

Disaster Risk Reduction – fundamental to saving lives and reducing poverty

East Africa is facing the worst food crisis of the 21st Century. Across Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya, over 12 million people are in dire need of food, clean water, basic sanitation and shelter. Suffering and death are already happening on a massive scale, and the situation will worsen over the coming months.

It is no coincidence that the worst affected areas are those suffering from entrenched poverty due to marginalisation, conflict and lack of investment. While severe drought has undoubtedly led to the huge scale of the disaster, this crisis has been caused by people and policies, as much as by weather patterns. An adequate response to the current crisis must not only meet urgent humanitarian needs, but also address these underlying problems.

Overview

The Horn of Africa is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, particularly drought, and climate variability is expected to increase in the future, which will have major impacts on livelihoods and food production. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) seeks to analyse, manage and address the causal factors of disasters and their impact on men and women, and as such should be a core feature of humanitarian, rehabilitation and development programming.

This crisis is testament to the lack of priority given to resilience building in the region. In Oxfam's view:

1. Greater investment and leadership on DRR by national governments and the international community is needed

DRR is effective and cost effective - investment levels must be increased. This should be coupled with greater political leadership by national governments and UN agencies to drive a step change in ambition and progress.

2. There must be a new humanitarian and development compact to take DRR seriously

In areas of protracted crisis and chronic vulnerability, the current division between humanitarian and development funding is not appropriate. DRR is the responsibility of both humanitarian and development sectors and there needs to be a clear shift to funding which seeks to bridge this gap:

- Humanitarian funding should be longer-term (ideally 36 months) and flexible (programmatically and geographically);
- Development funding must incorporate a risk reduction approach;
- Greater coordination between humanitarian and development financing streams to improve the coherence, effectiveness and potential to bridge or link interventions;
- Donors and national governments should refuse to fund or support programmes – whether humanitarian, rehabilitation or development - which do not seek to reduce risk.

1. Disaster Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa – addressing immediate needs and underlying vulnerability

The Horn of Africa is and will continue to be highly vulnerable to natural hazards. Drought is a common feature in the region and climate variability such as high temperatures and low and erratic precipitation is expected to increase. This disaster has been triggered by extremely low rainfall, a natural hazard, but the scale of this crisis has been caused by a huge increase in the number of people exposed to risk. Disaster risk is generated by inequality and injustice, hitting poor and marginal groups hardest; this is often women who eat last and least. The cost of this disaster both in lives and livelihoods lost and dollars spent is too high and could have been reduced. More should have been done to build effective early warning systems and the ability of pastoralists and other drylands dwellers to better endure drought and other shocks.

The tragedy of the unfolding crisis in the Horn of Africa demands a response to the immediate need as well as addressing these shortcomings. Disaster Risk Reduction – the nexus between emergency and development assistance – provides an effective and cost effective approach to build resilience and address underlying vulnerabilities, through systematic efforts to analyse, manage and address the causal factors of disasters (see note on terminology).¹

Crucially, taking a DRR approach means ensuring that **both humanitarian and development work** incorporates an analysis of disaster risk and seeks actions to reduce it. However, as with most countries, there is a sense that DRR efforts in Kenya and Ethiopia have focused more on emergency preparedness and early warning systems rather than the developmental challenge of addressing underlying vulnerabilities.²

For this to be the last famine that Africa suffers, DRR must be taken seriously.

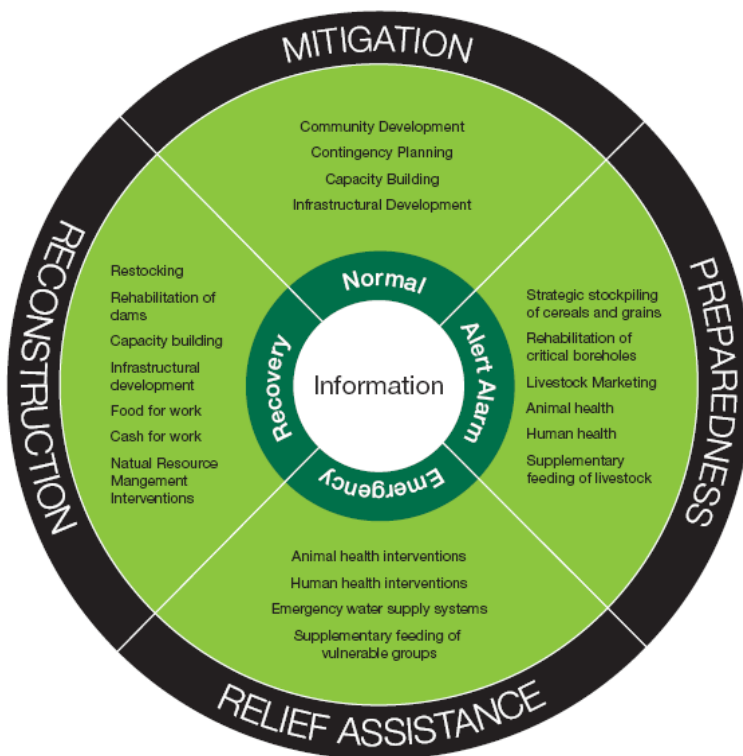
1.1 DRR in the current humanitarian response

All humanitarian assistance related to the current crisis in the Horn of Africa should reinforce resilience and reduce the risk of disaster by considering the long-term implications. Interventions should be carefully constructed to ensure that women's assets are supported and interventions may also require a conflict-sensitive approach, and be negotiated with traditional leaders and across clans. Key interventions include:

- Water resource management. Sustainability is a core consideration, including where/whether to situate boreholes, rehabilitation of water points and their ongoing maintenance and management.
- Work programmes. If cash or food for work programmes are being implemented, the public works element should be developed using a DRR approach, which builds community ownership and focuses on vital communal assets such as rangeland, water harvesting etc.
- Food availability. Where markets are working, providing support to traders to bring in essential food and strengthen delivery networks is an essential complementary activity to cash for work.
- Herd mobility. Emergency responses should support mobility where possible, for example, by providing mobile services. This is key to ensure the sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods. A conflict-sensitive approach may also be required to ensure responses reach all vulnerable sections of the community and are negotiated with traditional leaders and across clans.
- Veterinary services. Vaccination and other animal health interventions are important to prevent death and disease in the herd and strengthen livestock resistance to drought. Humanitarian response should use and strengthen private sector actors in developing sustainable services, to support development efforts.
- Supporting community structures. Emergency interventions should work with and strengthen local organisations and community leaders who are best placed to identify the most vulnerable and deliver aid where it is needed.
- Preparation for predicted floods. Rains are expected from September and with them come a significant risk of flash floods and disease. It is vital to undertake contingency planning for public health and veterinary services alongside the pre-positioning of essential supplies to prevent outbreaks of water-borne disease amongst people and vector-borne diseases in animals.
- Recovery. Given the relatively light September-December rains in some areas, the recovery phase will not start until June 2012, meaning that long-term recovery plans must stretch to late 2012 and beyond. Recovery activities should complement cash or re-stocking responses with veterinary and rangeland management services, support to those who are interested in leaving pastoral livelihoods to develop alternative incomes and continued efforts to strengthen water and marketing infrastructure.

1.2 DRR as long-term development - applying the Drought Cycle Management model

Unlike some natural hazards, droughts in this region are not one-off disasters requiring a short emergency response, followed by a swift rehabilitation programme, and then back to 'normal' development activities. The frequency of severe drought means that development work is increasingly disrupted and often undermined by the shift to emergency response. For example, an education programme may be completely stalled during a drought crisis, as children – often girls – are particularly affected - are no longer able to attend school. Governments, UN agencies, donors and NGOs must accept that drought is a normal occurrence in pastoral/dryland areas, not a rare or intrinsically disastrous event, and they should develop and adapt their programmes accordingly.



Whilst there are other natural hazards in the Horn of Africa – notably flooding – drought is by far the most widespread and long-term hazard. Its very nature – a slow-onset hazard – both enables and requires a particular programmatic response. The Drought Cycle Management Model is a very useful model as it conceptualises drought as a cycle of four phases: normal, alert/alarm, emergency, and recovery. It guides implementation of different interventions at each of these four phases thus ensuring that they are appropriate, effective and ultimately reduce the risks and consequences of any drought.

Source: Oxfam Learning Companion, Drought Cycle Management

2. Insufficient investment in DRR

DRR is both effective and cost-effective. Despite this, governments have not taken responsibility to address the issue and donors have not invested enough in DRR.

It is clear that DRR is **cost-effective**. Whilst it is too simplistic to assume an overarching cost benefit ratio (often quoted are 1:4 or 1:7), studies have shown time and time again that appropriate prevention saves lives and money. For example, protecting core livestock herds is much cheaper than rebuilding them once they have been decimated by drought; one study found that in northern Kenya, it was three times more expensive to restock a core herd than keep animals alive through supplementary feeding; in the Afar region of Ethiopia, restocking sheep and goats cost 6.5 times more than supplementary feeding, and restocking cattle cost 14 times more.³

DRR is also key to **effective** aid and government investments. Developing an analysis and response to risk is essential if aid and other investments are to remain effective. Otherwise hospitals, schools, roads and water points can be damaged or washed away in flash flooding, and developmental gains can be lost if rangeland and water resources are not managed effectively to protect livestock-based livelihoods from drought. In the absence of a DRR approach, the dividends from these investments will not be realised. For example, between 1997 and 2007, Ethiopia lost on average US\$1.1bn to drought every year; this almost eclipses the US\$1.3bn per year that Ethiopia received in international assistance to tackle poverty and emergencies over the same period, and is more than the amount Ethiopia invested in agriculture, a sector that is clearly crucial for ending food shortages.⁴ Recognising this, the Government of Ethiopia now has ambitious targets for investment in food security and agriculture, building to a projected expenditure of \$1.5bn by 2014.

In Ethiopia, the Government has committed to the Disaster Risk Management⁵ approach, developed a draft policy and a strategic programme and investment framework. Its Productive Safety Net Programme has meant that 7.5 million chronically food insecure people across the country are no longer in need of humanitarian assistance. However, there is still a need to invest more heavily in

building capacity for DRM at all levels of Government and all sectors and in making the DRM system better able to deliver early and appropriate responses to protect livelihoods. Despite the policy commitments made by the Government, lack of investment and limited capacity for translating early warning into early action, delivering non-food responses and addressing disaster risks through long-term development are major challenges.

Box 1: DRR works - Examples of Oxfam's risk reduction programmes in the Horn of Africa

Reducing disaster risk in Turkana District

Oxfam is working in the Turkana District of Kenya to help pastoralists respond to animal disease epidemics and drought. Support has been provided to local level Livestock Marketing Associations to make livestock markets more equitable – including marketing, improving sanitary standards relating to animals, and financial support to develop new livestock markets. Four livestock markets have been established, helping many pastoralists to sell their animals at decent market prices, even in times of drought. The livestock marketing system is now more efficient and more capable of responding effectively to disaster events.

Some Ethiopian communities no longer requiring emergency aid

As a result of Oxfam's HARO interventions to build and preserve livelihood assets in Ethiopia, communities which received emergency aid in previous droughts no longer require it. For example, a small-scale irrigation project was developed in Liban district of Guji zone. This pumped water from a major river to enable pastoralist households to produce grain not only for their own consumption but also for local market supply. Women report that they no longer worry about milk and food shortages for their children and family. In contrast to last year and neighbouring pastoralists outside the scheme, this community is no longer included in food aid targeting and livestock have not migrated due to the availability of crop residue.

Rebuilding ecosystem services and pastoralist livelihoods in Somaliland

Income and livelihoods were collapsing in Ga'an Libah, as fodder became scarce, due to drastic environmental degradation as a result of conflict and drought. Participatory community-based land-use planning was key to addressing this problem. Working with Somali partner Candlelight, Oxfam supported the construction of stone terracing to minimize water runoff, the revival of grazing management system and reforestation. Now livestock herd sizes and body weights have increased resulting in greater income, with many benefits, including more children attending school.

Micro-insurance schemes to build resilience

By buffering losses in a predictable way, insurance can build resilience and potentially also enable risk-prone households to take on 'high risk-high return' activities that increase these household's chances of moving out of poverty. Oxfam's R4 programme in Ethiopia, working with WFP, REST (Relief Society of Tigray), Swiss Re and local insurance companies, enables people to work for their insurance premium (rather than paying cash). These works are DRR-based, thus providing a tangible benefit even without payout. Now the threat of debt has been removed, farmers are more willing to borrow and invest.

For **international donors**, DRR funding represents a very small percentage of overall humanitarian and development activity and expenditure. New global data shows slowly increasing expenditure, but still to only extremely low levels. Global expenditure on DRR in 2009 reached US\$835m in 2009 – this represents a mere 0.5 per cent of total annual ODA. This overall fact is reflected in the response to the crisis in the Horn.

- Disaster prevention and preparedness (DPP – see note 1 on terminology): donors spent less than one per cent of humanitarian aid on preparedness and the prevention of disasters - see Table 1. This reflects significantly less than one dollar per beneficiary in the current drought.
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR – covering DPP and also risk reduction interventions embodied in longer-term development programming): the figures improve but are still extremely low, considering the acute vulnerability of this region to drought and other hazards.

Somalia's figures are particularly low – in real and percentage terms. Considering the importance and proven cost effectiveness of DRR the extremely low values here represent neither good planning nor good value for money and expose men, women and children to unacceptable levels of risk.

Table 1: Donor spend on DPP and DRR

	Average annual donor spend on DPP US\$	Average donor spend on DPP as a percentage of humanitarian aid	Average annual donor DPP spend per beneficiary of the current drought US\$	Donor spend on DRR as a percentage of total ODA
Kenya	2.22m	0.91%	59 cents	1.4%
Ethiopia	3.3m	0.59%	69 cents	0.9%
Somalia	0.7m	0.19%	19 cents	0.3%

See note 1 on terminology for definitions of DPP and DRR

Source: Donor spend figures adapted from Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2011⁶

3. The need for long-term flexible funding

Cost-effective DRR is the collective responsibility of both development and humanitarian communities, and how it is funded is as important as the need for adequate funding. DRR funding requires the best of both communities – funding flexible enough to deal with emergency need, and predictable and long term enough to ensure underlying vulnerabilities are addressed.

Humanitarian financing is often restricted to 12 months or even less and has a clearly delineated humanitarian mandate. Whilst this may allow the immediate emergency needs to be met, it severely limits opportunities to address the root causes of emergencies and build resilience of communities or capacity of national actors. It also often necessitates downscaling or removing of presence and capacity, which creates problems when needs spike again. This is in contradiction to the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship which stress the need for predictability and flexibility in funding, as well as longer-term funding.⁷

Developmental financing is much longer-term but is generally not flexible enough to re-allocate for emergency response in the event of need. In the Horn of Africa, it is fairly certain that both drought and flooding will occur within a three to five year timeframe yet, more often than not, there is little real contingency planning or analysis on how to respond to this risk.

There have been moves to start to bridge the humanitarian-development divide in the Horn of Africa. For example, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) programmes now typically last for three years, and ECHO's Regional Drought Decision incorporates a crisis modifier. However, this good practice is not sufficiently widespread and has not resulted in permanent changes in donor funding architecture. For example:

- USAID's Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative in Ethiopia included an innovative crisis modifier that was widely applauded, but this was cut from USAID's ELMT/ELSE programme, severely constraining the effectiveness of contingency planning and early response.⁸
- The EU is funding a three year regional pastoral and agro-pastoral programme in Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya led by FAO. Greater impact could be achieved if the programme was longer-term (three years is insufficient to embed resilience and build capacity), more holistic (rather than focusing on cross-border issues), more bottom-up and fostering innovation (to fully understand and meet the needs of communities) and with more advocacy (to achieve change at all levels).
- Most UN Emergency Response Funds only fund lifesaving activities in response to a humanitarian emergency. In Kenya however preparedness activities have started to be funded and this represents an important opportunity.⁹ However, there is still a need to extend the project lifecycle from six months and encourage DRR activities.

4. Recommendations

Oxfam recommends a greater focus on Disaster Risk Reduction for the Horn of Africa. This crisis is testament to the lack of priority given to resilience building in the region.

5.1 Greater investment and leadership required from national governments and the international community on DRR

Greater investment:

- National governments: DRR requires much greater investment, as a reflection of the actual and long-term cost of disaster losses. As effective DRR must be delivered at the local level, governments must invest to strengthen the capacity of officials and provide increased budget at the local level, so that at-risk communities are involved in decision-making around planning and spending
- Donors: currently, for every \$100 spent on humanitarian aid, less than one dollar is spent on preparedness and the prevention of disasters. Much greater investment is required to reflect the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship and current donor best practice, where 10 per cent of humanitarian aid is channelled to DRR work.

Greater political leadership. At all levels there is a need for increased drive to reduce the human and financial toll of disasters and to achieve the goals of the Hyogo Framework for action. Whilst some progress has been made, there is a need for a step change in the level of ambition, including:

- National level: governments are responsible for leading and coordinating at national level. They need to provide an enabling environment (policy, funding mechanisms and institutions) to support effective DRR work, as well as a clear public statement of commitment from the highest level of government.
- Greater UN focus and priority on DRR. At country level, UNDP has a mandate for linking relief, recovery, and development operations within the UN but this has not yet translated into an organisational priority. The UNDP should take a stronger role in Ethiopia and Kenya and other major UN players such as FAO and WFP also need to do more.

5.2 A humanitarian and development compact to take DRR seriously

The international community has tended to interpret its responsibility to developing countries as reacting to emergencies and supporting longer-term development, seemingly blind to the crucial link between the two. In areas of protracted crisis and chronic vulnerability, the current division between humanitarian and development funding is simply not viable. DRR must thread through all programming and is the responsibility of both humanitarian and development sectors. There needs to be a clear shift to funding which seeks to bridge this gap and specifically seeks to address and reduce disaster risk:

- **Humanitarian funding should be longer-term and flexible** – In accordance with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, funding should be longer-term (18 months minimum, ideally 36 months) to replace sequential multiple projects, and flexible (in both programmatic and geographic terms). This would streamline the process, overcome access constraints to ensure more timely responses and support resilience building.
- **Development funding must incorporate a risk reduction approach**, along Drought Cycle Management lines. This would ensure that programmes fully reflect the reality of drought in the region and make programmes flexible to respond to humanitarian crises as they occur – incorporating a crisis modifier or similar, to allow the programme to shift focus in the event of a crisis.
- **Greater coordination between humanitarian and development financing streams** to improve the coherence, effectiveness and potential to bridge or link interventions. Donors with both humanitarian and development funding wings should systematically and proactively facilitate links and test or create new mechanisms to bridge the humanitarian-development divide.
- **Insisting on a DRR lens to all programming.** Donors and national governments should refuse to fund or support programmes – whether humanitarian, rehabilitation or development - which do not seek to reduce disaster risk because they will be neither wholly effective nor cost-effective.

¹ **Note on terminology**

The vast majority of this briefing refers to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which is the most comprehensive approach. UNISDR define this as: systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events. <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

The government of Ethiopia uses the term Disaster Risk Management (DRM), which focuses more on the management aspects. UNISDR define this as: the systematic process of using administrative directives, organizations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

The term Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (DPP) is a subset of DRR. In this briefing, it is only used in relation to funding. Expenditure on DPP can be extracted easily using the financial codes for humanitarian spend whereas DRR in its fullest sense, is often mainstreamed into other programmes and is much more challenging to calculate.

² Mousseau F and Norton J (2010) Addressing Chronic Food Insecurity in the Horn of Africa: Good Practice Identified but Commitment Needed? REGLAP. Significant investment in social protection in both countries is a very important step in reducing underlying vulnerabilities, but much more is required.

³ Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative (2007). Food for thought: livestock feeding support through drought. Policy Brief Number 2, November 2007. Aklilu and Wekesa (2002). Drought, livestock and livelihoods: lessons from the 1999–2001 emergency response in the pastoral sector in Kenya. HPN Paper 40

⁴ Oxfam (2009) Band Aids and Beyond Tackling disasters in Ethiopia 25 years after the famine. Oxfam Briefing Paper No 133 http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/downloads/bp133_band_aids_beyond_161009.pdf. Recognising this, the Government of Ethiopia now has ambitious targets for investment in food security and agriculture, building to a projected expenditure of \$1.5 bn by 2014 (according to the Growth and Transformation Plan)

⁵ DRM – Whilst DRR focuses on reducing the risks of disaster, DRM focuses more on disaster management. DRM is the systematic process of using administrative directives, organizations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster. <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

⁶ Development Initiatives (2011). Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2011, pg 79, 80 and 103

<http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/gha-report-2011.pdf>

Annual DPP figures - calculated from 5 year figures (2005-2009) given in GHA: DPP per beneficiary - calculated using OCHA figures of numbers of people affected – 3.725m in Kenya, 4.8m in Ethiopia, and 3.7m in Somalia

⁷ <http://www.goodhumanitarianidonorship.org/gns/principles-good-practice-ghd/overview.aspx> Principles 12 and 13.

⁸ Nicholson N and Desta S (2010) Final evaluation report of ELMT/ELSE 2007-2009. Pg 47

⁹ Development Initiatives (2011). Global Humanitarian Assistance: Emergency Response Funds (ERFs). Profile. July 2011

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