

Partners for Resilience (PfR), Ethiopia, Integrated Risk Management Programme 2011-2016

Summary of Final Evaluation, December 2018

Background

The work of Partners for Resilience (PfR) centres on making people, communities and systems better prepared to withstand catastrophic events, and enabling them to bounce back more quickly and emerge stronger from shocks and stresses. PfR promotes four building blocks, helping communities to: anticipate the risks they face, respond when disaster strikes while maintaining basic structures and functions, adapt to changing risks and livelihood options, and finally address root causes as active partners with government in implementing disaster risk reduction.

In Ethiopia, the first phase of PfR was implemented from 2011 to 2016 in five *woredas*, or districts, by the Ethiopian branches of Cordaid and CARE, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), as well as five local implementing partners. The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (‘the Climate Centre’) and Wetlands International provided technical advice and support.

In 2018, an independent evaluation assessed the relevance of Phase I of the PfR programme as it was implemented in Ethiopia, its efficiency and effectiveness, its impact on community resilience, and its general sustainability.

Summary of findings

The evaluators concluded that “considerable changes” had occurred in the capacity of communities and partner organizations to enhance *resilience* – the core concept of the Partners for Resilience alliance – due to PfR interventions in the programme *woredas*.¹ The government took ownership to the extent of mainstreaming the IRM approach and even allocating some budget of their own for actual PfR implementation.

As a result, nearly half the beneficiary communities surveyed at endline reported having the capacity to cope or adapt to the extreme-weather events encountered after phase-out. This can be considered to be a remarkable achievement given that the endline data was collected in 2018, almost two years after the phase-out of the programme. PfR was implemented in highly vulnerable communities that were affected by a severe El Niño-related drought in 2015–2016 that may have wiped out some of the benefits achieved earlier.

Some problems and disappointments arose from delays in start-up, initial lack of clarity in the programme logic (a ‘theory of change’ had to be retrospectively reconstructed by

¹ By region: Dewe in Afar, Ebenat in Amhara, Gorogutu, Miyo, and Arero in Oromia, and Nyangatom in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples, and two further *woredas* of Dire Dawa city. Ethiopian implementing partners were the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, Support for Sustainable Development, Action for Development, the Agency for Cooperation and Research Development, the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat, and the Dire Dawa community DRR association.

the evaluators themselves), and drought. But thirty-five per cent of respondents reported that some interventions have continued after programme phase-out. These included, in the order presented in the evaluation:

Livelihoods

PfR introduced agricultural innovations into project areas, including improved pre-harvest technology and soil- and water-conservation techniques, and just over half of evaluation survey respondents reported taking advantage of these.

New livelihoods options generally increased household income for exactly two thirds of respondents who took them up, including 100 per cent in Nyangatom.

Average annual income from on-farm activities increased from the baseline average of ETB 3,285 (98 euros) to ETB 9,468 (283 euros), possibly influenced by inflation but including a significant contribution from PfR, focusing on marginalized communities with poorer-than-average baseline incomes.

The highest-earning crops were vegetables and fruits, and field crops, to which many people had apparently turned from cattle over the PfR period.

Gains in agricultural productivity during the curtailed operational period may have been undermined by a series of the extreme-weather events common in the project sites, mainly drought.

Women's groups organized by PfR were engaged in income generation schemes, as well as fuel-saving stoves, trade, savings and credit associations, and were linked to *kebele* and *woreda* officials. Most such groups in Dewe *woreda* and some in all other intervention *woredas* are still operational two years after phase-out.

Food security

Eighty-eight per cent of baseline respondents described themselves as food *insecure*, meaning that they needed help to feed themselves for at least three months of the year; the corresponding figure overall at endline was 76.4 per cent.

There were some increases in food security in Ebinat (which performed well compared to other *woredas*) and Nyangatom; but Dewe *woreda* participants reported their food-security status as even lower than baseline, possibly due to drought.

The increase in food security among PfR households, however, went *against* the national trend, in which the number of food insecure people increased greatly between 2014 and the end of 2015, with the government at one point declaring that 7.7m people needed emergency food aid.

Limited resources and capacity meant the majority of people identifying as food insecure struggled to withstand the drought that crept into programme areas right after phase-out. But of the food-secure respondents the great majority (87 per cent) rated the contribution of PfR at least as "moderate".

Credit and insurance

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents said PfR had improved their access to credit services through awareness raising. Access to credit even in Dewe *woreda*, a Muslim-majority area where this could have been problematic, improved considerably (according to nearly 40 per cent of respondents).

In fact, *women's* savings and credit associations organized by PfR emerge as one of the programme's "most durable contributions", the evaluators wrote, providing credit for productive activities (24 per cent), food (37 per cent), children's education (13 per cent), or a combination (26 per cent).

In Dewe, for example, among areas where access to credit improved because of PfR, some associations reported that they opened cafeterias while others planned to buy vehicles.

Agricultural insurance – a PfR option for reducing disaster risks – was only reported to be available in Ebinat *woreda*. This service is generally limited to crops, not livestock, the main livelihood for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists.

Water

PfR constructed and maintained schemes boosting access to water, even during extended dry periods, and promoted good management of them thereafter. Training for hygiene and sanitation and water management was successfully undertaken, and materials for treating water, with appropriate orientation, were provided in Nyangatom *woreda* and water-borne disease there reduced.

Nearly 70 per cent of households reported that water facilities had improved under PfR, and this has correspondingly improved the health, sanitation, and nutritional status of beneficiaries.

Community focus groups indicated people's health improved from better water in all programme areas, as well as from the introduction of cleaner fuel-saving stoves in Ebinat.

Compared to other *woredas*, because of drought the functionality of PfR-funded water facilities in Nyangatom was lower – three hand-dug wells and three cisterns out of 13 facilities in total.

Irrigation

Almost all endline respondents who use irrigation reported that PfR provided either financial or technical support. The baseline survey showed only 12 per cent using irrigation schemes, mainly from diverted rivers, rising significantly to just under 30 per cent in the endline study, with no other actors supporting this intervention.

The highest increase in irrigation usage was in Dewe, from 14 to 61 per cent, followed by Ebinat from 4 to 24 per cent – PfR results achieved through capacity building,

agricultural inputs, and irrigation canals.

Water-users' associations were established and strengthened to manage irrigation in all intervention *woredas*; all are still active, and even when the irrigation schemes are not they are working with the relevant local agencies to revive them.

Fifty-two per cent of irrigation users reported increased crop production. But pre-existing conflict over land use in Nyangtatom *woreda*, water scarcity, the lack of a feasibility study in Dewe, and the collapse of a dam and siltation in Ebinat limited the impacts of the interventions on livelihoods there.

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With the exception of women's groups in Dire Dawa, which still do not have any legal status, PfR interventions were successfully handed over to *woreda* and *kebele* government bodies during phase-out.

Schemes such as water and soil conservation, early warning, and women's savings and credit institutions have been linked up to relevant government structures and continue to benefit from government support.

The overall observation of survey respondents on the success of PfR was seen by the evaluators as "encouraging". The level of adaptive capacity developed during the programme was found to be moderate even if self-defined food insecurity remained stubbornly high. But a large majority (70 per cent) of endline respondents described PfR at least as "satisfactory".

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