DRIVING SUSTAINABLE RESULTS THROUGH INTEGRATION OF CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMMING

BACKGROUND

The Mandera triangle (Dolo Ado in Ethiopia – Gedo in Somalia – Mandera in Kenya) is defined by endemic poverty affecting more than 350,000 people. Impacts of climate change further expose the communities to extreme drought and floods affecting their livelihoods in livestock keeping and agriculture. Mandera triangle has also experienced periods of trans-boundary conflicts and periodic attacks by violent extremists. The complex social, economic and political challenges can affect any development program and result in both expected and unexpected outcomes.

Development organizations have implemented their individual projects, which sometimes target the same geographic areas or people, use different structures or policies, and provide varied sets of incentives to the beneficiaries. The results are marred by duplication, confusion, and unintended conflicts among the beneficiaries.

Positive outcome is a consequence of intentional collective approach by different development organizations who must work together to respond to common needs of their beneficiaries. The collective approach involves using strengths and opportunities from each individual organization. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in a 2013 study defined integration as "intentional combining of one or more sectoral interventions to improve humanitarian outcomes" – (which also implies geographical convergence in programming).

To build community resilience towards climate, conflict, inflation shocks, and promote climate and conflict sensitive programming, BORESHA used elements of sectoral convergence that cover the key result areas of disaster risk reduction (DRR), livelihoods, and Natural Resource Management (NRM). The Project has also used geographical convergence that entails coordination with other organizations that work within the Mandera triangle.

BORESHA coordinates and integrates its programming with Regional Approaches for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration (RASMI), and Support for Effective Cooperation and Coordination of Cross-border initiatives (SECCCI), both funded by EUTF (European Union Trust Fund). RASMI adopts a conflict systems-based approach to promote peace building, conflict management, and conflict resolution capacity at the community and cross-border levels. SECCCI is an intervention co-funded by EUTF, and implemented by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It aims to address cooperation and coordination approaches in the management and utilization of cross-border resources to enhance ecosystem and community resilience. It also aims to create wealth and employment opportunities in the cross-border areas.

About BORESHA & DDG

Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA) is a 3-year (2018-2020) cross- border project implemented by a consortium of the Danish Refugee Council, World Vision, WYG and CARE International with funding from European Union Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).

BORESHA works with local communities and public authorities to establish transformative processes to enhance the cross-border socio-economic integration and support resilience in the fragile and underdeveloped borderland areas between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, also called the Mandera Triangle.

This technical brief was produced through a collaborative workshop between BORESHA and the Danish Demining Group (DDG), a Humanitarian Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction Unit within the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

Fatuma Mohamed, mother of seven children and head of household, at her home in Dollow, Somalia, 2018© Mohamed Abdi / WV

World Vision
Communities are more resilient and better prepared for shocks

DRC&WYG
Individuals & communities are *more self-reliant* through increased skills & opportunities

CARE
Shared natural resources are more equitably and sustainably managed

BORESHA partners and their focal result areas

TECHNICAL APPROACH

BORESHA project's integration design has both horizontal and vertical linkages between and within partners. This broad integration is cascaded to implementation, monitoring, accountability, joint planning, joint project reflection meetings and reviews. Stakeholder integration (non-BORESHA partners) is also interlinked to different partners both in their respective countries and with cross-border projects such as RASMI and SECCCI.

The project components also link to the community needs, desires and aspirations within the countries' regulatory systems-action plans, by-laws, and policies.

Each of the four BORESHA partners works in three result areas of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Livelihoods/

Business Development and Natural Resource Management (NRM). The project has promoted integration at the following levels:

i. Technical integration

Through integrated information sharing systems, partners gain instant access to the information they need, when they need it. Integration of technical expertise and the results areas has helped in enhancing collaboration and managing risks associated with comprehensive project delivery.

In addition, consortium partner integrated the various community-based committees established for different activities (implementing DRR, Water management committees, etc.) by each partner to promote a coherent and synergic project approach in each community.

ii. Operational integration

The project established a consortium identity with a common logo, common communication documents (factsheets, brochures, banners) and common rules to holistically present the project to the communities, local administration, and other actors. This approach helped each partner align to the broader logic of the project. Additionally, the project builds synergy through sharing of common resources often pooling together to enhance efficiency and results.

iii. Monitoring Evaluation, Learning and Accountability integration

The MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) integration supports teams to share and communicate information effectively and avoid project delays. This, in turn, connects and empowers integrated teams by removing geographic boundaries through use of technology to ensure everyone has current project information to make timely decisions. MEAL provides the feedback loop between the implementers and the beneficiaries. It ensures that project documents and exercises adaptive learning for better outcomes.

In addition, BORESHA has established a robust feedback mechanism to harmonize the queries raised about the project activities by communities and other stakeholders. The project further assessed functionalities of key community structures and integrated them into project implementation for better coordinated outcomes and sustainability.

iv.   Stakeholder integration

BORESHA signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the RASMI Project, and committed to regularly coordinate synergistic activities, share work plans and participatory tools, and build on each other's work throughout the project cycle. The collaboration between BORESHA and RASMI goes beyond coordination in regular meetings to joint planning and implementation. Examples of combined actions are: the assessment conducted to identify schools, health facilities, and the joint introduction of the projects to target beneficiaries.

The project has also closely collaborated with the local administrations and undertaken activities contributing to the local government plans.

v. Regional Integration

BORESHA works with IGAD on several issues. BORESHA has been contributing to the IGAD's Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRISI) and collaborating with specific a IGAD projects such as SECCCI and IGAD-FAO Partnership Programme funded by Swiss Development Agency and structures such as IGAD Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Analysis Hub, and IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD). BORESHA and ICPLAD collaboration resulted in the drafting of the "Protocol for information sharing on cross-border animal health and sanitary measures between Ethiopia and Kenya".

RESULTS

The vertical and horizontal integration among the different partners has eased an initially complex operation and management of programs in the Mandera triangle. Results are hughlighted below.

i. Technical integration

BORESHA has created an interlinked collaboration that promotes joint assessments, monitoring and strategic decisions. This has led to improved partnership and collaborations, project implementation, and enhanced project outcomes and impacts. Because of an integrated approach to project implementation in Kenya, BORESHA-led community action plans for DRR component (COVACA) was included into the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) of Mandera. Eleven (11) disaster risk reduction priorities have been integrated into government plans and six (6) community priority plans have been funded by government and other actors. This ensures government ownership, financing, and sustainability of the interventions.

BORESHA has supported different groups at community level with responsive competencies along a unified project goal. Thematic groups or committees have jointly been identified and trained to better perform their functions. BORESHA has held conversations with the communities on key issues such as social cohesion, livestock management, and role of the private sector in supporting certain activities.

The project has promoted women's inclusion in the composition of the Trade Committees and under the Grant Facility. Women-owned businesses were given a mark-up in the assessment and scoring of grant applications. In the NRM component Importantly, BORESHA has fostered increased representation and participation of women in the management of rangeland councils: 14 out of 47 member committees present in Ethiopia were women. Further BORESHA has helped advance women's participation and involvement in NRM committees: 21 out of 40 NRM Committees have equal gender representation with 5 men and 5 women per village.

ii. Operational integration

Integration has enabled harmonised work norms and wage compensation especially, but not only, in the cash for work (CfW) component, leading to reduced conflicts and accelerated pace of implementation. Such integrated systems have streamlined processes, reduced costs, and increased efficiency. In addition, an integral push for agency-level feedback and response mechanisms including reflection

and learning meetings contributed to timely implementation of project components.

iii. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning integration

MEAL has provided an opportunity to share and exchange insights, reflections, knowledge and common lessons vital for replication and scale up of future programming. It has also promoted a functional working relationship with stakeholders, government counterparts, and other Actors necessary for success of the programme.

The project innovated the use of technology to help coordinate and integrate implementing partners. Monthly meetings were held using Skype and WhatsApp communication platforms to link participants unable to attend meetings because of government regulations. Partners then shared videos and photos of project implementation contributing to evidence-based reporting.

Partners used a joint feedback mechanism that helped improve coordination and resolution of complaints. Beneficiaries shared their feedback which were fully addressed at different levels. Of the 45 concerns received, 74% were requests for clarification, assistance, and additional project information while the rest (26%) required further investigation.

iv. Stakeholder integration

BORESHA has worked with RASMI to ensure seamless coordination, collaboration and synergy. RASMI focused on peace building initiatives while BORESHA focused on resilience and alternative livelihoods. Both teams held monthly review and planning meetings. Consequently, there have been increased levels of engagement between the implementation working group at the field level and local government.

RASMI and BORESHA also inter-linked their activities targeting youth at risk through first training them in conflict prevention management and resolution and in countering violence extremism, and then transitioning to BORESHA-specific activities on vocational trainings and other livelihood projects.

RASMI and BORESHA programmes also complement each other on natural resource management activities to ensure that peacebuilding and livelihoods activities go hand in hand.
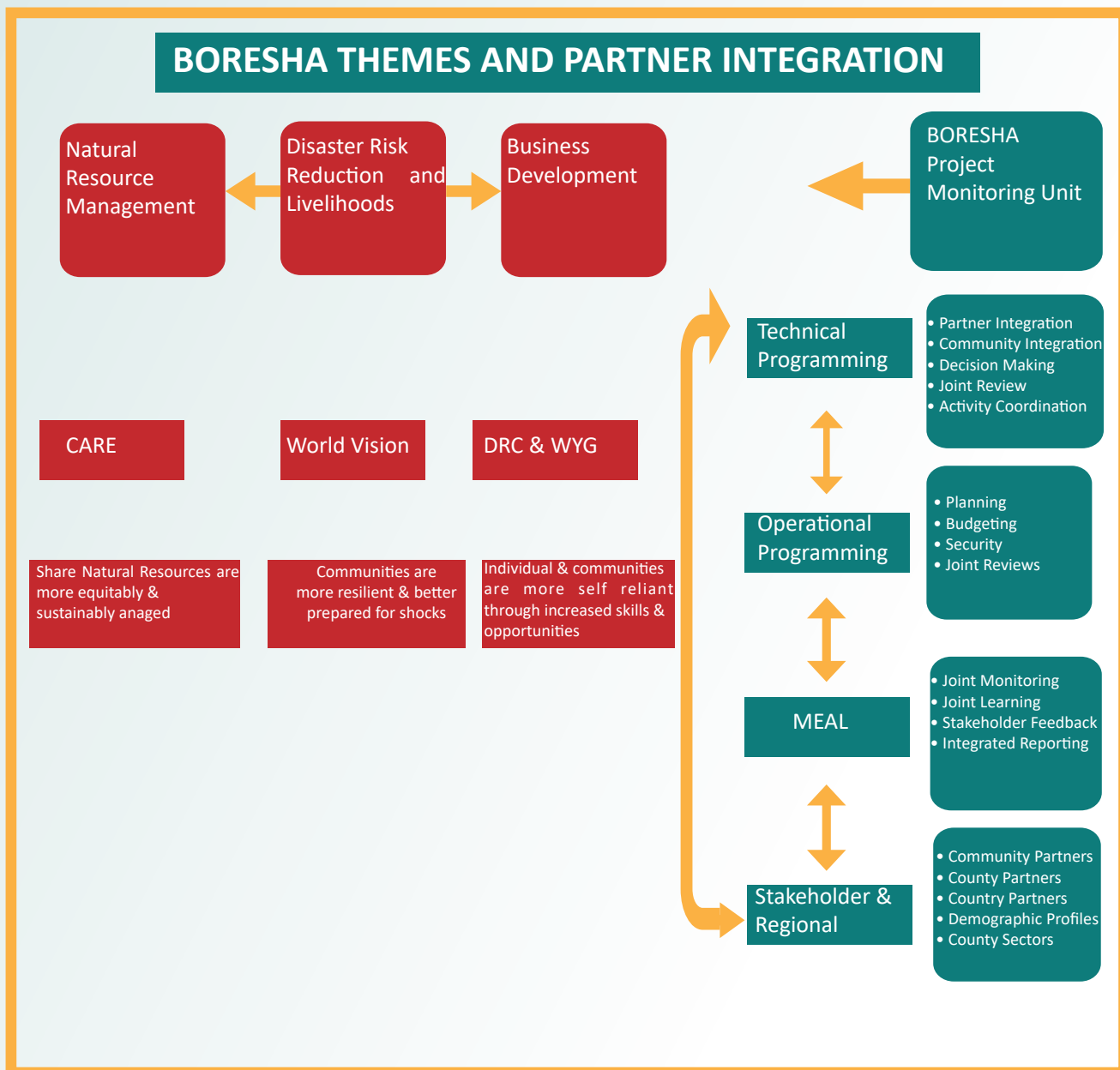
In 2018, upon request of the Mandera County Steering Group BORESHA conducted a Rapid emergency assessment and used the results to fundraise for emergency response to the cross-border displacement from Ethiopia to Kenya as a result of escalation of conflict in Moyale.

v.Regional Integration

BORESHA has regularly met and consulted with SECCCI to ensure programmatic linkages are in place and implemented.

Halima Aden, Fodder Production beneficiary in Dollow, Somalia, 2019© Maslah Mumin / DRC

BORESHA THEMES AND PARTNER INTEGRATION

| Natural Resource Management | ← | Disaster Risk Reduction and Livelihoods | → | Business Development |

BORESHA Project Monitoring Unit

Technical Programming
- Partner Integration
- Community Integration
- Decision Making
- Joint Review
- Activity Coordination

CARE   World Vision   DRC & WYG

Operational Programming
- Planning
- Budgeting
- Security
- Joint Reviews

Share Natural Resources are more equitably & sustainably anaged

Communities are more resilient & better prepared for shocks

Individual & communities are more self reliant through increased skills & opportunities

MEAL
- Joint Monitoring
- Joint Learning
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Integrated Reporting

Stakeholder & Regional
- Community Partners
- County Partners
- Country Partners
- Demographic Profiles
- County Sectors

CHALLENGES

Whereas there is geographical convergence and integration at the field level, the same may not apply at programme or Country level. The geographical (and cultural) distance between the country head offices and the border regions favours individual partner system as opposed to integration. In addition, in each country every partner tended to use already tested approaches and methodologies.

The four BORESHA consortium partners have different structures in each of the three countries and this contributed to knowledge fragmentation and intricate decision-making processes leading to an initial lack of ownership.

The consortium structure and constant meetings brought all actors together to address this discrepancy and provide platforms to exchange and to engage, as project activities depended on technical input to the field implementation teams. However, especially in the first year, country office staff participation in events was inconsistent and asymmetrical. Having multiple partners and multiple country programmes in the consortium led to fragmentation of their engagement, and made technical backstopping and decision-making processes much longer and complicated.

Difference in implementation approaches and modalities amongst partners initially created confusion among the beneficiary communities. For example, institutional regulations and policies around per diems and Cash For Work were different for each consortium partner before being harmonized.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Integration is an important component of any cross-border programme and should be given due attention during project design and planning. It should also be part of the theory of change.

Key roles of the project management unit (PMU) and similar structures in such complex and multi-country intervention should ensure an effective horizontal and vertical coordination among the partners.

Capacity to tackle an issue with multiple perspective and multiple actions bring out sustainable solutions. The link between DRR committee, livestock and agriculture interventions, CfW, private sector (e.g. management of *Prosopis Juliflora*, schools targeted jointly for water harvesting structures, environmental clubs, training on health messages, peace clubs, among others), all collectively ensure consistency in messaging and guidance to partners and community beneficiaries.

CONCLUSION

The integration among the different components and across countries allowed the teams to work better, find solutions to common challenges, learn from their colleagues, and achieve better results.

The integration mechanisms would add value in supporting services and technical programmes including joint activity planning, implementation and reporting. It has the potential to among others, promote innovation, define service delivery within the needs of the community, reduce cost of implementation by creating harmony and avoidance of duplication, reduce time for implementation, promote cohesion and ease market access.

Within the 24 months of implementation, BORESHA has put in place mechanisms that ensure sustainability of intervention by building institutions and strengthening structures within the communities. The skills developed will remain a community resource long after the project has exited.

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