

# From Commitment to Action: Are donors meeting their pledges to build resilience in the Horn of Africa?

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*In 2013 DLCI conducted a review<sup>70</sup> of levels of funding for resilience following the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa. This article summarises the major findings; highlights the donor initiatives that appear to be moving in the right direction; and suggests how IGAD, its member states and all development partners might take forward their promises to take action to end drought emergencies. Although there are many new projects starting, the key findings and recommendations are still relevant.*

## A call for action

The 2010/2011 drought in the Horn of Africa (HoA) highlighted the fact that the region has received minimal funding from the international community over the last 20 years to address the underlying causes of vulnerability.<sup>71</sup> The bulk of the international effort and finance has been focused on costly emergency drought response measures that are often late, and in many cases are detrimental to longer-term development efforts. The severity of the drought saw renewed reflection on humanitarian action in dryland areas, and a new focus on building resilience to drought in order to end the repeated cycles of humanitarian crises.

At the Nairobi Summit in 2011, development partners and member states of the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) supported a regional initiative to ‘End Drought Emergencies’ (EDE)—later termed the IGAD Drought Disaster and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI). The overall objective was to reduce drought/disaster risks and improve livelihoods in the HoA using an integrated programming framework at national and regional levels—shifting the balance from humanitarian aid to development/resilience-building. All governments, donors and implementing agencies in the region have subsequently adopted ‘resilience-speak’ in their communications, and strategies now commonly call for DRR and adaptation to be mainstreamed, and for long term investment to tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability. The question remains, however, to what extent has this paradigm shift resulted in a change in practice, and to what extent is it really just business as usual?

## A DLCI study

A DLCI study, conducted in late 2013, decided to review the status of funding in the Horn of Africa to determine how this corresponded with sustainable development needs in the drylands and the critical issues for impacting on resilience. In particular it aimed to:

- Determine what/who is being funded, and what/who has been left out, and why;
- Analyse the implications of these decisions on building resilience in the drylands based on the evidence gathered so far (2008 to date).

The study focused predominantly on Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia (the REGLAP/DLCI focal countries) with reference to other IGAD countries where possible.

It was recognised from the outset that determining the funding provided by different donors specifically as a response to IDDRSI would be a challenge: IDDRSI is not a programme but more a guiding framework. It was hoped however that the analysis could at least illustrate the extent to which funding has shifted since the commitment made by IGAD and development partners to ‘do things differently’. More than ten donor and development partners were invited to engage in the stakeholder consultations. These included:

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID),
- UK Department for International Development (DFID),
- Danish development agency (DANIDA),
- German Development Cooperation (GIZ),
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC),
- Italian Development Cooperation (CIS),
- World Bank (WB),
- African Development Bank (AfDB),
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA),
- European Commission (Development Cooperation – EuropeAid [DEVCO])
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) and other IDDRSI staff

## Overview of study findings

A key challenge in probing what is being financed as part of resilience building is teasing out what exactly funds are being used for. Most activities are broadly categorised as rural development, diversification of livelihoods, pastoral and agriculture development, or sometimes ‘resilience-building activities’. Without knowing the details it is difficult to determine specifically what resilience component is being funded. It is also a challenge to determine what is informing funding decisions, beyond donors’ strategic and regional plans.

70 Study: [http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/drought/docs/Funding%20study%20March%202014.pdf](http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/Funding%20study%20March%202014.pdf) and brief [http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/drought/docs/DLCI%20Summary%20Brief%20on%20Resilience%20Funding\\_March%202014.pdf](http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/DLCI%20Summary%20Brief%20on%20Resilience%20Funding_March%202014.pdf)

71 Kellett, J. and Caravani, A. (2013) ‘Financing Disaster Risk Reduction: A 20 year story of international aid. Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction/Overseas Development Institute’.



*Education is a transformative issue that needs funding / Kelley Lynch, Mercy Corps, USAID*

The findings indicated that many of the projects that are currently being implemented in countries of the HoA are not responding well to the call for change in the way aid is provided. Although funding decisions are now conceptualised around the general principles of resilience—principles that have been internalised through organisational strategies and concept notes—it is clear that much of the narrative has not been reflected in project outputs. There has been no major increase in long-term development funding, despite an agreement that the provision of key infrastructure and basic services in the drylands is an essential foundation for building resilience. Short-term funding is still being directed at the same ‘traditional’ interventions, with very little being provided to address critical and transformative issues. Many projects remain small-scale, working with limited numbers of beneficiaries, and targeting nutrition, livelihood diversification or water and sanitation (WASH) activities. Few projects appear to provide substantial funds to address the critical issues of education and health; and transformational factors, such as good governance and land rights, and peace building are still rarely considered under a resilience agenda.

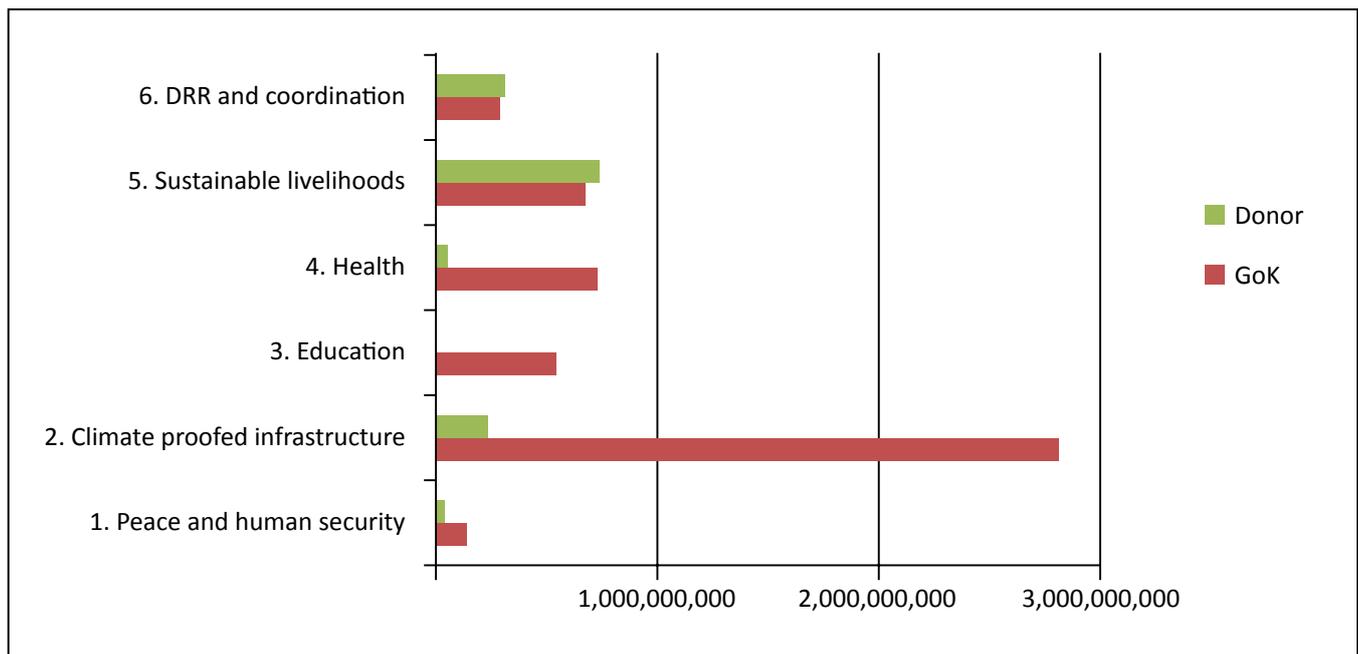
There are, however, a number of projects that do appear to have made a paradigm shift: StARCK+ (featured earlier in this journal) in Kenya is aiming at sustainable institutional changes: working closely with government ministries and County administration to model participatory, adaptive planning within institutionalised government planning cycles. Likewise it appears that DFID’s BRACED programme, once implemented, could be a model for change: its heavy focus on knowledge management and institutional strengthening should see the evidence from smaller interventions feeding into longer term, systemic policy change.

USAID’s PRIME programme in Ethiopia is working closely with the private sector to stimulate more sustainable investment, and is connecting rural and urban communities across heterogeneous dryland populations—thus targeting both vulnerable groups as well as wealthy, commercial stakeholders operating within the same system.

Many of the stakeholders interviewed by the study confirmed that resilience-building activities are typically implemented at the community-level and involve communities in the planning process. Although whether this involvement is sufficient to empower communities to help direct policy in the future is questionable, given the short term funding of many interventions and the limited funding to local CSOs who live and work in communities, so have the necessary understanding and relationship with them to make this work. Multi-sectoral programming is also being prioritised, and implemented through a variety of sector-based organisations. Water-shed/landscape level planning is becoming important, as is the need for longer-term project cycles. The challenging social, political, economic and environmental contexts in the HoA remain a limiting factor however: projects are still short in duration, usually around 2-3 years and this is unlikely to change for these locations that are viewed as politically, economically (or otherwise) ‘high-risk’.

The study findings support the Kenyan ASAL Donor Group’s comparative estimates of government/donor spending by sector, as presented in Figure 1: factors which address the underlying causes of vulnerability are still underfunded by donors, despite the agreement to jointly prioritise these issues well in-advance of disasters occurring.

**Figure 1: Donor contribution (in US Dollars) to the pillars of the Kenya Ending Drought Emergencies Country Plan in 2013<sup>72</sup>**



### Outstanding needs

Moving forward, several donors have made plans to refocus and increase support for resilience building in the drylands during 2014. The EU plans to provide additional funds for resilience-enhancing activities in the Eastern Horn (see article by ECHO in this journal). With more than USD \$134.5 million (€100 million) set to be operationalized under the SHARE framework alone in Kenya and Ethiopia (among other countries in the HoA), increased funding of nutrition, livelihoods, water provision and management activities are expected to speed-up achievement of national and regional priorities. Similarly, USAID is expanding its resilience programme and Germany plans to publish new pledges.

But it is clear that the current funding gaps that exist for the sectors of health, security and education, urgently need to be addressed by all donors. Governance, land rights, cross-border and watershed approaches in projects targeting rural livelihoods also need prioritising: including these issues in project documentation or in project planning meetings is simply not enough. These vital principles of resilience must be tracked throughout project implementation, from start to finish, through effective M&E systems and good communication and cooperation between all donors, partners and recipients of the funding.

DLCI proposes the following seven recommendations for IGAD, its member states and all development partners as a way forward:

1. Ensure that **the resilience agenda is broadened outside of the food security sector** to make sure it encompasses education, governance, 'voice,' and land rights.
2. **Donors** planning to refocus and increase support for resilience building in the drylands **must do more to enhance multi-stakeholder and cross-sector partnerships.**
3. Ensure interventions undertaken or advocated for are **based on a good understanding of emerging trends and opportunities in the drylands areas;** otherwise they will

undermine rather than build resilience of communities or contribute to the litter of misconceived projects. Civil society needs support to build this body of knowledge to inform decisions on appropriate interventions to fund, and also to support acceptance of new innovations by the development community.

4. **Support government and local decision-making institutions to become more inclusive, networked and transparent,** if vulnerable communities are to benefit from the resilience efforts. Civil society needs support to engage with governments and IGAD to ensure that accountability and monitoring mechanisms are in place.
5. **Ensure support to IGAD is enhancing its ability to provide technical and financial guidance to member states.** This is vital to maintain the trust and authority given to IGAD to lead the resilience agenda.
6. **Evaluate, document and disseminate lessons from development success and failures,** thereby avoiding repeated mistakes and obtaining better value for money. Lessons learned should also inform improved design of activities; especially long-term interventions such as the delivery of education services which are known to play a major role in household and community resilience.
7. **Develop verifiable evidence of resilience outcomes to determine 'good practice'** for enhancing resilience in its various components and contexts. Investments tied to these indicators should be collaborative, harmonised and consistent, and thereby contribute to longer-term sustainability and resilience.

If all the governments, donors and implementing agencies in the HoA who pledged to change direction following the 2010/11 drought are able to follow up their commitments in this way, the impact of drought in the future on the vulnerable communities in the HoA is likely to be much reduced.

<sup>72</sup> EC (2013) Resilience in Kenya- towards joint strategy, joint programming and joint M&E: ECHO perspective, presentation for the ASAL Donor Meeting, August 1st, 2013, GIZ office.