

CASE STUDY

SOMALIA 2017–2018 / DROUGHT

KEYWORDS: Shelter kits, NFI, Training, Post-distribution monitoring

CRISIS	2017 Drought	
TOTAL PEOPLE IN NEED*	6.2 million	
TOTAL PEOPLE DISPLACED*	2.1 million internally displaced. Over 240,000 in Somaliland and 99,000 in the targeted regions	
SHELTER NEEDS*	1.5 million individuals across Somalia	
PROJECT LOCATIONS	Bali Mataan (Woqooyi Galbeed region), Karsharka and Fadhigaab (Sanaag region)	
BENEFICIARIES	1,000 households	
PROJECT OUTPUTS	2,000 tarpaulins and NFI kits distributed	
MATERIALS COST	USD 265 per household	
PROJECT COST	USD 338 per household	
	<small>* Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan 2018 (December 2017).</small>	

PROJECT SUMMARY

To support displaced nomadic pastoralists in the Somaliland region, the project provided lightweight, mobile, shelter and non-food items kits to 1,000 households. It was delivered through an implementing partner who engaged local development organizations with strong links to the targeted communities. The post-distribution monitoring revealed unintended outcomes highlighting the creative ability of the affected populations. It also showed how certain items in the toolkits were not appropriate.



- 1 18 Feb 2018: Shelter Kit and NFI training of trainers delivered to partner organization.
- 2 19–23 Feb 2018: Distribution at displacement sites conducted.
- 3 25–29 Mar 2018: Post-distribution monitoring surveys carried out.

STRENGTHS

- + Working with local development organizations ensured the active participation of affected communities.
- + Most beneficiaries achieved the intended outcomes.
- + Versatility of items such as tarpaulins and jerry cans.
- + Positive engagement between the implementing partner and the authorities.
- + The lightweight and portable solution was appropriate for nomadic populations.

WEAKNESSES

- Limited scale compared to the overall needs.
- Targeted assistance and poor communication could have caused conflicts.
- Not all of the aid was culturally appropriate.
- The project did not directly address land tenure issues.
- The training methodology needed improvement.



The project provided tarpaulins and household items to mobile populations, in collaboration with local partner organizations with strong links with the communities.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict, recurrent drought and flooding, food insecurity and famine repeatedly affected Somalia for decades. Since the end of the 2011 famine, about USD 4.5 billion was spent on emergency response. In 2017, Somalia faced low rainfall for the fourth consecutive time, while recovering from prolonged drought in the Somaliland region and protracted armed conflict across the country. Joint efforts by the Somali Government and local and international partners averted another famine, but the effects of the drought continued into 2018. Heavy rainfall in April–June 2018 led to flooding on large swathes of Somaliland, especially affecting most vulnerable communities.

NOMADIC POPULATIONS IN SOMALILAND

The majority of Somaliland's rural populations are nomadic pastoralists whose primary livelihood is livestock, such as cattle, goats and sheep – who roam from pasture to pasture with the seasons, seeking grazing land and water.

The traditional shelter of the herders is a dome-shaped, collapsible hut made from poles covered by hides, woven fibre mats, or sometimes cloth or tin. Easy to break down and re-assemble, the shelter is carried on a camel's back and set up by women once a new camp is made. Nomads have few possessions and each item has practical uses, such as for example cooking utensils, storage boxes, stools, woven mats and water bags.

EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT

The drought resulted in successive poor crop harvests, substantial livestock losses (up to 85% in 2017) and large-scale displacement from rural to urban areas. Additionally, the drought and subsequent flooding forced pastoralists communities to move increasingly large distances to seek fresh food for their animals. The upsurge in displacement increased protection concerns and disease outbreaks and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Inter-communal tensions over access to water and grazing lands also increased.

Whilst food, health and water in 2018 were being provided by in-country agencies, a gap was identified in emergency shelter. Many displaced communities were living in overcrowded and ill-equipped shelters. These households lacked essential basic shelter items (e.g. tarpaulins and toolkits) and household items (including blankets, kitchen sets, water filters and carriers). Cholera outbreaks were on the rise due to lack of safe water and adequate sanitation.



Tarpaulins were well received as they were versatile and could be used for a variety of purposes. However, the tools and pegs provided were barely used, as these were not considered appropriate nor were familiar to the displaced populations. Subsequent projects replaced the tools with rope.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

The government held an NGO consortium to coordinate partners operating in the region. Additionally, since late 2017 the Shelter Cluster gained traction and started holding monthly coordination meetings. Before that, links between sectors and technical guidance were lacking. This gap affected the project, as a more clearly defined list of emergency shelter items would have informed project development, ensuring greater synergies between implementing agencies.

The project aligned with the Shelter Cluster strategy in Somaliland for 2018, which was centred around three main objectives:

1. Protection of newly displaced people and returnees;
2. Improve the living conditions of people in protracted displacement; and
3. Contribute to durable solutions (integration or return).

PROJECT GOALS

The project aimed to increase the resilience of displaced populations to recurrent seasonal shocks, linking emergency response to more durable solutions. The organization identified that for nomadic pastoralist populations affected by drought and protracted conflict, a fixed and permanent shelter was not the best solution. Hence, the project was designed with movement at the centre. Items had to be lightweight, durable, adaptable and portable.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was led by an international organization largely working remotely and implemented by a partner organization. The international organization had three staff who provided project development, monitoring and implementation support, and conducted a field monitoring visit.

Tarpaulins, tools and non-food items were distributed alongside basic training in three displacement sites. All materials were internationally procured due to a lack of local availability. Beneficiaries were responsible for the reception of materials at centralized distribution points within the sites. A training of trainers was provided to the partner organization on how to fix the tarpaulins with the items provided in the shelter kit. Training was also provided on the individual NFIs provided, specially the water filters. The partner then carried out this same training with the respective local organizations that were responsible for the direct engagement with the affected communities. The local partners supervised the shelter erection process and provided technical support.



TARGETING

The selection process was conducted by the partner organization, in coordination with the Somaliland Commission for IDPs. The three sites were targeted based on levels of need and accessibility.

The most vulnerable drought-displaced households were targeted using clear selection criteria defined by the NGO consortium. The prioritized beneficiaries included large households (6+ Individuals), elderly and people with disability, newly arrived IDPs, large female-headed households and families headed by orphans with no external support. 1,000 households out of the 1,950 living in the sites were selected.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The implementing partner used the connections of local development organizations with the affected communities within the target area. Community leadership structures within the displacement sites were consulted and directly informed the beneficiary selection process.

The post-distribution monitoring (PDM) highlighted that 88 per cent of respondents were informed by the community leaders prior to the distributions about what shelter and NFIs they would be receiving, although some stated that they were not asked if they needed items or not. In subsequent discussions with the implementing partner it was acknowledged that, for future projects, better communication with local organizations and community leaders would have been required.

In the early stages of the project, the partner organized an inception workshop to orientate its local partners on minimum standards for humanitarian action and distributions, to enable them to implement these concepts at grassroots level. The partner also conducted field demonstrations and linked the local organizations to other funding sources and capacity-building initiatives.

MAIN CHALLENGES

ACCESS TO REMOTE AREAS. Due to safety and security considerations (largely rural banditry), the project focused on displacement sites that were known to be accessible and where the implementing partner had other projects ongoing. This also complemented their WASH programmes in these sites.

TENSIONS DUE TO DISPARITY. During one of the distributions, many IDPs who were not part of the targeted caseload were frustrated and curious. While this had the potential to deteriorate, fortunately it did not – thanks to crowd-control measures implemented by the partner and the police outside the distribution site. To avoid disparity within communities, the project partners agreed that, going forward, distributions should use blanket coverage as much as possible. The complaint mechanism set up in the distribution site was reviewed and feedback incorporated into future projects. It was also agreed that distribution sites would be planned and arranged more appropriately for future distributions.

LAND TENURE. As the majority of the IDPs in Somaliland do not own the land on which they reside – especially those living nearby main districts – they often face threats of eviction from landowners. In one case, this resulted in the communities speaking out through the media and requesting the authorities to address this issue. While efforts were made to secure land tenure for the displaced, these could not support the majority of IDPs.

PDM FINDINGS

To fully understand how beneficiaries used the items and inform future projects, a survey was conducted by the implementing partner approximately 6–8 weeks after the distributions. It highlighted the following findings:

- Solar lights were voted the most useful item (72% of total votes), followed by tarpaulin (65%) and mosquito nets (56%). Beneficiaries reported that the solar lights made them feel safe at night and were satisfied with the number of lights they received, which allowed them to carry out different activities at the same time.
- The least useful items were found to be pegs (2%). Most of the beneficiaries stated that they did not use these at all.
- Fifty-eight per cent of respondents said that the toolkit facilitated construction and repair work. Out of the 42 per cent who reported it did not, some stated that they did not know what to use it for and did not have the necessary skills to use the tools. This suggested that the toolkit may not have been entirely culturally appropriate.
- Beneficiaries complained about the quality of the collapsible jerry cans, as these were not durable enough for the harsh environment.
- Although the water filters were well received, beneficiaries complained about their size and the waiting time to get clean water.
- Preferred items that were not included in the pre-determined kit included saucepans, flasks, big plates and spades.

Whilst the PDM results measured against the expected outcomes provided a good insight into the impact of the project, the unintended outcomes gave an additional level of understanding of how the items were used. For example, most beneficiaries used the tarpaulins as intended to set up new shelters (42%) and improve existing shelters (31%). However, tarpaulins were also used as water catchment to facilitate water storage (approx. 19%), or to provide a shaded area close to the shelters (4.5%). Very few respondents stated that they used the tarpaulins to help them earn money (0.5%), by supporting cultivation and construction work. With regard to supporting farming activities, it was witnessed that one beneficiary had placed a tarpaulin in the ground and had then backfilled it with soil to grow tomatoes, to ensure that water did not percolate through the dry soil.

WIDER IMPACTS

Based on the success of the project and the PDM findings, another project was conducted to target an additional 2,000 households and expand the geographical coverage. The main change was the removal of the toolkits, that were replaced with rope. The follow-up project was completed in November 2018 and resulted in planning for a further intervention with the same implementing partner for 2019. Despite the challenging operating environment, this proved that this response model was both effective and scalable.

Moreover, the size and profile of the project inadvertently reinvigorated the shelter coordination in the region, as the partner organization was supported and encouraged to coordinate with relevant bodies throughout.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

+ **Working with local development organizations** proved pivotal in mobilizing remote affected communities in rural Somaliland whom had received limited humanitarian support. This ensured the active participation of community leaders and affected families in constructing and improving their dwellings with the aid provided.

+ **Most beneficiaries used the aid items for their intended purpose**, achieving the intended outcomes (particularly the shelter related items). Where the PDM results identified that items were not used (e.g. the toolkits), it was agreed not to include them in the next project.

+ **Versatility of items** such as tarpaulins allowed beneficiaries to diversify the usage based on their respective needs. For example, some households used the tarpaulins and the portable storage facilities for water catchment.

+ **Positive and professional engagement between the implementing partner and the relevant authorities** helped facilitate project delivery in the selected areas.

+ The project managed to design a **lightweight and portable solution** that was appropriate for nomadic pastoralist populations, whose shelters needed to be transported for long distances.



The findings from the post-distribution monitoring provided a better understanding of the needs and traditional practices of the IDPs, informing the changes in items distributed in subsequent interventions.

WEAKNESSES

- **The project was able to support only a limited number of households** compared to the overall needs in Somaliland.

- **Targeted assistance and poor communication had the potential to cause conflicts** within the affected communities. Frustrations were observed at distribution sites between onlookers who were not part of the beneficiary list.

- **Not all of the aid was culturally appropriate** and, at times, was superfluous (e.g. handsaw and pegs), thereby reducing the effectiveness of the project. Better, coordinated shelter assessments would have ensured a more defined kit content. The PDM helped adapting it in subsequent project, where the toolkit was replaced by rope.

- **The project did not directly seek to address land tenure issues**, while it was known that IDPs faced real threats of eviction in some displacement sites.

- **The training of trainers methodology needed improvement.** Trainees were not identified timely before distributions and were not always trained thoroughly on the use of the items, so the cascade approach was not very successful and the messaging not very effective. Small focused training sessions with key community members would have been better. This would require more trainers.

CONTENTS OF THE KITS				
Items	Units	Qty	Unit cost (USD)	Total cost (USD)
Tarpaulins (6x4m)	pcs	2	12.81	25.62
Toolkits	pcs	1	13.60	13.60
Blankets (high thermal)	pcs	5	5.52	27.60
Mosquito nets	pcs	2	3.11	6.22
Kitchen sets	set	1	26.27	26.27
Ground mats	pcs	2	4.99	9.98
Solar lights	pcs	2	9.85	19.70
Jerry can, 10l collapsible	pcs	2	1.63	3.26
Water filter	pcs	2	30.21	60.42
Box	box	1	24.75	24.75

LESSONS LEARNED

- **It is essential to have a clear rationale for deciding on targeted or blanket distribution** within a site. Where possible, blanket coverage of displacement sites would avoid equity issues between households and conflict over limited resources. This often means restricting the geographical coverage within the budget limitations. Improved community engagement would also help mitigate risks of tensions arising over disparities.
- **Increased understanding of the context, socio-cultural aspects and the link between emergency shelter, livelihoods and longer-term recovery processes is needed.** The learnings gained about shelter needs of IDPs and the traditional shelters of nomadic populations helped better tailor the shelter-NFI package in subsequent interventions. For example, the PDM identified that **the toolkits were not appropriate, while rope was preferred to repair and maintain traditional shelters.** Unexpected rainwater harvesting strategies were also adopted by some households by using tarpaulins and jerry cans. A longer-term impact evaluation (6–12 months after the project) would also help analyse sheltering outcomes and draw out more information about resilience strategies.
- **More technical training on distribution mechanics** with the implementing partner and the local organizations was needed to improve the planning and execution of the distributions carried out in terms of speed, safety and security. For example, more detailed site assessments need to be carried out by the implementing partner to help plan the layout of the site and, during the distribution itself, additional labour should be made available to help households requiring support to transport the items.