IWRM Action Hub

CASE STUDY

Transboundary: Adoption of integrated approaches to drought resilience for improved livelihoods

Summary

Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWP EAF) has contributed to catalyzing the drought regional investment by mobilizing USD13M to enhance drought resilience of vulnerable communities in the IGAD region. The is through strengthening drought resilience of the vulnerable smallholder farmers and pastoralists mainly women, youth and the elderly. The approaches used are: Participation of vulnerable communities in drought adaptation actions, strengthening timely early warning feedback mechanisms, focus on market based priorities, interface of decision makers and communities, empowering women income schemes and provision of drought resistant high yielding crop varieties and animal breeds.

Background

The IGAD region is located in the Horn of Africa constituting eight countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The IGAD region faces several water constraints and prolonged droughts, with a vast area consisting of majorly 70% is Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). The annual rainfall in ASALs is less than 600mm (IGAD 2013).The region also experiences significantly high anomalies in precipitation.

GWP EAF is supporting the regional execution of the project entitled Strengthening Drought Resilience of Smallholder Farmers and Pastoralists in the IGAD region-DRESS-EA". The project is funded by Adaptation Fund (AF) and implemented by a regional accredited entity - the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). The target audience are the vulnerable smallholder farmers and pastoralists in four riparian states of Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and

Uganda. These include women, youth and the elderly who are affected most by drought. The target intervention sites are : Djibouti (in Bieidley of Ali Sabieh region; Wadi Gobaad, and Hanle sector in Dikhil region), Kenya (in Kitui and Samburu counties), Sudan (Kosti in ElSalam) and Uganda (Lokere Catchment).

Due to its significant water challenges and prolonged drought, the vulnerable poor communities whose livelihoods depend on rain-fed agricultural systems are affected most. The emergency and escalation of COVID19 did not spare these communities either and as such have intensified the challenges. The situation was worsened by their low levels of social change, capacity and inadequate information among others. From the gender lens, whereas women and men face livelihood challenges and vulnerability to droughts and other disaster risks, women, children, the elderly, and youth are most affected physically, economically as well as socially.

The vulnerabilities of these groups are mainly resulting from traditional beliefs and stereotypes that limit their ownership, control of livelihood resources and the increased burden on the domestic gender roles. In terms of coping to the adverse drought effects, the men migrate to seek for opportunities that may increase the income for the family. Therefore, the efforts put in to establish appropriate early warning systems and implementation of drought adaptation actions are timely and will improve the livelihoods of the vulnerable communities while contributing to regional and national economic growth.

Actions taken

The DRESS-EA project is transboundary, multi-sectoral, and multi-disciplinary in nature and implementation is conducted in a participatory and integrated manner. Project execution encompasses community, national, and regional levels. GWPEAF role is to integrate the regional dimension into the project. Below you will find key actions taken during the project.

Launching DRESS-EA project to popularize project activities: The aim was to reach a common understanding by all stakeholders at all levels to ensure there is adequate ownership and adoption of the activities during project execution. The regional launch was presided over by the minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Sudan Prof Dr. Yasir Abbas Mohamed Ali.. Prof. Dr. Yasir said "*the project is in line with the region's and countries' priorities especially on the issue of drought which requires handling with utmost urgency due to the devastating effects of Climate Change*".

Development of Regional Early Warning System (EWS) that is to be customized to National level of the Executing Entities. GWP EAF is collaborating with the IGAD Climate Predication and Application Centre (ICPAC) towards the development of regional Early Warning System (EWS) prototype that will be used to provide drought early warning information to the stakeholders at regional regional level (IGAD).

Periodic feedback user friendly tools on accessing EW information has been developed for use by the stakeholders (users) and reporting EW information to meteorology departments in the target countries. There has been system upgrade and customization of the mobile app tool called HUSIKA used in early warning information dissemination and user feedback.

Nomination of National Early Warning Focal Persons: GWP EAF lead the process of nominated one expert from each of the executing entities. The Early Warning focal person role is to interact directly on issues of Early Warning/Early Action under the DRESS-EA

project. Early Warning focal persons enhance expertise and also provide provide technical guidance during the customization of the national prototype.

Involvement of the private sector in the project governance structure. The private sector is very much recognized in the DRESS-EA project governance structure, and they play a big role in promoting the economic and infrastructure component of the project-thereby supporting to build resilience to crises and even shocks.

Making a broad-based governance structure that follows a multi-sectoral approach. The multi-sectoral approach ensures that the key issues in each sector is well catered for and addresses the real needs of each sector and contributes to drought management.

Development of online M&E system. GWP EAF has contributed to the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan and the online M&E system. The M&E system is strong online tools aimed at supporting to track progress of the project. The M&E system was designed through consultative and participatory process. The system is bilingual and requires user identity to login.

DRESS-EA project design involving policy and community interactions. The project design is such that its allows free interaction of the high level government officials and communities. The Kenya principal Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry stated "*We need to come up with more adaptive options for the communities to cope with the various climate change challenges*," said Dr. Kiptoo.

Drought adaptation actions targeting the vulnerable communities: The DRESS-EA project is adopting gender-responsive approaches in drought preparedness policy making and programming to enable the crucial role of women as actors in drought-risk management initiatives by increasing participation and representation of women at all levels of the decision-making process.

Outcomes

***Institutional coordination and collaboration improved*:** The diversity and innovative activities undertaken through the DRESS-EA project at regional and country levels have increased their capabilities in coordinating drought related impacts. This is contributing to development of the national drought development guidelines.

Enhanced capacity and knowledge, skills in drought management-Handling drought actions in a timely manner: Capacity building of stakeholders at various levels (communities, sub-national and government staff, practitioners and professionals) in water and drought management. This includes training in drought early warning and taking early action.

Partnership building with stakeholders at the region and country level (policy and communities): The signing of the MOU;s and agreements with mandated institutions has provided a conducive environment to collaborate on several activities, including project preparation and joint action planning.

Adoption of the drought regional dimension through the cross-exchange and integration of ideas: GWP EAF is promoting the regional dimension of the DRESS-EA project to enhance adoption of integrated approaches. This has been done in the following

ways: Cooperation/coordination, Knowledge, technology, and expertise, Duplication in planning and contribution to regional frameworks.

Enhanced cohesion within the community of practice: **T**he coordination of activities amongst the various stakeholders has created a sense of togetherness within the entire community of practice. The multi-sectoral discipline used brings the sectors together, during the governance meetings the decision makers are interacting and sharing ideas. This policy-community interface has created gains within the drought space. There is also social cohesion amongst the groups and associations at the community level/ the vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly.

Increased empowerment of the vulnerable groups especially the women: Women are the main producers of food in the household. Therefore, to attain food security in the region requires a concert effort targeting these groups (women and girls). Improving women's access, ownership, and control over land and inputs is catalyst to increased investments in land productivity, thus improving food security, nutrition and health at household and community levels. We need incorporate gender perspectives into drought management efforts and allocation of financial resources for gender equality in drought management, include gender-specific indicators in monitoring and evaluation and include Women in decision making. GWP EAF is collaborating with SWA- Sanitation and Water all to mobilize the responsible entities on financing government programmes to include gender.

Uptake of replicable adaptation actions by the communities**:** The DRESS-EA project employs a regional Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach. New and already existing innovative solutions to drought risk management through participatory processes are already emerging and being used by the project. An example is in Kenya where communities are adopting soil and water conservation measures in Kitui country. In Uganda this is through using drought tolerant crop varieties and in Sudan, mini-irrigation schemes are popular.

The linkages initiated by the GWP EAF and the DRESS-EA project with regional and national drought agencies such as IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC), and Meteorological Authorities that focus on strengthening Early Warning Systems and sharing climate related information provides an opportunity for improved drought management. GWP EAF through the running initiatives continues to create synergies will support within the framework of the three pillars of integrated drought management i.e. i) drought monitoring and early warning systems; ii) vulnerability and impact assessment; and iii) drought preparedness, mitigation, and response.

Lessons Learned

Closer interaction between the policy makers and the grass-root communities can fasten processes and fast track activities on the ground. The policy makers are privileged to get fast hand information from the vulnerable communities and this make a difference than when the information is delivered by a third party. Therefore, the policy makers make timely informed decisions.

Popular versions and broadcasting of communication materials that is customized in the indigenous/local community languages enhances faster adoption and action as well as better understanding of the activities on the ground.

Targeting the influential persons in the community can enhance ownership and faster adoption. For example, the local leaders are exemplary and key in influencing action on the ground. Some of the leaders are mentors and highly respected in the community. The communities learn and follow their leaders.

Having refresher training and tailored courses/trainings to technical officers to support in addressing emerging concerns and issues is key for continuity of project results.

Tours and exchange visit enhance practical learning and cross-fertilization of new and modern ideas that may be faster replicated. This leads to customization of replicated adaptation actions and in additions it leads to a spill over effect where the persons in the neighborhood also learn (positive leakage).

Large number of the beneficiary population are women, therefore, well designed project should address the concerns of the majority. Incorporating social inclusion as a component is vital for in successfully designed project.

Corresponding Author
Kairu, Gerald

Organisation
Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa -GWP EAF

Year
2022

Country
Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan (the), Uganda

Region
Africa

Keywords
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) , Integrated Drought Management , Vulnerable groups

Thematic Tagging
Climate , Gender
Language English

Supporting Materials
Gerald Kairu

Related IWRM Tools
Integrated Drought Management Plans, Climate Change and Gender

---