

influence governments, donors and regional bodies on the need to apply a holistic approach addressing pastoral vulnerability. Drought risk reduction offers an opportunity to do this.

A range of audiences will be targeted that will not only include governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, Regional governmental bodies and institutions (IGAD, COMESA, EAC) but also policy influencers and decision makers among the international donors, UN agencies, and INGOs as well as the Media. The project is part of the Regional Drought Decision (RDD) of DG ECHO and will draw on experience, evidence and lessons from all countries in the Horn and East Africa, tackling some of the most salient issues in relation to drought management and pastoral livelihoods.

The project will aim to create advocacy space that will promote necessary policy and practice change. The starting point is to influence donors, governments and regional bodies to review and change their policies and practices to reflect and integrate good practices in drought risk reduction. To achieve its objectives the project will need to tackle the common misconceptions that prevent swifter and more appropriate action, enhance understanding on issues of climate change and population expansion as global challenges that policy makers must act quickly to address, if the growing threat to the natural resource base is to be curbed.

Objectives and activities:

1. Knowledge gathering and good practice

Harness and package existing knowledge and good practice to influence policy and practice

2. Policy dialogue

Increase the responsiveness of government and other institutions (including the media) to pastoralist's issues and needs. This will be reflected in policy decisions and reporting

3. Policy and practice change

Promote practice change such that the work of partners and others targeted by this initiative is directed by the advocacy strategy and demonstrates changes in favour of pastoral communities

4. Civil society advocacy capacity networking

Building capacity for advocacy related to pastoral livelihoods among civil society organisations in the region.

Partnership

A consortium of INGOs including Save the Children (UK), Veterinaries sans Frontiers-Belgium, Cordaid and CARE led by Oxfam GB is working together for the effective implementation of the project. The project is working closely with RECONCILE who are well known in the Region for their work in policy advocacy, conflict resolution and for helping decision makers better appreciate pastoral communities and their livelihoods. The project is working to support the Horn of Africa Pastoral Network (HoAP-Network) of which RECONCILE is the current secretariat. Each partner in the group has a longstanding commitment to working with pastoralists in the Horn and East Africa. The project links with FAO to coordinate with other ECHO funded RDD projects.



contact details

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Reducing the Vulnerability of Pastoral Communities

through Policy and Practice change in the Horn of East Africa

Reglap II



The project is funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

Influencing policy and practice to support pastoral livelihoods

The Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASALs) of the Horn and East Africa are hot and dry with low and erratic rainfall. Pastoralism is particularly well adapted to this environment. Pastoralist communities have, for centuries, been the traditional custodians of these dry land environments following a natural cycle of rangeland and water utilization that was supported by the diverse natural resource. Today pastoralism makes a significant contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in many Horn and East African countries and provides millions of people with a livelihood¹.

Cycles of accumulation, collapse and rebuilding are defining features of the pastoral way of life. However, recent shocks and stresses in terms of prolonged and frequent droughts, floods, livestock disease and the impact of conflict are seen to be stretching coping capacities to breaking point. The disabling institutional and policy framework have contributed to the perpetuation and reinforcement of this cycle thus increasing vulnerability. With disjointed and uncoordinated interventions, the pastoral communities' coping options and strategies for risk minimization and management have been constraint and rendered ineffective. Those who are able have responded by diversifying their livelihoods, many of the less fortunate have fallen into destitution and increasing poverty.

The chronic vulnerability of many pastoralists to drought and other shocks is seen by some as an indicator that pastoralism is unsustainable. However, this ignores a range of external factors that have contributed to undermining resilience. Pastoral groups suffer from political and economic marginalisation. The increased vulnerability to disasters is a direct consequence of adverse national policies amongst other factors. Like any other livelihood system, pastoralism needs a supportive environment to be vibrant. This, it has been denied for years!

Few national governments or external actors recognise the importance of the ASAL and pastoral livelihoods, or support them with appropriate policies and interventions. Governments and agencies have yet to find effective solutions to the complex natural and political vulnerabilities of pastoral communities. Such solutions will not be found in isolated projects and programmes, but in wider environmental and policy spaces.

Recurrent drought need not mean recurrent distress. The seemingly perpetual emergency response cycle has to be broken. A lack of sound policy and implementation focusing on drought risk reduction constitutes one of the main constraints limiting the coping options of pastoral communities. A regional perspective will be needed to address this problem.

¹ There are an estimated 20 million pastoralists in the East Africa and the Horn DFID (2006): Peace, Trade and Unity; Reporting from the Horn of Africa Regional Pastoralist Gathering, Qarsaa Dembi, 2006.

Studies and papers produced in phase I

1. Pastoralism, Policies and Practice: A review of laws and policies in the Horn and East Africa.
2. Pastoralism and Climate Change: Enabling Adaptive Capacity
3. Demographic Trends, Settlement Patterns and Service Provision in Pastoralism: Transformation and Opportunity.
4. Social Protection in Pastoral Areas.
5. Preparedness Planning: Getting it Right; Understanding Livelihoods to Reduce the Vulnerability of Pastoral Communities.
6. Mobile Pastoral Systems and International Zoosanitary Standards: devising a Compatible approach.

The project: "Reducing the Vulnerability of Pastoral Communities through Policy and Practice change in the Horn and East Africa." Phase II.

This is the second phase of Regional Pastoral Livelihood Advocacy Project (REGLAP), running for 12 months from July 2009 – June 2010. The ECHO funded project seeks to change thinking regarding the importance of drought preparedness and mitigation and thinking around pastoralists and their livelihoods. It seeks to promote the integration of humanitarian assistance with development intervention through drought risk reduction and response.

The project contends that the division between humanitarian assistance and development work plays a critical role in perpetuating pastoral communities' vulnerability to drought and indeed other hazards. It is now time to integrate the two and have governments, agencies and donors address vulnerability by tackling the underlying causes, which implies a longer-term developmental perspective while also ensuring effective preparedness measures and capacity along with responding to humanitarian needs. This will enable the pastoral communities increase their resilience to shocks and stress, absorbing the effects of such environmental hazards through livelihood diversification and alternatives.

Phase II builds on the achievement of phase 1, which focused on building of evidence around five thematic areas and establishing the policy and practices baseline in the Horn and East Africa. Phase I (March 2008-June 2009) generated a lot of interest in pastoral development among the policy makers, development agencies and pastoral CSOs as well as among the donor community.

Chronic vulnerability in the ASALs requires new approaches that combine elements of humanitarian and development work. The project will be seeking to

Key messages

A risk management approach offers the opportunity to address the root causes of vulnerability to drought and build resilient communities:

Although complex, reducing vulnerability to drought must take its roots in sustainable development at community level but also include the development and implementation of supportive and enabling policies at national level and beyond.

Project Partners

