



Disaster Risk Reduction: Ethiopia's Somali Region 2012/13

Oxfam's programmatic work in supporting pastoralist households in Ethiopia's Somali region to reduce their risk from drought was selected for an effectiveness review in 2012/13. This review covered the activities of two projects in particular: The first one was the third phase of the cross-border "Regional Drought Decision" programme, which focused on building the capacity of community-based disaster risk management committees, as well as construction of water storage facilities and setting up some pilot pastoralist field schools (PFSs). The second project, the Somali Region Drought Recovery and Preparedness Project, was launched following the severe drought of 2008/09, and involved rehabilitating communal rangeland, restocking herds for female-headed households, training of community animal-health workers, a livestock vaccination campaign, a public-health campaign, and latrine construction.

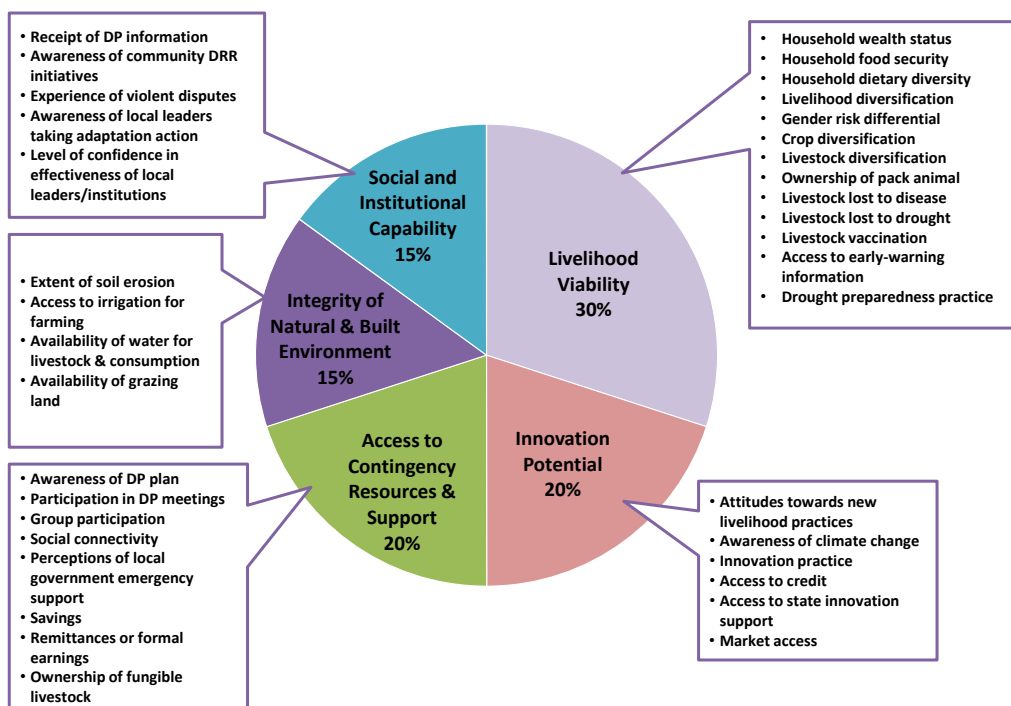


Figure 1: The figure presents the different dimensions and characteristics of resilience assessed in this effectiveness review. Each of the dimensions are weighted to reflect the aspects considered most important to resilience in the local context.

Photo credit: Eva-Lotta Jansson

Evaluation Method

In November 2012, with the support of an external consultant, a household survey was administered to 699 households in 22 kebeles in Awbare and Harshin woredas. Ten of these communities had seen implementation of one or both of the projects under review, while an additional 12 kebeles had not been targeted by those projects, but were included in the survey for comparison purposes.

The effectiveness of the project was assessed against 37 characteristics of resilience relevant to the project area. These characteristics fall under five interrelated dimensions (see Figure 1). The results for each of these characteristics were used to create an overall index of resilience for each household, which measures the weighted proportion of characteristics in which the household was above an acceptable level.

Rating key: ● - Evidence supporting large impact; ● - Evidence supporting more modest impact; ● - Evidence of large impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - Evidence of modest impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - No evidence of impact

Outcome	Rating	Commentary
Overall resilience (global outcome indicator)	●	Positive and statistically significant differences found between general intervention and comparison groups on the base resilience index, on the Alkire-Foster resilience index, and on the Global Indicator for adaptation and risk reduction
Dimension 1 – Livelihood Viability	●	Evidence of impact on four of the 14 characteristics of livelihood viability: vaccination of livestock, access to early warning information in 2011, and livestock lost to both disease and drought during that year.
Dimension 2 – Innovation Potential	●	There are small but statistically significant differences between the intervention and comparison communities in four of the six characteristics in this dimension: respondents' awareness of climate change, attitudes towards innovation, actual adoption of innovative practices, and access to markets.
Dimension 3 – Access to contingency resources and support	●	A larger proportion of respondents in the project communities were aware of whether the community had a drought contingency plan (and if so, had some understanding of its contents), and were also more likely to have participated in community meetings on drought preparedness. There is little or no evidence of a difference between the project and comparison communities in the other characteristics.
Dimension 4 – Integrity of the natural and built environment	●	Evidence of positive impact on three of the four measures in this dimension: extent of soil erosion, access to water for livestock/consumption, and access to grazing land.
Dimension 5 – Social and institutional capability	●	There are significant differences between the project and comparison communities in terms of receipt of drought-preparedness information, and awareness that local risk-reduction initiatives are being taken. There may also be a small difference in terms of the perceived effectiveness of local leaders and institutions to respond to respond to crises.

Results

A comparison of the intervention and comparison households provides evidence that the two projects had a positive effect on household resilience. Households in the communities where either or both of the two projects had been implemented scored positively on average on 44 per cent of the characteristics of resilience considered in the review, compared to 40 per cent in the comparison communities.

Most of the specific characteristics in which significant differences are found, not surprisingly, are those related to the key interventions of the projects. The households in project communities were also found to be faring better than those in comparison communities in terms of livestock lost to disease, access to livestock markets, and to have slightly more awareness of climate change and to be slightly more positive about innovation in livelihoods activities. Probably as a consequence of some of these changes, fewer of the households in project communities experienced severe losses of livestock during the drought of 2011.

Going forward

Programme work in the area covered by the effectiveness review has continued. Under the current project, Oxfam is working to establish and strengthen hybrid (government/traditional) committees to effectively manage natural resources (pasture and water) using a cross-border eco-system approach. This project also aims to institutionalise community-based disaster risk management committees and generate funding for community plans from external sources. In this way community plans are expected to become more "alive" in that actions will be funded and we would expect community engagement to become even stronger.