



Photo: People waiting for food at a feeding center in an IDP camp, Doolo zone, Ethiopia. Credit: Ankets Petros/Oxfam in Ethiopia

GENDER ANALYSIS FOR DROUGHT RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA – SOMALI REGION

SUMMARY

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1 INTRODUCTION

Despite impressive economic growth recorded in Ethiopia over the past decade, chronic food insecurity affects many. The country's subsistence crop and livestock agriculture is vulnerable to climate change and rainfall variability. The Ethiopian Somali region is one of the regions worst affected. A shortage of rainfall in the region over the past three consecutive years has resulted in huge losses of livestock and internal displacement of people. Although the drought affects everyone, men and women experience the impacts of the drought differently. Somali region arguably has one of the highest gender gaps in the country, as observed through various gender equality and women's empowerment indicators such as education, sexual and reproductive health rights, and women's decision making power in the family. This existing gender inequality tends to be exacerbated in humanitarian crisis situations, increasing the vulnerability of women.

The objective of this gender analysis is to understand the different impacts of the drought on men, women, girls, and boys, and their different coping mechanisms and potentials, in order to design and deliver humanitarian interventions responsive to their different needs. The study was conducted in Somali region, in six *kebeles* (wards/towns) of six *woredas* (districts) in the Jarrar, Doolo, and Afder zones.

The methodologies used in this study include both qualitative and quantitative methods. Household surveys were administered to randomly selected households in host communities and internally displaced people (IDP) camps, while focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) and observations were conducted with community representatives and local government staff.

2 FINDINGS

EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABLE LIVELIHOODS (EFSVL)

- Loss of livelihood (cattle, income, farm products, and all assets), affected both men and women.
- Lack of food affected all groups of households (however, children under five, disabled and elderly people, and pregnant and breast-feeding women are the worst affected by lack of food).
- Women in all categories tended to be de-prioritized in food consumption at household level and tend to eat last because of social norms.
- Women lost the income they used to get from selling dairy products (milk and butter), and small animals (goats).
- Men were expected to travel to the bush (migrate) with the remaining cattle in search of water and pasture.
- Women and children migrated to IDP camps for humanitarian assistance, mainly food and water, so influxes to IDP camps increased.
- Lack of nutritious food affected infants, children, and women (breast-feeding and pregnant mothers) – high levels of malnutrition.
- Lack of income to buy nutritious food for household family members.
- Increased debt (of both men and women).

- Increased reliance on neighbours and friends for support (for food and other important items).
- Because of the loss of livelihood, both IDPs and host communities (*kebeles*) were similarly affected.

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Access to water

- Reduced access to water supply highly affected all community groups, but women and girls were the most affected. It increased their work burden at household level since they are expected to travel long distances (average six hours) searching for water.
- High girls' school dropout rates. Girls have to support their families by engaging in household chores including fetching water.

Access to latrines

- Access to and use of latrines was low both in IDP camps and host communities. There were few latrines constructed in IDP camps, and they were not proportional to the size of the population in the camps. Where latrines exist, they were not sex segregated or didn't provide privacy and safety, which discouraged use by women and girls. Latrines were also not child friendly. Because of these reasons, open defecation was a common practice, posing both a health and security risk.

Menstrual hygiene management

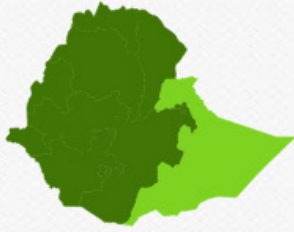
- Lack of access to menstrual hygiene management materials and facilities in IDP camps, such as dignity kits, washing and drying places for menstrual hygiene.

Women's leadership roles

- Nominal role of women in WASH committees (WASHCOMs).

PROTECTION

- Gender based violence (GBV) cases were not reported and harmful traditional practices (HTPs) such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage, and polygamy were commonly practiced before and during the drought.
- Psychological stress, depression, and anxiety among both men and women.
- Protection risks due to lack of water and food were very high.



KEY FINDINGS

SOMALI REGION GENDER ANALYSIS



Age distribution of affected communities



- Adult (18 - 49 years old) (34.42%)
- Youth (10 - 17 years old) (22.79%)
- Children (5 to 9 years old) (20.30%)
- Infants (< 5 years old) (15.88%)
- Elderly (> 50 years old) (6.61%)

Household heads in IDP camps



- Female headed (89.70%)
- Male headed (9.70%)
- Child headed (0.60%)

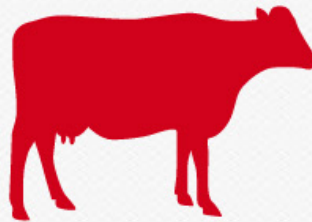
Household heads in host communities



- Female headed (73.40%)
- Male headed (26%)
- Child headed (0.60%)

Impact of drought on livelihoods

Over 70% of households reported livestock production as a livelihood source



Over 75% of all households surveyed reported a loss in livestock and livestock products



Across all communities surveyed, **women held the primary responsibility** for collecting water



70% of those surveyed reported having access to sexual health services



Both men and women reported a **lack of latrines** as the primary reason for not using the latrines in IDP camps.



In both IDP camps and host communities, only around **50%** of women reported themselves as using the latrine

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

EFSVL

Immediate intervention

Cash assistance

- Cash assistance is preferred instead of direct food assistance, to meet immediate needs and preserve productive assets such as livestock. Hence, Oxfam and other humanitarian actors should continue to combine immediate humanitarian responses, e.g. also use cash transfers as a means of addressing immediate food needs.
- Cash transfers, both conditional and unconditional, should be provided to affected people and target vulnerable women, female-headed households, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, and elders.
- Both men and women are willing to participate in cash-for-work activities. Thus, identify their activity preferences based on their gender. And ensure that women participate in soft or light activities around their households.
- During cash for work, working hours for men and women should not be equal, because women have a lot of household responsibilities.
- Ensure the availability of childcare centers (day care) to enhance the participation of women.
- With distribution committees for cash intervention, ensure gender balance and strong women's capacity to make sure women are empowered by them.
- During cash distributions, ensure that the time and place of distribution is appropriate for women. Ensure some awareness-raising activities while people wait for the cash, discuss with men and women about how to spend the money, and how women should make decisions over the use of the cash received.
- Develop culturally-appropriate behaviour change communication (BCC) and information education communication (IEC) materials for awareness-raising.

Actions for medium- and long-term recovery and resilience

- Raise community awareness on improving women's decision making power over cash and other resources.
- Conduct a joint study on livelihood options and preferences of men and women for recovery livelihood activities (with livelihood and gender team).

Restocking (livestock provision)

- In restocking, invest in assets traditionally controlled by women or those useful to reduce their workload e.g. shoats (i.e. sheep and goats), donkeys, etc.
- Invest in livelihood opportunities that are traditionally women's work, e.g. dairy production and processing.

Strengthen local women's agencies and cooperation

- Provide financial and technical support to existing local cooperatives and women's associations. Support the community to establish these kinds of organizations.
- There is a high need for grinding mills in rural *kebeles* where women grind cereals by hand in their homes. To reduce their workload at household level, support the installation of

grinding mills through the management of women's associations or women's self-help groups.

- Promote and enhance productive safety net programs (PSNPs) in all areas where there is persistent drought effect.

WASH

- Oxfam in Ethiopia and other humanitarian actors should continue targeting mainly IDPs for supporting provision of water services, and continue to target schools and health centers.
- There is a need to expand the provision of sustainable water access for host communities by constructing boreholes. Oxfam should influence humanitarian actors to provide sustainable and quality water supplies for vulnerable people in Somali region.
- Oxfam and other humanitarian actors should ensure the construction of adequate numbers of sex segregated latrines in prioritized *kebeles*. They should also ensure the latrines provide privacy and are located at acceptable distances from the IDPs. They should ensure that the latrines have proper inside and outside locks and lights.
- Ensure latrines are constructed proportionally to the overall population size of males and females in IDP camps. In all camps, there is a need for additional latrines for women.

For effective menstrual hygiene management Oxfam and other humanitarian actors should:

- Provide separate bathing places or materials such as wash basins.
- Ensure the dignity kit comprises the right and appropriate contents (e.g. menstrual hygiene materials, underwear, women's scarves and women's plain cloth, laundry soap, solar hand battery).
- Consult the needs of women and girls before providing kits (to choose between reusable sanitary cloths and disposable sanitary pads).
- Always conduct post-distribution monitoring (PDM) after distribution of the dignity kits to track the users' satisfaction.
- Strengthen the role of women in WASHCOMs apart from their representation and make sure that there is support for women to exercise decision making power through:
 - Organizing separate leadership training for women.
 - Regular follow up and monitoring to support women in WASHCOMs.
 - Motivating women to take leadership roles in WASHCOMs.

PROTECTION

- Provide community awareness and sensitization about GBV, legal provisions protecting women and girls from GBV, and roles of institutions that provide services and assistance to survivors of GBV.
- Engage traditional and religious leaders through sensitization activities.
- Set up community protection committees to analyse protection threats, (including GBV and share their observation of trends); pass on information about services, make referrals, if, in the event they come to know of a specific GBV case; and offer to refer to specialist service providers with consent from the survivor or the immediate family.
- Build the capacity of government offices responsible for responding to GBV and education to change attitude of law enforcement personnel, who are influenced by patriarchal values.
- Advocate at a local level to set up an effective monitoring and reporting system.

- Oxfam should work with similar organizations to provide psycho-social support for affected men and women.

GENDER TARGETED ACTIONS

- Strengthen women's agency and leadership in humanitarian interventions and raise women's confidence and consciousness to address the gender gap.
- Set up actions to sensitize women, to get organized in collectives (self-help groups or cooperatives etc.) to advance their economic and social rights.
- Advance women's leadership in various committees, such as WASH and cash or other livelihood committees set up by the humanitarian interventions, and support more women to come into leadership positions (rather than assume symbolic representation without making their voices and concerns heard).
- Support women to assume leadership positions in mixed groups, such as WASHCOMs and livelihood committees.
- Also train women in roles that are not traditionally considered a woman's domain – for example, as technicians to do minor maintenance in WASHCOMs – to help challenge traditional gender roles and change community perceptions.
- Share experiences and publicize visits to places where women have assumed leadership positions in WASH and livelihood activities, to build women's confidence and challenge traditional gender norms.
- Undertake interventions on unpaid care work to support women's engagement in the public domain.
- Conduct Rapid Care Analysis to identify actions that can be taken to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.
- Conduct community dialogues to address social norms affecting the distribution of care work and to promote sustained behavioural change.
- Strengthen advocacy for investment in time- and labour-saving equipment and public services that redistribute care work.

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