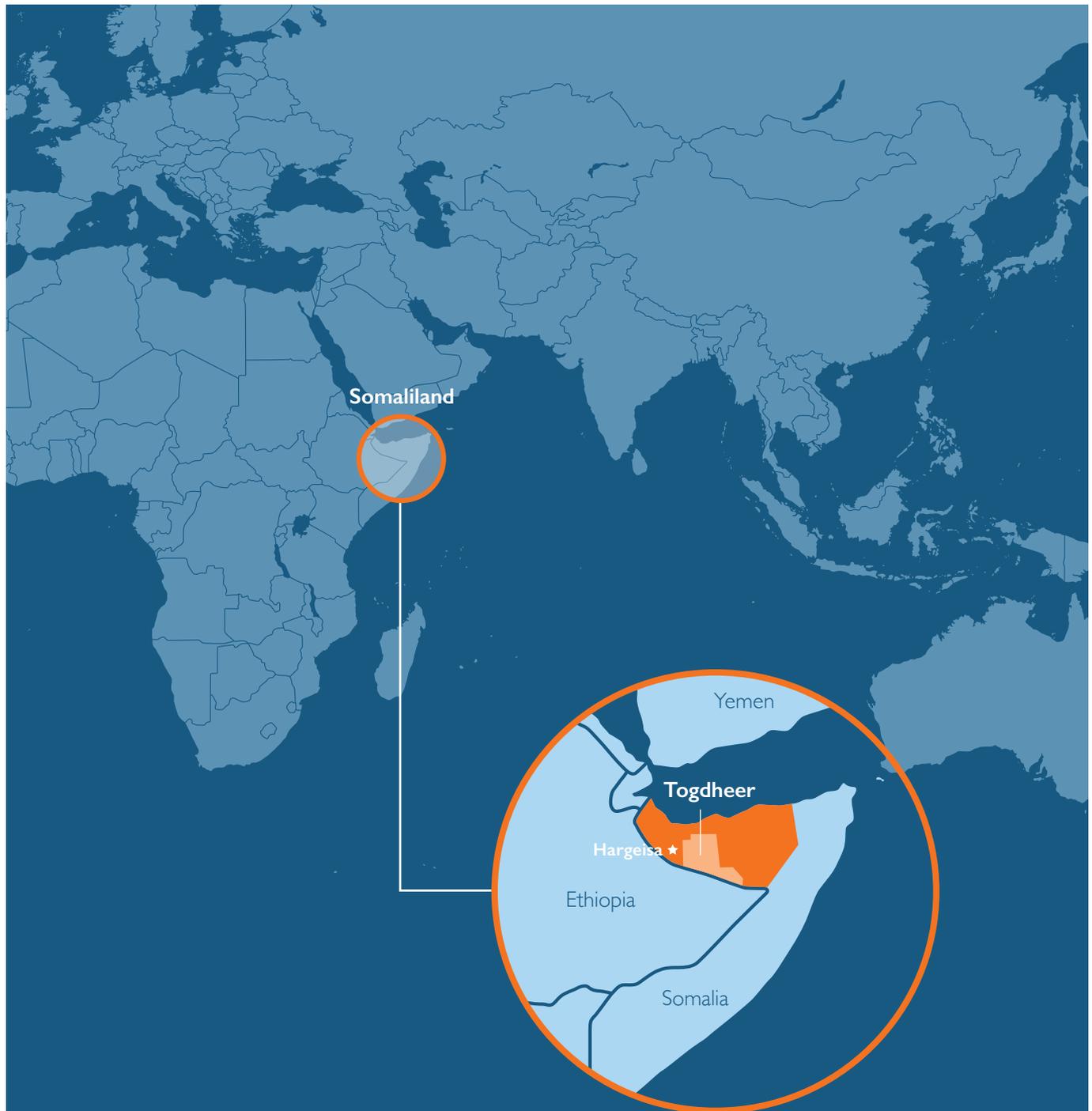


Enhancing Resilience for Improved Livelihoods in Togdheer, Somaliland

Odweyne, Burao and Cel-Afweyne Districts,
Somaliland



About this report

This report summarises the evaluation of World Vision's Enhancing Resilience for Improved Livelihoods in Togdheer, Somaliland project, which took place between January and May 2020. Independent consultant Peter Walyaula conducted the evaluation, with support from Joanita Sebayiga and Leah Juliet Walyaula. Additional data analysis and review was provided by Cornelius Chirairo and Vichi Liyana Gunawardena.

Front cover: Halimo raised chickens around 20 years ago, but was unable to replace them when they died. Now she is a poultry farmer again, and earns a regular income of her own.

Context

Somaliland is an unrecognised de facto sovereign state situated in the north-west of Somalia. Most districts are populated by semi-nomadic pastoralists, with agriculture as the main source of livelihood.

Regular, prolonged drought seriously constrains agro-pastoral food security and resilience. Despite positive developments in Somaliland over the last decade, its government institutions remain weak, and therefore cannot adequately provide for public services or build local capacity to address the challenges of climate change. Drought is becoming more frequent, limiting livelihood diversification opportunities as livestock and crops are placed at increasing risk. For instance, after a drought in 2017, the REACH Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment reported up to 68 per cent of households in one region had lost livestock. It also reported a lack of adequate

sources of livelihood and hyperinflation, which negatively affected the most vulnerable groups, and that pastoral households moved an average distance of 80km to access water points for both human and livestock consumption.

Previously, in Cel-Afweyne district, forestry projects involving the *Boswellia sacra* (or frankincense tree) and *Prosopis juliflora* (locally known as Ali Garoob or mesquite in the US) had been trialled but had faced challenges such as low natural propagation using conventional methods. Farming practices and policies in the region were inadequate to face a changing climate, particularly in areas such as planting (method and timing), soil management, water harvesting, and pest/disease control, all of which resulted in lower yields and income. Better agricultural, water storage and livestock husbandry practices were needed, including methods to promote reforestation to prevent further land degradation.

World Vision's work in fragile contexts

World Vision welcomes the international community's renewed approach to addressing both root causes and consequences of fragility. Recognising the urgency for new action and greater funding, and based on our experience, World Vision believes that the following collective efforts, including within our own organisation, are needed to achieve transformational change for children, families and communities in fragile contexts:

Work towards people-centred, child-focused collective outcomes: To date, voices of affected people and their expectations are largely missing from global decision-making forums and processes that are working on collectively delivering across the humanitarian, development and peace agendas. Urgent efforts are needed to invest and grow people-led, child-focused movements that drive transformational change and connect local, national and global action for fragile contexts

Ensure context-specific action: Efforts to build an effective nexus among humanitarian, development and peace approaches must be context specific and context appropriate. In certain situations this will mean operating in separate but coordinated lanes to prevent compromising one another's principles while building towards commonly agreed goals that align to the 2030 Agenda.

Build a better future for the next generation by engaging in positive politics: Bridge divides; reduce inequality; promote equity, openness and understanding; embrace diversity; and address differences through solution-focused dialogue.

Find out more about World Vision's strategy for fragile contexts here: www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/A%20Brighter%20Future%20for%20Fragile%20Contexts_FINAL.pdf



Over time, land management, environmental farming practices and diversified income sources can reduce desertification and mitigate the impact of drought in Togdheer.

Project Goals

To enhance resilience through improved ecosystem health and food security of agro-pastoralist communities in Odweyne and Burao Districts in Togdheer region and Cel-Afweyne district in Sanaag region.

Expected outcomes:

1. Increased production and productivity of smallholder farmers and agro-pastoralists.
2. Increased capacity for targeted communities to diversify and expand their livelihood opportunities.
3. Improved natural resource assets supporting smallholder farmers and pastoralists.
4. Enhanced community resilience and disaster mitigation capacity.

Achieved through:

- Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)
- Better options for livelihoods: agricultural, small business, livestock
- Improved access to financial services (savings and loans)
- Increased vet and vaccination services through the Community-based Animal Health Workers (CBAHWs) structure
- Dams and boreholes to resolve water scarcity.

Over time, land management, environmental farming practices and diversified income sources can reduce desertification and mitigate the impact of drought in Togdheer

What is FMNR?

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is both a community mobilisation approach for landscape restoration and a specific technique to regenerate trees. Living tree stumps and self-sown seeds are re-grown into usable trees by pruning and protecting them.

The regeneration of trees (which is generally faster and less expensive than planting trees) restores and builds natural assets and makes agricultural activities more productive, increasing income, as well as food and water availability. FMNR can be considered in any agricultural, livelihood or development project where tree regeneration will contribute to long-term well-being and where the physical conditions for FMNR exist.

FMNR is also an empowering form of social forestry or agroforestry, giving individuals and communities the responsibility to nurture trees and reap the rewards from the sustainable harvesting of wood and non-timber forest products. Even in a poor policy environment, regenerating trees may still provide fodder, shade, and soil nutrients. As a natural resource management intervention, FMNR is a rapid, low cost and easily replicated community-led approach to restoring and improving agricultural, forested and pasture lands.

For more information: [Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration – FMNR Hub](#)

Project overview

The goal of the project was to enhance the resilience of 10 village communities in the Togdheer region of Somaliland, supporting 13,444 people with environmentally sustainable food security.

The project focused on improving income opportunities for farming, forestry and other business initiatives for local families and their children. It used Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) to improve ecosystem health, food security and resilience to recurring droughts and other weather shocks for agro-pastoralist communities. Considering Somalia's fragility, FMNR was also intended to contribute to local peacebuilding, collaboration and protection. Faith-based and community groups had already highlighted the negative effects of deforestation and land degradation on their social bonds, and community-led land management was known to be a solution to these tensions in other contexts.

The project used climate-smart, improved agricultural technology such as natural fertilisers, crop residue mulching and propagation including tissue cloning, to support the production of food and tree crops, and build the capacity of communities to optimise production and conserve endangered natural vegetation (some plant species were facing extinction). FMNR sites were used for demonstration and research in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and highly valuable frankincense and other crops were propagated locally and made available to farmers. Other community activities included vegetation restoration and recovery, and community participation in diversified forest-based livelihoods.

Strengthening local private sector commitment to profitable environmental business was core to the project's goals, involving farmer associations, beekeeper associations, charcoal merchants, livestock keepers, veterinarians and animal drug suppliers and traders.

The project also partnered with appropriate government teams and community groups to introduce holistic rangeland management into policy and establish by-laws on sustainable usage of common resources.

This project was supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

“Through FMNR interventions, acacia trees and indigenous grasses that had disappeared have started coming back. People’s attitudes have changed because they now know that they and their animals’ lives depended on those trees and grasses. Now that people no longer move in search for pastures and water, they are now more settled, have time to cultivate food and take their children to school”.

Regional Coordinator, Ministry of Environment and Rural Development



Increased participation of women in economic development was a core focus.

Evaluation purpose and methodology

The end-of-project summative evaluation was conducted by independent consultant, Peter Walyaula, with a small support team. The purpose of the evaluation was to verify and document the project's achievements against the expected outcomes, including lessons learned and recommendations for World Vision and others working in the sector of food security in Somalia.

The consultant used mixed methods including household surveys in both the project and comparison areas, as well as key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FDGs). The survey size was calculated based on a 5 per cent error tolerance, adjusted to ensure a balance of female and male respondents and ability to compare with confidence. In total, the survey consulted 571 people (396 project participants, 175 non-participants for comparison; 51 per cent male, 49 per cent female). Baseline data was also used for comparison over time, with some indicators needing reconstruction to fit with current lines of enquiry.

The qualitative discussions also emphasised difference perspectives, with focus groups including mixed gender and separate gender groups, Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups, and FMNR champions.

Project impact

The project showed remarkable improvements in its target areas of production, productivity and diversity of livelihoods, as well as side benefits of private sector strengthening, social cohesion and disaster mitigation.

Households that had year-round access to food increased from 44.4% (2016 baseline) to 73.2% (2020 evaluation). The project targeted the most vulnerable households, such as those that had lost almost all their livestock due to drought, which was in line with local needs, government priorities and World Vision's strategy on resilience.

Almost a third (29.7%) of households in the project area (compared to 11.9% in the comparison site) earned income at least in part from the sale of tree products like leaves, honey, fruit, sawn timber and poles, while 61.6% of the project area (compared to 18.7% in the comparison site) were involved in grassland and pastureland rehabilitation. The majority (91.6%) of households in the project area (43.9% in comparison site) indicated an improvement in the quality of grazing/pastoral land, while 56.3% of the project area (15.4% in comparison site) reported an improvement in tree cover.

Other positive long-term environmental benefits introduced by the project include improved soil and water conservation practices, the enhancement of irrigation systems, and the use of fuel-saving stoves and solar lanterns. The improved pastures and water availability have helped reduce the movements of pastoral households, allowing them more time to engage in other viable activities like crop cultivation and alternative businesses. School attendance has also improved due to this reduced mobility, for both girls and boys.

The emergence of new private traders has been another positive development with groups opening businesses involved in livestock and veterinary (CBAHWs), fuel, retail shops and savings (VSLAs). These businesses have shown considerable growth. In 2019, the CBAHWs treated 7,351 animals from 316 households, while VSLA members saw their capital increase from US\$2,748 in 2018 to US\$7,337 by the end of 2019.

All of these project activities have brought people together, enhancing social and business interactions and relationships, while creating a stronger sense of community, peaceful co-existence and cohesion.

“We used incomes from VSLAs and started new businesses, bought household assets and livestock. Our future plan is to save more money and establish fuel stations. We are also planning to mobilise more community members to join the VSLA”.

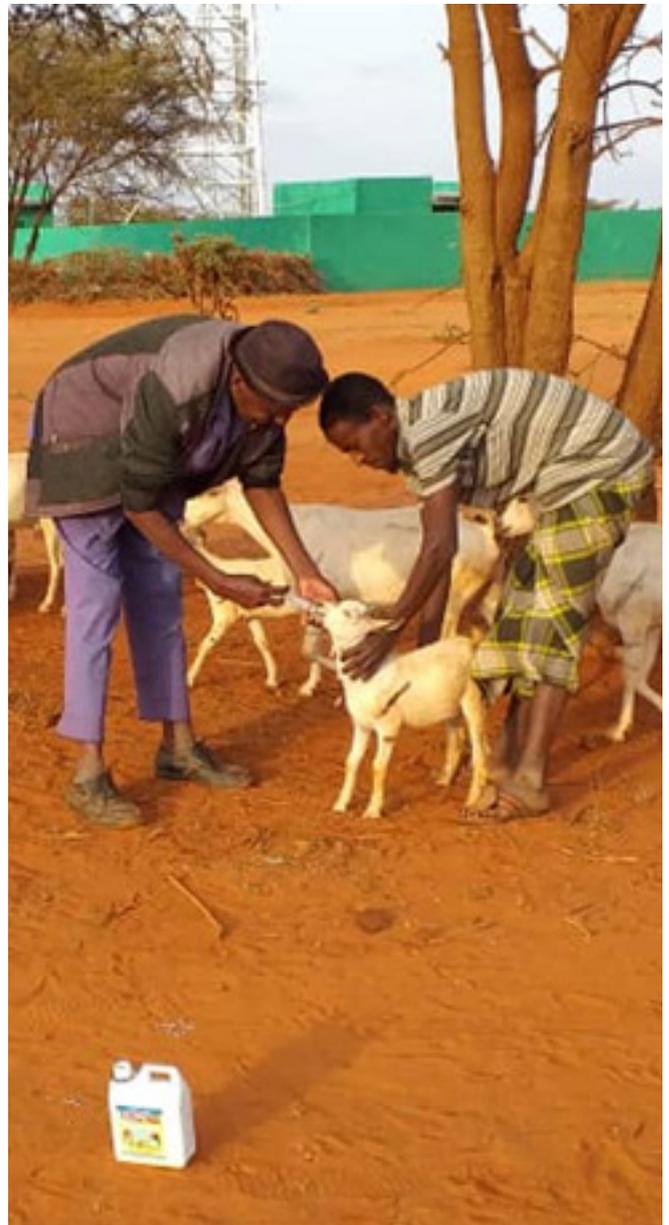
Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA)
Group member Xaaxi village.

Project findings

Outcome 1:

Increased production and productivity of smallholder farmers and agro-pastoralists

The evaluation found the project's approach of equipping smallholder farmers with knowledge, information and productive inputs led to increased crop yields and improved animal health services. Households with one or more adults earning an income increased from 50.4 per cent (ANCP Phase I Evaluation 2016) to 68.8 per cent (2020 evaluation). Households with an alternative source of income increased from 6.5 per cent (2018 baseline) to 54.7 per cent (2020), and households using improved farming practices increased from 20.7 per cent (2016) to 64.6 per cent (2020). There was also an increase from 44.4 per cent (2016) to 73.2 per cent (2020) of households with year-round access to food.



Veterinary services including immunisation have been essential to livestock survival, household food security and alternative income sources

Outcome 1: Increased production and productivity of smallholder farmers and agro-pastoralists

	2016 Baseline Evaluation	2020 Evaluation
Households with one or more adults earning an income	50.4%	68.8%
Households with an alternative source of income	6.5%*	54.7%
Households using improved farming practices	20.7%	64.6%
Households with year-round access to food	44.4%	73.2%

Note: *2018 outcome monitoring

‘Most families used to eat one meal a day, but now families eat at least three meals due to increased milk production and sales.’

– Caregiver, Qalooqato Village

Outcome 2: Diversified livelihood alternatives among the targeted agro-pastoralists

The evaluation found the project enabled smallholder farmers to access alternative income sources by engaging in profitable income-generating activities. Households earning an income from the sale of fodder increased from 13 per cent (2016) to 78.24 per cent (2020). Households practising both crop and livestock farming increased from 36.7 per cent (2016) to 62.1 per cent (2020) and almost a third (29.7 per cent) of the households in the project area (11.9 per cent in comparison site) made some household income from the sale of tree products.

Outcome 2: Diversified livelihood alternatives among the targeted agro-pastoralists

	2016 Baseline Evaluation	2020 Evaluation
Households earning an income from the sale of fodder	13%	78.24%
Households practising both crop and livestock farming	36.7%	62.1%

‘The project helped us grow different crops, restock animals, diversify our businesses and join saving groups and as a result, our incomes have improved.’

– Mother, Beerato village



Women-only savings groups made successful forays into small business co-operatives such as shops and petrol stations

Outcome 3: Improved natural resource assets supporting smallholder farmers and pastoralists

The evaluation found the project supported the rehabilitation of natural resources to advance household livelihood strategies. Households involved in FMNR practices increased from 20.7 per cent (2018 outcome monitoring) to 74 per cent (2020). Households involved in pastureland rehabilitation increased from 41 per cent (2016) to 61.6 per cent (2020). More than half (56.3%) of the households in the project area (15.4% in comparison site) reported an improvement in tree cover compared to three years ago, while more than two thirds (78.2%) of the households in the project area (58.5% in comparison site) were engaged in selling fodder products.

Outcome 3: Improved natural resource assets supporting smallholder farmers and pastoralists

	2016 Baseline Evaluation	2020 Evaluation
Households involved in FMNR practices	20.7%*	74%
Households involved in pastureland rehabilitation	41%	61.6%

Note: *2018 outcome monitoring

‘The training on farming systems that I received from the project has helped me a lot. I use my 14 hectares of land for pastures, planting and protecting of local tree species and for sorghum growing.’

– FMNR Champion, Beerato village

Outcome 4: Enhanced community resilience and disaster mitigation

The evaluation found the project supported the restoration of natural environments to lessen shocks related to drought and increased climatic variability. There was an increase from 18.4 per cent (2018) to 41.4 per cent (2020) of households that had ever received and used any weather information in the last 3 months. There was an increase from 52.7 per cent (2016) to 65.9 per cent (2020) of households that were adopting low coping strategies to obtain food or income (an indication that households are more food secure).

Outcome 4: Enhanced community resilience and disaster mitigation

	2016 Evaluation	2020 Evaluation
Households using weather information in last 3 months	18.4%*	41.4%
Households adopting low coping strategies to obtain food/income	52.7%	65.9%

Note: *2018 outcome monitoring

“Most families used to eat one meal a day, but now families eat at least three meals due to increased milk production and sales ”.

– Caregiver Qalocato Village

Sustainability

The evaluation found good potential for sustainability after project closure, due to:

- The close working relationships developed between community leaders, the government and the University of Nairobi (UoN), which have created a real sense of ownership of the project.
- The government's commitment to the initiative which includes the supply of land for FMNR demonstration sites, collaboration with FAO to secure inputs, and hiring CBAHWs.
- Community leaders who participated in project training have passed on their skills to the community through awareness campaigns.
- The project has actively engaged FMNR champions, CBAHWs, VSLAs, and private traders to work together on planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.
- The project established and trained water committees to handle the repair and maintenance of dams, water canals and boreholes and these structures are continuing to work effectively.

The importance of land fallowing

Land fallowing (allowing land to rest to regain fertility) has been recognised by the majority of households in the project area as a worthwhile soil conservation practice to replenish nutrients and regrow pastures. According to the evaluation, 85.3 per cent of households in the project area (compared to 59.6 per cent in the comparison site) said they normally allowed a year or more for the land to rest.

Resolving local conflicts: a priority for sustainability

The project carried out peacebuilding and conflict management trainings with community members using the 'do no harm' approach. Using these skills, together with traditional peacebuilding structures involving village chiefs and elders, community members were able to resolve disagreements through negotiations and mediations. Government representatives have also continued to sensitise communities over the laws that govern communal land in order to avoid conflicts.

'The skills and experience given to me by the project have equipped me to handle peacebuilding, conflict resolution and gender-based violence.'

– Caregiver, Beerato village

Cross-cutting themes

Gender

Given the significant challenges for girls and women, the project has not really achieved enough. More women than men exhibited negative attitudes towards their rights. The evaluation showed little difference on gender issues between the project area and comparison site. For example, only 29 per cent of people surveyed disagreed that collecting water was the responsibility of girls and women. On child marriage, 49.3 per cent of households agreed (or somehow agreed) that if a girl younger than 18 gets married, it should not be reported to authorities but rather be resolved at a family level so that the girl could continue in the marriage. On domestic violence, 64.7 per cent of respondents agreed (or somehow agreed) that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.

These results reflect a gap in the programming approach which did not explicitly address local gender-related issues and barriers. Outcomes for women were noted – for instance, rehabilitated and newly constructed dams in villages helped reduce women's workload in collecting water; while energy-saving stoves reduced the amount of time women had to spend collecting firewood.

'This project promoted the empowerment of women who had been marginalised, we were provided with the skills to effectively run VSLA. Men and women also talked together on things related to tree regeneration, rearing animals and family issues.'

– Caregiver, Beerato village

Focus group interviews confirmed that participation in the project was empowering for individual women, who had greater access to savings and loans as well as financial decision making. Women participated (though less than men) in training and community meetings, cash-for-work activities and re-seeding of communal pastures. Overall, though, a greater emphasis on social change to address gender disadvantage was needed.

"At first, we used to sit and wait for our husbands to provide for all the family needs but now we can complement their efforts. I started with a loan of USD 50 and within three months, my business had grown to 200 USD".

– VSLA member Khaatumo village

Disability

The project was designed to ensure people with disabilities (PWDs) were part of the project interventions and a total of 134 PWDs were registered. Families with a person with disability were prioritised in activities such as cash for work, sensitisations and training, and a majority of households (63.2%) agreed that the project targeted PWDs. Some of the other activities included advocacy for PWDs, the construction of facilities with easy access for PWDs, and support for PWDs with wheelchairs and other equipment (all project constructions, such as hay stores and veterinary posts, were designed with disability-friendly features).

Disability inclusion was mainstreamed throughout the project cycle to ensure the participation of PWDs from assessment through to design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The project took an affirmative approach to intentionally include PWDs in other areas such as agricultural inputs re-stocking activities and joining VSLA; for instance, the Beerato FMNR site is championed by a blind beneficiary and some of the VSLA members in Khaatumo were people with disability.

An action plan was agreed upon by the government and staff to collect disability data throughout the project cycle, and the project worked closely with government and communities to ensure local leadership and family members followed through on their commitments to take care of PWDs.

Almost all (98.1%) of the households in the project area had the view that children with disabilities, like other children, should be given equal rights to education and health services.

‘People with disability persons participated in community activities like other members and their ideas were listened to.’

– Caregiver, Beerato village

Research collaboration reaps rewards

World Vision successfully collaborated with the University of Nairobi and IGAD Sheikh Technical Veterinary School (ISTVS) to research crop varieties suitable for the environment.

The collaboration resulted in the propagation of frankincense, the conversion of *Prosopis juliflora* pods to animal fodder and the development of other planting materials suitable for the local project area environment. Demonstration plots targeting both students and beneficiary communities for experiential learning were set up at ISTVS and 550 people were supported with training.

Cowpeas, pigeon peas, chickpeas, oranges, sweet potatoes, kale, cabbages and tomatoes were planted on the demonstration plots and an early maturing sweet potato variety was also developed and distributed to Odweyne community. Additionally, over 2,000 *Moringa oleifera* tree seedlings (grown in the university shade house) were transferred to community farms and FMNR sites in Odweyne.



Sarah Eige is Vice-Chair of her female-only Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) and a champion of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). By teaching her daughters the basics of tree pruning, she is passing on environmental knowledge and commitment to a new generation.

Conclusions and recommendations

The project demonstrated that it is possible to bring about food security and increased economic resilience in a fragile context, by joining community groups to work together on environmental land management. This is a significant outcome in itself, made more noteworthy by social resilience outcomes; local conflict reportedly reduced as tensions associated with water and other resources eased.

On the issue of women and children, there is still work to be done. A gender-focused outcome may have had a positive influence on attitudes regarding the status and value of women, but work of this nature needs to be handled sensitively given the extreme inequality women face. The evaluation also found that harmful practices against children continued; economic development on its own is not enough to protect children and future efforts need a more targeted and integrated approach to reducing these violations.

Future initiatives to improve farming will need to integrate a mix of approaches that include extension services, training, campaigns, cash for work, research, and access to affordable inputs. The integration of experiential learning and research will further provide smallholder farmers with practical skills to support diversified livelihood alternatives. Value addition should be prioritised and besides ghee production and milk cooling, structured producer groups could be equipped in areas such as packaging to better market their products.

Interventions should balance meeting economic needs with promoting environmental integrity. Continued conservation practices such as the appropriate use of land, water, biodiversity and forest resources will further improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. It is too soon after three years to measure results of FMNR in biodiversity, soil fertility and uptake of research findings; as World Vision Somalia continues to expand FMNR based on the success of this project, they should also consider ways to return in three to four years' time and test the long-term benefits of the model in this region.

To further mitigate against the frequency and severity of stresses, shocks and future disasters there is a need to strengthen coordination beyond local government. Wider participation should include the public, research institutions, and private and civil society actors.

Recommendations for World Vision:

- Scale up FMNR in other World Vision projects and sectors (for instance, livelihoods), using the information from comparison villages on environmental shocks and needs.
- Use insights from Todgheer to consider how FMNR works in a/ fragile context and b/ traditionally nomadic context.
- Share and take up research recommendations on the *Prosopis juliflora* and frankincense trees, including continued partnership with research institutions.
- Increase gender-focused work with men, for more equal participation and outcomes in VSLAs and support for women's economic and social empowerment.
- Strengthen coordination beyond local government to include other NGOs and agricultural/environmental stakeholders.
- Design communication materials for FMNR in local language including allowance for low levels of education.

Recommendations for government:

- Engage other partners in supporting activities of CBAHW including affordable allowances and transportation in offering veterinary-related services to the community.
- Engage other development partners to prioritize and scale up FMNR activities, environmental management and water conservation practices learnt through the project.
- Contribute to security of community assets such as beehives.
- Include and target FMNR farmer groups in the provision of government agro-inputs.

For further information contact: ancp@worldvision.com.au



This reservoir makes water available for more months a year than previously, helping to protect young trees and keep livestock healthy in times of drought.

When you commit to humanity amazing things can happen!

**Through Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration in Somalia,
environmentally sustainable farming, forestry and other
business initiatives have reduced poverty and reversed effects
of climate change long-term.**

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