



# Strengthening Livelihood in Borderland areas through Community Structures and Youth Empowerment

## IMPACT AND LESSONS



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COMMUNITY STRUCTURES AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

**IMPACT AND LESSONS**

## INTRODUCTION

More than 350,000 people living in the Mander triangle (Liban and Afder zones in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, Gedo in Somalia and Mander in Kenya) face widespread poverty in an area with primarily pastoralist livelihoods. Fluctuations in weather patterns that swing from drought to floods with relatively short periods of stable pasture and agricultural harvests drives up to 80 per cent of households into debt during dry seasons. Livestock are also increasingly susceptible to disease and mortality, partly as a result of weather conditions. Many people migrate across borders in search of pasture while those who farm along the riverbanks are also displaced during periods of heavy rains. This fragile region is characterized by low levels of literacy, poor agricultural extension services, traditional technologies, low levels of access to skills development and credit, and high levels of animal disease. All these factors contribute to low incomes. The mean monthly income of households in 2018 in the BORESHA project areas was USD 41.80 in Kenya, USD 37.39 in Ethiopia, and USD 26.27 in Somalia – all of them below the poverty line. The incomes of the households were largely from livestock keeping, farming, trading, salaried employment and wage labour. BORESHA targets this region with socioeconomic and resilience interventions. Trade between the cross-border areas is important to most livelihoods. However, frequent border closure affects the region's economic potential. Insecurity due to terrorist activity and inter-clan conflict caused by resource scarcity remains a challenge.

Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa -BORESHA- is a cross border project implemented by a consortium of the Danish Refugee Council, World Vision, Tetrattech and CARE International with funding from European Union Trust Fund for Africa. BORESHA works with local communities and public authorities to establish transformative processes to enhance the cross border socio-economic integration and support resilience in the fragile and underdeveloped borderland areas between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia sometimes referred to as the Mander Triangle.

### **Approaches and methods used**

BORESHA conducted two studies, a Value Chain Analysis and a Labour Market Assessment, to identify key areas of cross-border livelihoods and their challenges and potential. It then designed interventions to address value chain and labour market constraints such as low or no access to technical services for farmers and pastoralists, and little or no access to inputs, skills and finance. The studies also identified a gap in market information and linkages.

BORESHA consortium partners complement each other in strengths of intervention and collaborated with the local administration to improve livelihoods in the area.

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AT END OF YEAR 3

Over the three years of phase one, BORESHA has facilitated an integrated response to the constraints to livelihoods, addressing animal health and productivity, animal feed availability, skills, and financial deficits and market development through linkages and information. This has yielded some early results.

### **Livestock Production System Support**

BORESHA Established 19 Livestock Common Interest Group (LCIG Comprising of 551 Members) to promote livestock Value Chain development and their other areas of expertise (fodder production, livestock rearing, bee keeping and poultry keeping). LCIGs were trained and equipped with knowledge, skills and start up kits to improve management and profitability of their enterprises 5 fodder storage facilities and 1 agriculture product market facility were also built. All the LCIGs are involved in fodder production and have harvested 2 to 4 rounds of fodder harvest and continue to use the fodder for their animals needs and sold some 2 groups were supported with poultry farming equipment and 1 group with beekeeping equipment. The latter produced and used honey at household level and commercialized some in the local markets

Behavior change campaign on good practices to improve livestock management reached 1080 HHs. Among the topics tackled the campaign created awareness and knowledge on: herd management, livestock disease, livestock feeding requirements, ecosystem analysis and land degradation principles.

Finally, 210 households (1458 people1051F:457M) mostly headed by vulnerable women across the six target villages were supported with fodder to feed the milking herds during dry seasons.

### **Community and institutional animal health system strengthening**

The Project supported Vaccination and Mass treatment of Livestock to Control and eradicate the Livestock diseases affecting livestock trade and Production in the region that included PPR CCPP. 14 vaccination/treatment campaigns conducted.

488,052 people belonging to 83,977 HH have benefited from Livestock intervention with a total of 1,148,192 Animals So far treated or Vaccinated in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

114 Community Disease reporters/Community Animal Health Workers (CDRs and CAHWs) trained and supported by the project continue to support better livestock disease reporting and treatment in The Region

### **Community based saving and loaning capacity**

BORESHA Project support the establishment of 195 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) groups with 4,853 members, of which 90% of them are women,

pooling together their savings and offering loans. VSLAs were trained focusing on group dynamics, management of cash flow, business skills, financial literacy and saving and loan methodologies. During the life of the project VSLA groups have continue to save and provide access to loan for their members. Loans are used for HH Level needs for supporting their business as well as for cushioning members from the impact of drought and COVID 19



### **VSLA transforms Amina's business and livelihood**

“The day I joined the savings and loan group in 2018, is the day my life changed for the better. I now manage my life without having to depend on others as I used to. As group members, our livelihoods have all transformed. For me, VSLA has been a way building a better future for my family.” These are the words of Amina Ibrahim, a 42-year-old single mother of seven children who lives in Belethawa, Gedo Region, Somalia. “Trust with each other has keeps us going. We meet once a week and I save USD\$ 5 -7 depending on what I can afford that week,” she says. Before she joined the VSLA, Amina had a small table, placed in front of her home, where she sold tomatoes and onions. With the first loan of \$200, she got more stock. After two months, she repaid the loan and for the second cycle, received \$300 in savings share-out. She now the main business in the market. “My life has changed completely! I even look different,” says a smiling Amina. “I am happy, my efforts are keeping my family and I well. We eat and live better all because of my small business.” Amina is now able to pay school fees for her first-born son who goes to a private school and buy books for the rest of her children who attend a public school. “We now eat three meals a day and I save \$25 every month with Wadajir Savings group” says Amina.

## **Youth Economic Empowerment**

TVET: The TVET skills training component was implemented jointly by Tetra Tech, DRC and World Vision International. A total of 568 individuals across the three countries were trained in technical and vocational skills, either by a technical, vocational education and training (TVET) service provider, or in the absence of a suitable service provider, by an established business (EBT).

BORESHA supported the 568 Young Men and Women to enroll in TVET Training with the purpose of equipping Young Men and Women with skills to increase their chances to get employed by either existing Businesses or to create employment for themselves. Project supported young men and women in the area to acquire different courses according to the findings of cross border Labor Market Assessment conducted at the onset of the Project. The TVET Graduates were also trained on business management and provided with startup kits to equip them with means and knowledge required to establish successful businesses. Up to now 119 young men and 100 young women have been employed or established their own businesses

After the training was completed, successful candidates other than those who had opted for driving courses, were given a business start-up kit. These kits had an average value of Euros 450 per kit. The startup kits included beauty therapy and hair-dressing equipment, tie and dye materials, sewing machines, mechanics', welders' and electricians' toolboxes, computers and printers.

In 2020, a tracer study of all TVET graduates was conducted over 11 months to determine the impact of the training on resilience including employability, earning potential, spending patterns, and perceptions of the future. Key findings are that training improved the resilience of TVET/EBT graduates in terms of: human capital – improving technical skills, employability and ability to run businesses[1]; financial capital – improving their ability to earn more money, and to utilise this resource to invest in their households and businesses; and social capital – improving their self-perceptions and perceptions of their futures, together with their standing and perception of their families' and communities' future. In Kenya, of 22 students (out of 30) that were traced, nine stated that they had not been to school. These students undertook a range of vocational skills - tailoring, mechanics, welding and fabrication and driving; and at least six were earning an income. Among these were two pastoralists who had decided to abandon their previous livelihoods.

Scholarships: Under the scholarship program the project supported 45 Young Men and Women (M29 F16) to undertake various courses like early childhood development, Building technology Community Health and Social work, Agriculture, ICT, Science Lab, Human resource Management, Journalism and Mass Media Communication and lastly Medical Laboratory

## **Community structures improvement through cash for work**

BORESHA Linked a number of Community Planning process with resources to implement element of those plans through Cash for work Methodology. Communities identified the neediest households to be enrolled in the CFW activities that aimed at rehabilitating community infrastructure while also preserving and maintaining community key assets including Earth pans, access roads, Schools and Health Facilities. During the Project Period, 3,993 beneficiaries were directly engaged in CFW activities in 133 sites benefiting 23,958 indirect beneficiaries.



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### **Community groups commercialize fodder production**

Thousands of animals die during drought when pasture or fodder is unavailable. Dollo Ado and Dollo Bay areas in Ethiopia are particularly hit during dry seasons. BORESHA provided LCIGs with fast-growing forage seeds, motor pump generator, and farm tools. They were also trained on growing Sudan grass which effectively responds to feed crisis. Three LCIGs growing Sudan grass have in their some of their fodder harvest sold in the markets of Dollo Ado, Dollo Bay and Mandera. BORESHA has constructed supported the communities to construct fodders storage facilities to sustain supply even during dry seasons.

Abdulahi, an agro-pastoralist in Fikow, Dollo Ado Woreda, grows fodder and is a member of this group. “At the end of the day, we will sell the fodder, and our livestock, getting double benefit,” he says. He hopes to switch to an irrigation-based fodder production to significantly improve the output of his animals as well as household income. “We are expecting three times more production in our next harvest. We plan to be one of the best fodder producing cooperatives in the area, he adds”.



# LESSONS LEARNT

- VSLA activities have built the resilience of the target communities as manifested by the increased community uptake of this approaches. Social funds mobilized by VSLA groups have assisted communities to address immediate and unforeseen issues like hazards, deaths and illnesses.
- The bottom up and highly consultative approaches in the establishment of both VSLA and District Bank Committees (DBC) enabled strong local ownership leading to excellent collaboration from the beneficiary SMEs through loan repayments by the end of the project period. Through this approach, the project eliminated the notion of “donor money” for agency managed revolving funds which often creates sense of entitlement to the borrowed amount leading to poor repayments and often collapse of project based revolving funds
- If students are unable to relocate closer to main TVET providers, or if there are no suitable TVET providers available, Enterprise Based Training (EBT) provides a viable alternative but offers limited options in terms of technical skills training. The project relied on businesses previously trained by other actors for EBT. New private businesses (for example, honey producers, butchers and plumbers) that reflect the scarce skills identified in BORESHA's Labour Market Assessment could in future be developed as EBT providers.
- Both TVET and EBT supports the realisation of aspirations towards self-employment and employment. For self-employment, the provision of business startup kits and mandatory business skills training to supplement the technical training are a key success factor.



## **Driving out of poverty in 40 days!**

Abdi Hussein Diriye, a father of 9 children, is one the beneficiaries of BORESHA TVET skills training. Before taking the driving course, Abdi earned Kes. 500 (USD 5) daily as a conductor in one of the matatus plying in the Mandera-Burabur route. After completing the course in February 2019, and obtaining driving license, he was promoted to assistant driver earning daily wage of Kes. 800 (USD 8). He then got a job as a truck driver transporting stones from quarries earning him Kes. 1,000. “I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue the driving course. I am now respected and trusted driver with driving license like the rest.

My income has increased enabling me to take care of my children well. They go to school and I don't worry over fees payment. We take three meals a day and I meet the family's medical expenses. Because of this training, my life has changed for the better. I am now a respected member of the community and contribute towards communal projects,” Abdi said.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Linkage of illiterate and semi-illiterate SMEs and VSLA members with Adult Functional Literacy and Numeracy training program; to enhance their functional literacy. Though strongly recommended during the baseline survey as a means for enhancing entrepreneurial skills of the targeted beneficiaries' majority of whom were functionally illiterate, the project did not manage to address it. To achieve this, future program should consider supporting VSLAs to establish community skills development centres and provide TOT for community volunteers in functional literacy and numeracy who will then provide functional literacy and numeracy training using the available community resource centres. The volunteers can then be provided with small stipends which can be borne by either the VSLA as part of administration costs or provide subsidised fees to be paid by individual beneficiaries to sustainably manage the community skills development centres
- Provision of market driven skills trainings programs for targeted beneficiaries. It is important to enhance community engagement in Technical Vocational Education and Trainings for developing more sustainable livelihood skills. Future programs should consider linking beneficiaries and community structures to vocational and technical skills development that can tap into unexploited individual's interests and natural gifts for earning decent livelihoods. TVET interventions should not work in isolation but they shall be complemented by career guidance components, business development training and seed capitals and clearly linked to existing value chains and opportunities in the labour market.
- Fodder Production: The community is scaling up this technology. The group's fodder farms have become demonstration centres for others who are interested in adopting and growing improved forage along their crop production. But, commercialization and market linkage is weak. The next step is to facilitate market linkages in the intervention area as well as in other parts of the border







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