

BORESHA SHEKO

TENTH EDITION

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of Agriculture | Mandera County

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FOREWORD

INTRODUCTORY NOTE



On behalf of the Department of Agriculture of Mandera County Government, I am pleased to introduce the 10th edition of the BORESHA Sheko, we are grateful to BORESHA for giving us this platform to highlight on the challenges, achievements as well as opportunities posed by the desert locusts that ravaged the County late last year and early this year. In order to effectively respond to the locusts scourge that was new to us we created three response sites which were strategically placed. The teams were trained and provided with vehicles to conduct ground spraying and more than 70 sites were sprayed with the help of the affected communities. Unfortunately, Mandera did not benefit from aerial spraying that was conducted by the national government.

Some of our specific achievements included establishment and activation of locust surveillance team in all the sub counties, establishment of two main locust control teams and one mobile team, sensitization of all the agriculture technical staff on the invasions of the desert locusts and sensitization of farmers, members of the public on the existences of Locust to foster prompt reporting and partnership in fighting the menace.

In order to enhance the level of preparedness we undertook several County Steering Group meetings from 30th December 2019 to form a technical working group to counter the scourge and procured equipment and chemicals to help in responding to the invasion. Some of the procured items included 100 pieces of Motorized pumps, two vehicle mounted sprayers and personal protective equipment. The department also procured Sulban 48% EC and Malathion.

We have faced enormous challenges in dealing with desert locusts invasion which included unfortunately missing out in the regions that secured aerial spraying by the national government which is attributed to the security challenges in the area. The use hand spraying to control the locust swarms proved to be quite a challenge as the swarms were massive and spread along a rough terrain posing the difficulty of even reaching some of the affected places. The use of chemicals also presented a different challenge where the threat of environmental pollution had to be considered. This included then danger of poisoning the water for domestic and livestock use and killing of more useful organisms. Low staff morale due lack of motivation through allowances and technical and logistical capacity have also affected the department's efforts in fighting the menace. In terms of the measures that may help mitigate some of the challenges, we were recently allocated some funds by the Mandera County Assembly to support desert locust control activities. Appeals have also been shared to the other partners through the CSG to support the locust control operations. The department has also sought support from the national government and FAO is supporting some activities on desert locust control in the county.

There are however a number of gaps that need to be addressed in collaboration with organizations and programmes including BORESHA. These includes undertaking continuous community mobilization and sensitization with volunteers, chiefs, women leaders, county administrators playing the critical role sensitizing the communities while also investing in publicity through local FM and TV stations. Successful response against the desert locusts will also require procuring of personal protective equipment and pesticides for spraying once ground surveillance helps establish the invaded areas. We will appreciate and appeal to stakeholders to conduct comprehensive assessment on the impact of locust invasion on food security and come up with efforts to help in the recovery. These may include procuring and distribution of certified crop and pasture seeds, rangeland reseeding while specific support may go supervision, and monitoring as well as logistical support through motor vehicles and motorcycles for spraying.

Paul Ogutu
Director | Department of Agriculture
Mandera County Government

NEWS

FEAR OF THE DEVOURING AND DEVASTATING DESERT LOCUST

Author | Mohamed Ali



© Jeremy Wachira

In January 2020, the residents of Mandera county experienced an uncontrollable swarm of locust, the worst of its kind in over 70 years. This is a crisis that both community and county authorities did not anticipate. The locust which entered the county in swarms from neighboring Somalia caused unprecedented havoc to both livestock and farms.

A team from BORESHA project visited a farmer to assess the level damage and preparedness of the community in case they are hit by another invasion.

The team headed to Girisa location - 2KM north of Rhamu town - where Issack Mahat, one of the project beneficiaries and a farmer, affected by the locust invasion lives. His home is a typical Somali homestead comprising of 3 Somali aqals (a dome-shaped collapsible traditional Somali shelter made from poles covered by woven fiber mats).

He recounted the havoc caused by the desert locust during the last invasion as well as its secondary effects. In his village, the locust came in two phases. The first group of swarms were smaller in size, less destructive and could easily be scared away. In the second phase however, the swarms grew larger and invaded the farms causing unprecedented damage to their crops.

All the lush green maize fields were reduced to hard stalks leading to massive losses. Almost half

of the mango trees in Girissa, which have provided food and a source of income for the residents, were completely destroyed. The forage in the rangelands was also not spared. This has greatly affected food security in the county.

For many, farm produce is not only consumed at household level but also provides them with an income. This enables them to attend to their household basic needs and gives them access to services such as health care, education, among others.

"I have never, in my 53 years, seen this kind of a problem. The county government's intervention was too little, came too late and ended as soon as it began. We employed simple methods such as beating of drums, shouting, hooting (using motorbikes), and lighting bonfires just to scare the insects away." Mr. Issack remarked.

As the Chairman of the location's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) committee, Mr. Issack has been closely following both local and international news to get apprised of the current state of events. Through information received from the media, it is eminent that another invasion will be hitting the County again.

"We are people who rely and trust in God and we pray that we don't see another locust invasion but as a committee, we are also trying to create awareness so that people do not heavily invest in plant-



Issack fears that another locust invasion will impede community's ability to bounce back, 2020 © Abdiaziz | BORESHA

ing of crops that may end up being destroyed by the locust. It is tricky because if we advise people not plant, there will be food security problems whether there will be invasion or not and if they plant and we witness another invasion, it will be a double loss, loss of invested money and loss of the planted crops. Other than awareness creation, there is nothing else we can do. Even the government is not prepared and we don't expect much from them." Mr. Issack noted.

Proper planning and timely response is needed to counter the effects caused by the locust invasion. The floods that were experienced in the region recently led to food scarcity, which has further been

compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The climate remains propitious to locust breeding and, based on projections, swarms in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan could increase 400-fold by June 2020, despite control and/ or spraying operations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned that the presence of the swarms could lead to between 50% and 100% crop loss in affected areas, in a region that already counts 20 million people that are food insecure. If the situation is not addressed sooner, it will have far reaching effects to the affected communities.

UPDATE

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Awareness creation on COVID19 reaching 1.7 million people and distribution of Hygiene kits to 1,724 households to support hand washing.
2. Online training of TVET trainees in Somalia
3. Business Development Skills training
4. Cash for work activities in Somalia and Ethiopia
5. Submission of year 2 narrative and financial report and audit report

UPCOMING MAJOR ACTIVITIES

1. Support schools on environmental championing activities: Initiating school garden.
2. Enrollment of TVET trainees and Assessment of new EBTNET centers
3. Market Information System-SMS Platform in-depth interviews
4. Publishing of Cross border trade research
5. Rehabilitation of degraded rangelands and water points rehabilitation
6. COVID-19 activities to continue

INTERVIEW

WITH SCHOLARSHIP BENEFICIARY BASED IN DOLLOW, SOMALIA



Sharmarke Ahmed, Scholarships student.
June 2020
Photo | DRC Somalia

Sharmarke Ahmed is the first born of a family of 7 children. From September 2017 – till now he is a teacher at Al-Qalam Primary and Secondary School. He got the opportunity to be part of the scholarship students supported by the BORESHA Project in October 2019. With COVID 19 restrictions he is continuing his classes through zoom. We asked him about that experience.

1. How does the e-learning take place/what is the process?

The e-learning is online learning and the fact that we have stable connection is a big plus for us since the classes run smoothly. We use ZOOM via the Zoom mobile app on Android and iOS, where you can start or join a meeting, in this case the lecturer initiates the meetings and has organized his sessions very well. A timetable has been developed whereby students know in advance the time each class will take place as well as the topics of discussion. The Online class is conducted either through a video or audio depending on the connection.

2. How often are you required to take the classes?

There is normally a timetable that has been developed to this effect which indicates the number of classes per day and per week. We are very much motivated and willing to take part in as many classes as possible if only to finalize our course which was disrupted by COVID-19. There is nothing much to do at home and to be honest the ZOOM classes are a great gateway from the destructions of the pandemic in Somalia, therefore I look forward to every class with enthusiasm.

3. Are learning materials available online?

Unfortunately, not all the learning materials are available online, like me there is a mathematical concept that is required for calculation and I have searched for that concept online in vein, I have had to request for a one on one session with my lecturer in order to fully grasp the concept.

4. What are some of challenges when taking the e-learning classes?

There are several challenges, however the main challenge has been the cost of internet data bundles, mind you I am still jobless and therefore I cannot afford to spend 100ksh a day to purchase the bundles which sometimes are not enough. There are also the occasional network disruptions that are normal in this part of the country.

5. Is the quality of education the same as compared to regular classes?

No, regular classes are much more fun, interactive and informative. The classroom environment offers students the opportunity to have face-to-face interactions with their peers and lecturers. This is an added social benefit as well as an educational aid. Because students see the same peers in class every session, they get a chance to form friendships and bonds.

6. What are the advantages of e-learning for you?

There are several advantages, however the biggest advantage especially in this era of COVID19 is that we can continue with our learning and maintain some normalcy in these abnormal times, the e-learning has provided a timely solution in our hour of need.

STORY

Author | Bashir Abdifatah

FOR THE LOVE OF CARS



BORESHA Staff Bashir interviewing Ali Hassan (Left). Dollow, Somalia, 2020 © Macow / DRC Somalia

Somalia is at a crossroads. Many youths have grown up in a country where education was inaccessible and where security was rare. Lack of creation of jobs and lack of skills to earn are increasingly compelling the young people in Somalia to join the wrong groups and extremists. Youth bear the biggest brunt of unemployment in the country with more than one in every 3 being jobless. To help deal with the problem, BORESHA project Somalia Technical vocational and skill training Program (TVET) is empowering them with skills that meet current market demands hence making them more employable in the long run. Results are promising – they are using gained skills to secure jobs and empower others.

The specific aim of this programme is to contribute to quality vocational training for young people in Dollow, Somalia, and create lasting linkages between technical and vocational training institutes and the labour market, thus facilitating decent and sustainable wage or self-employment for young people.

Meet Ali Hassan

Ali Hassan is a young man who fled from the three-decade long conflict of Mogadishu the capital

of the country and now an IDP in Dollow. Ali, is a 23-year-old father of three children, he is currently residing in Kabasa IDP camp in Dollow, Somalia. There is one thing that separates Ali from his peers in the town and that his love for cars, ever since he could remember he has been passionate about cars and was always curious as to how they were made and how they function. He describes himself as a car enthusiast, he loves them and everything about them, he enjoys working on them, modifying them and of course would love to own one in the near future. He took up the auto mechanics course provided by BORESHA due to his love for cars, he is a young impressionable man that is very keen and detail oriented. He loves the smell of cars, deconstructing and then again constructing the vehicle from scratch. When we quizzed him further on this passion he says "there are many reasons, but deep down the main reason is that cars give me a sense of freedom and independence, the ability to go where you want and when you want is something many take for granted, I am confident that one day I will own one."

“Growing up in Mogadishu, like any other child I had dreams and aspirations of a better life, unfortunately due to the conflict, I was not able to access education like other children in other countries.” Says Ali. “If there is one thing I have learned throughout my life is that we should never take education for granted as if it is available to all, it is a great gift and a privilege that opens many doors to unlimited opportunities, through education one is empowered and provided with the necessary tools and skills to change the world’ says Ali.

BORESHA Support

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector is one of the major parts of the education and training systems that play crucial roles for youth in Gedo region. The DRC- BORESHA project is supporting more than 20 students to learn

new skills through enterprise based TVET education and Ali is one of them. For the last two months (December and January) students undertaken several trainings of technical skills and more practical experience. The TVET programs are well-placed to play an important role in the COVID-19 pandemic but facing challenges to continue the learning and practical session. “I want to thank BORESHA, my teachers and parents for this far I have come, I have gained practical skills that have enabled me to earn a small income to sustain the livelihood of my family. I have plans to open my own business, I never thought such opportunities existed” says Ali. He is in a unique position since he is not only a student at Horeseed Garage in Dollow but he also earns a small income by using his skills to the test by helping out in fixing some of the cars at the garage, this income is what sustains his family.



Challenge

A major challenge to the achievement of a harmonized and comprehensive Enterprise based TVET qualification system is the quality of training that companies provide and the quality of the skills the apprentices acquire depends largely on the skills, competence and attitude of the master trainers. Furthermore, there is hardly a standardized curriculum in the TVET system in Somalia. Despite this challenge in collaboration with the local authority and other key stakeholders as a consortium we are committed to increasing practical skills and capacity for the youth to bridge the demand and supply gap in the local economy in order for them to better their lives.

We will continue to invest in TVETs since we believe it is one of the sure ways to secure the future of Somalia since it guarantees long term productivity and economic sustainability.

Quick Facts

- BORESHA through TVET center in Dollow (Horseed Company) have trained eight mechanic TVET graduates and dispatched them to several motor mechanic companies.
- Selected by BORESHA team and in collaboration with the local authority based on TVET selection criteria.
- Best students were hired by the Horseed Garage based in Dollow, Somalia and are now working there and earning a living.

DID YOU KNOW

BORESHA CELEBRATES WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



World Environment Day, hosted by Colombia this year, is the most renowned day for environmental action. Since 1974, it has been celebrated every year on 5th June: engaging governments, businesses, celebrities and citizens to focus their efforts on a pressing environmental issue. This year, the theme is *BIODIVERSITY FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS* – a concern that is both urgent and existential. Recent events, from bushfires in Brazil, the United States, and Australia to locust infestations across East Africa – and now, a global disease pandemic – demonstrate the interdependence of humans and the webs of life, in which they exist.

As the BORESHA project we marked this day through several activities in our project areas. This year's commemoration was quite different due to

the COVID19 pandemic that has totally changed how we operate and they type of activities we can carry out. However, we marked the day at Mandera County Government of Kenya Prison in the Township ward. The event was graced by the Chief officer for Environment and Natural Resources Management in Mandera County, National Environment Management Authority of Kenya, Mandera County Water User Association as well as other stakeholders. We have committed to raising awareness on environmental protection and bio diversity conservation in the Mandera triangle that includes Dollow Somalia and Dolo Ado in Ethiopia. While taking all the COVID19 precautions we planted 50 trees in the prison's compound and we shall plant more trees in other sub-counties.

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