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BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AMONGST PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

This publication documents some of the key activities and lessons learned from the first phase of the SDC Project Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Enhanced Pastoralist Food Security in the Borana Zone (or NRM-Borana in short) of Southern Ethiopia.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic limited certain project activities and required an appropriate response, it was drought during three out of the five years of project implementation that was the greatest challenge. This necessitated a re-orientation from development to humanitarian assistance on several occasions – a re-orientation that could be readily implemented thanks to a contingency fund embedded in the project design. Given the likelihood of continued unreliable and reduced rainfall, responding to drought provided an important learning opportunity.

In the first extension of the project, governance and peace building and conflict resolution were added; it thus evolved into a triple nexus approach of development – humanitarian – peacebuilding.



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Key NRM-Borana Project interventions from which important lessons have been learned are set out in separate **Briefing Notes**, as outlined below.

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1 The context

The NRM-Borana project has consistently sought to understand the local cultural context before intervening. This Note introduces the Borana people and their traditional system of governance; the changing weather pattern with an increasing frequency of droughts, and the differing perceptions of the government and customary institutions that inhibited a comprehensive and effective response to environmental degradation.

2 Participatory Resource Management (PRM) plans

This Note outlines the process by which the project facilitated the participatory planning of natural resource management in 16 different *kebeles* in a way that respects traditional knowledge and territorial concepts as well as local government priorities. The Note describes the key findings of the process and the actions identified.

3 Supporting more productive use of traditional water resources

Water is key to pastoralist livelihoods. This Note describes how the project intervened to support the enhanced productivity of the two most important traditional sources of dry season water – deep wells or *elas* and surface ponds – whilst reinvigorating their traditional management structures.

4 Supporting the more equitable and productive use of traditional pastures

The shortage of fodder and grazing land requires an increase in pasture productivity. This Note describes project interventions to enhance fodder production whilst reinvigorating traditional pasture management regimes. Interventions included selective bush thinning from overgrown pastures, hay making and hay baling.

5 Supporting women's economic empowerment

The project investigated various opportunities for women to gain an increased income and strengthen their position; these included beekeeping, crop and vegetable cultivation, bull fattening, poultry raising, and milk production and marketing. The Note focuses on the sector with greatest potential: intervening in the milk value chain according to logic of market systems development.

6 Forecasting, early warning and eventual humanitarian response

The five years of project activities have shown how important it is to tailor interventions to the expected timing and extent of rainfall, given increasing fluctuations due to climate change. The project brought together government meteorologists and traditional forecasters to make joint seasonal climatic predictions and agree on key advisory messages to be disseminated to pastoralist communities, allowing them to make informed decisions. The Note also describes humanitarian interventions supported through the project during periods of drought to enable recovery without distorting local markets.

7 Peace building and conflict management

This Note outlines the different types of conflict that occur in the Borana area, and highlights project interventions in building mutual understanding between the different stakeholders. This is especially in building the capacities of local leaders and Peace Committee members in conflict-sensitive dialogue.

KEY FEATURES OF THE NRM-BORANA PROJECT

Goal	To improve the food and nutrition security and the resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities in the Borana Zone through context-specific and sustainable natural resources management practices, and through enhanced pastoralist income diversification
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased access to pastures and water for pastoralists• Increased income and diversified livelihoods for women pastoralists• Better coordination and knowledge sharing on NRM interventions• Collaboration between local government and customary authorities resulting in inclusive NRM decision-making and conflict prevention
Geographical coverage	16 <i>kebeles</i> within five <i>woredas</i> (districts) of Borana Zone
Time period	September 2016 – August 2020; three extensions up to December 2022
Budget	CHF 9,599,800 million (total figure September 2016 – December 2022)
Funding	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC
Implementation	A consortium of Helvetas and Welthungerhilfe (WHH), with local partners Community Initiatives Facilitation and Assistance (CIFA) and Peace and Development Centre (PDC) and in collaboration with various offices of the Government of Oromia National Regional State (ONRS) at zonal, <i>woreda</i> and <i>kebele</i> level, as well as technical support from the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, Bern University of Applied Sciences (HAFL), Managing Risks for Improved Livelihoods (MARIL) and Swisspeace
