

NEWSLETTER

ICRC SOMALIA DELEGATION

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GARGAAR

SOMALIA: ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

In Somalia, two decades of conflict and natural disasters have destabilised and damaged the normal coping strategies of its otherwise resilient population. Consequently, the outcome of the livelihoods of most Somalis remains very poor, leaving them with a constant struggle to meet their most basic needs.

To mitigate the impact of these recurrent shocks to Somalis' economic independence, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has for many years, been delivering programmes that aim at strengthening the population's capacity to recover and consolidate livelihoods in the aftermath of such events.

The organisation is most commonly associated with rapid aid response to humanitarian emergencies. However, the ICRC's approach goes far beyond the more publicly visible large-scale relief operations. In fact, ICRC teams designing

assistance programmes build support for livelihood recovery into the architecture of their response from the start, as part of the professional logic that has emerged out of the last 150 years of helping victims of conflict.

Therefore, livelihood support programmes are linked from the very beginning of the response to a crisis, to the life-saving relief activities, such that the two components complement each other.

The four types of livelihood systems that are common in Somalia are: livestock, agriculture, fisheries and trade & crafts. The ICRC programs promote income generation within these systems with the introduction of innovative and new technologies when necessary.

The goal is to boost people's capacities to earn an income of their own. ICRC helps them in the setup, whether it be a small

business, livestock replenishment or skills training. We make sure that it is a step that has a long-term impact on people's lives. More than a million Somalis benefitted last year from the outcome of such projects, and I am optimistic that our team may achieve similar results this year. Whilst conflict and natural disasters have continued to afflict Somalia's most vulnerable people in 2013, they, and the ICRC, have no option but to continue to strive towards a more positive future where shock-recovery is no longer necessary.

Patrick Vial
Head of ICRC Delegation for Somalia

ICRC

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of the Red Cross

AGRICULTURE: HARVESTING IN THE FACE OF HARDSHIP

Relative to before the civil war started, a growing proportion of the Somali population relies on crop production as the source of all, or part of their income, as a direct result of the collapse and on-going fragility of the livestock economy. In addition to the impact of the conflict, the agricultural sector is prone to droughts and floods. Farmers, and people who depend on their produce, have therefore remained highly vulnerable to such shocks, and have continued to need frequent support to ensure their ability to maintain their economic wellbeing. Since January of this year alone, ICRC provided 246,000 farmers in Hiraan, Middle and Lower Shabelle, Juba and Puntland regions, with agricultural inputs to sustain their farms and livelihoods.

We followed Mr Ali, a father of five who received vegetable and staple seeds from the ICRC. "I began cultivating my farm, planting the seeds and watering them in the plot I own." To facilitate the process, the farmers were provided with manual tools, tractors and irrigation pumps. Various reinforced canals supplied the farmers with water. Ali was satisfied with the help he received as he told us, "I harvested fruits and vegetables (watermelon, tomato, peri-peri and others) and I made a profit of \$1850 USD." He explained how the profits helped in supporting his family.



Ali Harvesting water melons from his farm .

The wider impact of his farming is also crucial, as his harvest serves the local population and contributes to fostering the economy.



Beledweyn : Somalia: ICRC staff and elders at a canal rehabilitation site

The ICRC invests a lot of resources in preventing floods by heightening riverbanks and plugging potential breaches. In recent months, over 20 flood prevention projects have been implemented in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Gedo and Hiiraan regions. Some of the breaches that caused devastating floods in Hiiraan in 2012, have been plugged through ICRC supported community projects, thereby saving lives and livelihoods. In addition to flood prevention, the ICRC extends irrigation systems to farmers who rely on unpredictable rains for crop production. So far, in 2013, over 100,000 meters of irrigation canals have been rehabilitated or lengthened, and over 300 irrigation pumps provided, allowing many drought-prone farmers to produce their crops more sustainably.



Hiiran region: Somalia – ICRC provides farmers with ploughing services and seeds for planting.

Over the decades of conflict in Somalia, farmers have all too often been forced out of their villages by conflict; often for months, if not years. In such situations, floods, weeds and other pests devastate their unattended farmlands. When these farmers finally decide to return home, the ICRC helps such farmers rehabilitate their land, by offering ploughing services. In 2012, over 20,000 families had their abandoned farmland rehabilitated through ICRC support.



Tuulo Hiiran - Hiiran region : Somalia – Mumina, a beneficiary of the ICRC agricultural land rehabilitation program, tends to her farm

The ICRC also distributes seeds to help farmers improve their yield. These are good quality seeds that are adapted to the environment and relatively drought resistant. Vegetable seeds that are not readily available in local markets are also distributed to poor farmers. Fodder seeds (for animal consumption) are provided to agro-pastoralists to help them sustain their main source of income – their livestock.

LIVESTOCK: FROM CATASTROPHIC COLLAPSE TO GRADUAL RECOVERY

In Somalia today, over 50% of the population heavily rely on livestock for both consumption and trade. Pastoral livelihoods have been seriously affected by the prolonged conflict. Since the collapse of the state in the early 1990's, the absence of animal health services and animal health certification systems, that are necessary for international livestock trade, has significantly reduced the pastoralist's ability to export their produce, and therefore greatly shrunk the market available to them. Many pastoralists have been forced to adopt supplementary sources of income generation and have turned to agricultural farming often on land that is only marginally productive, whilst many others gave up on livestock rearing entirely. Out of the devastation of the early 1990's a pastoral sector has emerged that is smaller in scale, and that remains vulnerable to shock, but where there is significant potential for improvement and growth, and where



Somalia: In the early 1990's the break-down of veterinary services throughout Somalia and Somaliland resulted in the decimation of herds, many of which had already been depleted by increased consumption by people who had been forced to flee from areas affected by armed conflict. Following the catastrophic collapse of this pillar of the Somali economy in the early 1990's, the ICRC has been trying to help pastoralists protect what remains of their livelihood assets and to support growth-potential in the sector.

relatively small investment can make a huge difference to large numbers of people.

AN INTERVIEW WITH AWAIS NASSER KHAN, ICRC SOMALIA VETERINARY SURGEON

Awais Nasser Khan has been working with the ICRC for over 6 years. He has worked in Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan and now Somalia. As a professional livestock expert, his role is to work with pastoralists on improving their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

What are the main problems faced by pastoralists in Somalia?

Pastoralists and agro pastoralists are exposed to several periodic and chronic hazards. Livestock owners ranked recurring droughts, livestock diseases, scarce water sources and animal feeds as the most common and economically important factors undermining their household economic security.

How does conflict relate to these problems ?

Due to the on-going conflict and violence in Somalia, many pastoralists have had to flee to take refuge in safer areas with their animals. Some of them lose their livestock as they displace, and others sell their animals to meet the immediate needs of their families.



Awais Khan, ICRC Somalia Veterinary surgeon

Additionally, the problem of livestock diseases has been greatly amplified by the collapse of state-run livestock services at the start of the civil war in the 1990's. Subsequently, respective state or regional livestock ministries have had very limited resources to cope with any outbreak of endemic disease, leaving the economic survival of livestock owners almost entirely dependent on external support.

How is the ICRC helping to address these problems?

The ICRC takes complementary approaches. Firstly, livestock treatment campaigns



Women learning how to make fishing nets -Mogadishu Somalia

FISHING SECTOR

The fishing sector is perhaps the sector worst affected by the conflict, and the most often neglected. Fishermen have had their access to vital marine resources significantly reduced over the last two decades. A great deal of fishing equipment has been rendered irreparable through years of disuse, and the market for producing and importing such material is underdeveloped in Somalia.

The ICRC is attempting to improve the situation by initiating projects promoting domestic fishing gear production as well as market accessibility. In the first component of the project, women are trained to braid nets and prepare fishing lines. Once trained, the ICRC will organise the most committed women into cooperatives that produce, and sell or rent fishing gear. Men, in the meantime are trained to make and repair boats and canoes.

In addition to building local capacity to produce, the ICRC also supports fishing cooperatives to improve their ability to sell their catches, by building fishing markets and improving the cold chain facilities that enable access to those markets.

are organised during animal disease emergencies through the line governmental departments or local veterinary association to protect livelihood assets at immediate risk. In 2013, 2.4 million heads of animals benefiting over 150,000 people have been treated. While carrying out such emergency responses, the capacity of animal health service providers including the department of animal health, animal health associations and private animal health workers is strengthened by rehabilitating and equipping district veterinary clinics, replenishing veterinary drug stores and

AN INTERVIEW WITH AWAIS NASSER KHAN

training animal health workers. In 2013, the ICRC is supporting 12 veterinary clinics across Somalia and training for 60 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) is on-going.

Secondly, it carries out **Restocking**. Pastoralists who have lost their animals due to natural disasters and / or conflict receive animals to replenish their stock. By the end of 2013 the ICRC will have provided 3500 families with a standard “package” of 10 productive goats each, as they return to their places of origin from various IDP camps around southern Somalia. The intention is to provide them with the means to be economically self-sufficient as they re-establish themselves back in their home districts, and reduce the likelihood that they re-displace.

Additionally, the ICRC invests significantly in rehabilitating or constructing new water points in areas of scarcity, and in providing seeds for fodder crops to try to ensure the availability of food for the animals during dry months and droughts.

What are the challenges faced by ICRC in addressing livestock problems?

Security is one of the biggest challenges faced by our teams. In large parts of the country, the technical staff that are required when organising specialised veterinary services are unwilling to go for security reasons. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable population are living in such areas. The ICRC tries to overcome these constraints by working with local associations and by supporting other organisations that might be able to work in such areas. Another major constraint is the availability of quality and certified veterinary drug suppliers. The ICRC therefore procures all its veterinary medicines abroad.



Phil Moore/ICRC

A Somali Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) gestures whilst a veterinarian administers a de-worming medicine to a goat during an ICRC animal treatment campaign in Dhidin Caaraale, approximately 40km west of Garowe in Puntland, Somalia. The ICRC has provided the medical supplies, as well as financially supporting the costs of sending veterinary teams out into the field, and has trained several pharmacists in the region



Phil Moore/ICRC

Somali veterinarian staff and pastoralists treat camels during an ICRC animal treatment campaign in Dhidin Caaraale, approximately 40km west of Garowe in Puntland, Somalia. The one-month long campaign is planning to treat one million heads of livestock.

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.