



- Grant Recipient: Action for Women and Children Concern (AWCC)
- Grant amount: \$29,994
- Duration: 8 months
- Year: 2020-2021

## BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITIES THROUGH INCLUSIVE CDRM

Increasing community resilience to climate-induced shocks in Somalia

## Project overview

### What is the problem?

Somalia is a war-torn country that is also highly affected by climate-induced events, like unpredictable droughts and flooding. Such shocks often hit hardest on people with low resilience, who are already facing food insecurity and loss of assets. Today, half of the country's population need humanitarian assistance.

### Where is it?

Marka, Lower Shabelle region, Somalia

### Who does it affect?

Women and children; people already suffering from displacement and persistent poverty

### What are the causes?

Protracted armed conflicts and climate change-induced shocks cause internal displacement, food insecurity, and livelihood crisis. Thousands of people migrate from their home regions to urban areas every year to seek survival after losing their productive assets to droughts and subsequent flooding from torrential rains.

### Approach

Action for Women and Children Concern (AWCC) Somalia considers "inclusive" community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) as an effective way to reduce the effects of climate change-induced shocks and increase the overall community resilience to these shocks in Marka district, Lower Shabelle region, Somalia.

The project seeks sustainable solutions that are cost effective and require active community participation. In collaboration with local government and mobile phone service providers, the project will develop a unique SMS system tailored to local seasonal calendars to inform communities in advance to prepare for upcoming flooding.

AWCC recognizes the fact that women and children are primarily affected by climate-induced shocks, as they are the most vulnerable group. Nevertheless, women also have tremendous potential to contribute to sustainable solutions through an inclusive CBDRM approach.

This project entails a series of trainings to introduce these inclusive methodologies, thereby strengthening community resilience capacities and enabling them to better adapt to climate-induced shocks as a community.



## PROJECT UPDATE

### Achievements so far

As part of this project, AWCC has accomplished the following thus far:

- Held two community sensitization and awareness raising trainings on inclusive CBDRM including interactive, group discussion and brainstorming sessions. Local authorities, stakeholders from local NGOs and private-sector and community leaders explored early warning and messaging systems to enable early action on a possible disaster unfolding to avert and mitigate its effects.
- Conducted a baseline survey; two mobilization sessions for 50 stakeholders (both women and men); and three trainings for 90 community members (both women and men), including local authorities and community elders from Marka district, on inclusive CBDRM. In the Somali context, inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) means that all (women and men alike) are on board to learn, understand and respond each other's needs before disaster strikes.

### Lessons learned

1. The AWCC project coincided with a year of increased flooding in the Lower Shabelle region and throughout the country that displaced hundreds of thousands of people. As climate-related events continue to intensify, it is clear that the project is essential and must be sustained for the foreseeable future, while inclusive CBDRM should be institutionalised for all of Somalia.
2. Nationally, there are no effective DRR and DRM bodies capable of triggering early warning and action to allow people to prepare for and mitigate the effects of climate crises and the protracted armed conflict is adding to the country's fragility and weakening communities' capacities to withstand and cope with recurrent crises, particularly flooding and droughts.
3. The expectations of local authorities and communities are very focused on emergency responses to crises such as flooding, with little understanding of how proactive efforts, with community support, may be able to avert some of the disastrous effects—and also reduce the demand for project resources to be diverted to unfolding flood crises in the Lower Shabelle region.
4. Although women have emerged as important breadwinners during the last three decades, over the course of the armed conflicts, their participation and recognition from local authorities in decision making is not equitable.

### Moving forward

- Although project uptake has been slow, AWCC is capitalizing on community acceptance by bringing in local authorities, community opinion leaders and the private sector. This buy-in will be leveraged to build inclusive CBDRM committees and develop community action plans in the next project phase.
- AWCC will continue to transform lessons learned toward potential actions to address existing gaps both locally and at a larger scale. Among the problems that require immediate action include poor urban sanitation practices in Marka town and damaged irrigation canals that increase flooding risks, as well as the need for the institutionalization of inclusive CBDRM in Somalia.
- Capitalizing on the visibility earned with Cities Alliance, AWCC has acquired funds and signed a new agreement with UNDP Somalia in September 2020.