



Extract from the Final Evaluation report of the

# **AECID project 17-PR1-805**

## **“Building Resilience Capacity of Vulnerable Agro-Pastoralists Project”**

In Guchi and Moyale Woredas

Mela Development Training & Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd. Co



# “BUILDING RESILIENCE CAPACITY OF VULNERABLE AGRO-PASTORALISTS PROJECT” IN GUCHI AND MOYALE WOREDAS

The “Building Resilience Capacity of Vulnerable Agro-Pastoralists Project” was developed jointly by Ayuda en Acción Ethiopia (AeAE) and Community Initiative Facilitation and Action (CIFA), a local NGO, in Guchi and Moyale Woredas of the Borena zone in Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. Funded by Ayuda en Acción Foundation and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the project was designed to reduce agro-pastoral communities’ vulnerability by ensuring food security. The undertaking was planned to be executed in two years, from January 2018 to June 2020.

This project focused on two of the 13 woredas in the Borena zone, and in six kebeles in particular (Harakeke, Guchi Badiya and Erdar in Guchi woreda; and Mudi Ambo, Arbale and Arganne in Moyale woredas). This project has benefited 4,474 households (2127 female households) with the total of 31,516 people.

The project area covers 148,000 square km area and is located about 700 kilometers south of Addis Ababa, bordering Kenya, and had an estimated population of 178,382 in 2016 (51% women). The Geda system, an indigenous democratic socio-political system of the Oromo inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List, is the main social structure.

Agro-ecologically, more than 97% of the area is lowlands, of which 34% is grazing land, 30% is tree land and 14% is land suitable for agriculture (but only 4% has been cultivated). Livestock holding with traditional grazing is the main economic activity in the selected woredas, with 75% of the population depending on subsistence grazing while the remaining 25% is considered as “urban” and agro-pastoralist. Consequently, 80% of pastoralists obtain 70% of their income from livestock products. In addition to livestock production, rain fed crops are the second most important economic activity in the area, but due to recurrent drought and erratic precipitation, productivity is often low.

The events of droughts, more and more frequent in the last 3 decades, decimate the capacity of recovery of the agro-pastoralist communities and their means of

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life. Frequent droughts and erratic rain fall affect livestock dependent pastoralist and agro-pastoralist result in shortage of pasture and potable water leads to loss of livestock, food and nutrition insecurity. The project focuses on reducing vulnerability factors in the intervention area and on strengthening the resilience of agro-pastoralist communities in Guchi and Moyale. It is a multidimensional intervention that takes care of the communities and their livelihoods, the project centered on four areas:

### **Provide access to safe drinking water supply for humans and livestock, use sanitation facilities and improve hygiene practices in the targeted communities.**

The project intended to enhance water access in terms of quality, quantity and proximity by harvesting surface water. Due to the difficult access to potable water, people living in the targeted kebeles had been forced to drink untreated/unpurified water from open ponds. The lack of potable water exposed them to waterborne diseases, putting mothers and children especially at high risk.

The main effort was the rehabilitation of two existing ponds by cleaning and upgrading the capacity of each to 6,000 m<sup>3</sup>, and the construction of two new ponds with a capacity of 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> each.

Although the original plan was to implement the pond intervention in both woredas, it was actually

undertaken solely in the Guchi woreda due to severity of water shortage in consultation with communities and Moyale district. The project improved access to water close to community.

The construction and rehabilitation of ponds were undertaken by local human labor benefits 536 poor households through cash for work smoothen consumption and save household assets.

In addition to community access to water, the project also installed six water tanker in six health posts, each tanker has a capacity of 10,000 liters to address water shortage. The water tanker installed with roof catchment to collect rain water during the two rainy seasons.

In addition to developing ponds to access water, the project had distributed to supply household-based water purifying devices for 550 households, prioritizing lactating and pregnant women and older people who had no capacity to purchase chemical for water treatments and are unable to travel long distance. The distributed water filtering device is simple to operate for women and got high acceptance from the communities.

Another key activity of the project was an awareness campaign to improve health promotion and hygiene by, among other things, building own pit latrine and realized impact of open defecation. To ensure the ideal development of these initiatives, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHCo) were established and trained to ensure the management of constructed and rehabilitated ponds and promote hygiene and sanitation in the community.

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### **Enhance food crop production for consumption and market**

Pursuing the improvement of food security status of poor households, the project also supported increasing crop production of agro-pastoral communities. Enhancing crop production in agro-pastoral areas can increase availability of food because those same agro-pastoralists are net

buyers. In order to achieve this goal, members of the targeted communities were provided training to improve their skills in farming, adopt agronomic practice and reduce post-harvest loss. Another complementary scheme to support the crop production was the provision of improved seeds of maize, haricot bean and vegetable seeds, hand tools and pesticide sprayers to poor agro-pastoralist. The project also facilitated access to supply of inputs for group members through involvement in bulk purchases. The project promoted agricultural practices, diversifying income sources in addition to livestock, the main livelihood sources.

### **Protect livestock and Increase livestock production**

According to the information gathered before the implementation, some pre-existing problems such as shortage of pastures, grazing land is encroached by bush hamper the growth of grass, degradation of land and livestock loss. In order to improve the situation, the project focused on rehabilitating the rangeland in the Guchi woreda, being this action one of the major activities of the project.

In order to enhance livestock production, breeding goats were distributed to households that have become more vulnerable due to drought and conflict. The purpose of goat provision was also to address malnutrition and improve nutrition especially for children, by enabling them to obtain goat milk for consumption.

Furthermore, to protect livestock, a plan to improve veterinary services was designed by providing training on vet management to Community animal health workers (CAHWs) and vet technicians and livestock health support.

### **Improve livestock market access for agro-pastoralists and protect it through an insurance scheme**

The purpose of the proposed action is to sustainably improve the livelihoods and incomes of pastoralists through enhanced livestock market opportunities. The project's key interventions focused on strengthening the commercial orientation and capacity to respond to market demand of livestock marketing cooperatives. To attain this, the project has granted funds and provided cooperative members and the executive committees with different types of capacity building trainings. Efforts were made to create market linkage for the exiting livestock traders with potential buyers in the central and export market; as well as to build dialogue forums with the actors and support providers to enable market players to conduct efficient, fair and secure transactions.

The other major intervention is facilitating an index-based livestock insurance (IBLI) scheme, proactive risk mitigation measures that enables to mitigate losses of livestock due to drought. IBLI was introduced eight years ago, but it has been facing the challenge of gaining acceptance by the local community, and the operational system of the scheme was not friendly to the pastoral ecology and customary setups.



# EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

The project was designed with an overall goal of reducing the vulnerability of agro-pastoralist communities by improving the food security of these communities. The evaluation has observed that all the planned and delivered interventions have a

complementary influence on the achievement of the project goals. Moreover, all the planned project activities have been fully implemented, reaching a 100% or higher delivery rate of targets.

It was observed that the planned supports have reached ultimate beneficiaries, and they have addressed the real needs of the targeted households and community groups. Activities were undertaken in accordance with the intended plan by targeting households as well as individual beneficiaries and communities to ensure access to water, community and household asset building.

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## RESULT 1

**Access to safe (human and livestock) drinking water supply, use sanitation facilities and hygiene practices improved in the targeted communities**

The pond development intervention has enhanced access to water both for human and livestock consumption in the target villages and it has reduced distance and fetching time to a certain extent for target water users.

The construction and rehabilitation of ponds was undertaken by mobilizing the community through cash-for-work basis, which provided temporary employment for resource-poor households (nearly 50% of them women). On top of improving access to water, the pond development intervention enabled vulnerable households to gain additional income and overcome draught-caused temporary food shortage at household level.

The distribution of water filters facilitated access to safe drinking water for the target households and additional people in the neighboring household, which in turn has improved the health situation of the beneficiaries and communities.

With regard to the hygiene and sanitation promotion training and awareness-raising initiative, there is a practice of using improved toilet facilities and shower rooms which indicates the effectiveness of the awareness-raising intervention. Additionally, WASH committees have been established in all the target villages and they have actively engaged in coordinating the pond development works and they are providing regular operational services to water users through mobilizing labor and ensuring the economical utilization of scarce water.



## RESULT 2

### **Selected families improve and adapt the food crop production to drought**

The intervention in the area of crop production, in particular the training on improved agricultural practices, which was accompanied by inputs and working capital supports, has enabled most members of the group to increase production and gain additional income. As a result, some have expanded farm plots and invested in additional equipment, and the food security status of group members at household level has been enhanced.



## RESULT 3

### **The selected agro-pastoralist population increased and protected its livestock production**

The project has successfully achieved the planned targets in all intervention areas, especially on rehabilitating the rangeland in the Guchi woreda, being this action one of the major activities of the project. It was reported that more than 446 Ha of land encroached by unwanted bush affected the growth of grasses were cleared

and protected as a reserve resource to be used during peak dry season. The success of the bush thinning and rangeland management activities of the project has helped the target community to access grass in the near-by areas without traveling long distance as the areas share border with Somali communities and frequently prone to conflict.

The bush thinning was undertaken by 392(249 male, 143 female)

poor households benefitted from Cash for work at least for two months to smoothen consumption and improve purchasing power of food and essential items during the dry period. The clearing and subsequent management of the rangeland is being undertaken by respective rangeland management committees in each community.

The distribution of breeding goats to 200 vulnerable households has contributed to improving nutrition, especially for children, by providing goat milk. Provision of goats has also empowered the women economically and psychologically. The provision of the goats helped target vulnerable households to gain milk to overcome malnutrition of children and even to sell some of the off springs to cover food expenses. Thus, the initiative is considered beneficial in enhancing nutrition and contributing to food security at target household level.

To protect livestock wellbeing, 50 CAHWs (community Animal health workers) and vet technicians were trained to ensure access to vet attention for target community, including mobile services during seasonal movement in search of water and pasture for livestock. The training was followed by provision of vet kits and essential drugs that could enable trained CAHWs to deliver basic veterinary treatment.

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The target communities in general and specific households in particular have been adapting ideas gained through training and exposure to project interventions that served as stepping stones to improve traditional practices in a gradual manner. The training provided to CAHWs was effective in introducing basic vet services and improved livestock management down to community-level practice. Trained CAHWs perceive the instruction received, combined with existing traditional knowledge and skills, as building their confidence in providing basic vet services in their areas.



## RESULT 4

### **Agro-pastoralist communities improve their access to livestock markets and have livestock insurance.**

The introduction of index-based livestock insurance (IBLI) has reduced the vulnerability of 748 households (50% female) involved in the insurance scheme. The new approach has modified the subject of insurance, now based on forage loss that could lead to livestock weakness and gradual death, instead of on actual loss of livestock. The introduction of IBLI has been contributing to overcome challenges related to peak dry season shortage of forage and it even has improved access to vet services.

The livestock insurance scheme is a very good approach for the protection of assets, as it enables target households who have joined the scheme to receive compensation and save their livestock in the face of acute shortage of pasture. The IBLI is designed in a manner that enables policy-holder pastoralists to get compensation when they face forage deterioration that is determined based on area-aggregate observations of the satellite-based vegetation index, but not after losing their livestock.

Along with other interventions (restocking of breeding goats, support to improve crop production, livestock marketing cooperatives, CAHWs), all have inbuilt potential in creating resilience in a sustainable manner. They are also contributing to the effort of overcoming food insecurity situations at target household level.

The interventions related to livestock cooperative capacity building have contributed to enhance the role of women in cooperative leadership particularly in executive committee and proved the competency of women in community. Moreover, the project supported through capacity building training and injected working capital, which enabled the cooperatives to increase their working capital, expand their market operations and make additional profits that enabled them to distribute dividend to their members, 62% of them are female.





# LESSONS LEARNT

1

During the implementation of the project some adjustments needed to be made (for example, the site selection for pond development) and lessons were learnt. One of the most relevant lessons was that involving community leaders and pertinent local government offices in the design of interventions is a key success factor for the effectiveness and sustainability of project initiatives. The actions enhanced local ownership of the project activities Likewise, a project with a high level of flexibility and adaptability to the local context lays foundations for sustainability in the outcomes.

2

The project's results also show that interventions that address the real needs and priorities of beneficiaries have high likelihood of success. The support provided to the livestock market cooperatives and the crop producers group, among others, is a typical example of this.

3

A gender-sensitive approach proved to be completely appropriate for this project. Gender issues were properly considered. The project has promoted women's empowerment by undertaking gender-sensitive interventions in the project design and implementation, for instance, in water filter distribution, restocking, livestock marketing cooperative, hygiene and sanitation, temporary employment in physical works and in most of the trainings and leadership capacity-building initiatives. As a result, the economic and social status of particularly vulnerable women is increasing, as their access to and control over productive resources (e.g. livestock, money), as well as their leadership role, knowledge and skills, are improving. This approach has allowed to attain results superior to those achieved by non-gender sensitive means.

4

Most of the project activities, such as the livestock marketing cooperative support, the rangeland management, pond development and the crop production support intervention, are likely to be sustainable. This is because all the required institutional mechanisms such as bylaws, leadership committees and beneficiaries' sense of ownership are in place and the groups can continue operating without external financial support.





