



Facts & figures

- In 2011, over 13 million people affected by drought, the worst in 60 years
- Drought is the most recurrent disaster in the Horn of Africa
- €70 million invested in drought preparedness in the Horn of Africa since 2006
- EU-funded projects implemented in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Uganda
- EU also funds pilot projects in many other developing countries to reduce vulnerability to other hazards.

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INTRODUCTION

Disasters are a combination of natural factors (hazards) and human factors (vulnerabilities and coping capacity). Disaster risk reduction (DRR) programmes aim at increasing the coping capacities of the affected communities and reducing their vulnerability.

In developing countries, the Commission's action focuses on supporting strategies and complementing existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability. This support is a combination of community-based projects and projects at national or regional level that strive to increase resilience in the event of natural hazards. Community-based projects can be taken as an example to be scaled up by authorities and other communities.

In the Horn of Africa, drought is a recurrent hazard that affects a large percentage of the population. The

frequency and intensity of drought disasters have increased over the last decades, threatening to wipe away the developmental gains that have been made.

The European Commission established DRR programmes in the Horn of Africa in 2006, with a specific focus on drought. These projects seek to build resilience in communities that are particularly vulnerable to drought, so they can cope better when rains fail.

In the past, communities had traditional coping mechanisms, such as migration in search of resources, for dealing with recurrent drought.

Today, population growth, resource-based conflict, lack of development, poor basic services, a trend towards a more sedentary lifestyle, as well as climate change make it harder to implement traditional coping strategies. So far, the Commission has invested €70 million in such programmes and the results are beginning to show.

CASE STUDY : MOYALE, NORTHERN KENYA

Moyale County borders Ethiopia to the North, Marsabit to the Northwest, Isiolo to the South and Wajir to the Northeast. Although the frequent droughts have caused livestock deaths, undermined livelihoods and stretched coping mechanisms, the population of Moyale is coping relatively better than other communities. Nutritional surveys conducted in June 2011, at the onset of the current drought, show substantially lower malnutrition rates compared to the neighbouring districts.

One part of the explanation is a combination of DRR programmes that have equipped communities with the skills to better cope with the effects of droughts. Regarding the DRR aspect, the Commission has funded drought preparedness and mitigation interventions such as early reduction of herd sizes, rehabilitation of water dams and rangeland management. The Commission has also supported measure to respond to the emergency such as distribution of food vouchers and water trucking.

Communities have formed DRR Committees made up of community leaders and local organisations. These committees are in charge of local preparedness and in particular traditional early warning systems. For instance, the Committees advise communities to migrate or to reduce the size of their herds whenever there is a looming drought. They also oversee the use of water and pasture in times of scarcity.

In the larger Moyale district, communities have carried out pre-emptive "destocking" of herds which reduces pressure on rapidly shrinking pastures. The sheep and goats are bought from the community, slaughtered and the meat distributed free of charge to the most vulnerable families. With the money raised from the sale of the excess herds, the communities transport

the remaining animals to places where pasture and water are available.

Joint management of pasture and water has cushioned the Moyale population from the effects of the current drought. Community members, with guidance from the DRR Committees, have fenced off sections of the rangeland and are regularly uprooting invasive weeds to allow regeneration of pasture.

The DRR programmes in Moyale are of a cross-border nature, meaning they are implemented across the Kenya / Ethiopia border. This has helped build bridges between communities by ensuring amicable sharing of resources. In Sololo for instance, two warring clans, the Oromo of Ethiopia and the Borana of Kenya, have come together to rehabilitate a water pan and now share the water during times of drought.

The local communities in the DRR framework are also responsible for identifying families to benefit from emergency programmes such as food vouchers and water distribution. Orphaned children, the elderly, and people with disabilities are given priority. These vulnerable groups collect monthly food rations from local traders who have been selected by the community.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION WORKS

The Moyale community is a testimony that "slow onset" disasters such as droughts can be managed. It is now essential to build upon such encouraging examples. The construction of a disaster resilient society needs the joint commitment and concerted effort of international organisations, donors, governments, local authorities and civil society components.

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