



Managing natural resources comprehensively and sustainably to combat poverty in pastoral communities

In Djibouti, pastoral communities have made a clear improvement in their living conditions with better access to water and strengthened capacity in natural resources conservation and management.

Djibouti suffers from food insecurity aggravated by persistent drought and elevated food prices. The situation is particularly critical in the pastoral areas where most poor people live. The erratic rainfall that characterizes these areas leads to a high rate of animal mortality and has an adverse impact on living conditions for livestock farmers. To address this situation, IFAD, in collaboration with partners, launched the Programme for Mobilization of Surface Water and Sustainable Land Management (PROMES-GDT) in December 2008. The programme objective is to improve living conditions for pastoral communities by promoting sustainable natural resource management. The programme is being implemented over six years with cofinancing from the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Country: Republic of Djibouti

Direct Beneficiaries:

Nomadic and sedentary livestock farming households

Results:

- More secure access to better quality water in the most affected pastoral areas, with the repair of 19 cisterns for domestic use and nine earth embankments for watering livestock.
- Improved socio-economic conditions for women with the installation of new cisterns to reduce the duration of daily water collection from five to two hours.
- Greater capacity of communities to take charge of managing natural resources under a participatory approach.

Main Lessons:

- Investments in building national capacity are necessary to ensure the sustainability of programme gains.
- Local communities will more easily take ownership of the programme gains when actively involved in project management through steering committees.



BASIC INFO

Sources:

Programme for Mobilization of Surface Water and Sustainable Land Management (PROMES-GDT), midterm review mission, main report, May 2012

Project Name:

Programme for Mobilization of Surface Water and Sustainable Land Management (PROMES-GDT)

Project Starting Date:

2007

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WEB PAGES

IFAD Operations Near East, North Africa and Europe:

<http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pn/index.htm>

IFAD learning notes:

<http://www.ifad.org/rural/learningnotes/index.htm>

IFAD project:

http://operations.ifad.org/web/ifad/operations/country/project/tags/djibouti/1366/project_overview

Background

With a human development index (HDI) of 0.430, Djibouti ranks 165th of 187 countries and is considered one of the poorest nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Food insecurity and poverty are particularly prevalent in rural areas, where 83 per cent of the population are poor – the majority of them nomads engaged in extensive livestock farming. With rangeland located around water points denuded of vegetation, families are unable to sustainably farm these ecosystems characterized by high aridity and relatively scarce forage resources. The progressive degradation of natural resources poses a threat to the mobility of herds and pastoral populations; hence the overgrazing of the best rangeland, where herds far outstrip capacity. The goal of PROMES-GDT is to address the water shortage issue faced by the pastoral population – by reinforcing surface water mobilization techniques to improve access to water for communities and their livestock.

Rural communities taking charge of managing their own natural resources

The programme adopted a geographic targeting strategy based on financing surface water mobilization and sustainable land management initiatives along seasonal migration corridors. The Day Forest and environs, Petit Bara and Grand Bara and vicinity, and the region of Gobaad were identified as priorities. The programme beneficiaries are 6 000 nomadic and sedentary farming households. Local steering committees were set up with rural communities as members. The committees are central to planning and decision-making arrangements concerning

sustainable land use management and development initiatives in each target area. These initiatives were identified, negotiated with the local steering committees and documented within an overall hydropastoral development plan (SAHP) – and then translated into an action plan agreed upon with the committees. This concerted approach to integrated water and sylvopastoral management, based on the SAHP and the local steering committees, is a major innovation introduced by the programme.

A total of 19 underground cisterns for domestic use have been repaired of the 21 cisterns targeted by end-2012, and 12 new 100 m³ cisterns have been built. Local populations have taken part in site selection and excavations with support from the WFP work-for-food programme. In response to demand from the population of Dorra, the programme also repaired nine pastoral earth embankments and built gabion barriers to mobilize floodwaters. This enabled water tables to be replenished so that the population could make use of the runoff.

The programme has had a major impact on the quality of life for women, who are the main beneficiaries. The waterworks construction and rehabilitation have led to an improvement in the socio-economic conditions of women as the family members responsible for fetching and carrying water. Direct benefits include time and energy savings. In addition, greater access to drinking water has considerably enhanced family food security. Furthermore, a gender-specific approach was followed in local steering committees and management committees for water points and pastures, where a 30

per cent participation rate by women was targeted and implemented.

Innovating with partnerships for a concerted approach

The programme introduced a number of innovations in mobilizing surface water. One of these innovations is the adoption of a concerted approach with populations for integrated water and sylvopastoral management based on the SAHP, local steering committees and management committees, and initiating floodwater control techniques to replenish water tables. IFAD-WFP complementarities in implementing the work-for-food programme is another example of direct support for vulnerable people and job creation in the context of drought in Djibouti. This partnership made it possible to develop and enhance knowhow in mobilizing surface water and sharing it with the other partners involved. Moreover, given the programme's success, the World Bank took the concept in 2011 and transposed it into a new Rural Community Development and Water Mobilization Project (PRODERMO). The PROMES-GDT experience has also contributed to the development of a national water mobilization and conservation strategy.

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