over water and pasture often results in conflict and forces pastoralists to travel for longer distances with weakened livestock to find water. The stress induced by long-distance migrations leads to an erosion of the social capital and social support networks amongst the pastoralists. Access to basic social services such as education and health facilities is also disrupted, rendering this group less resilient to the increased incidence of drought.

At the same time, the stress-induced migrations negatively affect the health and productivity of livestock, leading to a significant increase in livestock mortality during drought periods. As the health of the livestock deteriorates, pastoralists resort to selling animals, thus crowding the market and leading to a drop in prices. This reduces the income of the pastoral households at a time when prices of all other consumables tend to go up, hence weakening the purchasing power of the pastoralists. The end results are loss of assets, destitution and, finally, dropping out from pastoralism. 'Drop out' pastoralists tend to migrate to urban settlements to access humanitarian relief and other basic social services. These situations create a sub-group of the population around large towns and villages who lack the skills to take part in economic activities in their new settings.

Communities living in adjacent border areas are often inter-dependent (in terms of culture and ethnicity, language, sharing common resources, trade and marketing routes), and the causes of their poverty are inter-linked. This is particularly the case in pastoral areas where pasture and water need to be accessed by resource users on both sides of the border. Furthermore, communities sharing a common border are faced with similar environmental conditions, socio-economic constraints and risk profiles. Effective natural resource management, conflict management and development work therefore requires joint action. Of particular relevance to the Somaliland-Ethiopia Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project are issues of trade, charcoal production, livestock trekking routes and water points. For example, poverty reduction in border areas cannot be achieved without peacebuilding, and most conflicts have a cross-border dynamic. As well as mitigating risk (conflict, disease), cross-border work can also add value, by opening up social/economic opportunities (trade, natural resource management (NRM), education) - this is particularly the case given the trade routes and links between Somaliland and Ethiopia.

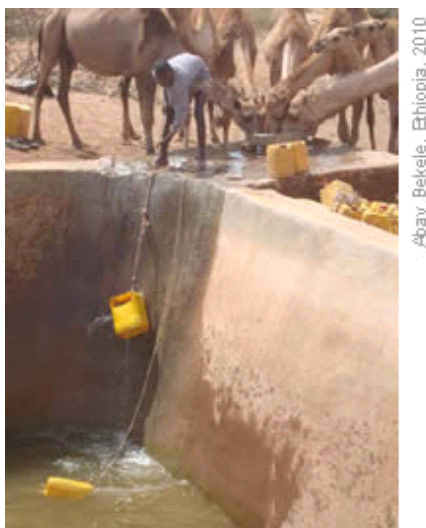
Figure 1: Location of Ethiopia-Somaliland Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project



Project strategy

The principles of cross border programming as applied to the Ethiopia-Somaliland Cross Border Drought Preparedness Project have largely been developed from prior thinking and consultations over a period of years. The programme strategy is based on Oxfam GB's 'one programme' approach and Oxfam GB's and HAVOYOCO understanding that the cross border project should be:

- | Proactive in nature and involve high quality work with communities
- | Programmatic and strategic, i.e. focused on strengthening institutions/processes, not just activities
- | Jointly planned and owned by communities, local partner organisations or by both governments
- | Addressing issues that can only be tackled by common action and/or coordination on both sides of the border
- | Used to achieve wider impact by influencing policy and practice on a regional basis
- | Flexible and responsive to changes in an operating context
- | Built on shared learning and understanding



Watering camel from a birkad in the Harshin-Somali region

Situation analysis

Assessments carried out in Ethiopia in January and March 2009 in Harshin Woreda and in Somaliland during the first week of May 2009 were instrumental in informing the proposal put to ECHO for the second phase of the cross border project. The findings revealed that vulnerable pastoral households were facing increasing livelihood erosion as droughts became more frequent and coping capacity extremely weakened. Communities identified the

effect of drought on vulnerable households as a core problem, highlighting that lack of proper, integrated management of natural resources (water and rangeland) leads to scarcity of water and pasture, as well as natural resource and environmental degradation. The assessment also identified privatisation of communal grazing land, limiting mobility and availability of resources, poor access to basic social services, erosion of social capital and resource based conflict as interrelated problems associated with the effect of drought.

Within the current disaster management system (on the Somaliland side) there is a functioning, although often ad hoc, disaster management coordination structure and a food security and nutrition information system. However, the absence of government in a central strong position is a clear limitation in relation to effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to strengthening of the organisational capacity of community-based institutions to participate in the decision-making process in respect of matters affecting their welfare. In relation to this, women in pastoral societies are highly marginalised and face multiple burdens in terms of bearing responsibility for most productive and reproductive tasks, while lacking comparable authority over productive resources and decision making processes. These burdens tend to increase during times of drought stress and conflict. Preparedness planning and capacity is seen as an urgent need.

Phase II objectives and expected outcomes

The proposal for phase II submitted to ECHO states that pastoralist vulnerability to drought will be addressed by focusing upon the natural resource base and the management of natural resources, capacity for effective drought preparedness and response and supporting communities to preserve their asset base in times of drought stress. The principal objective of the project is to ensure that communities, local government and civil society organisations in Somaliland and the Somali region of Ethiopia are better prepared to manage the negative impacts of droughts.

Three expected results (outcomes) for Phase II are:

Result 1: Improved institutional capacity for drought preparedness linked to enhanced community preparedness capacity.

Greater emphasis was placed on this result during the second phase, recognising the limited achievements during phase I. The focus is to improve community access to early warning information from national/regional authorities, awareness of the drought cycle, and drought risk management at community level. This is supported by the development and improvement of contingency plans with clearly demarcated roles and responsibilities.

Result 2: Improved integrated natural resource management (NRM) to ensure increased access to and availability of pasture, fodder and water.

Here the project focuses upon mapping of the natural resource base as a tool for planning in both a humanitarian and development context. Mapping exercises are built upon by ensuring the effective management of water points (including hygiene practices) and pasture management. Based on studies undertaken during phase I, the issue of land enclosure was to be taken up at a policy and advocacy level.

Result 3: Households better able to preserve their assets throughout the drought cycle.

The emphasis here is on working to ensure that levels of vulnerability to drought do not increase amongst pastoral populations by helping to ensure household assets are preserved during times of stress. This involves reviewing and addressing issues of coverage of veterinary services offered by Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), reviewing livestock marketing for effective livestock off-take during times of drought stress and building the capacity amongst livestock marketing cooperatives, Woreda DPPO (Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office), pharmacists and private vets in drought related livestock diseases and drought response.

Phase II activities

Target population

The project was implemented in the cross-border areas of Harshin, Somali region of Ethiopia and in Odwayine, Durqsi, Ballidhiig (Togdheer Region) and Farawayne, Allaybadaye and Belligubedle (districts of Galbeed province of Somaliland). The border communities are mainly from Isaac clan sharing the same ethnic denomination.

A total of 76,000 people in 9,500 households were expected to benefit directly from the intervention as shown in Table 1. The beneficiaries are pastoral men, women, children, youth and the elderly. Among the general population in Somali region of Ethiopia, 90% are pastoralists while those in Somaliland constitute 60-65% of the population.

Table 1: Profile of intervention targets in Phase II

	Total population in target area*	Total number of households in target districts**	Total direct beneficiaries	Total direct beneficiary households
Somaliland				
Galbeed (project will be working in 3 of the 10 districts)	100,800	12,600	14,729	1,841
Togdheer (project working in 3 of the 6 districts)	111,600	13,950	21,271	2,659
Total Somaliland	212,400	26,550	36,000	4,500
Ethiopia				
Harshin Woreda	80,215	10,027	40,000	5,000
Total Somaliand and Ethiopia	292,615	36,577	76,000	9,500

*Target area given as districts the project is working in, rather than the region.

** Each household has on average 8 people.

The activities implemented in phase II in order to achieve the three results are summarised in Box 1. Approximately 76,000 people (9,500 households) directly benefited from the integrated NRM of water and pasture resources as well as capacity building activities targeted by the project. Woreda, district and regional authorities, community-based organisations played a key and predominant role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project. By improving the management of water and pasture resources and reinforcing local capacities, all the Harshin population (80,215 people of whom over 45% are women) indirectly benefit from the project. Many of these benefit from the technical support provided by the implementing team.

Woreda and regional government institutions and community-based organisations also benefit from capacity building and technical support provided by the project. In Somaliland, the implementing local partner, HAVOYOCO, the community pastoral organizations (POs), the districts/regions authorities and the national level government departments including, the national disaster authority and the Ministry of Pastoral Development and Environment of Somaliland, benefit from institutional capacity support. On the Ethiopia side, the respective woreda and regional government institutions of Livestock, Crop and Rural Development, Water, Energy and Mines, DPP and Health are key beneficiaries from the different trainings and institutional development support.



Mobility, a key pastoral livelihood strategy (Kebribeyah Somali region)

Amongst target beneficiaries are the POs at community level and (in Somaliland) district level community development and preparedness committees.

Management and coordination

In order to administer and deliver the project, a Project Management Team was formed and led by the Somali Region, Pastoral Programme Manager. The Ethiopia project lead reflected a change in approach from phase I which was led by Somaliland. The switch to Ethiopia reflects the larger project on the Ethiopia side of the border and the greater project management capacity correspondingly budgeted within the Ethiopia team.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

In Phase I of the project, a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) guide was developed and a project baseline established. In phase II, the MEL guide and baseline was adapted to incorporate a Logical Framework.

Project implementing teams conducted monthly field monitoring by providing monthly progress reports. These monitoring exercises have been conducted to check the progress made against plans and hold discussions with stakeholders (communities, local authorities and NGOs). The implementing team held monthly coordination meetings to make decisions based on an analysis of the monitoring data, and the outcome of the meetings were shared with Oxfam Nairobi Office and FAO (flash report). During such reviews, Oxfam GB discussed with beneficiaries the relevance of the proposed activities for the next semester and took their comments into account.

A final internal evaluation was conducted by a team of Oxfam GB senior staff from Ethiopia and Somaliland, and representatives of NGO and government bureaus. The baseline survey was repeated and the results compared with the baseline carried out at the start of the project.

Lessons learnt during the first two project phases

Access to and types of rangelands

A key finding of the natural resource study in phase II of the project was that communal lands are being increasingly privatised, i.e. they become land enclosures. The process seems to be influenced by endogenous [erosion of customary institutions, intra-clan competition, erosion of communalism and population growth] and exogenous [weak grass root government institutions, expansion of settlement and social services, commercialization of rangeland products and climate change] factors. This leads to erosion of livelihoods as livestock numbers decrease, so that more people become involved in selling charcoal as a means of survival. Charcoal is used domestically or sold to the Middle East.

During phase II, Oxfam GB has tried to build community capacity, e.g. through developing water capacity (cement lined wells) and rehabilitating rangelands via the community.

A number of negative impacts and challenges of the programme have emerged. As water points were developed, communities started acquiring their own private birkads. The number of birkads on the Ethiopian side increased

significantly but the amount of grazing land remained the same, leading to rangeland degradation during the dry season in particular. The number of birkads in the area of the project has now reached more than 5000. Livestock come to access the water and graze the fields around the water points leading to rangeland degradation. Wealthy households started selling water and natural resource sharing mechanisms changed as livelihoods declined. Overall there has been a process of commercialisation so that water and grass are increasingly purchased. Water is now commonly sold during drought and dry season periods.

Box 1: Phase II activities by anticipated result

Result 1: Improved institutional capacity for disaster risk reduction linked to enhanced community preparedness capacity.

- | Awareness raising on disaster risk reduction (DRR)/drought cycle management topics for pastoral organisations, traditional leaders, women groups, traditional meteorologists and government (district commissioners, village head-men and governors (regional and district level)) in Somaliland.
- | Ten community mapping sessions on drought preparedness including mobility patterns, water and pasture resources for contingency planning in Harshin.
- | Five trainings on DRR and five follow up meetings with CAHWs to strengthen a community based early warning information system using data collected by CAHWs and linked to the district DPPB office.
- | District disaster contingency planning workshop, facilitated by DPPB with community participation, to establish a drought contingency plan in Harshin District. Also, support to NERAD (National Environment Research and Disaster Management) to develop a national and district contingency planning methodology for Somaliland as well as a national plan together with six district drought contingency plans.
- | Conduct an early warning system (EWS) user survey and use this as a basis to develop an EWS for Somaliland.
- | Study tour for NERAD, HAVOYOCO and Oxfam GB Somaliland to Ethiopia/Kenya to see how these two countries' disaster risk management agencies (including EWS systems) and mechanisms are set up and function.

Result 2: Improved integrated NRM to ensure increased access to and availability of pasture, fodder and water.

- | Cross border integrated natural resource management mapping of the project area focusing on water, pasture resources and possible migration routes in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).
- | Joint dialogue workshops on findings of natural resource management (NRM) mapping and land enclosures study from previous phase of RDD in partnership with FAO and line bureaus and ministries (proposed formulation of a cross border NRM technical working group)
- | Construction of five community birkads and natural resources management training and follow up coaching for five birkad community management committees.
- | Construction of four rainwater harvesting tanks in four schools and operations and maintenance training and follow up coaching for four teachers.
- | Technical vocational skills course for 10 masons and carpenters on the construction and maintenance of water structures and roof water harvesting system.
- | Gully erosion control and re-seeding of 6 sq. km of pastureland including provision of tools to community members.
- | Technical and policy level support to the Ministry of Pastoral Development and Environment of Somaliland to advance the formulation of the national Land Tenure Policy. This includes convening a stakeholder's review meeting (to include participants from Ethiopia by way of joint learning) and incorporating the findings of the land enclosures study from the previous phase of the RDD.

Result 3: Households better able to preserve their assets throughout the drought cycle.

- | A cross border study to investigate the possible role of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS) in drought preparedness and response including tackling drought related diseases and the overall performance of CAHWS in respect to their given mandate.
- | Dissemination of study findings to national bodies via national workshops in Somaliland and Somali Region (government, FAO and agencies engaged with CAHWS working) to help strengthen CAHWS training through the updating of national and agency training guidelines.
- | Used study findings to develop training guidelines on the management of drought related diseases and trained CAHWS on the same. A total of 22 CAHWS were trained in Somaliland.
- | Support the Livestock, Crop and Rural Development Bureau in Somali Region of Ethiopia to roll out the national guideline for the Design and Establishment of CAHWS via holding a regional orientation session (targeting FAO, Agricultural Bureau DPPB, NGO's, etc.) and two district orientation sessions (targeting CAHWS, district veterinary technicians, live stock marketing cooperatives, private vets and private pharmacies).

The total number of water points rehabilitated during the two phases has been approximately 500 (approx 10%). There are two ways to manage birkads - privately and communally. Most of the constructed or rehabilitated birkads have been constructed for the community but private birkads tend to be better managed than communal ones. Another lesson from phase II has been that it is important to support the capacity to manage the water points (financially and institutionally) so that these resources are sustainable.

An important finding from this experience for Oxfam GB, who are now attempting to secure funding from ECHO to continue the project from July 2010 to December 2011, has been that drought related problems cannot be solved simply by filling gaps, e.g. constructing birkads. It is far better to build the institutional capacity of communities so that they can manage their own resources more effectively.

Another set of key learning points arose in relation to types of grazing land (60% enclosed/private, 40% communal). Enclosed lands are generally well managed but most of the community are excluded from these lands. Usually, the grass and trees are excellent on enclosed lands. Communal lands tend to be degraded and eroded and poorly managed. In the next phase of the project, Oxfam GB intends to support the exchange of management experience between enclosed and communal lands. This will be piloted in three woredas - four communities per woreda. The project will use households in enclosures to train those communities who use communal lands, in land management. To reverse the situation, pastoral field school will be piloted to train herders and community leaders. Trainees will act as resource persons in their local communities to raise the awareness level of the community on rangeland management.

Another set of issues arising out of the first two phases relates to cross-border land areas. The GoE does not recognise international movements over the border. Oxfam GB is therefore looking at issues around mobility and the need to establish information systems for critical knowledge around pastoralist livelihood systems. For example, with regard to livestock diseases, how mobility is influenced by disease and how to share information between communities. The congregation of herds at dry season grazing areas favours disease transmission. However, this also gives opportunity to access and treat a large population of animals at any one time, and stands the best chance of breaking the chain of transmission.

Cross border livestock trade

The structure of the market between communities in the cross border areas of Ethiopia and Somaliland conveys livestock to Somaliland and brings in consumer goods to Ethiopia. Oxfam GB will facilitate exchange of information between the two communities.

Cross border mobility

Sharing information on grass and water availability and improved management of strategic water points and grazing lands between the two cross-border communities is essential. This will have to be done informally due to the GoE's position on cross-border movements. The Oxfam GB offices in Jijiga and Somaliland plan to exchange information and also disseminate and share information between the two communities. The aim in the next project phase will be gradually to institutionalise capacity to exchange information outlined above. It is also hoped to take relevant government staff from Ethiopia and Somaliland to West Africa to expose them to cross border policy formulation and implementation in the region (Mali, Burkina Faso or Niger) and how information sharing can work, i.e. the approach is advocacy from above while having an impact at grassroots level.

Preparedness and livestock disease

Another key issue for the next phase of the project is addressing preparedness. A major problem for pastoralists is livestock disease, especially drought induced diseases. Five key livestock diseases for each animal species have been identified as part of this project making it possible to strategise disease control measures. The most important actors with respect to livestock diseases are CAHWs. Through the project, eighty nine have so far been trained on the Ethiopian side, with others trained on the Somali side. These CAHWs move with the communities to provide animal health service as they are pastoralists themselves. The project has been building their capacity in disease surveillance and diagnosis with a view to establishing community early warning and response capacity to drought. This will help facilitate vaccination or treatment interventions.

A relevant and appropriate contingency plan has been produced both on the Ethiopian and Somaliland side on the basis of assessment, analysis, consultation, and seasonal scenarios. The contingency plan includes linkages with the regional (Ethiopia) and national (Somaliland) early warning system (EWS). It is anticipated that these linkages will be strengthened during the forthcoming ECHO programme (RDD3). Community based early warning indicators focus on the following key areas: rainfall, birkad levels, pasture conditions, livestock body condition, livestock disease, and migration in/out of the woreda. This information is gathered by CAHWs. Focusing on these indicators would help pilot the process and establish the analytical linkages between community based monitoring and the regional/national EWs. In Ethiopia, CAHWs information is passed to animal health technicians (AHTs) in government. In Harshin there are 13 centres with AHTs. AHTs travel to the district capital each month for payment and can use this opportunity to inform the district of developments. The project aims to develop district contingency plans, which will be activated by early warning information collected by CAHWs.

On the Somaliland side, institutional capacity of the government and the technical capacity of its staff are weaker. Oxfam GB has tried to build capacity of DPPO equivalent staff although there are not many suitable government staff to train. Thus, the programme is stronger on the Harshin side. Marketing activities have not as yet started in this project. Oxfam GB recognises that it is important to establish preparedness first but that timely livestock marketing will be critical further down the line.

Community vulnerability

The remaining pillar of the Oxfam GB crossborder project relates to reducing community vulnerability during drought and dry seasons. Generally, the drought and dry season favours the better off but if conditions are very severe, all are affected. The most vulnerable are the poor as they lack livestock and natural resources. They need alternative income generating sources. Women are the most vulnerable amongst the poor. Women and children remain behind when husbands migrate. If food and money sent by the husband diminishes, then they have to send livestock to their husbands to sell.

The challenge for the Oxfam GB project is how to reduce vulnerability of women and children who remain behind during the dry season. The programme is currently attempting to identify business opportunities for women.

Table 2: Profile of beneficiaries by result/sector

Result /Sector	Number of beneficiaries in Somaliland	Number of beneficiaries in Ethiopia	Total number of beneficiaries	Number of households
Result 1: Disaster preparedness, local disaster management components	36,000	40,000	76,000	9,500
Result 2: Disaster preparedness, small-scale infrastructure and services	4,800 (part of the 36,000 above)	25,000 (part of the 40,000 above)	29,800	3,725
Result 3: Food assistance, short term food security and livelihood support.	9,600 (part of above)	0	9,600	1,200

Conclusion

In conclusion, a lesson from phases I and II of the project is that the focus of pastoralist interventions should be to strengthen the community and risk reduction strategies rather than simply fill material gaps through resource provision. Oxfam GB also realise that information on the interaction of communities with neighbouring groups is a pre-requisite for understanding pastoralist societies and planning development initiatives. Furthermore, there is a need to find out about the major resources in a community, where these are found, who manages them and perhaps most important of all, who benefits from them.

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¹Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.