



EU APPROACH TO RESILIENCE: LEARNING FROM FOOD CRISES

Facts & Figures

Total EU humanitarian funding to the Horn of Africa in 2011-2012:
€807 million, reaching over 6.5 million people.

Total EU humanitarian funding to the Sahel for 2012 crisis:
€500 million committed in 2012, to reach approximately 6.6 million people

Resilience Targets

Over the short-, medium- and long-term:

The SHARE initiative in the Horn of Africa aims to mobilise €270 in 2012 & 2013

AGIR-Sahel initiative has set the ambitious target of mobilising €750 million over the next 3 years



Women in Burkina Faso participate in a 'cash for work' project receive money for building embankments around fields to better irrigate crops during future dry seasons. Photo: Raphael de Bengy

In a nutshell

- Recent and recurrent crises have affected 31 million people in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region of Africa. These are only the latest arguments for the need for sustained policy to increase the resilience of vulnerable people in the developing world.
- Strengthening resilience lies at the crossroads between humanitarian and development assistance
- The European Commission has proposed a new policy communication to the European Parliament and the Council on how EU development and humanitarian aid should be adapted to increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people affected by disasters.
- The policy will build on the promising results of the European Commission's resilience-boosting initiatives in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, part of its response to the drought crises in these regions. These initiatives (AGIR-Sahel and SHARE respectively) seek to break the vicious cycle of drought, hunger and poverty through sustained coordination between humanitarian and development assistance.
- Focusing on resilience saves more lives, is more cost effective and contributes to poverty reduction – thus boosting the impact of aid and promoting sustainable development.

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks such as drought, violence, conflict or natural disaster.

One practical tool to increase resilience, especially to recurrent crises like droughts and floods, are the 'seasonal safety net' programmes, targeted at the most vulnerable

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households, aiming to catch them before they fall into crisis, such as a poor harvest. These safety nets commonly involve cash transfers, either unconditionally, or in exchange for work or training, to the most vulnerable people during the period of the year when their reserves of money and food are lowest.

Another proven resilience-building tool is prevention and preparation projects, designed according to cyclical risks, such as hurricanes and violent storms during the rain season, or unpredictable vulnerabilities, such as earthquakes. These projects work best when they include and are embraced by local communities.

Developing early warning systems and advancing collaboration with the insurance industry are other areas with potential for building resilience, identified in the new Communication.

What is the EU doing to build up resilience?

The Commission's new resilience communication outlines ten steps that will increase resilience and reduce the vulnerability of the world's most vulnerable people. These steps include support for the design of national resilience strategies, disaster management plans and efficient early-warning systems in disaster-prone countries, as well as putting forward innovative approaches to risk management through collaboration with the insurance industry.

The communication is based on the Commission's significant experience responding to humanitarian crises and tackling the root causes of weak development – such the massive recent drought crises in Africa where the Commission is focusing on immediate crisis response, but also on fostering long-term food security and on increasing the population's ability to cope with future droughts.

The Commission's flagship resilience initiatives so far are the **Supporting Horn of African Resilience (SHARE)** and **l'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience Sahel (AGIR-Sahel)**. The goal of the new Communication on Resilience, adopted by the European Commission, is to use the experience gained through these and other initiatives to make sure that EU support help vulnerable communities not just survive disasters, but become better able to cope with them and recover successfully.

SHARE initiative for the Horn of Africa

Last year, the Horn of Africa faced one of the worst droughts in 60 years, which led to a large humanitarian crisis affecting over 13 million people in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. The situation was so desperate in Somalia that the United Nations declared famine for the first time since 1992.

The Horn of Africa is faced with increasingly frequent and intense droughts. At the same time, population growth, increased pressures on resources, insecurity and prolonged political instability have made it harder for the poorest communities to cope with and recover from the droughts. Each shock sends the communities into deeper vulnerability and further erodes their means to prepare for the next crisis.

Following the 2011 crisis, the European Commission launched "SHARE - Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience" with the goal of improving the ability of people, communities and countries, to face recurrent crises. With allocations of over €270 million in 2012 and 2013, SHARE aims to boost resilience by improving the opportunities of farming and pastoralist communities to make a living and the capacity of public services to respond to crises.

SHARE aims to improve land resource management, as well as the income opportunities for populations dependent on livestock; in the long term: find lasting solutions for the heavy burden of chronic malnutrition, and to look at durable solutions for refugees and uprooted populations within countries and the region.

AGIR initiative for the Sahel

In 2012, severe drought and a failed harvest left 18 million people across the Sahel region of West Africa without enough food. The underlying causes of this persistent food insecurity is the limited access to food among the poorest which leads to high acute malnutrition rates, low levels of food production, poor access to basic services, acute poverty, environmental degradation, rapid population growth (3% per year), and poor governance. 80% of those requiring emergency humanitarian aid in a crisis come from the 20% of the population who are the poorest of the poor with no access to land or income-generating assets.

While drought is inevitable, the hunger and suffering it causes are not. At the initiative of the European Commission, the AGIR-Sahel initiative was launched in June 2012, together with governments, UN agencies and other humanitarian and development bodies. It proposes a roadmap for better coordination of humanitarian and development aid so as to protect the most vulnerable people in the Sahel when drought hits again. The initiative also covers the development of better prevention and preparation strategies to future disasters, including improvements to early warning systems and links with the insurance industry.

Examples of humanitarian projects contributing to resilience

In the Sahel



In **Mali**, as in many other countries of the Sahel, the European Commission is funding an unconditional cash transfer programme in the town of Madina Sacko. This pilot programme will reach close to 45,000 people affected by the drought in the regions of Kayes and Koulikoro. The cash will be provided to households identified as very poor, to enable them to buy their own food on the local markets.

In **Chad**, the European Commission supports an innovative partnership between the international NGOs ACTED and Alima and the local NGO Alerte Santé. This project is reaching 56,000 people, including several thousand children under 5 who are suffering from acute malnutrition. The project's objective is to fight and manage severe acute malnutrition. Its achievements could be potentially scaled-up and implemented throughout Chad.



In **Burkina Faso**, in a village called Palboa, 300 kilometres away from Ouagadougou, the European Commission is supporting a "cash for work" programme implemented by Action Contre la Faim. In exchange for cash, about 1,200 villagers are building embankments around what will become rice fields. The intention is that rainwater will be retained for the next crop. In total, each worker will receive €90 over 2 months, the equivalent of about three 100kg bags of sorghum. This project will benefit 7,000 people in Palboa.

In the Horn of Africa

In **Somalia**, through SHARE, the European Commission funds a project run by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) that aims to improve food security, nutrition and livelihoods for over 100,000 people affected by the last drought. Activities include the distribution of seeds and fertilizers, improving vegetable production and increasing the income-generating opportunities within these Somali communities. Concerning livestock, the most valuable assets for these communities, activities focus on ways to improve animal health, fodder production and prevent starvation during crises and sale of livestock. This might not only safeguard livelihoods of vulnerable herders but also give them an alternative living.



In **Kenya** 3.7 million people were in immediate need of food, clean water and basic sanitation during the 2011 drought. Under SHARE, the EU is enhancing its support to boost recovery and build resilience through a revamped early warning system, institutional support to authorities such as the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) managing the Disaster and Drought Contingency Fund (NDDCF), and community level livelihoods projects that expand people's economic opportunities. Renewed investments by the Kenyan government and its institutions in arid lands are expected to help translate early warning into early response in ways that will avoid the development of similar crises in the future.

Moyale was the only region in **northern Kenya** where the malnutrition rates of the population remained below the emergency level of 15 %. This was the result of several factors, including years of investment in community preparedness for droughts and access to functioning markets. Much of that investment came through the Disaster Risk Reduction programme financed by the European Commission's humanitarian aid. The Programme focused on community-based actions aimed at helping villages to better cope with the impact of droughts and at building the resilience of the population at risk. From 2006 to 2011, ECHO has invested over €17 million for such projects straddling the Kenya-Ethiopia border – an investment that paid off for the benefit of the people of Moyale.



Around the world

In **Vietnam**, frequently affected by typhoons, school-based disaster preparedness sessions funded by the European Commission have taught approximately 500,000 schoolchildren and over 15,000 primary school teachers how to prepare for and cope with disasters. This programme uses innovative and child-friendly methods, such as the simulation exercises and drills.



In **the Philippines**, one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, Commission funded projects has sought to build resilience by bringing together civil society and state institutions. Lessons learned from this successful programme, including the importance of working together with local government units from start to finish, so that these resilience building initiatives are sustainable, have local ownership and therefore can be replicated and adopted on a larger scale.



Armed conflict, the use of force, movement and access restrictions, settler violence, demolitions or evictions and forced displacement in **the occupied Palestinian territory** threatens not only the livelihood of certain Palestinian families and communities, but also puts them under constant, and sometimes, acute emotional stress. In order to help children develop the necessary coping mechanisms and build up a form of resilience to cope with this stress, ECHO is funding a number of psychosocial support projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



In **Nepal**, Early Warning Systems, another important part of Resilience building initiatives, proved their worth in August 2010. When flood levels on the Rapt River breached the warning level the early warning system along the river, communities downstream were notified through a radio and telephone network. They had time to shift their essential and movable assets to higher and safer places. When the flood reached the villages, people had already reached safety. The early warning systems thus minimised losses of life and property.

Examples of development projects contributing to resilience

In the Sahel

In **Niger**, European aid for food security in 2012 covers nearly one third of the overall needs of the population. It is channeled exclusively through the National Government's food security Mechanism, allowing the purchase of grain as well as cash for work operations. Thanks to decisive and early action a dramatic situation has been avoided. To this date, and over four months, no less than two million people have been saved from hunger."



In **Burkina Faso**, 18,557 tons of improved seeds were produced by farmers that received support from an EU programme. The programme also equipped 13 communities with additional harvesting machinery. Seven storage facilities and seven drying fields were constructed. This was complemented by the training of almost 200 people in areas such as production, harvesting and treatment techniques. Finally, four decentralised laboratories were established to support the analysis of seeds and their certification.

In the Horn of Africa



In **Ethiopia**, the EU has supported the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) with €240 million since 2005. The programme gives 7-11 million people who are threatened by hunger a predictable income in return for their labour in rural infrastructure (e.g. road maintenance, anti-erosion work). The programme can be expanded if a shock or crisis occurs and has helped reduce the impact of the 2011 drought in Ethiopia.

In **Somalia** the EU helps to rehabilitate canals in agricultural areas: in 2010, about 50,000 farming and households directly benefited from support to irrigation and flood control infrastructure, as well as crop development. Another EU-funded project has helped to improve the health of livestock in Somalia. 6.7 million sheep and goats were treated and vaccinated, to protect them against diseases that limit productivity and trade.