

BORESHA IMPACT STUDY SUMMARY BRIEF

This report details the analysis of the impact study of the Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA) project, which was carried out in the Manderera Triangle (the area where Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia meet) in November and December 2022. The scope of the impact study covered the period between December 2017 and December 2022. The study sought to find out, analyse and document the impacts of the three BORESHA project phases through the lens of specific thematic intervention areas, showing what worked and/or didn't work and why, and make recommendations for future resilience programming/work that would provide future strategic direction on cross border resilience building, thinking, and planning, for DRC, consortium partners, donors and other stakeholders. The study focussed on six key areas of enquiry:

1. The extent and depth of resilience achieved by project interventions - comparing resilience outcomes (in targeted groups, communities or individual entities) as a result of project-supported interventions, and also those not supported by project interventions.
2. Outcomes and development results from the three phases of BORESHA that demonstrate improved economic resilience at the individual, household and community levels.
3. Progress made to improve/develop market systems and key value chains to provide vulnerable persons and communities with a means to participate in economic activity.
4. The impact of unexpected shocks/external factors, such as COVID-19, drought etc.
5. Adaptive programming that occurred in cross-border work, and the evidence thereof are in line with context complexity.
6. The value (social and economic) of interventions and how they contribute to peaceful interactions and co-existence between communities.

To answer the above areas of inquiry, the study utilised a mixed methods approach integrating primary and secondary data from multiple sources. The main methods comprised a thorough desk review of secondary data sources, and primary qualitative and quantitative data collection, including household surveys (of the intervention and non-intervention matched groups), key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. Triangulation of findings was used to corroborate and check the reliability of evidence by comparing data/information across the respondents, as well as between the respondents and project documents. Collectively, 400 household surveys, 25 focus group discussions, 45 experts and community-level key informant interviews, and 23 field observations and desk reviews were conducted.

BORESHA invested over 22 million euros in promoting economic development and greater resilience, particularly among vulnerable populations, and those with disabilities. This work started in 2017 and continues till the end of March 2023 and has since reached 350,000 men, women, children, and youths. These investments went to interventions targeting 3 outcomes: 1) communities in the Manderera Triangle are more resilient and better prepared to withstand and respond more effectively to shocks; 2) individuals and communities become more self-reliant through increased skills and opportunities for cross-border employment, diversified enterprise and livelihoods; and 3) cross-border rangeland and other shared natural resources are more equitably and sustainably managed. A baseline study for the project was conducted in 2018.

The impact study findings indicate that compared to their baseline situation and to comparison households from villages where the project was not implemented, project beneficiaries had higher average monthly incomes and a lower percentage of households that used negative coping strategies to deal with stressors. The intervention group recorded growth of household incomes from USD 35.15 per month at baseline to USD 87.01 per month by the end of the project. In contrast, the average income among households from comparison villages only reached USD 67.87 per month during the same period. The project villages also had

an enhanced reduced coping strategy index of 11.1, a greater household dietary diversity score (HDDS) of 8.5, and a higher food consumption score of 54.3%, in contrast to the comparison villages that had r_CSI of 20.8, HDDS of 5.7 and average food consumption score of 36.4%. Compared to a baseline situation, the surveyed households had a diminished reduced coping strategy index (r_CSI of 21.9), with 37% of them having a poor FCS, roughly 28% having a borderline FCS, and 35% having an acceptable FCS.

The project households fared better than the comparison villages, which remained in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification 3 (Crisis), while the project households moved from IPC 3 to IPC 2 (Stressed) within the project period. Even during project implementation, beneficiary households reported fewer negative effects of shocks (76.7%) than comparison households (84%). In addition to being the result of having greater incomes, the reason for this could be, because these individuals also had stronger savings, better access to BORESHA support, and less income drop in the face of shocks. These improvements are still fragile, however, given the cyclical nature and frequency of droughts, notably the fact that the region is currently experiencing the worst drought in recent memory. Other factors contributing to the fragility of such gains include conflicts and insecurity, the ongoing knock-on effects of Covid 19 and rising food and fuel prices worldwide.

According to a key informant, "each thematic area has its own story," and an assessment of the thematic interventions delivered under each result revealed that these investments were relevant, timely and appropriate. Under Outcome 1, the community-level disaster risk reduction investments resulted in the identification of community vulnerabilities and risks, the development of community adaptation action plans, and the implementation of some priorities in these plans (including water points, animal health, education and health) and their integration of the plans into government planning processes. Beneficiary communities thus reported fewer negative effects of the shocks, felt more knowledgeable about the shocks, had faith in their ability to respond, and claimed to have better knowledge and decision-making abilities when shocks happened. The project encouraged the adoption of IBLI, although actual sales only occurred in Kenya. By the time the product was available in its sixth window, over 2,230 households had purchased insurance coverage. The insurers were also able to increase the uptake of other insurance products. The agents selling the product were also engaged in small business, earning a commission or salary for the work and insuring their animals.

Under Outcome 2, according to the County Director of Veterinary Services, as a result of the animal health interventions, a crisis was avoided and livestock assets were protected. 22 Mass vaccination and treatment initiatives for animals reached a total of 2.839 million animals and beneficiaries attributed improved animal health and disease resilience to the vaccinations and treatments, and they credited CAHWs/CDRs with improved rural outreach and service quality. The LCIGs were said to be instrumental in promoting better livestock husbandry and increasing fodder production. The VSLAs supported under this outcome helped them develop better-saving practices and has given them access to financing when they need it. For instance, in the household survey, 52.4% of respondents reported borrowing money from the group in the previous two years. Other benefits of the VSLAs reported included families' increased access to financial services or loans, higher household incomes, business expansion or improvement, and closer engagement with financial services. Also, over 800 jobs were created and businesses were able to stay afloat thanks to the 78 start-up or business growth grants, worth a total of 608,000 Euros. The beneficiaries reported successful business expansion, business diversification, access to new markets, and other beneficial outcomes. The TVET skills training was said to be crucial for beneficiaries to diversify their incomes, and of the 985 TVET graduates 83.5% said they were already applying their new skills, earning an income averaging KES 800 per day.

Under Outcome 3, 82 rangeland sites that were restored through reseeded, check dams, and other sustainable land management approaches are now sources of dry season fodder, and there has been a gradual recovery of vegetation. In addition, according to the key informants and FGDs participants, the NRM, VSLAs, TBC and WUCs have increased bonding social capital with the communities within countries and between cross-border communities. The overall findings suggest that the NRM interventions had beneficial effects on resilience by resulting in harmonious management of natural resources. The establishment and strengthening of NRM Committees and Water User Committees (WUCs), as well as the training of government officials and

communities in NRM, have improved resource governance and enhanced land productivity, according to key informants and FGD participants. Restoring degraded rangelands, introducing practices for conserving soil and water, and undertaking initiatives to reseed grasses, restore indigenous trees, and develop dry-season pasture conservation all helped to increase productivity.

The project established functional water points that improved water supplies and had positive benefits and were essential in enabling households to withstand the effects of the droughts, with 95.7% of the surveyed households having access to water from these water projects. The County Government no longer needed to truck water from far boreholes to these areas during the dry season thanks to the solarization of boreholes, which also reduced the expenses of operating the pumps by lowering the demand for fuel to run the generators. The County government stated that no BORESHA-targeted communities have been included in its emergency water trucking operation for 197 locations because none of them showed significant water stress. Also, a total of 28 schools were supplied with water harvesting and storage schemes, reaching 13,706 beneficiaries. The use of water harvesting technology, according to key informants, increased the availability of water for the schools, had a beneficial effect on the communities, and notably helped to increase their resilience.

By creating and strengthening networks like tri-border business committees, facilitating community dialogues, and improving access to financing through business grant facilities, among other interventions, the project made significant progress in supporting value chains and market systems. The lack of a regulatory framework, the early stage of markets and the sparse presence of private sector actors with the ability, scale, and incentives to support systemic market changes have all contributed to the slow progress of some of the market interventions. Future investments should explore incentivising private sector players to participate more in these markets, designing a more cohesive strategy for promoting various commercial solutions for the necessary goods and services, and collaborating with the national governments and IGAD in the implementation of existing cross-border policies and agreements between the 3 countries.

BORESHA and its beneficiaries experienced various shocks during implementation. The drought led to severe pasture and water shortages, forcing pastoralist communities to migrate across the borders. The Covid pandemic caused Manderla Town, the area's largest market, to be placed under lockdown, impeding cross-border trade movements of people and animals as well as household income derived from both, which put an increased burden primarily on low-income households. The locust invasion destroyed thousands of hectares of grazing areas and crops, and insecurity and conflicts also contributed to the displacement of communities. The Consortium prioritized and expanded the breadth of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in the project area in response to these shocks, as well as emergency drought response actions. However, because the project lacked a built-in crisis modifier to facilitate a quicker early response to the shock, they had to navigate a lot of administrative procedures and mobilize external resources. According to the PMU team, "Even while the absence of a crisis modifier or rapid response fund made it more difficult for us to respond to shocks quickly, an agreement with the EU allowed BORESHA to scale up some drought-related interventions

Due to the complexity of cross-border work, a comprehensive system, structures, and adaptive programming were needed for the project for it to function well at all levels across the three countries. The project was carried out in collaboration with a consortium led by the Danish Refugee Council, World Vision, CARE, and WYG/Tetra Tech (in BORESHA I). The Project Management Unit (PMU) was in charge of overall project management supported by several coordination structures including the Technical Working Group (TWG) which provides technical program support for the implementation of the program, the Technical Implementation Groups (TIG), and the Steering Committee (SC), which is made up of the Country and Regional Directors of the various consortium partners and ensures that partner-specific challenges are discussed. An efficient project management unit and other governance structures were successful in ensuring the proper engagement of all partners in the various processes of the intervention. It was evident from key informants that collaboration with local partners (NGOs and CBOs) in the project implementation would have resulted in additional benefits, such as greater impacts and sustainability of project interventions. Concerning adaptability

and flexibility, the project worked with both formal and informal private sector actors in the Mandera Triangle, layered and leveraged interventions to promote sustainability, and drew on the successes and information obtained in various phases. Additionally, it coordinated with regional, national and local level coordination groups like the County Steering Group (CSG) in Kenya and other consortiums like RASMI, SECCI, and the Omo Delta initiative.

In addition to having an impact on households and market systems, the project promoted peaceful interactions and intercommunal coexistence. Relationship-building and the avoidance of any conflict when these resources were depleted were made possible by facilitating community dialogues to exchange and discuss reciprocal grazing arrangements. At an institutional level, the streamlined collaboration with the livestock ministries of the 3 countries facilitated disease control and surveillance. Similar systems for information sharing and coordination were promoted by the tri-border committees. The project worked closely with the national government to ease security fears and concerns associated with informal cross-border trade, hence allowing seamless trade. It also mainstreamed conflict sensitivity, gender and social inclusion. These structures have formed strong mutually beneficial relationships and established close communication.

While the project has had a significant impact on the resilience of households in the Mandera Triangle, the results of the study also suggest that additional investments are needed to have a greater impact, protect, and sustain the gains made during the three phases of BORESHA. For instance, the nascent cross-border institutions and practices need support, and the resilience gains made thus far need to be protected. Furthermore, projects like BORESHA should commit to longer program cycles of at least five to ten years to create sustainable impacts and be cost-efficient and effective given the complexity of the environment in which they operate. Going forward, the focus should therefore be on strengthening the intervention areas that have the potential to be scaled up including disaster risk reduction, assistance for animal health, VSLAs, TVETs and scholarships, business skills training and cross-border support, natural resource management, and WASH. In scaling up these interventions, it is recommended that the project should continue to operate through a Consortium since the benefits derived from experience and competencies have been demonstrated.

Some of these interventions tend to have a lasting effect and will need the assistance of private actors, the majority of whom work in the Mandera Triangle on a modest scale and informally. Therefore, it is crucial to keep strengthening the nascent institution in charge of overseeing these system-level thematic areas while also attempting to incentivise larger private sector actors to enter the ecosystem. Additionally, considering that in Somalia the governance mechanisms are inadequate, there is a need to connect with the UNDP-facilitated District Council formation process to anchor critical institutions and plans such as the DRR and NRM committees and rangeland councils. UNDP is assisting district administrations with bottom-up planning and decentralised service delivery as part of the Joint Program on Local Governance. This is carried out by ensuring that there are systems in place for reconciliation and dispute resolution, actively supporting the formation of district councils through a participatory process (ensuring broad representation, including IDPs and women where appropriate), and strengthening the capacity of district councils to provide local services.

As a result of several climatic and human-induced factors and their interaction with social, economic, environmental, political, security, and seasonal environment, some pastoral and agro-pastoral households are getting displaced into urban centres such as Mandera, Belet Hawa and Dollo Ado to better access basic services, livelihoods opportunities, and humanitarian assistance. However, these populations face severe challenges. It is therefore important to pay attention to the increasing inequality in pastoral societies in the peri-urban areas that are expanding and where poor and stockless pastoralists are the majority, and look into employment and labour market trends to come up with effective strategies to support new, alternative livelihoods.