

# Integrating Drought Cycle Management for Effective Programming

A briefing on Oxfam GB's Horn and East Africa Drought Cycle Management Learning Project



Women carrying water back from the emergency tapstands in Southern Somalia that Oxfam has installed due to the severe drought which is affecting East Africa. Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi/Oxfam

## What is Drought Cycle Management?

We know that drought is a recurrent and natural phenomenon in the arid and semi-arid lands of the Horn and East Africa. The cyclical nature of drought means that as partners in the development process it is essential that we understand this cycle and

design programmes better preparedness and response.

Drought cycle management (DCM) aims to strengthen people's livelihoods throughout all stages of the drought cycle to make them less vulnerable and to ensure

DCM reminds us that we must learn how to live with the reality of drought and not see it as a rare or disastrous event.

## The Drought Cycle Management Learning Project



The Drought Cycle Management Learning Project (DCM Learning Project) works to integrate drought management into development programmes in pastoral areas.

way, thereby reflecting Oxfam's 'one programme approach.'

The project:

- **Aims to improve the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness** of all aspects of work in these areas. This includes drought mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery activities.

- **Draws upon and learns from** the extensive knowledge and experience of Oxfam and partners operating in drought prone areas.

- **Recognises the erosion of traditional coping strategies in some areas**, and will integrate with measures that seek to tackle such 'chronic' trends.

- **Seeks to integrate humanitarian, development and campaigning work** in a mutually reinforcing

The Drought Cycle Management Model above illustrates a conceptual model of the progression of drought and corresponding activities for each stage.



Villagers digging with picks and shovels to desilt Kaloperebong water pan in Rikitae, Panyangara subcounty. The pan mainly serves families settled in Rikitae. They had prioritised its reopening, and with Oxfam's support drew up a Community Action Plan to take work forward. Oxfam has provided hand-tools, and supported a cash-for-work programme to enable the desilting to go ahead swiftly in advance of the rains. Geoff Sayer/OXFAM

## Approach

The DCM Learning Project uses a people-centred learning approach.

This approach recognises that knowledge is not something supplied by one person to another but something that flows back and forth and is continually improved, adapted and refreshed.

The project is centred on capturing experience, best practise, examples of

process and practise from Oxfam, its partners and within the wider literature. This will be used to generate and promote continuous learning at an organisational and individual level.

This approach means:

- **Using processes that encourage interaction across boundaries** (countries and disciplines)

- **Developing tools and techniques during information capture** that help individual and collective learning

- **Generating skills and motivation** to help Oxfam and its partners learn and adapt

- **Everybody has something to contribute** to the DCM project, and everybody has something to gain.

## Partnerships

Oxfam's DCM learning project is lead by the Regional Pastoral Project. It started in July 2006 and the first phase will last for 12 months.

The project will work closely with the country programmes and partner agencies. It will also draw from and share findings with local and national authorities and actors involved in relevant institutional structures at country and regional level (coordinating bodies, drought management committees) etc.

## Objectives and Activities

In phase one of the project, we aim to:

- **Capture the experience of Oxfam and its partners** in implementing long term development programmes in drought prone environments. This will include the technical, managerial and institutional aspects of drought management.
- **Begin the process of institutionalizing good practice** in the integration of drought management within

pastoral development programmes at both a strategic and operational level.

- **Improve the application of knowledge** and learning as a means to improve programmes in drought prone environments.

The main activities of this phase will include:

- **A literature review** relating to drought management and pastoral development
- **Field visits to draw out**

experience and lessons learned

- **Developing case studies** that capture, analyse and synthesise this experience
- **Holding two 'writeshops'** to bring about reflection, comment, refinement and peer review of materials generated.
- **Developing resource and training materials** to capture this learning and a strategy to implement it in phase two.

### Contact details

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Oxfam GB's Pastoralism Website and published resources on pastoralism:

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/pastoralism/index.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/pastoralism/index.htm)