



A STEP TOWARDS RESILIENCE

Joint Initiatives Addressing Protracted Crisis in Somali Region-Ethiopia

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The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) was established in 1935 by a government decree. In the same year, the National Society was registered as the 48th member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and a member of the international Red Cross Movement.

Since then, ERCS has undertaken humanitarian and development programmes and services targeting the most vulnerable communities in the country.

The ERCS operates in 11 regions, 28 zones and 74 woredas with more than 3,800 grassroots Red Cross committees (2011-2012). Currently, ERCS has over 3 million annual fee paying members and more than 70,000 volunteers who support the humanitarian and development activities of the society. Its vision is "To be a self reliant and efficient humanitarian organisation in Ethiopia in reaching the most vulnerable".

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Contents

Acknowledgement.....	vii
Foreword	viii
List of contributors, November 2017.....	xi
Other Contributors	xii
Abbreviations / Acronyms	xiii
Water is first out of one thousand needs (Somali proverb).....	1
You will die for water but water will not kill you (Somali proverb).....	3
The story of Laftagalol earthen dam	3
Water pocketing	6
Creating household income through climate smart agriculture.....	8
The case of Kebri-Ahmed farm pond users' group.....	8
Sustaining the Elbahay earthen dam for the future	10
Lessons from Partnerships for future programming	12
Partnership with consortium alliance	12
A step towards resilience.....	15
Service to community by Community	18
The case of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs)	18
Honey healing our land	21
The story of Udbi	21
Milk empowers women	23

The case of Tikdem Milk Group: The story of Zeyneba	23
Saving together for tomorrow's prosperity	25
A move towards disaster risk reduction	28
Enhancing community organisation for adaptive capacity	30
The story of Kebreahmed Kebele	30
Early Warning can save lives	33
A case of Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC)	33
Community mobilisation for watershed conservation	36
One child ten trees- A case of school environmental clubs	38
Fruit Production for food security	40
Lessons from Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with Ecosystem Management Restoration (EMR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)	42

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Maria Twerda
Country Representative for Ethiopia
Netherland Red Cross
November 2017

Foreword

Despite progress made in reducing disaster risk at all levels since the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in 2005, disasters have continued to exert a heavy toll on peoples' lives and livelihoods. Between 2005 and 2014, over 700 thousand people lost their lives, over 1.4 million were injured and approximately 23 million were made homeless as a result of disasters. Overall, more than 1.5 billion people have been affected in various ways, with women, children and people in vulnerable situations disproportionately affected. The total economic loss was more than \$1.3 trillion. In addition, between 2008 and 2012, 144 million people were displaced (mainly from armed conflicts which are becoming protracted). Climate change has added another complication by increasing the frequency and intensity of the hazards, significantly impeding progress towards sustainable development. Recurring small-scale disasters and slow-onset disasters affect communities, households and small and medium-sized enterprises, constituting a high percentage of all losses (UNISDR¹). However, all is not lost because now, there is a growing recognition to stop a short-term fixation for long-term problems. As a result of this, resilience building and proactive risk reduction is now reflected in all key global instruments such as Sustainable Development Goal, the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework for Action.

Ethiopia is a disaster-prone country; exposed to numerous hazards including droughts, floods, epidemics and conflict. Recurring droughts and floods have the most severe impact on Ethiopia's population. The country has a long history of recurring droughts, which have increased in magnitude, frequency and impact since the 1970s. The severe drought in 2015, exacerbated by El Nino, affected 10.2 million people in the country. A number of studies show that due to climate change and additional human-induced factors the areas affected by drought and desertification are expanding in the country. Flash floods and seasonal river floods are becoming more frequent and widespread. Climate models indicate that in the next century there will be a 20 percent increase in extreme high rainfall events.

Somali Region of Ethiopia is a typical context that shows the challenge the country is facing; moving from one crisis to another before getting adequate recovery period in between. People living in Somali Region of Ethiopia are not new to drought and floods. In order to address the underlying causes of vulnerability and enhance communities' resilience, an integrated disaster risk reduction approach was designed and implemented in partnership among Ethiopian Red

Cross Society (ERCS) and 3 Dutch organizations: The Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), Wetlands International (WI), and Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Change Centre (RCCC). The program's overall objective was to improve food security, livelihoods, water security and adaptive capacity of 50,000 people in 3 woredas, namely Gursum, Jigjiga and Tuliguled in Somali Region. Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) was the key implementing partner alongside the relevant government stakeholders and of course, the target communities who are the drivers of the entire planning and implementation process.

The Protracted Crisis Programme was implemented over a period of 3 years and provided an opportunity for replicating and up-scaling an integrated approach for resilience, linking Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR). From beneficiaries' record, so far 38,493 persons have been reached with food security initiatives out of whom 36% are women and close to 33,150 persons, of whom 42% are also women, will benefit from the water security outcome. When activities such as those targeting unemployed youth, rehabilitation of natural resources, water development, and the linkage between DRR and development planning have been fully implemented, the number of beneficiaries will certainly reach and exceed the targeted 50,000 people. The people reached with DRR outcome are by far more than the number of the two outcomes as this has a multiplier effect when one disseminates knowledge and skills obtained from the DRR intervention, many more are reached.

A Step to Resilience, is a compilation of inspiring stories of the journey of change that started in 2014 bringing together several partners with the common goal of empowering communities of Somali Region to deal with the challenges brought about by the protracted crisis in their communities. The methodology used for the preparation for the writeshop, the simultaneous documentation of lessons learnt during the Programme, the extensive use of photographs and illustrations, and the unique editorial strategies make this book an exciting addition to the big catalogue of literature on resilience.

It picks a few success stories emerging from the water storage infrastructure that include a number of livestock now able to access water, improved incomes from growing fast maturing seeds, availability of technical services provided by Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) at community level and the organisation of community groups especially vulnerable women into savings and milk marketing groups to help diversify livelihoods.

Without applying the usual lingo and terminologies associated with evaluations, the stories told in this book make such interesting reading while at the same time succinctly conveying the beneficiaries' perspectives. This is achieved without necessarily losing the humor and originality that is so evidently characteristic of African story-telling. Through the stories, the readers will discover the immense potential and comparative advantages of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in improving livelihoods and contributing to the sustainable development of communities. We would like to thank the partners for an excellent cooperation and to recommend *A Step to Resilience* for everyone working to build resilience in the context of protracted crisis in the Horn of Africa region.

List of contributors, November 2017

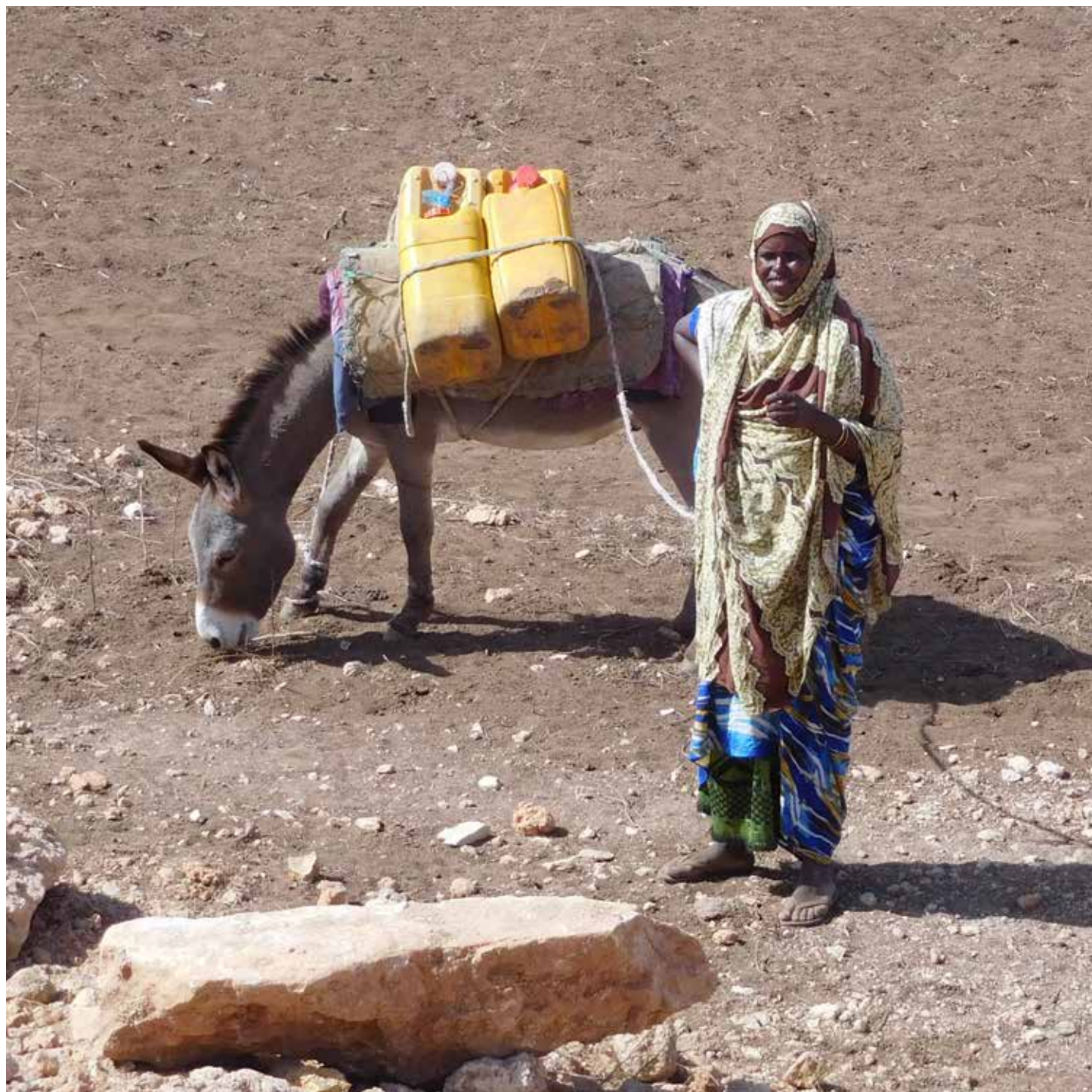
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Abbreviations / Acronyms

CAHWs	– Community Animal Health Workers
CBDRM	– Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CBDRR	– Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CCA	– Climate Change Adaptation
DPPO	– Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office
DRM	– Disaster Reduction Management
DRR	– Disaster Risk Reduction
EMR	– Ecosystem Management and Registration
ERCS	– Ethiopian Red Cross Society
ETB	– Ethiopian Birr
HFA	– Hyogo Framework for Action
HOAREC	– Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network
IGAs	– Income Generating Activities
MoU	– Memorandum of Understanding
NGOS	– Non Governmental Organizations
NLRC	– Netherlands Red Cross
NMA	– National Metrology Agency
PfR	– Partners for Resistance
RCCC	– Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
SCRS-E	– Strengthening Community Resilience in Somali Region of Ethiopia
SRWB	– Somali Region Water Bureau
SLCNRDB	– Regional Livestock Crop and National Resource Development Bureau
UN	– United Nations
WI	– Wetlands International
VCA	– Vulnerability Capacity Assessment





Water is first out of one thousand needs (Somali proverb)

Somali Region, with a population of about 5 million people, depends on rain for its water supply and livestock production. Nearly 60% of the people are pastoralists and subsist through herding of livestock. People in the region have suffered a series of livelihood disruptions resulting from drought. Due to erratic rainfall and poor pasture, most of the pastoralists and their herds are forced to move long distances in search of pasture and water. Traditional humanitarian and development assistance historically has fallen short of building sufficient capacity of communities to withstand the endemic shocks and stresses in the region.

As a consequence of the shocks, the region is also the most food and water insecure in Ethiopia. The frequency of droughts has increased from once in every ten years in the 1970-80s to twice a decade in the 1990s and recently to once every 2-3 years. Flooding along the river banks has also become a regular phenomenon as a consequence of high rainfall

in the upstream highlands. This is exacerbated by severe degradation of the river catchment areas that have removed soil cover leading to high runoff when it rains.

Though drought is the major hazard causing food and water insecurity, there is often a range of intertwined underlying factors that have exacerbated people's vulnerability. These factors include: Environmental degradation which is the result of severe deforestation; overgrazing; lack of reliable water sources; limited access to basic services such as human and livestock health; and climate variability that exposes people to drought and chronic food shortages.

To deal with the priority need of access to clean water, the Protracted Crisis Programme implemented by a consortium of agencies constructed 2 medium sized dams, 3 standard birkads with capacity of **600m³** each, and 3 roof water harvesting structures (commonly called Roto, each with capacity of 10,000 litres). By the

time of writing, construction and development of 3 other new birkads, one borehole and one shallow well drilling, and rehabilitation of 6 old birkads were still on-going. It is estimated that when all these structures are completed and commissioned, the challenges of water insecurity in the communities will have been adequately addressed.

The Laftagalol earthen dam is one of the two completed water structures having a holding capacity of 1 million **cubic meters** and would serve approximately 30,000 people. This is one of the largest water facilities being implemented by Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) through a partnership agreement with Somali Region Water Development Bureau. More than 12 million Ethiopian Birr has been allocated by the programme for its implementation. The other main water facility is the Bombas sand dam with a size of 30 metres width and 2 metres high. The aim of this structure is to enhance water percolation into the sand so as to improve reach of ground water using the 2 hand dug wells constructed near the dam. This water facility is expected to serve another 3,000 people in the region.

Despite challenges in partnership development and project implementation, good collaboration has been established with various regional government bureaus such as the Regional Livestock Crop and Natural Resource Development Bureau (SLCNRDB) as

well as the Jigjiga University where capacity building trainings have been Organised for over 150 experts and community members including water management committees to ensure sustainability beyond the project phase.

The other major achievement of the programme has been in the software area where Organised farmer-groups around the 7 small-scale farm ponds established in Jigjiga and Gursum Woreda have been trained in crop husbandry and have started benefiting from the use of the ponds to water their crops. The purpose of the farm ponds is to store rainwater for small scale irrigation to create alternative income from agriculture. The ponds are small to medium size pits covered with plastic geomembrane to protect water percolation into the ground. It is ideal structure to practice small scale irrigation by harvesting rain water. Each pond is designed and developed to hold 263 m³ of water and each serves around 20 farmers in small vegetable production. As a start-up input, the farmers were supplied with the necessary irrigation materials, variety of seeds, and training on agronomic practices.

As a result of the interventions of the Protracted Crisis Programme, households participating in these initiatives are beginning to develop better resilience to shocks and moving on to diversify livelihoods from pure pastoralism to agro-pastoralism and agribusiness as demonstrated in the stories below.



You will die for water but water will not kill you (Somali proverb)

The story of Laftagalol earthen dam

Water shortage is a critical challenge for Somali Region pastoral communities, but the problem worsens in prolonged and cyclic drought situations. Reliable and perennial water sources are not available in most areas in the region. Sufficient water is only available during the erratic short rainy season. The deep and high permeability nature of the sandy soilacerbates the limitation of surface water availability after rain fall.

Jigjiga district is one of the arid areas in the Somali Region where people suffer due to lack of water for human consumption, and livestock and crop production. Although the area is supposed to have two rain seasons a year; the “*dyer*” (long rainy season) between September and November, and the “*go*” (short rainy season) between March and May, the rain fails and these failures can last for several seasons. To bridge prolonged dry spell periods, communities are

forced to pursue indigenous coping mechanisms. Together with their livestock, they migrate to areas where water and pasture are available and only come back to their original homes when it rains. The community lacks the capacity to construct water harvesting structures and have left this role to local government authorities, Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and other non- governmental organisations (NGOs). Accordingly, ERCS, in cooperation with the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), local government and communities of Laftagalol Kebele of Jigjiga Woreda, conducted a vulnerability and capacity assessment in 2014. According to the assessment, drought was one of the biggest hazards for the Woreda and proposed a strategic solution with the introduction of rain water harvesting structures, such as construction of dams and birkads. The Protracted Crisis Programme was designed based on the assessment findings including the community-proposed solutions of rain water harvesting structures.

In collaboration with the local government and the community, the location of the earth dam in Laftagalol village was selected and with technical support from the NLRC and ERCS the dam was designed and constructed. The local community led the mass mobilisation for dam management through constructing different soil and water conservation structures (soil bund, trench, micro-basin, check dam, etc.), as well as the planting of multipurpose tree seedlings. In addition, the community formed a Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) committee for managing the overall disaster risk reduction interventions in their Kebele, including the management of the Laftagalol earthen dam. Community members were trained by the local government and ERCS and NLRC. The Laftagalol earthen dam subcommittee was set up to ensure sustainability of the dam by focusing on water sanitation, fair access and utilization, as well as repair and maintenance of the water structures.

The construction of the Laftagalol earthen dam improved water access during the peak dry period and migration to other areas in such of water has significantly reduced. The community has been able to settle in their locality thus reducing the stress for children, the elderly and livestock through reduced movement. Cattle deaths have reduced as well and hygiene and sanitation for families have greatly improved. Women and children spend less time fetching

water and can now focus on other activities like school for children and income generating activities (IGAs for the women). The dam is intended to support a population of 31,746 people of the Laftagalol Kebele with their livestock during the peak dry months of the year. However, more than 20,000 other people and livestock from other neighbouring Kebeles make use of the dam, therefore serving more than 50,000 people and livestock. Because of this, the water may not last the intended peak dry months of the year.

Abdulahi Beshir, 61 years of age and father of 9 children, is a clan leader at Laftagalol Kebele of Jigjiga district. He is one of the beneficiaries of Laftagalol earthen dam. *“Shealah! I have no words to speak for the dam. It is Allah’s gift for Laftagalol community,”* Says Abdulahi Beshir. *“I used to travel far, to Fafan Kebele (40 km) in search of water for my 20 sheep and 10 cows. I would take my children with me, to help with the watering of the animals and to bring water home for consumption. During my many travels, livestock would die or get lost to wild animals. Due to mixing with other pastoralists’ livestock herds, my livestock would be taken by mistake to other Kebeles. During the dry season, when it gets very hot, I would move my home for months near a water source until the rain came. But now, our situation has changed since beginning of May 2017 as there is water in the dam and my livestock is living with me around*

my homestead and are in good condition. I can milk my cows every morning and night so that I get fresh milk to feed my family well. In addition, no livestock has been attacked by wild animals or gotten lost due the mix up while tracking in search of water,” he adds.

The Somali Regional Government as well as NGOs and UN organisations appreciate the disaster risk reduction work done by the Protracted Crisis Programme, especially the construction of the Laftagalol earthen dam and how it benefits the surrounding communities. During their visit to the dam they commented that the programme should work more on

protecting the dam by constructing different soil and water conservation structures in the upstream area to reduce the siltation effect to extend the dam service year. In addition, they advised that the community dam management system be strengthened. As the volume of water is big, it is important to introduce irrigation agronomy to promote livelihood diversification of the community and improve food security.

These lessons have been taken up by ERCS and its partners and will be reflected in the second phase of the programme.





Water pocketing

Addressing water needs of pastoral communities in Somali Region

Lack of water and proper storage capacity during the dry season is one of the biggest challenges in Laftagalol Kebele. The local community is sometimes forced to travel up to 60 km per day in search of water for their households and livestock. The journey is stressful for both people and livestock as both can be attacked by wild animals. Due to the stress of the journey for animals, milk production is reduced thus affecting food security of families. When the water problem worsens, people are forced to shift their homes temporarily to live closer to the water points until the rains come. This, not only affects education in the Kebele for school going children but it also affects the elderly who are usually left behind without proper care and nutrition. During this time, people and animals tend to use the same open

water sources, making them vulnerable to water borne diseases.

To address these challenges, the Protracted Crisis Programme in Somali Region, wanted to assist the community in Laftagalol Kebele to increase their immediate water and storage needs. They offered to build birkads so that the community could store water. Birkads are underground cisterns and are the most common rain water harvesting structures in Somali Region. An average birkad holds up to 600 m³ of water, enough to serve up to 80 households with domestic water for the 6 dry months of the year, addressing the chronic water crisis.

Mohamed Ali Nur is a farmer who lives with his family of 7 in Laftagalol Kebele. He is one of the beneficiaries of the birkads build by the Protracted Crisis Programme. He was involved from the beginning of the project when the assessment team visited his village. The programme staff together with staff from

the Somali Region Water Development Bureau (SRWB) conducted an initial discussion with communities on how best to address the water scarcity problem. The village had some small privately owned birkads, but there was no other water source for the community. During the discussions, the community decided that birkads were the most appropriate solution as they collected and stored water for long and prevented water loss through infiltration and evaporation. *“Now the birkad is full of the previous rain showers and together with the Laftagalol dam, we have sufficient water. We will use the water from the dam first and then use the water from the birkad when the other sources are depleted,”* says Mohamed. *“My family is saved from travelling the long distance to fetch water. My children now have time for school and other domestic work. For my cows, water is near and milk production has increased due to less stress. I have more milk for my family and the surplus I sell for cash. Thank you for building the birkads close to my home. I have more time to increase my land for cultivation too as I now have more family members who can assist me during the planting season. This will increase the crop yield of my land,”* he adds.

Mohamed is also a member of the water committee. The committee ensures equitable water use among communities and makes sure that each household has received equal volume of water from the birkads, irrespective

of family size. The birkads are regarded as protected water sources and by-laws have been formulated to ensure that domestic and wild animals are blocked from coming closer to them. This keeps the water clean as it is used for household consumption without treatment.

However, Mohammed Ali raised a concern that Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and its partners have to take to consideration. According to him, the construction did not ensure proper plastering inside the birkads. This has resulted in loss of water through seepage on the walls and floor. This he says, should be fixed at the end of the dry season when the birkads are empty.





Creating household income through climate smart agriculture

The case of Kebri-Ahmed farm pond users' group

Kebri Ahmed farm pond is one of the 7 farm ponds established by the Protracted Crisis Programme in Somali Region of Ethiopia. Abdulahi Hassen Hajin is one of the 6 farming family heads Organised around the farm pond who has already started to reap the benefit from it. He was continuously in struggle to cope with the ever increasing climate change and its associated impacts. He was losing hope slowly as the fight for scarce water became a norm in his community. That is when the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) approached him with this great idea, the use of farm ponds to produce short maturing crops.

The erratic nature of rainfall, elongated dry spell and its inadequacy led Abdulahi to be highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change particularly water stress. Recurrent drought and its associated impact such as

deaths of livestock, and low income from those that remained further plunged him to deep poverty and made him dependent on food aid. It is during this crucial time that he joined the Protracted Crisis Programme which is implemented in his area (Kebri-Ahmed Kebele).

Abdulahi cultivates 8 koti of land (equivalent to 2 Ha) where he plants chat, a cash crop locally produced. He also has a small plot for sorghum and maize production. In most cases, the sorghum crop fails before maturing because of the erratic and short rain. The chat, however, is the main source of income to meet his family's basic needs. In a good year, he sells up to 40,000 ETB annually which is sufficient to buy 6 months of his family's food and clothing. The deficit is usually covered from animal sources and petty trade. However, in last year's severe drought, he lost 15 of his cows and 15 shots, and was left with only 8 cows and 30 shoats. In such drought, the large part of his income was spent on animal feed and industrial by-products as

an effort to save his core animal breed such as cows, heifer and bulls.

During beneficiary targeting, Abdulahi was selected by his village community on a participatory consultation facilitated by the programme staff to be part of this intervention. Abdulahi was selected to be part of the programme because he was considered to be a model farmer in the community and because of his willingness and commitment to demonstrate and propagate his successes to other farmers. During pond construction, he contributed labour for excavation work as well as in managing flood inlet and outlet of the pond. As an input, Abdulahi and the other 5 group members have received short maturing drought resistant seeds of onion, green pepper, tomatoes; tridle pump for pumping out water to the farm; and 3 consecutive trainings on agronomic practices and post-harvest management. In the last rainy season of 2017, the group used 2 hectare of land for onion production and harvested 20 bags (each bag is 50 kg). They sold a bag for 450 ETB on the farm. When there is good rain and the pond collects runoff to its capacity, the group is able to harvest early maturing crops three times a year instead of twice.

Abdulahi realized that increasing the ploughing land is critical to increasing his and the group's income. The group agreed to commit additional plot of land for cultivation of onion, pepper, and tomatoes for the coming rainy season. Being in a group has made him learn

the importance of working together with others because it enables him to contribute to group effort and learn from other people's experience. Through the group, he is able to achieve more. This he says has become the source of strength for the group to continue and aspire to do and achieve more.

However, despite their success, the group has faced a number of challenges, one of them being the world animals that drink from the pond. Due to the incessant drought, wild animals find themselves in the ponds and after drinking they are unable to come out. In their struggle to come out they end up tearing the plastic sheet which leads to loss of water through seepage. Abdulahi suggests an upgrade of the farm ponds to birkads. To counter this challenges of damage by wild animals, Abdulahi was encouraged to improve the fence around the pond to better protect it from contact with domestic and wild animals. In general, this intervention has clearly proved successful and can be replicated to serve as an alternative means of improving the livelihoods of people in such unpredicted environment. For Abdulahi the journey to success has just started. *"I am now able to feed my family and send them school. I get additional income from farming and other sources which can further improve my resilience. As a group, we are able to purchase seed for the next cropping season. We are now planning to expand the size of the pond to collect more water so as to increase our production."*



Sustaining the Elbahay earthen dam for the future

Elbahay earthen dam is overburdened by free users and lacks an appropriate owner who cares about its maintenance and long-term sustainability. Even worse, these free users are jeopardizing the future of the dam by using it for purposes that can harm the water quality and its life span.

Elbahay dam was constructed in 1986 by an Ethiopian-Italian project for water harvesting and irrigation purposes. After 34 years of service, it is of critical importance as the main source of water for Jigjiga town, and provides a permanent water supply to surrounding rural people and their livestock. It is the only source of water for Jigjiga town construction works transported and supplied by water trucks. The dam is also vital as a source of drinking water for rural communities in the dry season and the

main water source for water trucking during drought emergencies in the surrounding Fafan zone.

However, there are many threats facing the sustainable long-term supply of water and holding capacity of the dam due to siltation. The most prominent threats are the lack of a dam management task force, pollution and contaminating agents. Car and clothes washing, contamination by livestock and oil and petrol from water trucks and their pumps all threaten the quality of the water and biological resources in the reservoir such as fish and birds, and the recreational value of the water.

In order to conserve and sustain the long-term future of the water for Jigjiga, the Protracted Crisis Programme assessed the condition of the dam and the lake it supports. The consortium looked not only at the dam site itself which is a man-made wetland, but in the surrounding landscape that drains into the lake

and suffers from soil erosion that contributes to the siltation of the lake. This area was identified as important for conservation and restoration in the Atlas of the Fafan Catchment produced under the programme. The consortium identified the “Meles Foundation Park” as a key site for on-the-ground conservation works that also serves as an attractive park for recreation and relaxation. The Programme planted a large number of trees which are well cared for.

To improve the management of the dam, the consortium helped establish a regional dam task force that brought different government bureaus together. It started with an awareness workshop to create an understanding of the current challenges facing the dam.

Thanks to the mobilisation, the task force has identified roles and responsibilities of the members and assigned different tasks among the groups to boost their contribution. They now hold monthly meetings and visit the dam to assess the current situation and develop solutions.

Results of this collaboration with the task force include greening and plantation works around the dam to increase the vegetation coverage so as to minimize the soil erosion that is leading to the siltation of the lake. This will also increase the attractiveness and recreational value of the area, and improved livelihoods from the planting of fruit trees.

“ To improve the management of the dam, the consortium helped establish a regional dam task force that brought different government bureaus together. ”

The Protracted Crisis Programme also contributed to the rehabilitation and expansion of the conserved area by protecting it with barbed wire fencing that has minimized livestock entry to the conservation areas and reduced the work load of the guardians. Now the guards have more time for watering and caring for the planted trees rather than keeping animals out of the park.

The work of conserving the dam and surrounding lake have only just started, and more needs to be done. A water purification plant, built under a previous project would have made a large contribution to improved water quality, but it is not operational. Also a livelihoods assessment around the site needs to be conducted.

While there are still many management issues to strengthen, the Jigjiga Agriculture Council Office is very motivated to continue this work. Irrigated agriculture in areas around the lake is disturbing the soil and further contributing to siltation. In the future, the conservation area around the dam will be expanded through planting of more trees.



Lessons from Partnerships for future programming

Partnership with consortium alliance

The Protracted Crisis Programme tends to bring out the best from all humanitarian organisations responding to humanitarian needs in the fine line between development and emergency. The SPHERE standards developed by humanitarian agencies in the 1990s provide excellent reference points for standards of care and service delivery in emergency situations and should certainly form part of any partnership agreements in Protracted Crisis Programmes such as the one that alliance members undertook under the programme. In addition, when agencies choose to deliver as a team, regular honest review meetings under a neutral moderator are imperative otherwise challenges such as what befell the consortium are not uncommon.

The consortium brought together three international organisations namely, the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), Wetlands

International (WI) and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Center (RCCC), and two more local organisations, Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre network (HOAREC) as implementing partners. In addition, the consortium had the Somali Region Water Bureau and Woreda Agriculture Offices, Jigjiga University and Metrology Agency, as well as the community which joined to implement some of the aspects the programme. The aim of the consortium and wide partnership was to bring together previously unconnected fields of expertise in drought risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation (CCA), and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) in an integrated manner to address the humanitarian and development issues identified by the Programme, and to ensure sustainability. Organised under the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) as lead agency, the alliance members would meet monthly to review progress and

lessons on how each partner was doing and to deal with any emerging challenges.

Despite these joint reviews, it was noted that key challenges that each of the consortium partners faced were not always shared as openly as intended or discussed and they therefore remained unresolved. The overall impression was that except for the strong partnership between NLRC and ERCS, and some efforts of collaboration among WI and ERCS on ecosystem rehabilitation, complementarity of each partner's expertise remained largely theoretical. It also appeared that the local implementing partners had difficulties in appropriately grasping the concept of integrated DRR approaches and the strengths that each of the consortium partners brought to the table.

The programme established a strong link and collaboration with Somali Region Government sectors mainly with Somali Region Water Bureau (SRWB), Woreda Agriculture Offices, Jigjiga University and Metrology Agency.

Though it is not common to see the SRWB directly involved in the construction of water facilities, with the imposed partnership, the construction of 17 water facilities including Laftagalol and Bombas dams, was given to the Somali Region Water Bureau. The Regional Water Bureau is a regulatory government body mandated to ensure improved water access for the community both in terms of coverage and quality. There was good progress made with

“ Despite these joint reviews, it was noted that key challenges that each of the consortium partners faced were not always shared as openly as intended or discussed and they therefore remained unresolved. ”

regard to the construction of the Laftagalol earthen dam, Bombas sand dam, and the birkads. However, overall accomplishment of the water bodies has by far lagged behind from what was agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the parties. However, being a government institution, it became difficult to hold it to account or even to terminate the contract due to non-performance and outsource for a private contractor. The heavy rains and flooding experienced in April 2017 around Laftagalol earthen dam, diverted attention and resources of the SRWB for dam construction was diverted to flood mitigation. In addition to this, well Organised and appropriate environmental conservation measures were not fully put in place by the concerned partner during the design phase and later the implementation phase of the dam. It has now been realized that unless complete and far-reaching physical and biological environmental conservation measures are put in place, the long-term use and sustainability of the Laftagalol dam is in jeopardy.



Field visit NL ambassador to Hare dam April 2017

Again, because the terms and deliverables had not been agreed upon beforehand, there was very little room to put pressure on failing partners to honour their commitment. Neither the consortium members nor ERCS anticipated this form of arrangement and were not prepared to deal with it as it emerged.

The lesson from all these failures is that terms of engagement should be agreed upon before engaging with partners including government agencies at design and formulation stage to forestall such disagreements mid-stream of implementing such large-scale humanitarian and development projects. Other equally important and inter-linked interventions such as the risk reduction management approach

was diverted to the rather painfully necessary but complicated construction and rehabilitation of water facilities, particularly expansion of the Laftagalol earthen dam and rescue measures at times of high flood emergencies. There was a suggestion that RCCC and WI would have liked to do a feasibility study prior to the construction of the dam but this was not pushed as it was overshadowed by other emerging needs in the course of initiating the programme implementation.

It is therefore imperative to agree and sign a MoU at design level, on partner expectations, and undertake regular honest reviews throughout as part of project monitoring, under a mutually agreed neutral moderator or chair.



A step towards resilience

The main food security challenges in the project areas were severe environmental degradation, declining agricultural productivity, lack of alternative livelihood options and marginalization of the most vulnerable segment of the community, particularly women and youth. Over time, livestock and crop productivity in these areas have been so severely affected by a degraded environment and incessant droughts and floods, leading the most vulnerable households to rely on food assistance either in the form of direct food aid or as beneficiaries of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Moreover, as a coping strategy, communities are often forced to move within and across their kebeles together with their livestock in search of other livelihood options.

The Protracted Crisis Programme has shown practical changes in the lives of the

target communities in many ways. For example, the attitude of the Self Help Groups (SHG) and Income Generating Groups (IGG) and their members changed, especially in terms of looking for livelihood diversification options. Through the Programme, group members received business management trainings and subsidies to help them link all possible businesses in their area to diversify their livelihood bases. The economic empowerment through life stock fattening, income generation interventions have led to reduced social marginalization.

The climate adapted seed distribution as well as working with model farmers who can train their community men and women have clearly had an impact. The end line survey demonstrated a critical rise in income from agriculture even though the amount of household income from agriculture has decreased dramatically. It is assumed that the Program's intervention of distribution of climate-adapted seeds to 1600 household and the training of the model



farmers in new agricultural methods has born some fruits.

The water projects are expected to have a long-term and multiplier impact in reducing mobility, addressing water shortage and supporting small scale agricultural practices. Enhanced access to new and rehabilitated water points reduced travel time, workload and saved extra costs.

The Protracted Crisis Programme planned to address the challenge of food and livelihoods insecurity through various initiatives that

can increase financial means to buy food to support families. While the programme made major investments in infrastructure, there was a strong effort to address other challenges through the implementation of a range of inter-linked approaches to improve the incomes and livelihoods of vulnerable people in the area. One of the efforts initiated by the programme was the self-help and income generating groups (SHG, IGA) approach.

The concept and practice of a self-help group was new in the programme area and the

program had to start only with the formation of five SHGs in Jigjiga Woreda and one milk IGA in Gursum Woreda. There was evidence of significant positive changes in the lives of the involved women. Not only did their livelihoods increase remarkably, the women who joined the SHGs also built more confidence and learned how to develop themselves in order to change their aid-dependency into self-reliance.

This intervention improved and supported agro-pastoralists' livelihood strategies as well as alternate livelihoods. Initially, the effort was on promoting savings, loans and social solidarity and each SHG started practicing a weekly savings initiative. To support the group beyond savings, the programme provided a series of skill enhancement trainings and business start-up financial capital to help members of the SHGs and IGA groups mitigate drought impact by buying household goods in advance and storing them, or engaging in the purchase of productive assets such as fattening and selling of small ruminants, while others planned to run small businesses such as buying and selling of food items and household consumables.

The other significant outcome of the programme was the introduction of climate adapted agricultural practices in some selected farming kebeles. With the provision of short maturing seed varieties, small scale irrigation facilities and training, the programme has proven that farmers can harvest small

vegetables that can support the immediate nutritional needs and income for farming families. The case of the Kebri-Ahmed Kebele farmer is a good pointer for this where a group of small farmers are producing onion and pepper using minimal irrigation. In moisture rich areas, fruit trees distributed by Wetland International (WI) have also shown the possibility of supplementing household income in Fafen. Wetland International has established one fruit nursery in Fafen valley that supply fruit seedlings for the community.

To address the challenges related to the provision of veterinary and agricultural extension services, the programme selected 18 community animal health workers (CAHWs) from all 9 targeted kebeles and trained and provided them with start-up veterinary kits. The training was facilitated by senior veterinarian and extension experts from Jigjiga and Gursum Woreda Agriculture Office. The training also included a session on setting up CAHWs' business models to sustain their business through cost recovery schemes.

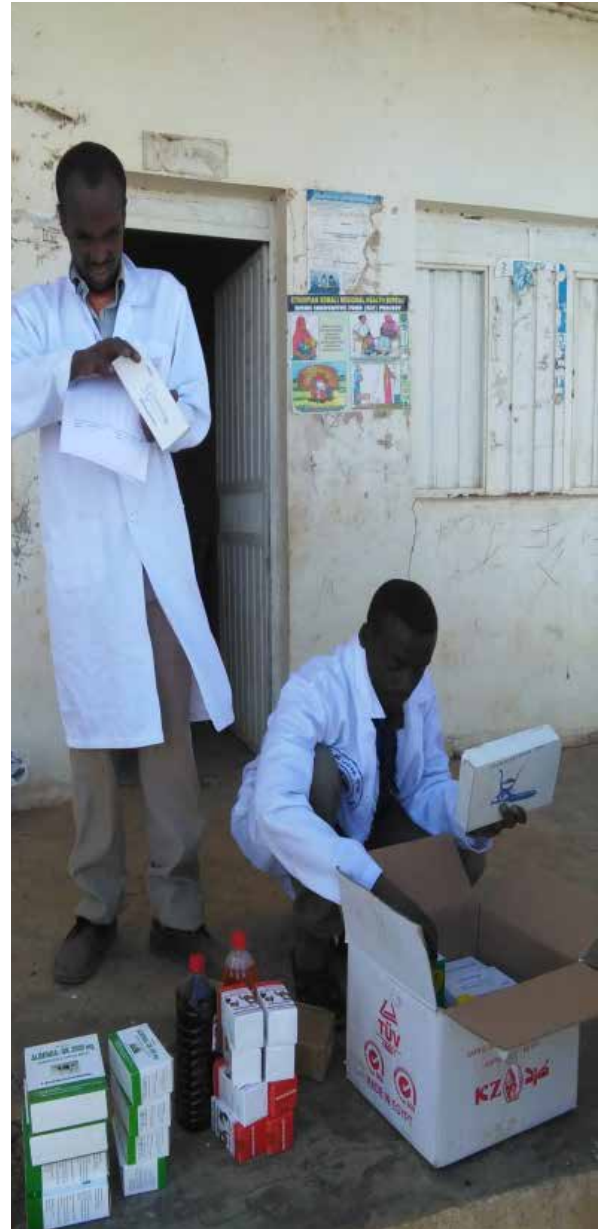
However, in the true nature of programming in an environment of protracted crisis, the programme had to respond to a drought emergency mid-course in 2015, when it provided emergency food and health care to more than 7,000 vulnerable children faced with severe malnutrition. This support included the provision of CSB and oil.

Service to community by Community

The case of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs)

CAHWs are the front liners in diagnosing and providing immediate veterinary care and services to their communities as in most cases government or private veterinary services are not accessible due to long distances and limited means of communication. Livestock in this area is a key economic indicator for livelihood. By this intervention, trained CAHWs proved that they can contribute a significant role by carrying out vaccinations in many national disease control programs and, as an early action, to timely mobilize government experts when there is a suspicion of disease outbreak in their respective communities. There was evidence of significant strengthened linkages between CAHWs, extension workers from district agriculture and life stock offices and the regional bureau which enhanced regular collaboration.

The baseline survey of the Protracted Crisis Programme in 2015 identified that one of the livelihoods of the agro-pastoralist communities of the nine villages targeted by the programme is livestock rearing but this is undermined by poor veterinary services and inactive CAHWs. Because of this, the project provided refresher training for 18 CAHWs (2 from each of the 9 targeted kebeles) in 2015. This was an on-job



training aimed at upgrading the knowledge and skills of functional CAHWs through practical training on basic principles of veterinary medicine and primary health care, animal handling and restraining, clinical diagnosis, cause and transmission of diseases, and treatment and what control measures are to be taken at their level. The training also included a session on CAHWs business models to help them set up businesses around the provision of veterinary services. Graduates of the training received start-up veterinary kits with essential veterinary drugs and equipment.

This was intended to strengthen the weak veterinary service delivery system in most of the target villages and to serve as a gap-filling measure in the existing livestock health service supply vacuum. It was therefore unfortunate that 50% of the targeted CAHWS dropped out of the programme for reasons such as lack of income, lack of transport or difficulties in obtaining practicing permits and business registration from the government.

Mohamud Mohamed Isse from Laftagalol Kebele is 40 years old and is one of the 18 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) supported by the Protracted Crisis Programme since 2015 to gain skills and support animal health efforts in the project areas. He lives in Laftagalol Kebele of Jigjiga district. Mohamud is also a farmer and has four children. His livelihood depended mainly on crop farming

and livestock rearing. However, his farm yield and annual income continued to decline year after year as his farm plot was very small and the rain fall irregular in the area.

“Before I received the refresher training and supplementary drugs from Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), I had a constant problem of how to access veterinary drugs and maintain my business. I did not know where to find the pharmacies to buy the drugs I needed for the business. In addition, I had little knowledge on how to manage my income and expenditure and could not keep myself afloat. After the training however, I am now able to plan and maintain the business.

Though CAHW work is a side-business, being a CAHW has given me some prestige and respect from my community. They trust my services and I am always at their disposal whenever they need me to treat their sick animals. But I usually feel that respect will wane if I failed to treat the sick animals due to lack of drugs. Through ERCS however, I now get sufficient drugs, working equipment and working capital. I am now proudly able to respond to the calls of my people,” said Mohamud

Mohamud was selected in 2015 by Protracted Crisis Programme to receive another refresher training based on capacity assessment conducted prior to the training. He was also provided with various drugs to supplement his activity as a small business. The list of inputs



he received from the programme included Oxytetracyclin, Ivermectin, Penstrep, Multivit, Anti-strip, Sulphadmindine, wound sprayer, Albendazole for cattle, Albendazole for sheep and goats, Diazinon, Alcohol, Savlon, wound spray, treatment syringes, a thermometer for veterinary use, and a labcoat. One of the objectives of the programme was to improve

food security through strengthened and diversified livelihoods and this initiative targeted livelihoods diversification and promotion of efficient market-driven businesses and local economic integration. However, a lot remains to be done to ensure this initiative works for the farmer and the market.



Honey healing our land

The story of Udbi

Udbi Mahamud Ade, currently living with her five children and a husband in Laftagalol Kebele is one of the 115 beneficiaries of Protracted Crisis Programme that received transitional beehives from the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), Somali branch. Overall, the project provided 230 transitional beehives with accessories such as beeswax, queen-excluder and bee protection dress in the target areas, reaching 115 very vulnerable households that have limited access to farm land.

Udbi's main livelihood is farming which depends on rain fed pastures and the use of traditional methods of farming. This livelihood is often threatened by erratic and below average rainfall, poor vegetation coverage and land degradation that is prevalent in Laftagalol Kebele. Poor vegetation and insufficient pasture has greatly affected livestock production in the Kebele so much so that although Udbi's family

keeps livestock, she does not earn enough from. Currently, she sells 8 cups of milk at 5 Ethiopian birr each, earning 40 Ethiopian birr per day, which is not enough to feed and clothe her family.

The extreme climate situation in Somali Region has exposed the people residing in Laftagalol Kebele to the risks of several disasters such as drought and chronic food shortages, risks of flood hazards, loss of income and assets, and conflict over increasingly scarce and fragile resources. Moreover, communities in the Kebele have limited access to land, diversified livelihood options, access to information on modern farming and agriculture extension services.

Udbi was selected by ERCS because she already had some experience in beekeeping using traditional beehives. The objective of the beehives intervention was to support the beneficiaries in improving their farm practices



and income through provision of transitional beehives (a blend between traditional and modern beekeeping methods) and skills training.

Udbi's family received one transitional beehive from ERCS and her husband was trained on the management of the beehives. The training was facilitated by experts from regional government's agricultural office and the ERCS. The training covered bee keeping, importance of honey in improving nutrition, installation of transitional beehives, and the transferring of bee colony from traditional hives to transitional hives. The family is currently using this knowledge to improve their farm practices in beekeeping. After 3 months of receiving the transitional beehives Udbi harvested 5kg of honey and was able to sell it between 150 and 200 Ethiopian birr per kg earning her a total

of 750 Ethiopian birr compared to her earlier harvests of 2kg per season which would earn her 300 Ethiopian birr. She is very happy with the increased income from the bee farming. If the weather condition permits she expects to harvest honey at least three times per year. Her plan is to buy a second transitional beehive, as this has proven to improve the family income with minimal efforts.

Udbi and her husband also actively participate in the construction of gabions and in soil and water conservation activities around the Laftagalol dam in the village. She is very happy with the work of ERCS in her area especially the construction of the water dam, the services provided by the community animal health workers (CAHWs), as well as the interventions in water and soil conservation.



Milk empowers women

The case of Tikdem Milk Group: The story of Zeyneba

In Gursum Woreda women bear the heaviest burden in family management and often they are excluded from development participation. One opportunity for them under the Protracted Crisis Programme was the formation of an Income Generating Activity (IGA). The IGA is a small voluntary association of women formed by people with a common problem or situation for a purpose of pooling resources, gathering information and offering mutual support.

Zeyneba Abdi is one of the milk group members and also the deputy chairperson of the group in Tikidem Kebele. She has five children and her family's livelihood depends on the income she earns from collecting and selling milk. The group has 30 members and one is male. As Zeyneba explained, the group was established a year ago and has been operational since then. She explained the situation before

the formation of the group:

"I used to walk two-and-a-half hours to get to Fafan which is 12 kilometres away from Tikidem. Each day, early in the morning, I left my children and animals at home and rushed to Fafan to sell the milk I collected from the village. I would then hurry back home to feed my children after selling all the milk. Often in dry seasons, I reached the Fafan market with sour and curdled milk because of the hot weather and I would carry it back home without selling it. On the days I took more time than usual to get back home, I found my children crying and my livestock grazing in someone's farm which is a source of disputes with neighbours. When the Ethiopian Red Cross team came up with this idea of organizing the women who already operated in a traditional way, it took a lot of energy and time to convince us. In the end, we all agreed to see how the process would work and all the women in our group had a feeling of 'let's see.'"

The programme initiated the intervention with a training of the 30 women on small business development, group management and conflict resolution. After the training, each of the members were provided with 1,500 Ethiopian birr as start-up capital. In addition, as a group they were supplied with 30 aluminium jugs, one butter churner and one milk storage shed that was constructed by the programme. The materials supplied have improved storage, preservation and marketing of the milk. Moreover, a market linkage was created so that instead of travelling to Fafan to sell their milk, the buyers come to Tikidem to collect the milk themselves. According to Zeyneba, the group now collects 500 litres of milk every day from Tikidem and its surroundings and supplies it to the buyers. The group has now 50,000 Ethiopian birr in the bank and there is also 5,000 birr available for urgent matters.

“I am able to make 50 birr a day now; my life is better than before. I do not have to walk long distances and most of all I am proud that I have a job to do each day which is worth my effort. I now send my three children to school and take good care of others who are not yet of school going age,” added Zeyneba.

Zeyneba works as deputy chairperson of the milk group as a volunteer. All members of the group have additional responsibilities other than their daily task of milk collection. Zeyneba said that members, her included do the



additional responsibilities happily since they have a high sense of inclusion and ownership of the group.

Zeyneba now has a kiosk (shop) near her house where she sells various household and food items. She opened the kiosk from the savings she made from milk marketing. To build on the work of Protracted Crisis Programme, she recommended that there should be refresher training for the group and that additional funds in form of loan to the group would help them expand their business.



Saving together for tomorrow's prosperity

The Netherlands Red Cross supports the Ethiopian Red Cross in Somali Region in Ethiopia with various activities. One of these activities is providing support to Self Help Groups (SHGs) primarily women groups. This is a conversation with one of the SHGs done in June 2017.

The name of the SHG is Kamburwaku which in Somali language means 'the start of prosperity'. The SHG is in Yoosle Kebele, in

Jigjiga District. The group has been supported by Red Cross since March 2015. Each SHG has 20 members and the members are selected from the poor families in the community. The idea of the SHG is for members to learn to save and to improve their contacts within the group and support each other. One of the activities they do is that they set up small projects together to financially support their families.

In the beginning, not everyone was interested to become a member of the SHG as the set up was different. The SHG facilitators, who were members of the ERCS explained

to new members that the focus on the group would be on sustainability and that they should not expect ERCS to provide them with food and non food items. In the first 6 months, the focus was on strengthening the group and to have a clear structure with chairlady and secretary but also to learn how to save money. Each week, each member would save 10 Ethiopia birr (EUOR 0.30). This fund would be put on a joined SHG bank account which the group had opened. Each member had a personal saving booklet where each amount was registered. Because many members were (almost) illiterate, the administration was often done by their sons or other family member.

After 6 months, the group planned how they could save extra money. Because the Somali community is pastoralist, each member wanted to buy 2 sheep for fattening which would be sold during the high season (e.g. end of Ramadan when the demand for sheep is high). ERCS provided a grant to the group (each member got 1000 Ethiopian birr/EURO 35) for which 2 small sheep were bought. The animals were sold for 1300 Ethiopian birr/EURO 45. Fifty percent of the profit was returned to the group joint account and the other half was for each member. The members stated that they bought clothes for their family members, sugar and other domestic needs. The group saved more money and in the next round, 3 sheep per member were bought for fattening.

Asha Farah is the secretary of Kamburwaku SHG. She had this to say: *“It took time to understand how to work in a group, and in the beginning, I did wonder if it was a good idea to join a Self Help Group. But we have seen how members of a group can improve each other’s lives. We help one another and with the extra money I have earned I can now buy things for myself, like sugar and clothes for my children as well as pay school fees without asking my husband for money. My husband gave me permission to be a member of the SHG. He has realized that I am more entrepreneurial and that I can also contribute money to support our family.”*

“Sometimes, when I do not have the weekly 10 Ethiopian birr for the contribution, he gives me the money. We make plans together with the group to buy more sheep for fattening but we are also thinking on how we can sell second hand clothes in our Kebele. The women who in the beginning refused to become members of the SHG, regret it now, as they can see that we are doing well and flourishing. Being a Self Help Group member is good especially during the drought season because members would always have something extra for the family.”

The Red Cross would like to support women in SHGs and start new SHGs. The first SHGs will be crucial to become facilitators for the new groups.



Self Help Group Kamburwaku



Grazing sheep of the SHG



A Move Towards Disaster Risk Reduction

Somali Region is the most food and water insecure region in Ethiopia. The frequency of droughts has increased from once in every ten years in the 1970-80s to twice per decade in the 1990s, and in the recent years to once every 2-3 years. Flooding which is becoming perennial is the consequence of high rainfall in the upstream highlands combined with severely degraded vegetation and soil cover, that has left the ground barren and unable to absorb water, leading to high runoff and fatal flash floods when it rains.

The rural and semi-arid Somali Region is a land of plains and hills. The 5 million people in the region depend heavily on natural resources for their survival. However, land cover, water resources and pasture are declining at an alarming rate. There are no natural, permanent sources of surface water but trans-boundary,

seasonal rivers and wetlands). Nearly 80% of the people are subsistent pastoralists herding livestock. For many years, people in this region have suffered a series of livelihood disruptions as a result of ecosystem degradation that is worsened by prolonged drought and internal conflict.

Due to erratic rainfall, overgrazing and deforestation, most pastoralists and their herds are forced to move long distances in search of pasture and water. Traditional humanitarian and development assistance has historically fallen short of building sufficient capacity of communities to withstand the inevitable shocks and stresses endemic to the region.

Though drought is the biggest hazard causing food and water insecurity, there are a range of intertwined, underlying factors that have exacerbated people's vulnerability. These include: Environmental degradation which is the result of severe deforestation and overgrazing; lack of reliable water sources which is also in

part as a result of environmental degradation; limited access to basic services such as human and livestock health; and the ever-changing climate variability exposing people to drought and chronic food shortages, risks of flooding, leading to conflict over increasingly scarce and fragile resources.

In order to address these underlying causes of vulnerability and enhance communities' long term resilience, an integrated disaster risk reduction approach was designed to be implemented in partnership with Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and 3 Dutch organisations. These include the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), Wetlands International, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre. (RCCC), focusing on improving the food and water security, livelihoods and adaptive capacity of 50,000 people in 9 kebeles of the 3 targeted woredas, namely Gursum, Jigjiga and Tuliguled.

The programme intervention included a combination of direct responses to the prevailing problems. It focused on the rehabilitation of water sources, emergency health and nutrition, response to anticipated disaster risks through community based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) and contingency planning, early warning and early action systems. It also took into consideration, adaptation measures through climate-adapted crops and farming practices, ecosystem management and restoration, water resource development as well as livelihood diversifications. These

disaster risk reduction measures enhances the capacities of communities to mitigate and prevent anticipated disasters (namely, drought and flood) and reduce their vulnerability.

A critical first step to reclaim degraded land was mapping the landscape, identifying the changes in land cover over time and understanding how the landscape naturally provides water and retains it. The consortium resulting maps, manuals and recommendations provided a roadmap for improving the health of the land and water to reverse environmental degradation. To put these plans into action, the consortium trained and engaged people from local governments, communities and even school children. With their participation, the consortium has undertaken large-scale tree-planting to reduce soil erosion and retain water; restore wetlands, recharge groundwater and increase soil moisture. It has also excluded livestock from sensitive areas to promote the regeneration of vegetation and developed sustainable livelihoods through fruit cultivation and bee keeping.

The consortium believes that at the end of the programme building up ecosystem resilience over time as part of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to a changing climate offers the best hope for escaping the growing humanitarian crisis. This can also be replicated in other landscapes facing severe environmental degradation in the Horn of Africa.



Enhancing community organisation for adaptive capacity

The story of Kebreahmed Kebele

Somali people are the most drought affected and vulnerable community in Ethiopia. In addition, they have suffered from a lack of inclusive development for a long time and the region has remained one of the least developed in the country, that is named “emerging region.” The main economic activity of the community is animal production with minimal support from crop production. It is often not enough, and due to frequent food insecurity, their sustenance is dependent on food relief from international humanitarian organisations and the government.

The scattered settlement and seasonal migration pattern of the community means it often lacks access to information that leaves it unable to deal with disaster risk management and socio-economic challenges. The community has limited knowledge of disaster risk management and inclusive development interventions. It

lacks disaster risk preparedness and therefore cyclic disasters have continually affected the community for a long time that it has accepted this as the wrath of Allah (God). In addition, the limitations of government to reach the community and educate it about disaster risk reduction, disaster response and early warning systems exacerbates the challenge.

To understand the challenges in the community, Ethiopian Red Cross (ERCS) and Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) made a vulnerability capacity assessment (VCA) in 2014. The assessment verified that there is no community based disaster risk reduction system that traces the probable hazard and the consequence of risk. The community faced recurrent drought-induced disasters and other fast-emerging disasters without any preparation thus losing its livelihood.

After considering the VCA result, the Protracted Crisis Programme sought to address

the disaster risk issue by bringing the community together and establishing community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR). Accordingly, 9 CBDRR committees with 15 members each were established in nine kebeles of the three districts (One CBDRR committee in each kebele). The CBDRR committee was elected democratically by the wider community by considering their acceptance and capacity to lead the CBDRR interventions. There are three sub-committees under CBDRR: Development, early warning and water management committees. The elected members received diversified training of disaster risk management, leadership, community mobilisation, and agro-pastoralist technical trainings. In addition, the committees were strengthened through regular technical support.

Following the training, the community made their own vulnerability capacity assessment and identified their challenges and the possible solutions. The CBDRR committee prepared a three-year participatory and disaster risk reduction development plan. Based on the plan, the CBDRR committee regularly gathered the wider community and discussed their development, early warning and water management issues. This helped raise community awareness on the DRR system.

Sado Ahmed, a mother of 9 children, is a resident of kebreahmedi Kebele in Jigjiga Woreda. She is one of the beneficiaries of the

programme and a member of the Kebreahamed CBDRR committee .

“Before, we were not engaged on communal response for disaster and we were not involved in disaster risk reduction interventions. But now, we are educated on DRR which confirms that disaster is not the wrath of Allah (God), and that people can prepare early, mitigate and reduce disaster risk thus saving lives and livelihoods from the anticipated disaster risk. Following the establishment of the committee, we the community, prepared a three-year disaster risk reduction plan and posted it on the board of our Kebele’s administration office so that everybody could look at it and contribute to its realization,” said Sado.

The CBDRM committee regularly updated their plan and tried to manage the development and disaster response activities in their respective areas. If the case was beyond their capacity, they requested support from the district government and other NGOs.

According to Sado, in 2017 the CBDRM committee wrote a letter to the Woreda government and ERCS requesting for the rehabilitation of two birkads. Since the ERCS response was delayed, the Islamic Relief (an NGO), responded to a request from the government for help. In addition, in response to this year’s disaster crisis, the CBDRR committee wrote a letter of support to the government for water trucking. *“The water trucking saved our*

lives and those of our livelihoods,” she says. The early warning sub-committee regularly receives metrological and other early warning information from the Regional Metrology Agency and ERCS, and informs the community through the radio amplifier that was provided by ERCS.

The development sub-committee mobilized the community and conducted different disaster risk reduction activities such as soil and water conservation. The water management sub-committee managed the available water resources by ensuring equal water distribution, maintenance of water infrastructure and overseeing sanitation.

No one knows the problems of the community and the solutions better than the community itself. Therefore, the formation of CBDRM is a good approach that promotes the engagement of the community on community vulnerability and capacity assessment, solution seeking and implementation as well as monitoring progress. In addition, it empowers the community and helps them to share their social, cultural, political and economic matters among themselves.

In spite of the good approach of CBDRM, the committees faced various challenges that include illiteracy of CBDRR committee members, lack of a CBDRR office, limitations on basic office supplies, lack of contingency/reserve fund at

“ No one knows the problems of the community and the solutions better than the community itself. Therefore, the formation of CBDRM is a good approach that promotes the engagement of the community on community vulnerability and capacity assessment. ”

community level, delays of response from other actors, and the severity of the drought within the year.

CBDRR is a new approach for ERCS, and the Protracted Crisis Programme has provided valuable lessons. Accordingly, ERCS formulated a DRR policy that included CBDRR as an approach for disaster risk management. In addition, the Somali Regional branch was selected as a pilot area to test the new ERCS-DRR process improvement for six months.

Since CBDRR is a new approach for Somali Region in general and the project area in particular, it is important to strengthen the committee so as to ensure the sustainability of disaster risk management so that ERCS can scale up the approach in other areas of the country.



A case of Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC)

Between 2015 and 2016, Ethiopia was affected by a strong El Niño that created a devastating drought, affecting most of the country. Rain

can create a great danger when its extreme and it appears suddenly in the more remote areas where communities and local administration do not know its negative effects. This is exactly what happened in Jigjiga, the capital city of Somali Region of Ethiopia.

Even though heavy rain in the highlands upstream of Jigjiga town had been forecasted accurately (on a probabilistic basis) and the local Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office (DPPO) had received the information, they were unable to understand it and share the implied risks. Because of this the community was not informed in time to move.

Then, between 3 and 4 April 2016 a flash-flood took place in Jigjiga town. A total of 23 persons were reported to have died. More than 80 people were said to have been injured when the seasonal River Jerer, which flows across the centre of town rose suddenly and burst its banks.

In response to the flood disaster, Ethiopia Red Cross (ERCS) volunteers *distributed food and non-food items* for 200 households who were affected by the flash flood in Jigjiga. The Deputy Secretary General of Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) had this to say, “Despite the efforts made by the government and NGOs, the situation still remains a big concern, and ERCS will continue to bring long-term solutions to the affected areas as they are part of its resilience project implemented in partnership with sister National Societies.”

Within a few days of the Jigjiga disaster, between 7 and 8 April, and with the lethal flash-flood very much in mind, the ERCS convened an ‘early warning early action’ workshop for

regional- and *Woreda*-level Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office (DPPO) personnel, meteorologists and ERCS disaster managers from the Somali and Harari Regions and Dire Dawa city. On the agenda were internal communications, annual ‘seasonal conferences’, the content and presentation of warnings and alerts, and inter-agency coordination.

That meeting seemed to bear fruit the very next day (9 April) when a highland village near East Imi town, in the River Shebelle area of Somali Region was successfully evacuated by the DPPO with no casualties after the National Meteorology Agency (NMA) issued a flood warning.

Later in April the NMA and ERCS Organised a conference in Jigjiga to discuss the current seasonal forecast that is updated monthly and complemented by more reliable 10-day forecasts. The participants discussed the past years with similar meteorological profiles to see what conclusions can be drawn.

Making sure the local media covered the seasonal conference, people started to realize the importance of this information. This information can be used as early warning but can also be used at community level for the cropping season, to help people plant better,” said Tayib Muhummed, ERCS Somali Region branch coordinator. ERCS Somali Region branch has joined forces with the NMA to agree on possible forecast-triggers for humanitarian

intervention, planning to match them with specific actions early next year and to make sure they are shared with other international partners in the region.

“We work closely together now,” continues Tayib Muhummed, “The training convened by the ERCS allowed us all to coordinate and communicate much better. Before there was not enough. The importance of improved cooperation among the chain of actors to operationalize ‘early warning early action’ is very clear.”

One of the good outcomes of the project is has it created linkages between businesses, farmers, herders, town-dwellers, and the local government to identify what early action needs to be taken and when, as well as recognizing that people closest to a problem are best placed to identify solutions. It has also brought together the local Met Agency and government bureaus, resulting in improved coordination among actors for early warning and early action.

This experience from Somali region is now being replicated in Amhara region, through ERCS, with support from the NMA. Other implementing agencies have also shown interest in this simple yet powerful approach which enhances resilience through consistent, quality and timely early warning information and advisories for actions by different stakeholders.



ERCS volunteers prepare to distribute humanitarian relief in Jijiga April 2016, where a flash flood took people by surprise.



Community mobilisation for watershed conservation

With natural resource degradation so common in the Fafan region, it is difficult to address all the ecosystem restoration needs. Also, there is limited funding to do the work. To address this issue, the Protracted Crisis Programme joined the Regional President, Abdi Mohamud Omon to support the development of community mobilisation guidelines. He brought his experience from Tigray Regional State where he witnessed positive outcomes for soil and water conservation with the help of communities.

The idea behind community mobilisation is that in return for conservation projects that provide direct benefits to the community, and the materials and guidance to do the work, the community donates the labour. This gives the community a stake in the success of the work and enhances its sense of ownership. It also helps in ensuring that the community guards against any harmful activities that undermine their achievements.

The Somali Regional Agricultural and Natural Resource Development Bureau was asked to draft guidelines to support community mobilisation, but lacked the resources to do so. Following this, the Protracted Crisis Programme contributed to the guidelines and helped organize two consultative workshops with experts from the Amhara Region who had strong community mobilisation experience.

The next step was to pilot a few community mobilisation projects on the ground to see if they were feasible. The first test was at Laftagalol earthen dam which was built through the Protracted Crisis Programme and which that changed the lives of people living nearby. Before the completion of the dam, members of the local community had to travel 60 km to access water. Now the community can enjoy the benefits of a reliable source of water. Not only for domestic use but for watering their animals and for crop production. To maintain the dam though, a lot has to be done. for instance, if not properly maintained, it is likely to fill up with silt from upstream erosion. that is responsible for soil degradation and gullyying.

Abdi Aziz is Kebele administrator at Laftagalol. According to Abdi, life was difficult before the Protracted Crisis Programme intervention. Soil erosion formed big gullies upstream where his farm is, washing away his fertile land. It was too costly to rehabilitate such big gullies on his own. When the programme was launched he became a major community mobilisation supporter to save the dam and his farmland. Training was also an important element of the community mobilisation. Abdi Aziz attended a regional level consultation workshop on community mobilisation guidelines for watershed development.

Before the actual work could start, it was important to select the right time to mobilize the community. The work had to be delayed until after the busy harvest season when the community could find some time. Also the community had to be mobilized in the right way because it mattered who was asking members to donate their labour. It was therefore decided that a request from the regional Agricultural and Natural Resources Development Bureau would receive the best response.

After an assessing the situation, the regional Agricultural and Natural Resources Development Bureau in collaboration with Wetlands International and ERCS, provided materials and technical support for free. When the time came, 150 community members came together to conserve the dam by building a fence that has greatly helped to save their farmland

from degradation and gullying. More than 400 soil bunds and gabions were constructed in the upper catchment of Laftagalol. These barriers will conserve the soil by intercepting it and filling in gullies. This will help prevent the silt from filling up the dam reservoir.

Abdi Aziz saw the benefits of this approach. He believes that without community mobilisation it would have been too difficult to rehabilitate the big gully that was destroying his farmland. He is happy that his community was used to pilot that part of the programme. *“It was a good thing for our community members to be the first to be mobilized for watershed development. We will continue mobilizing them for other development activities after this one is completed.”* He explains. *“I am very happy today looking at all the people who came out to save the dam from siltation and their farmlands from soil erosion. This is a double benefit.”* He adds.

While community mobilisation in Laftagalol was a success, mobilisation efforts in the other trial communities were not. A PSNP cash or food for work programme in the upper watershed that was under the Gursen Agricultural Bureau was unsuccessful. Seedlings that were provided in order to conserve soil and stop gullying around the community were not cared for and perished due to drought and lack of water.

These trial experiences, both good and bad are a feed back to the development of the guidelines covering 101 woredas and whose finalization is yet to be realized.



One child ten trees- A case of school environmental clubs

Deforestation and land degradation are quite prevalent in the Fafan Region. Among the nomads and agro-pastoralists who live here, there is very low awareness of environmental issues. This lack of knowledge exacerbates the destruction of the environmental resources of Bombas town and its surrounding villages. This undermines the resilience of the communities to cope with stresses like droughts.

To address this lack of environmental awareness, the Protracted Crisis Programme saw the establishment of environmental school clubs as a core activity for changing behaviour. Environmental school clubs are groups of students and teachers who volunteer to improve the environment of the school compounds and their communities by planting trees and keeping the landscape well-maintained.

Before the Protracted Crisis Programme, the district office of education attempted to launch the clubs but they faced too many challenges such as accessing seedlings from 15 km away and meeting the cost of 10 Ethiopian Birr per tree. Bombas Environmental School Club was the first one to be established by the Protracted Crisis Programme and one of the nine clubs that were started in the 9 target areas of the Programme.

Mohammed Ahmed Bare is the Bombas school and club director. His livelihood depends on the basic salary he earns from his job. Having no land or animals. Three of his six children attend school. Part of his job evaluation by the district education office depends on how well the environmental club performs. He therefore takes it upon himself to motivate the pupils who range in age from 8 to 13-years old, Through his encouragement his pupils have participated fully in the programme through their club.

To give guidance for the establishment and training of the clubs, Wetlands International partnered with Jigjiga University and the Regional Bureau of Education to draft guidelines for the clubs. Mohammed's school was selected because it is located in the targeted area of the programme. Mohammed and other teachers were trained so that they could be able to lead the clubs at their respective schools.

A key achievement of the clubs is the planting of tree seedlings by club members around the school compounds, their own homes and other public places. More than 12,000 seedlings of different tree species were distributed and planted by school clubs. In Bombas, for instance, the environmental club planted 1250 tree seedlings. This enabled the club to attract more volunteers. Every group of trees planted in the school compound is named after the student who planted them. The student is then made responsible for watering and taking care of his or her trees. During the dry season, pupils are encouraged to bring water from home to water the trees. The tree planting extended to local communities, with pupils planting trees around their homes and caring for them.

And the benefits are beginning to be seen by both students and teachers. Some of the trees have grown and can provide shade, creating a more pleasant environment to learn in. The clubs have made the schools to be centres

of learning on environmental issues for the entire region. In communities with little formal education, different awareness raising events have been held on the need for conservation of the environment through tree planting as a disaster risk reduction and adaptation measure to cope with a changing climate and its adverse effects.

The Environmental clubs have proven popular. To strengthen them, the programme constructed roof water harvesting structures to supply water for the trees. However, more needs to be done to harness and improve the clubs. For example, there is need to fence schools in order to keep away goats and other animals that graze on the trees. More hand tools would have helped increase the efficiency of the work as well. One thing that was meant to motivate clubs and which has not been realised is competitions between schools that had been planned as a way of recognising good clubs. They were to be awarded with footballs and sports regalia.

But as the seedlings are maturing, the future is uncertain. Although the clubs are an activity that could be scaled up with additional funding the Programme is coming to an end with no clear sustainability plan for access to more seedlings for planting. It will be up to the district office of education and the motivation of leaders at the schools like Mohammad to keep the clubs going.



Fruit Production for food security

Jigjiga is a drought-prone area, and suffers land degradation from livestock overgrazing that leaves it bare and unproductive. Agro-forestry initiatives undertaken under the Protracted Crisis Programme sought to provide long-term solutions to the challenges of food insecurity and ecosystem degradation in the region.

Communities of agro-pastoralists have low capacity to resist drought. Their traditional main crops of sorghum, maize and ground nut have also been impacted by pests in recent years. As a result, their livestock and crop production are decreasing, increasing their poverty and food insecurity. Without the production of these crops, they lack the means to buy rice, sugar, clothes and materials for their houses. They have traditionally lacked capacity and access to

grow higher value crops such as fruit. Fruit tree seeds come from Oromia and the Hara Region, 80km away, making them very expensive.

The Protracted Crisis Programme aimed to improve food security through the production of fruit trees. It established 6 nurseries in communities that had good water availability and employed community members to grow and nurture seedlings. 120,000 fruit seedlings were produced in the Fafan 1 nursery site. Community cooperatives provided land for planting and 90,000 trees were given to local communities living nearby. This was the first time that communities received seedlings for free, as well as payment to work in the nursery. The fruit seedlings were distributed to about 10, 000 households.

To increase the capacity of the communities, the programme provided training in Jigjiga and at nursery sites on how to grow and care for the

trees. A year ago the seedlings were still small – only 50 cm tall. But since being planted, some seedlings like the papaya have grown fast, and are already producing fruit. Other fruit trees that have been planted include orange, guava and mango.

One of the beneficiaries of this initiative is Deek Abdi from Fafan village. Deek Abdi is a husband and father of 6 children leaving in a half Ha of land. His life was hand to mouth when he joined the Fafan¹ fruit nursery site with his wife. Before joining the Programme, he was a farm hand who used to work in other people's farms. What he used to be paid was not enough to sustain his family needs. It was prohibitively expensive for him to access fruit seedlings from Oromia Region to plant on his piece of land. He and his wife were trying to improve their livelihood and searching for better opportunities when they were employed as day labourers at the nursery.

At the outset, they received training on seedling production and management in October 2015 and then received 1500 Ethiopian Birr each up to the time the seedlings matured. They utilised the knowledge they gained and planted guava, papaya, orange, mango and avocado.

Today, the papaya seedlings have started producing fruit and a new sun has arisen for Deek and his family. He has been able to sell fruit for the first time and used the income to

buy staples such as rice and sugar. He is grateful for the knowledge and opportunity he received from Wetland International. He is saving money and is hopeful for the future.

Like Deek, other communities are realizing direct benefits from the fruit production as it provides valuable food security. People are also selling the fruits in Jigjiga, earning cash and reinvesting the money in other cash crops like chilli to diversify their production and meet demand.

Fruit seedling production was a new undertaking in the Somali Region and therefore several challenges had to be overcome. The pastoralists through the consortium had experience with sorghum and maize, but needed training on how to grow trees and manage a tree nursery. At the onset, there were also gaps in knowing what the local demand was for different types of fruit. The seeds were bought by staff in Addis Abba, and high value seeds for apple, orange and lemon trees were fewer in number and could meet demand. There were also logistical delays in planting the seedlings which led to some of the seedlings to dry off.

The drought in the region created additional challenges. It was difficult to provide enough water to grow the seedlings in rain fed areas. Funding was also diverted to more urgent priorities and nursery staff had to be laid off, resulting in 40,000 fruit trees to be cared for and watered at the Elbahay dam.



Lessons from Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with Ecosystem Management Restoration (EMR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)

Ecosystems and the benefits they provide (e.g. climate regulation, food security, freshwater supply, disaster risk reduction) are fundamental to supporting people's livelihoods and other life on Earth. Healthy ecosystems function as natural infrastructure which can mitigate impacts of natural and man-made disasters (e.g. drought, flood, natural resource based conflict, wild fire as well as landslides). They also provide a number of services critical to food, water and livelihood security, poverty reduction and carbon sequestration – all of which strengthen people's resilience to disasters.

Sustainable ecosystem management is therefore considered an integral part of disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Investing in

ecosystems can bring about benefits at local as well as at global level. For instance, it can help communities adapt to climate change (ecosystem based adaptation), while at the same time enhancing people's livelihoods.

Based on this premise, a consortium was set up with three international organizations: The Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), Wetlands International (WI) and Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC) and two local organizations; Ethiopia Red Cross Society (ERCS) and Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre & Network (HOAREC), combining DRR, CCA and EMR. This integrated way of working is the core of the Protracted Crisis Programme, building the technical capacities of alliance` partners and government staff. It is implemented to boost the environmental conservation based on DRR and livelihood improvement initiatives by respective partners. Through this, the Programme has changed the lives of the vulnerable communities to various environmental degradation and climate change induced hazards



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