



REDUCING HUNGER AND BUILDING RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

With generous donation of £95,858.76 by JOA, Save the Children is supporting over 1,832 families, including 3,298 children, in Ethiopia's arid and drought-hit Somali and Afar regions to produce and buy enough food to keep their children healthy in times of crisis by increasing livestock and crop productivity, supporting entrepreneurship through Income Generation Groups, and supporting the development of new skills to diversify sources of income. To date the project has supported 1,374 families, including 2,474 children.

We are pleased to share this progress update, which presents the details of the activities and project achievements up to June 2016. As agreed with JOA, the extreme drought conditions experienced over the past year has led to delays in implementation and the project has now been extended until December 2016. Save the Children is confident of finalising remaining activities through this no cost extension period.

HUNGER AND RESILIENCE NEEDS IN AFAR & SOMALI REGIONS & CONTEXT UPDATE

Ethiopia's arid lowland Somali and Afar regions are increasingly vulnerable to drought. Rain shortages leave the land devastated, while lack of accessible water points and grazing fields kills livestock, which is vital to local economies. Lack of veterinary facilities, trained staff, drugs and transportation means that already scarce livestock is also under threat from disease. It is essential that these limited food sources are well managed, yet communities and local governments do not have the resources and skills needed to properly manage food stocks to prepare for crises. As a result, people's livelihoods are increasingly fragile and do not provide sufficient income to buy food to feed their families. Each year between six and 13 million people are estimated to be at risk of hunger and in need of emergency assistance. The effect on children is profound as one in two children are 'stunted', which means that their development has been negatively affected by the lack of basic nutrients needed to grow up healthy and to fight life-threatening diseases such as pneumonia.

Furthermore, the cumulative effect of the poor rain of the latter two consecutive rainy seasons in 2015 due to the El Nino effect, which caused the worst drought suffered by the region in 50 years; resulted in further deteriorating of pasture in the area; and the resultant low water availability led to poor livestock conditions and low milk production; negatively impacting children's and lactating mothers' nutrition status. The prolonged shortage of pasture and water in most parts of Afar forced many people to migrate with their livestock to Amhara, Tigray and Oromia regions in addition to migration within the Afar region to areas where relatively better water and pasture were available. Similarly, in Sitti zone people migrated to deep rural and neighbouring Oromia zones and Dire Dawa administrative areas, which in turn has triggered conflict with local populations over scarce pasture and water. The drought conditions impacted the area in 2015 with the peak in late 2015- early 2016 until the arrival of the belg rains in April 2016. The recent rainfall continues to improve pasture and browse availability, which is expected to encourage households who had migrated their livestock away from the zone to return. Nevertheless, improvements in livestock productivity remain unlikely during this rainy season due to the absence of conceptions during the very dry Belg and Kiremt seasons of 2015 and early 2016 that resulted in massive livestock death. Improvement of conditions is also gradual; and extreme food insecurity is likely to last until the September harvest season at the earliest.

Since April 2016, increased seasonal rainfall has improved water availability to some extent, although emergency water trucking interventions are still under way in many areas hardest hit by the drought of 2015. Additional days of good rainfall could further recharge water sources and improve the water situation; while additional weeks of rainfall would enable better pasture and browse regeneration. Currently, overall livestock body conditions remain below normal in the highly drought-hit project intervention areas; and there are reported cases that livestock are still dying in

parts of Sitti and Fafan Zones of Somali Region.

According to FEWSNET (April, 2016), starting in June, improvements in livestock body conditions and seasonal increases in prices of livestock are likely to result in a slight improvement in food access and an improvement of food security outcomes to Crisis areas in the absence of assistance. Poor households in southern Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali region are likely to continue facing substantial food consumption gaps until at least September.

With all these contextual challenges, JOA's support has contributed to and strengthened our effort in finding alternative income sources for communities, maintaining crop and livestock productivities and increasing the understanding and functioning of income generating groups.

Save the Children has significantly contributed to our project aims thus far in the project, through training and distribution of crop seeds and farm tools for 122 (113 male and 9 female) irrigation user agro-pastoralists (1 member per household), training and support of 41 Community Animal Health Workers on livestock health management and vaccination, establishment of 4 animal food production groups comprising of 95 members and forming & support with start-up capital of 13 income generating group consisting of 156 members.

PROGRESS OF ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Increasing crop productivity

1.1. Tools, seeds, construction and improvement of irrigation systems

With the objectives of strengthening community based micro irrigation and fruit and vegetable production and management, 122 (113 male and 9 female) irrigation users have been trained on good arid land agriculture to upgrade the existing traditional irrigation located in Chifra woreda. The participants of the training were selected from 6 kebeles. 3km of irrigation canals filled with silt and debris has been cleared and 40m of masonry work had been constructed to improve the irrigation conveyance system. A feasibility study to construct a 500m irrigation canal in Ewa woreda is also in progress.

Selected early maturing and drought resistance crop seeds and agricultural tools were distributed to 370 (303 male, 67 female) individuals in drought affected communities to restore production and enhance resilience for the disasters. A total of 5.25qt of sesame seeds, 16qt maize seeds and 6qt of mung bean seeds, as well as 700 hand tools were distributed in 6 kebeles of Ewa and Chifra woredas. Procurement of an additional 50qt of maize, 20qt mung bean and 100 mango seedlings is now in progress to distribute for 100 irrigation users.

In Sitti zone, Somali region, the Garman irrigation Scheme site has been identified and design completed in collaboration with the woreda agriculture office. User associations comprising seven committees with a total membership of 290 HHs have been established in the command area of the canal. The committees have been trained in irrigation water usage and management. During the establishment of the irrigation canal, only 165 HHs were benefiting from the canal; while after completion of the canal rehabilitation within the next 4 months, more than 290 HHs will benefit.

In eight kebeles of the Erer agro-pastoral area, 10 development agents and 56 community members received training in dryland farming techniques, selection of lowland species and farming and use of supplementary irrigation in late 2015. In February 2016 in the same target woredas, 42 more participants (9 females and 34 males) also received this training.



Photo: Chifra irrigation canal and irrigated farm after cleaning of the silt

Activity 2: Increasing livestock productivity

2.1. Refresher Training for 27 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs)

In order to strengthen community based livestock health services and build the capacity of community animal health workers (CAHWs), capacity gap assessments were conducted in Erer (Sitti zone, Somali region) and Ewa and Chifra woreda (Afar). Based on the outcome of the assessments, 33 selected CAHWs (9 from Erer and 24 from Afar) received refresher training on key standards of livestock health management in collaboration with regional livestock crop and rural development bureau experts from the local government office. The trained CAHWs have played a key role in the vaccination and treatment campaign led by government in support of SCI. In addition, the trained CAHWs are expected to actively participate in upcoming livestock vaccination activities to be implemented in their respective woredas.

2.2. Training and support for 27 new Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs)

17 (13 male, 4 female) new CAHWs drawn from Chifra and Ewa woreda were trained in basic veterinary skills in January 2016. Veterinary kits were distributed for the trained 17 CAHWs to improve the services they can provide to their communities. The trained CAHWs will provide vet services to deep rural pastoral and agro-pastoral communities with close monitoring and technical support from the woreda pastoral and agricultural offices.



CAHWs vaccinating livestock in Ewa woreda

2.3. Training for four community groups on animal feed production and management

The recurrent drought has degraded the range land and limited availabilities of pasture to only the rainy seasons. Dry season fodder management has not been exercised by the target pastoral communities, and currently the competition for the available fodder becomes a source of conflict among pastoral and neighbouring highland communities. With the aim of good fodder management and creating awareness in fodder production and banking, four fodder production groups with 95 members (92 male, 3 female) have been established in Chifra woreda; one per kebele. Presently, 70 irrigation users are trained on fodder production and management for three days. Another 100 HHs and 20 woreda experts will also be trained on this in July and August.

In Sitti zone of Somali region, in collaboration with the cooperative promotion office and water offices, SCI selected 2 fodder production groups, with a total membership of 40 HHs (20/group –

one member per HH). Selection of the groups and the sites considered the availability of land that suits fodder production, group interest and capacity to fully engage and water sources. Two cycles of training has been provided for the cooperative groups; in which in the first cycle received fodder agronomy and post-harvest management training in 2015; following which SCI identified the gaps faced after their first year engagement and in May 2016 refresher training was provided for 3 days for the same group of 40 participants (12 female, 28 male) with an extra day in practical techniques of fodder production and management.

Activity 3: Supporting Income Generation Groups (IGGs)

3.1. Grants for IGGs

13 income generating groups have been established in Ewa and Chifra woredas with the aim of diversifying the livelihood options and increase income of pastoralist communities. The groups have received 448,400 Birr as revolving funds and start-up capital alongside the members' savings. In addition, 6 agro-pastoralist marketing groups with a membership of 156 (38 male and 118 female) have been selected for a 2nd round grant transfer using JOA funding. Document preparations are completed to transfer grants to the selected income generating groups; each IGG will receive 45,000birr as a business start-up capital and shop construction fund.

In Sitti zone, in collaboration with the Somali region and woreda cooperative promotion agency, SCI facilitated an assessment of the status of the existing income generating and business groups, their existing capacity gaps and their potential of growth, and business potentials for the groups to be newly established. Based on the assessment findings, targeted strengthening of one existing group and facilitated establishment of one new cooperative was conducted. In addition, two existing cereal bank cooperatives were targeted for income generating and livelihood diversification. The four cooperatives were found to be good but needed to reach maturity and continue to strengthen their internal capacity in mobilising resources to qualify for matching funds to be provided; as per plan of the project. To strengthen capacity of these four cooperative groups, business management, entrepreneurship, and cooperative management training was provided.

SCI is working to link up these four cooperatives with Micro Finance institutions (MFIs) to increase the viability of these cooperatives, group cohesion and profitability of the businesses in which they are engaged. The Somali MFIs have witnessed the strength of these cooperatives by properly managing whatever small resource they have. SCI is at the final stage of signing an MOU with a Somali MFI to manage the revolving fund and support the cooperatives in business management.

Activity 4: Supporting alternative sources of income

4.1. Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET)

Based on the capacity gap assessments conducted on selected IGGs, it was identified that lack of basic book keeping knowledge, business attitude and lack of entrepreneurial skills were the main challenges in almost all IGGs. Accordingly, 8 days training on basic book keeping and entrepreneurship were organised in collaboration with Asyta TVET.

A total of 56 IGG members drawn from 13 IGGs and 4 woreda experts from Chifra and Ewa woredas participated in the training. In addition to the formal training, regular financial management technical support has also been provided for all IGGs. The TVET training and regular technical support significantly contributed to boost the basic knowledge of IGGs on financial management and business skills, which will serve to improve the income generation groups' business activities and performance.

In order to enhance the technical capacities of kebele development agents so as to provide continued technical support and monitor the progress income generation groups, 30 Kebele development agents have been trained on income generation technical support and entrepreneurship skill development. The training was provided in collaboration with Asyta TVET. The trainees were

drawn from Ewa and Chifra woreda intervention kebeles. Similarly, 4 members of 4 cooperatives in Erer district with gaps identified in record keeping have been admitted to Dire Dawa TVET to participate in a 40-day course. The members have been certified.

BENEFIT TO CHILDREN AND THE COMMUNITY

So far, this project has materialised the support for long-lasting effect on the communities by building communities' capacity to recover and bounce back from drought and shocks through establishing sustainable community structures such as income generating groups, supporting income diversification and sensitising communities in dry land agriculture and fodder production. Families in Chifra and Ewa woredas have already shown improvement in their agricultural practices and better maintain their livestock, which has enabled them to withstand the current drought as compared with neighbouring woredas.

However, the extreme drought conditions have been challenging to achieving project objectives. For example, large numbers of community members migrated away from the project areas in search of food and water for their families and livestock; meanwhile, the death and deterioration of livestock body condition significantly affected livestock terms of trade and thereby increased the loan default rate of the communities in Sitti zone, Somali region. Nevertheless, the cooperative members have managed to feed and send their children to school during this prolonged and severe drought period, a positive sign of resilience in the face of the challenges compared to the wider community. The IGG members have gained book keeping and business skills that needed to run alternative income generating activities. The majority of IGG members have their own ledger record and have started utilising records of costs and revenues. The project has built the confidence of disaster prone women in terms of their survivability and capacity to cope with shocks and disasters. As a result of the families having access to resources, children in the village have been able to continue schooling and are less vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

PLAN FOR EXTENSION PERIOD – UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

| Outputs | OVERALL TARGET (Life of the Project) | ACTUAL ACHIEVED TO DATE (CUMULATIVE) | % OF ACHIEVEMENT | TARGET # BENEFICIARIES to be reached during NCE | EXPLANATION |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tools, seeds, construction and improvement of irrigation systems | 150 HH | 95 HHs (370 individuals) | 63% | 55 HH | Activity in progress. Preparation is underway for canal rehabilitation and distribution of seeds for remaining beneficiaries. Action plans have been developed to speed up the activities to take advantage of the good belg rains |
| Training for four community groups on animal feed production and management (Dry-land Farming Expert to conduct training) | 100 HH | 70 HHs | 70% | 30 HH | Activity in progress. Training will be completed on August 2016 |
| Refresher Training for Community Animal Health | 27 individuals | 27 individuals | 100% | 0 | Activities completed |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Workers Grants for IGGs | 200 individuals (13 IGGs) | 120 individuals (6 IGGs) | 60% of individuals (46% of IGGs) | (7 IGGs) | All 13 IGGs have been established and each IGG comprises between 15 to 20 members. 1 st round grant has been transferred to all IGGs in Sitti and Afar. The 2 nd round grant is performance-based; this has been transferred to 6 IGGs based on their high performance, but for 7 IGGs (4 in Afar and 3 in Sitti) performance did not yet reach the level required for the 2 nd grant. SCI will be working closely with these groups to build their capacity and to work towards the 2 nd grant payment. Signing of MOU with micro finance institutions is also in progress. Trainings have been completed; the remaining project period will be used for experience sharing. |
| Technical and Vocational Educational Training | 30 | 30 | 100% | 0 | |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR WORK

Save the Children works in more than 120 countries. We save children's lives.

We fight for their rights. We help them fulfill their potential.