

## A CASE STUDY OF THE CONSORTIUM TRANSFER PROGRAMME IN SOMALIA

The case study looks at the consortium cash transfer programme in Somalia in response to the humanitarian crisis of 2006.

### CONTEXT (SHOCK AND PRE-EXISTING SITUATION - POVERTY, MALNUTRITION ETC.)

Many areas of southern Somalia have been in a perpetual state of humanitarian crisis since the collapse of the central government in 1992. A devastated basic social services and infrastructure has periodically been exacerbated by the impact of drought, floods, market shocks, disease and recurrent conflict that has led to constant food crises in the country. Although there is no adequate data on health and nutrition, FSAU records show a global acute malnutrition of 17.8% and a severe acute malnutrition of 4.2%, both above the emergency threshold, which confirm the seriousness of the humanitarian crisis. The current case study of the food crisis is a direct result of the failure of the secondary *Deyr* rains of late 2005, but the situation had been building up after several failed rainfall seasons.

### SITUATION ANALYSIS (RESULTS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT + MARKETS + POLICY)

The FSAU needs assessment carried out at the end of 2005 showed that failure of the secondary *Deyr* rains of late 2005 in Somalia had resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, especially among the pastoral communities. The drought had caused death of up to 50% of the livestock by June 2006 and livestock prices had fallen by 60-70%, leaving 313, 200 people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The falling price also led to the collapse of the credit system based on livestock as collateral, and is the main lifeline of the pastoralist, especially during the dry season. Water scarcity posed a major concern with 50% of the boreholes not functioning. Thus, there was an urgent need for food, water and means of debt repayments to creditors. Severe and chronic environmental degradation was also identified by FSAU as a key problem responsible for diminishing prospects for sustainable livelihoods in the region.

### RESPONSE ANALYSIS (GOVT., UN, AGENCY POLICIES AND STRATEGY, RESOURCES AND CAPACITY, PRIORITIES, FUNDS AND TIMING)

Following the needs assessment two regions of the Northern triangle covering some areas of Gedo and Juba were highlighted as adequately covered by other agencies. The consortium partners of Oxfam-GB, Horn Relief and Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA) therefore decided to target regions in Somaliland and Puntland, which were judged to be in an acute food security and livelihoods crisis, and are poorly covered by other humanitarian actors. The partners also pro-actively engaged the FSAU and FEWSNET to develop more specific cash-based information and analysis as well as analysis of market functionality, appropriate size of cash transfers and prevailing labour rates. This information was complemented by discussions with traders on the ground. Four LNGOs; Havoyoco, Shilcon, SVO and Horn Umbrella were identified as the implementing partners for Oxfam GB and NPA while Horn Relief decided to implement the project directly. Department for International

Development (DFID) funded the consortium response for a period of six months, January to June 2006. Oxfam-GB contributed 28.8% of the total program budget to cover budget gaps while NOVIB provided additional funds to Horn Relief for an in-depth evaluation of the consortium activities. However, the timing of the cash projects was relatively late for maximum impact, with the first distribution coming in June 2006, one to two months after the rains and two to three months after the first food aid distributions arrived. This was partly due to the fact that the agencies were moving into new areas, which delayed mobilisation and partly due to delays in obtaining funding.

## **RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING RESPONSE**

The rationale for choosing the response was guided by the Food Security Analysis Unit for Somalia and Oxfam GB's long presence across the border in North East Kenya that facilitated a quick mobilisation of water interventions that enabled the partners to gain credibility and access to communities in southern Somalia and assess the feasibility of cash-based responses. The programme borrowed heavily from the experiences and recommendations of the Oxfam Kenya programme including the use of local partners from the Kenya Programme and Horn Relief's experience in Somalia that stresses transparency and engagement with clan systems. The choice of cash for work and direct cash relief interventions was specifically because they were perceived as appropriate for offsetting short-term problems occasioned by the four-year drought. Due to the complexity of working in Somalia because of the ever changing environment, this intervention was based on the 2004 concept on alternative ways of working in Somalia<sup>1</sup>. The concept focuses on how to avoid constraints of high administrative costs, changing contexts and presence of numerous 'gate keepers'.

## **PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

The project goal was to contribute to the enhancement of the food security and livelihoods of the drought-affected communities through emergency cash based intervention. The objective was to improve the purchasing power and livelihoods of 16,260 target households, and to develop infrastructure through micro-projects among the communities of Lower Juba and Gedo regions of South Somalia. Essential activities comprised of; a) community based registration process relying on public participation, transparency and pro-active engagement with the clan system in order to advocate for targeting of resources poor pastoralists and minority groups; b) an initial one-off cash relief distribution of \$50 per household and c) a four monthly distributions of cash-for-work for 8,900 households consisting of 90% of beneficiaries receiving \$55 per month as cash-for work and 10% most vulnerable and labour poor households receiving cash relief of \$55 per month and d) identification and implementation of a range of drought mitigation micro-projects as part of the cash-for work component. The programme was implemented through a consortium of three INGOs and three LNGOs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Alternative Approaches to working in conflict prone areas, with specific reference to the South of Somalia*,. Internal document, Oxfam, 2004.

## **OBJECTIVES OF CASH PROGRAMME**

The objectives of the cash programme was; a) to improve the purchasing power and the livelihoods of 16,260 target households and to develop infrastructure through micro-projects in the drought affected communities of Lower Juba and Gedo Region of South Somalia, and b) to identify and implement a range of drought mitigation micro-projects as part of the cash-for work component

## **PRACTICAL ISSUES**

The project faced challenges of; too many actors involved in the implementation, the wide project area coverage and the short project duration for effective community mobilization and smooth project implementation. Secondly, the cash for work and cash relief interventions could not accommodate all the poor and deserving households because the crisis being addressed was much bigger than the available resources.

## **MONITORING SYSTEM**

Although an inbuilt comprehensive monitoring framework was developed for the project at the beginning of the project, it was not implemented because of time constraints despite its ability to strengthen uptake of new ideas. The consortium perceived it to be too comprehensive and ambitious and instead impacts and lessons learnt was based on one-time assessments such as baselines, pre and post distribution surveys. A baseline survey and two post-distribution monitoring surveys were carried out. Monthly narrative and financial reports were also prepared but they lacked details and seemed to be a cut and paste from previous reports. The information from the project surveys also had inherent weaknesses in terms of quality of information and the ability therefore to comment on project impact was limited. Over reliance on the qualitative method of proportional piling and leading questions was singled out as a problem. The contact between the various consortium partners at field level was also minimal, despite the earlier commitment to work and share information regularly.

## **PERCEIVED IMPACTS AND BENEFITS OF CTP (INCLUDING NEGATIVE BENEFITS)**

- The cash intervention reduced the effect of the drought and beneficiaries were able to meet basic needs such as food, repayment of debts, purchase of water, clothing, education and medicine within the implementation period.
- Some households were cushioned from disposing off their livestock while others were able to do limited re-stocking.
- Community participation in form of labour yielded other benefits beyond the immediate cash benefits because the micro-projects addressed felt community needs and priorities.
- Gender balance and equitable access to resources was ensured as a result of deliberate encouragement of women participation, access and control of project benefits through direct project management, supervision and dispute settlements as active members of VCRs.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Most communities preferred cash for work instead of cash relief or other forms of emergency interventions, they felt that cash relief should be minimized in favour of cash for work.
- Transparency through public vetting of beneficiaries by VRCs and the local authorities through clan systems at the initial stages of community mobilization and registration created trust and made implementation of the project easier.
- Good rapport with the Government departments and other stakeholders created an enabling environment for smooth and effective implementation of the project and helped in avoiding conflicting approaches with other stakeholders as well as creating a climate for learning among the local stakeholders in the project areas.
- Allocating adequate time for planning before the actual implementation of the project is crucial because community mobilization, the constitution of VRCs, the registration of beneficiaries and the vetting takes time and if not done well could jeopardize the project.
- Interventions ought to reach as many drought affected households, in adjoining regions, as possible to avoid influx of people from one region to another in search of cash for work, but this should not be done at the expense of spreading resources too thinly.
- Communities can play a pivotal role in ensuring environmental management, rehabilitation of degraded areas and protection of areas at risk through micro-projects.
- Workload of women should be taken into consideration in division of labour during implementation of micro-projects as well as distance of the projects from their villages.
- Using private local money transfer companies is an opportunity for quick disbursement of money to beneficiaries where there is a weak local administration and security risks.