Islamic Relief Worldwide

Evaluation Report Rural Integrated Development in Somaliland (RIDES)

Authors: Khadar A. Abdi & Stuart Coupe
March 2019

Contents

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the many people who made this study possible. They would like to thank both Islamic Relief UK and Islamic Relief Somaliland team for their support during the design and implementation of the evaluation. Thanks also to the Islamic Relief staff from different levels for their feedback on the draft evaluation which helped us improve it. In particular, they would like to recognise the continued support from Hamayoon Sultan, Global Monitoring and Evaluation Lead at Islamic Relief Worldwide during the evaluation period.

This project would not have been possible without the commitment and the talent of the data collectors and the transcriber. They formed an effective team, contributing to the improvement of the data collection tools during enumerator training and tool testing. They also gave of their time long after their contracts were finished to provide clarifications and additional information to the report's authors, for which they are grateful. Thanks to those who were interviewed for this report including officials from the Somaliland government, who gave their time, information and viewpoints to the teams so readily.

Finally, we would like to thank the communities for their enthusiastic participation and honest input which enabled the authors to present a clear picture of successes, opportunities and challenges rising from the project.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

RIDES	**Rural Integrated Development in Somaliland**
FFSs	Farmers Field Schools
SHG	Self-Help Groups
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
MoUs	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
VDC	Village Development Committees
HHs	Households
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HHS	Household Hunger Scale
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
USD	United States Dollar
IDPs	Internally Displaced Peoples
CAHWs	Community Animal Health Workers
ECD	Early Child Development
WFP	World Food Programme
PA	School Parent Association
MCH	Mother Child Health
WHO	World Health Organization
MoH	Ministry of Health
HPA	Health Poverty Action
HSC	Hygiene and Sanitation Committees
ToTs	Training of Trainers
NADFOR	National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authorities
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MTR	Mid-Term Review
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
C-EMIS	Community-based Education Management and Information Systems

Executive summary

The project evaluated is the Rural Integrated Development in Somaliland funded by Islamic Relief UK and implemented by Islamic Relief Somalia in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts of Somaliland. The project aim was to reduce rural poverty, contribute to Somalia/Somaliland's national development plans and sustainable development goals. The project target beneficiaries were 6955 households (HHs) with gender distribution (60% female, 40% male) most of whom were deemed vulnerable when the project commenced.

The overall purpose of this final evaluation is "to document and inform the stakeholders (donors, partners and beneficiaries) of the project's relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, the potential impact in relation to project outcomes and the lessons learned, disaggregated per type of beneficiary (men, women, youth)."

The household survey demonstrated the accomplishment of key project outcomes. The project has improved the food security level of the communities as evidenced by the Household Hunger Scale (HHS), Household Diet Diversity Score (HDDS) and coping strategy analysis to overcome daily food insecurity. For example, 93% of the household are 'non-light hunger' compared to only 35% recorded at the baseline. Recently, the households have not engaged with any extreme coping strategies to overcome daily food insecurity, which is a positive indication of improved food security level in the area.

The increased harvest and the booming local businesses as a result of the project investment into the agriculture sector, water and cash grants to women's small business has improved the household income. The findings indicate the average daily income for a household of 6-7 members was 11.2 USD while their expenditure was 8.4 USD per day. The project baseline found that the daily household income was 1 USD and the target was to increase it by 3 USD by the end of the project. The project has successfully achieved the set target as the current average household income stands at 12.7 USD per day.

The construction and rehabilitation of water sources increased the quantity and quality of water for farming, household and animal consumption. The construction and rehabilitation of schools enabled a conducive learning environment for students and teachers.

Though the project has not made major investments in the education sector, the interviews with the school principals and the evaluation team school visits revealed increased school enrolments, retention, reduced school drop outs and improved learning environment for children. The health component of the project has mixed results. The activities were relevant but characterised by significant delays which limited their effectiveness. Again, the health activities were limited but the huge gap in health services in the community meant such minor investments in the health sector were visible.

A distinction needs to be made between immediate and sustainable accomplishment of project outcomes. The core contribution of the RIDES project was the reduction of vulnerability on a sustainable basis. This was achieved through training and the provision of cash grants to 600 vulnerable women in Self-Help Group structures, which were supported with a clear and effective Shariah-compliant revolving fund saving and loans methodology. Furthermore, nearly 1,600 farmers have been provided with training, seeds, irrigation equipment, tillage hours and organic pesticides, enabling them to substantially increase crop production and created a pathway towards a sustainable livelihood. The creation and capacity building of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) means that farmers are equipped to find solutions and develop linkages to input suppliers. Water provision has

also been substantially improved for domestic and productive purposes, having clear benefits for improved hygiene and health in the community. The overall rise in household income has permitted a substantial rise in school attendance. However, all of these gains may be threatened in the case of severe drought, whereby assets are likely to be depleted again, as the communities noted they are overwhelming unprepared prepared for this eventuality.

The project has massively boosted income and food security of the target population of 6,955 households. A question arises concerning whether this could be attributed simply to the good agricultural season in 2018. The baseline survey in 2015 and the endline in 2018 were both conducted at the end of the year, November to December. Rainfall conditions in 2015 and 2018 were very similar, with normal/above normal rainfall being recorded by the Food Agricultural Organisation (FAO). Therefore, the changes in income and food security can be attributed almost entirely to the project as it is the only new factor in operation when comparing the two agricultural seasons. In 2015, only 12% of surveyed households cultivated their field despite good rainfall, due to lack of inputs. A word of caution that is necessary on these findings is that project success was ultimately dependent upon 2018 being a good rainfall season (which it proved to be), so that farmers could take advantage of the training and support packages provided in RIDES. The assumptions built around the success of this project included favourable climatic conditions in the project area, and the good rainfall reinforced project efforts to achieve its objective. Thought needs to be given on how a project such as RIDES can build drought resilient livelihoods to the extent that households in Somaliland are equipped to withstand and prosper, even in the drought seasons that they are going to face in the future.

The increased provision of clean water has greatly boosted the agriculture, livestock, education and health outcomes. This was not achieved by integrated implementation as such but demonstrates the critical importance of water provision to the success of the RIDES project. For example, the FFS with access to irrigation water was a great success whereas the FFS that relied on rainfall was much less effective in boosting knowledge and production.

The additional activities in the project in the field of education and health have had significant short-term impacts including increased attendance, attainment and health indicators, whereas the medium- to-long term impact is likely to be lacking.

Overall permanent water provision and micro-enterprise are the highest impact areas of the project as they can sustain the communities regardless of the unpredictable seasonal and long-term climatic conditions. Sound local structures and linkages to government were put in place to maintain good governance of Self-Help Groups and maintenance of water facilities.

In terms of design and implementation issues, the key learning is that the late implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities and the dependence of some of the agricultural and livelihood outcomes on good rainfall were risks that would need to be minimised in future projects. In a four-year project in Somaliland, at least one year of severe drought is likely and this came to pass in 2016-2017. Therefore, it is not credible to attribute the delays in implementation upon a hazard that was entirely predictable in the context. Future projects in the area should be designed so that progress can be maintained in drought periods with emphasis on drought resilient agriculture and livestock practices. This includes designing flexible budgets for alternative options in drought periods such as conditional/unconditional cash transfers instead of restocking and provision of agricultural outputs.

The project implementation was slow to commence in the first year. The project budget was also affected by Brexit related devaluation which forced a decision to end the project in December 2018 instead of June 2019. The finding of the evaluation is that these factors were less critical in

constraining the overall impact of the project, than the lack of emphasis on DRR in the first years of the project and the absence of alternative implementation strategies in the face of the severe drought of 2016-17.

The RIDES project featured a weak baseline and lacked an explicit theory of change/logframe to explicitly guide sequencing of project activities and establish clear milestones for delivery. There were weaknesses in documentation of complaints, and gender expertise and strategies were lacking. This was compensated for by very strong relationships and trust between Islamic Relief and the communities which enabled effective implementation and durable recovery to occur even after setbacks such as crop failures and loss of livestock during the drought.

Despite these constraints, the RIDES project can be considered to have been an overall success. The project was very well regarded by the Government of Somaliland meaning that a new intervention learning from RIDES1 and building on its achievements will be highly welcomed by all stakeholders in Somaliland.

Project background

Islamic Relief Somalia has been operating in Somalia since 2006 and has responded to conflict and drought affected people through provision of life saving assistance. The Rural Integrated Development in Somaliland (RIDES) project was a four-year project in Somaliland implemented in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts, with spillover to surrounding satellite villages. It was developed following the outcome of a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise in December 2013 and the subsequent focus group discussions (FGDs), open discussions, and a workshop facilitated with the same communities in June and October 2014. The project area is the districts of Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq, which is approximately 80 to 100 kilometres respectively from the main city of Hargeisa in Somaliland. Numbers were estimated at 6,955 households with around 49,620 members1. The project target beneficiaries were set as the 6,955 households with gender distribution (60 per cent female, 40 per cent male) most of whom were vulnerable.

The project focussed on integrated development interventions to tackle the key causes of deprivation which prevail in these areas: drought, caused or exacerbated by climate change; weak community institutions; and the inability of the Somaliland government to provide basic services. RIDES sought to build the capacity and empower communities to increase their income whilst basic services in water, education, health and livelihoods were improved.

In contributing towards its goal of reduced hunger and improved household resilience in two rural districts the project has the following objectives:

Objective 1: Develop improved and resilient livelihoods for 6,955 HHs in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts. Livelihood interventions will be developed to withstand drought enabling community members to improve the production and marketing of crops and livestock on internal and external trading markets, boosting income. Small businesses and casual labourers will receive inputs and skills training to solicit demand for their services.

Objective 2: Increase the quantity and quality of water to at least 5,246 HHs in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq as well as for crop and livestock production. A piped network will run from newly constructed boreholes to provide households with potable water. Berkads and shallow wells will

[1] These estimations are based on community reporting since there is no official census data available for reference.

serve the water needs of crops and livestock. Polluted and salinated streams will also be cleared of chemical intoxicants and waterborne disease agents.

Objective 3: All school-aged children, boys and girls alike, complete the full course of primary education. Parents will be targeted to send their children to school and teachers encouraged to routinely monitor and report absenteeism and truancy. School materials and uniforms will be provided to help those families who cannot afford them as this will encourage families to ensure children are educated. Schools will be furnished with equipment and teaching materials to promote a conducive learning environment.

Objective 4: Reduce the mortality rate of children under five. The drive to increase income, improve the quality of water and introduce new hygiene practices will reduce the mortality and diarrhoeal incidences of children under five. As purchasing power enhances, nutrition and dietary intake will also improve.

Evaluation scope and objectives

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the project on target beneficiaries and provide stakeholders with information on the performance of the project and to provide practical recommendations.

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the project performance and the change for the target beneficiaries and to provide practical recommendations for Islamic Relief's future programming. Considering the dual objectives of accountability and evidence-based learning, the evaluation assessed the results and unintended effects of RIDES' integrated approach and documented lessons across the geographic areas to help reinforce and/or revise the intervention approach and provide recommendations for similar actions.

In addressing the above, specific objectives of the final evaluation are:

a. To assess the relevance/appropriateness of the theory of change of the project: Is the project addressing urgent needs and was it suited to the priorities of the beneficiaries that will make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable communities in terms of access to sustainable livelihood and production?
b. Assess the efficiency: The evaluator will assess whether activities of the project were cost-efficient, were achieved on time and whether they were implemented in the most efficient way in comparison to alternatives.
c. Assess the effectiveness of activities and achievement of targets/outcomes.
d. Assess the project's achievements in relation to its objectives and intended results stated in the project document, logical framework and project implementation plan.
e. Evaluate the impact/change on the intended beneficiaries and how the project has contributed to these changes. Assess the extent to which project outcomes will be sustained beyond the life of the project.
f. Identify the key lesson learned and the promising practice that can be replicated in other projects that have similar interventions.
g. To deliberate on opportunities to improve and inform the design of livelihoods intervention as part of Islamic Relief's Integrated livelihoods initiative (provide recommendations on Islamic Relief's livelihoods programming).

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect relevant data for the study. The quantitative process was used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables – and to transform the results into usable statistics. The qualitative process was used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions, motivations, and dive deeper into the specifics of the evaluation questions. In addition, the findings solicited through extensive desk research were triangulated and used to develop a comparative work of the project achievement against relevant standards. The data collection took place from 28 December 2018 to 3 January 2019.

Qualitative methods

The qualitative method is based on secondary sources and primary data collection as described below:

Desk review and Islamic Relief staff interviews

As part of the desk review work, the consultants reviewed list of documents including: (1) project proposal; (2) project logframe; (3) PRA assessment; (4) mid-term review; (5) interim reports; (6) IRW Somalia annual report; (7) Islamic Relief project integration tool kits; (8) baseline report; (9) activity reports and case studies; (9) budget and financial reports; (10) project plans; (11) and MoUs with relevant institutions. To set the scene and understand more about the project, the consultants had face-to-face meeting with Islamic Relief global M&E lead, the RIDES project staff in Somaliland and Skype interview with the Islamic Relief regional programme coordinator and Somalia country director. The extensive desk review work and the meeting with the relevant project staff allowed the consultants to understand the project description, objectives and activities, the socio-demographic characteristics of the target communities and any other key elements of the context that may be relevant. This analysis helped define the areas to focus on the next steps of the baseline study; and gave the information to finalise the interview guidelines and protocol, as well as to decide on the final details for primary data collection.

Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and case studies/stories of change

In total, twenty Key Informant Interviews were conducted, alongside six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with different project participants and seven case studies were collected from project participants.

Key Informant Interview (KIIs) participants disaggregated by sex					
No	**Participants**	**Sex**		**Participant**	**Sex**
1	Dacarbudhuq school principles	Male	11	Farmers from Abdaal district	Female
2	Abdaal school principle	Male	12	Farmer from Abdaal district	Male
3	Aw-barkhadle school principle	Male	13	Farmers from Dacarbudhuq district	Female
4	Abdaal district Education Commissioner	Male	14	Farmers from Dacarbudhuq district	Male
5	Dacarbudhuq health worker	Male	15	Regional Director for Ministry of Agriculture, Maroodijeex, Somaliland	Male

6	Abdaal Health worker	Male	16	Director of Teacher Training College, Maroodijeex, Somaliland	Male
7	Dacarbudhuq district general secretary	Male	17	Director of Planning and Coordination, Ministry of Water Development	Male
8	Abdaal district commissioner	Male	18	Director animal health section at ministry of livestock	Male
9	Abdaal religious leader/imam	Male	19	Commissioner, National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority	Male
10	Dacarbudhuq religious leader/imam	Male	20	Director of planning and research at National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority	Male

No	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Male	Female
1	FGD for the Abdaal Village Development Committees	10	3
2	FGD for the Dacarbudhuq Village Development Committees	10	4
3	FGD for the Abdaal Self-Help Group	SHG are exclusive for women	12
4	FGD for the Dacarbudhuq Self-Group	SHG are exclusive for women	14
5	FGD for the ordinary project participants	7	8
6	FGD for the vocational trainees	4	1

The project works in 19 villages under two districts. Each village has six Village Development Committees (VDCs): agriculture, DRR, Education, Health, Water, Hygiene and livestock. The participants of the VDC discussions were representatives from all six. The FGDs, KIIs and case studies were used to get detailed information on specific sectors of the project and to triangulate with the quantitative data. The discussion focused on water, agriculture, health, education, livestock, microcredit, income, gender, droughts, climate change and other cross-cutting issues relevant to the evaluation.

Quantitative methods

The quantitative survey involved sampling of 356 household with sex distribution (60 per cent female, 40 per cent male) from 19 villages of the project area. The ratio of female to male respondents is based on the distribution of men and women set out in the project.

Sampling

The project target population was 6,955 HHs with sex distribution (60 per cent female and 40 per cent male) most of whom were vulnerable in 19 communities in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq in Somaliland. Considering the distribution between males and females and accounting for the time and budget drawn, the evaluation's sample size was drawn using the below formula:

$$\frac{\frac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

Where N= population size, e = Margin of error (percentage in decimal form), z = z-scores and p = population proportion (0.5 used for sample size needed). Computing the sample size at 95 per cent confidence level and margin of error of 5.06 per cent (0.0506 in decimal form) gave a sample size of 356 households in the project areas.

When the sample size was determined, the evaluation employed stratified sampling, divided the population into groups based on geography (in this case, the villages that the project works in), then within each stratum/village, the household survey respondents were randomly selected. To avoid sampling bias, the sampling frame considered the relevant socio-economic characteristics of the population including wealth ranking, age, disability, livelihood types (pastoral, agropastoral, trader, etc) and so on.

Even though the project works in 19 villages, there are only 12 main villages while the other seven are extensions of these. Although the survey covered all 19 villages, the field planning was based with the 12 main villages for access purposes. The below table shows number of household respondents from each village and their sex distribution. The number of household respondents in each village is proportional to its population size.

Table 1

HHs sampling disaggregated by geographical location and sex				
No	Villages	# HHs respondents	Female	Male
Saaxil region – Abdaal district				
1	Abdaal	70	42	28
2	Hamaas	13	8	5
3	Maqaaxida-inanta	8	5	3
4	Dhalacad	6	4	2
5	Madheera	33	20	13
6	Dohoguban	22	13	9
	Sub-total	152	92	60
Maroodijeex region – Dacarbudhuq district				
1	Dacarbudhuq	55	33	22
2	Dheenta	28	17	11
3	Jaleelo	38	23	15
4	Dararwayne	35	21	14
5	Aw-barkhadle	26	16	10
6	Dhubato	22	13	9
	Subtotal	204	123	81
Grand total		356	215	141

Gender aspect of the evaluation and training of the enumerators

At every stage of the evaluation, a deliberate effort was used to ensure that the process was gender sensitive. Many Somali rural women do not feel comfortable to discuss their personal and family issues with male strangers. Hence, we included two experienced female enumerators in the data collection team to ensure that female respondents were confident and honest about their responses. The data collection team attended a two day training on 25-26 December to fully understand and contextualise the tools and to pilot before actual data collection took place. As part of this training, they received a session on gender issues and methodologies for conducting research with women. The consultant has also discussed with the teams that interviewing women about their personal information requires care and diplomacy and shared methods to mitigate potentially difficult situations that may come along their way. For example, in Somali culture the husband will not allow a stranger male to interview his wife in private. Therefore, the training discussed how to balance respondents' privacy and avoid any potential threats from husbands.

The survey data was collected and analysed in a sex-disaggregated manner, to understand how issues play out in different gender groups. Separate focus group discussions were also conducted with women Self-Help Groups (SHG) to ensure that each group felt confident in the discussion to delve into specific issues.

Digital data collection and quality assurance

The evaluation team leader is an expert with digital data collection, and he digitised the survey tool and uploaded it onto tablets for data collection. The digital data collection reduced errors and advanced accountability in the data collection process by recording the location the interview took place, taking picture of the respondent and recording the respondent's voice. The digital data collection also recorded the beginning and the end of the interview hence automatically calculating how long it took the enumerator to complete the questionnaire. This allowed the team leader to assess the quality of data collected and adjusted while data collection is taking place.

The evaluation team leader spent the entire time in the field with the enumerators during the field work. This allowed the team leader to upload all the completed surveys to the server each day, ensuring that any issues could be followed up with the respective respondent the next day.

Ethical considerations

The evaluation team (including consultants) followed the ethical standards and code of conduct set out in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.[2] This included voluntary participation,

[2] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

participants' informed consent, impartiality, and confidentiality of all information obtained during the data collection process.

Challenges and limitations of design and implementation of the study

Challenges	Description	Mitigation strategies
No project logical framework or theory of change	There was no standard and consistent version of the project logical framework or theory of change against which to measure the project's progress. There were multiple versions with different indicators and targets. This complicated the evaluation methodology to measure the project change (performance and impact).	The evaluation team re-constructed logical framework from the available project materials at the inception phase and shared with Islamic Relief UK team for review. However, as the evaluators explored further, it was discovered that this reconstructed log-frame would be of little utility as it contained some elements of frameworks in the project document that were never actually used or followed in the project. The evaluation strategy then changed to examine how the reporting structures and output/outcome targets evolved in practice.
Baseline data	The baseline report was not comprehensive and there were no baseline values for most of the project indicators. The baseline report was very quantitative and did not contextualise those reported values. The baseline was not done with consistent project indicators against which progress could be measured.	The evaluation team created a reference year in the survey tool for the indicators without baseline data. In place of this, the team conducted a desk review and held discussions to understand the context in areas where there were no further details. There are instances in the report where the evaluation team could not establish a reference year or record a baseline value to measure against the current evaluation finding. Hence, the findings were triangulated with qualitative data from the project documents to assess impact against reported interventions.
Project interim reports	The project interim reports run until June 2018, with the December 2018 Final Report being completed after the evaluation.	The evaluation team conducted a workshop with project staff and wider Islamic Relief Somaliland staff to understand more about

	This meant that there was no monitoring report available to the evaluators on the period June-December 2018 in which huge project investment was made and the project exit strategy was implemented.	what has been achieved in this period. In addition, the consultants triangulated the information received from the staff with the project participants for accountability purposes.
Project implementation timeline	Significant project activities, especially in Health, Education and DRR took place in the last six months of the project life cycle.	Same as above

Profiles of the respondents

Before exploring in-depth the findings of the study, it is useful to provide a snapshot of the respondents in terms of their demographic characteristics and socio-economic information. This information is useful to contextualise people's reported ideas on the project interventions and impact on their lives.

Household demographics

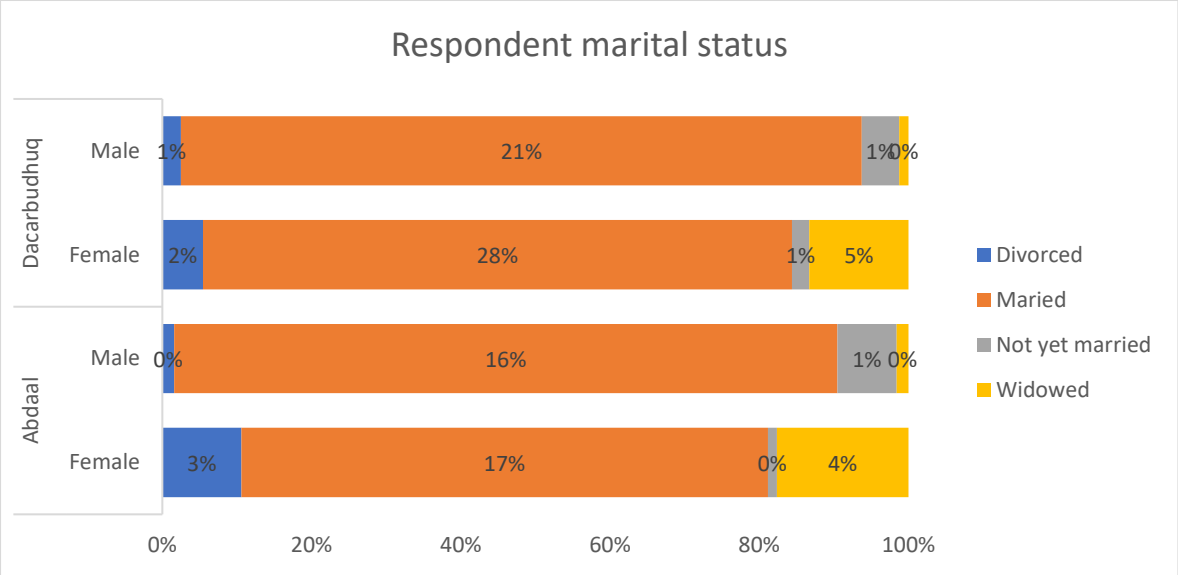
Table 2

Indicator	**All**	**Abdaal**	**Dacarbudhuq**
Male respondents (%)	40	60	40
Female respondents (%)	60	40	60
Female-headed HHs (%)	60	51	49
Male-headed HHs (%)	40	41	59
Average age of the respondent (years)	44	43	45
Average size of the HHs	7	6	7
Percentage of HHs respondent with special needs (%)	3	1.5	1.5

Respondent marital status

81 per cent are married, 10 per cent are widowed, 5 per cent are divorced and 4 per cent are not yet married. The number of women who are widowed are higher than the men. The number of divorced women is also higher than the men while the percentage of not yet married is equally split between men and women and across the two districts.

Figure 1



Respondent literacy

The literacy rate of the project population is very low. 63 per cent of the population is illiterate meaning that only 37 per cent are literate. Dacarbudhuq's population is more literate than Abdaal population. This literacy level is likely to negatively affect the growth of the local economy.

Table 3

Respondent literacy disaggregated by level of education and district

Districts	Illiterate	Literate	Total
Abdaal	26%	16%	42%
Madrassa/Qur'anic school only	0%	2%	2%
Never attended school	26%	4%	30%
Not completed primary	0%	6%	6%
Primary	0%	3%	3%
Secondary	0%	0%	0%
Vocational training	0%	0%	0%
Dacarbudhuq	38%	21%	58%
Madrassa/Qur'anic school only	0%	1%	1%
Never attended school	38%	6%	44%
Not completed primary	0%	7%	7%
Primary	0%	3%	3%
Secondary	0%	3%	3%
University undergraduate	0%	1%	1%
Total	63%	37%	100%

Current main occupation

Using the relative wealth ranking[3] 82 per cent of the population are middle, 13 per cent are poor and only 4 per cent are better-off. 40 per cent of the female-headed households are engaged in self-

[3] Using scale of 1-9, the respondents were asked where they think they fit in the ladder relative to the household their village. 1-3 being the worst, 4-6 being middle and 7-9 being the better off.

employment activities while 33 per cent of the male-headed households are engaged in agricultural related activities. It is also worth mentioning, that according to the below table, only 4 per cent of the households in the project areas consider themselves as unemployed.

Table 4

Household by main occupation	Better off	Middle	Poor	Total
Female-headed household	**1%**	**40%**	**9%**	**50%**
Agricultural day labour	0%	0%	1%	1%
Farming	0%	2%	0%	2%
Livestock and farming	0%	1%	0%	1%
Livestock/poultry related work	0%	1%	0%	1%
Other wage labour	0%	5%	1%	5%
Salaried worker	0%	1%	0%	1%
Self-employment	1%	30%	7%	38%
Unemployed	0%	1%	1%	2%
Male-headed household	**3%**	**43%**	**4%**	**50%**
Agricultural day labour	0%	11%	1%	12%
Farming	2%	17%	2%	20%
Livestock and farming	0%	1%	0%	1%
Livestock/poultry related work	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other wage labour	0%	1%	0%	1%
Salaried worker	0%	3%	0%	3%
Self-employment	1%	8%	1%	10%
Unemployed	0%	1%	1%	2%
Unemployed (but can't work)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	**4%**	**82%**	**13%**	**100%**

Findings and analysis

The project has four objectives which are organised into three outcomes in the results framework. In this findings and analysis section the reader will find systematic reporting of progress against the overall project objective, outcomes, DAC criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance and Core Humanitarian Standards. The overall project objective focuses on food security while the outcomes discuss income/livelihoods, social infrastructure (water, education and health) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Based on the findings, the report concludes with recommendations and conclusions for different stakeholders.

Overall objective of the project: Improved levels of food security for 6,955 HH in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq

According to United Nations Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."[4] To examine the extent to which the project has achieved its goal and objective on the issue of hunger and food security, the evaluation assessed household food security levels using different approaches; the HHS for food access, HDDS and coping strategies for food availability. When analysing food security in the project areas, it is important to recall that those estimations refers only to households, excluding government and other private enterprise agricultural production. Therefore, the present analysis of availability refers exclusively to household production.

The HHS is appropriate to use in areas of substantial food insecurity. In those settings, the HHS can be used to assess the food security situation in an area to provide evidence for the developmental and implementation of policies and programmes that address food insecurity and hunger. The HHS consists of three questions and three frequencies that, when administered in a population-based household survey, allow for estimating the percent of households affected by three different severities of household hunger: 1) Little to no household hunger; 2) Moderate household hunger; and 3) Severe household hunger.

[4] http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/en/

The evaluation included HHS in the survey and the results indicate that 93 per cent of the households consider themselves as food secure, six per cent consider themselves as moderately food secure and one per cent consider themselves to be severely food insecure.

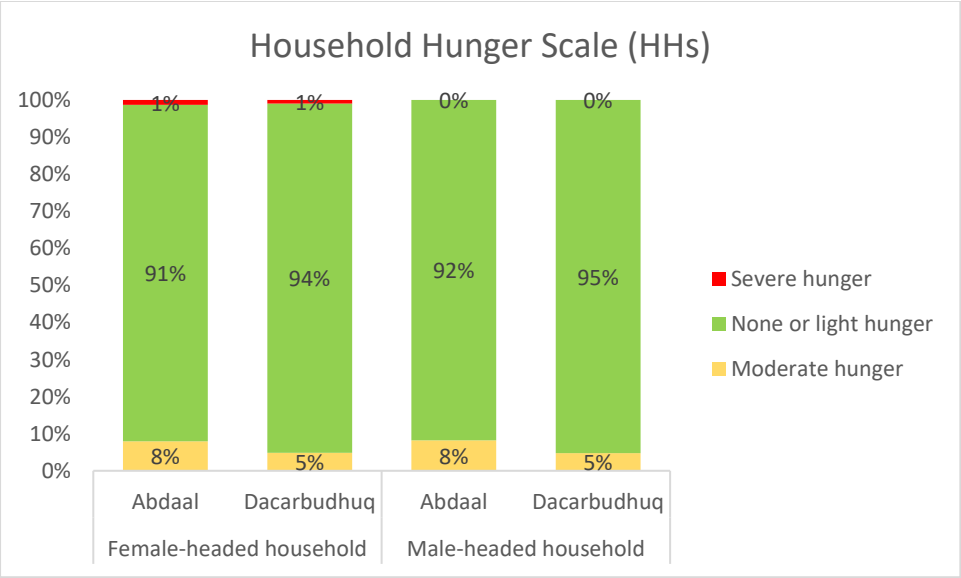
Table 5 Comparison between final evaluation and baseline Household Hunger Scale

	Final evaluation December 2018	Baseline November 2015
Categories	% HHs respondents	%HHs respondent
Moderate hunger	6	15
None or light hunger	93	35
Severe hunger	1	50
Grand Total	100	100

When compared to the baseline findings, the results of the final evaluation survey show that the project has made an enormous difference to the lives of the target communities. In November 2015 when the baseline was conducted, only 35 per cent of the households considered themselves to be food secure, 15 per cent considered themselves as moderately food secure and 50 per cent considered themselves to be severely food insecure. The increased food security of the households is attributed to the huge investment the project made into the agriculture, water, micro-credit and restocking the households who lost their livestock in the severe droughts in 2016-17. Islamic Relief is the only non-governmental organization investing in those sectors in the community from 2015 to date. The government also lacks the capacity and the resources to meet the existing needs of the local communities. Hence it is a fair judgement to associate improved food security of the household to the project investment in different sectors.

The HHS data is disaggregated by type of the household and district to compare household food security levels among families. From Figure 2, there is no major difference in the food security level between the female-headed households disaggregated by district. There is slight increase in the number of female-headed households who consider themselves as moderately food secure (eight per cent) and those who consider themselves as severely food insecure (1.3 per cent) in Abdaal district compared to others.

Figure 2



The increased household food security level of the project areas as indicated by the categorical HHS can be explained in the following ways:

1. Cash grants
2. Farming inputs, such as training, equipment and seeds
3. Access to water
4. Livestock inputs

The project provided cash grants to 600 women to invest in small businesses which increased their household income and purchasing power. 1,600 farmers received support from Islamic Relief including training, seeds, tractor/tillage hours, and farm equipment. A borehole was drilled in Dacarbudhuq, a borehole was rehabilitated in Abdaal, berkad was constructed in Maqaaxida-inanta and eight more shallow wells were constructed: five in Abdaal and three in Dacarbudhuq. 23,862 livestock were treated in Dacarbudhuq district. 225 livestock were provided to families who lost their animals in the droughts. The ultra-push strategy of increased investment on water availability, agriculture, livestock, and cash grants by Islamic Relief in a short period of time helped the farmers, women, small business holders and the wider community to realise increased food production and increased purchasing power.

This evaluation was conducted in December 2018 during the harvesting season for the project communities. This means there was more food available for household farmers and in the markets. The HHS uses a 4-week (30-day) recall period for collecting data and the data used for calculating the HHS was collected in the harvesting season. Hence the HHS score is more likely to be more severe than the dry season. Due to increased food production, Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts send their surplus produce to Hargeisa and Buroa, the two largest cities in Somaliland. The income received from the produce sales also gave the households the ability to purchase more diversified food from the market for consumption.

The project has provided an investment of £331,970 to the women's Self-Help Groups. These women were the most vulnerable and food insecure in the community at the start of the project. There were 20 groups, each with 30 members across the two project districts. Each woman received $715 and invested in small businesses. This intervention became very successful and changed the lives of the beneficiaries and their children. Some women procured a variety of food items from the nearby cities including Hargeisa and Berbera and sold them in the local market. They also purchased some of the produce from local farmers that otherwise could have been sent to nearby cities and sold them on in the local market. The increased income of the household enabled them to choose from available food groups when buying food in the local markets. Such a large injection serves as the minimum level of resources needed for an increase in household food security level.

The impact of the project interventions was multiplied by the fact that the rainfall conditions of the 2018 agricultural season were favourable. Since the end of Somalia's severe prolonged drought from late 2016 to late 2017, significant improvement in food security outcomes has occurred throughout the country[5] and specifically the project areas, driven by above-average 2018 Gu season rainfall and large-scale humanitarian assistance. The livestock deaths have decreased and livestock body conditioned improved. This increased value of the livestock has enabled households to purchase a variety of items including food using the income realised from the sale of one animal.

In 2015, Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq were classified as 'stressed' (IPC Phase II) meaning that the majority of the population has minimal food consumption, cannot afford essential non-food expenditure and is unable to maintain its livelihoods.[6] Comparing the current food level security to

[5] Somalia Food Security Outlook, November 2018 - FSNAU

[6] Analysis of RIDES project proposal

that of 2015, the project has significantly improved the lives of the communities in the project areas. The project area is classified as 'minimal' (according to IPC phase I). However, one must be cautious about the sustainability of the current food security level in the project areas.

Somaliland has endured regular cycles of drought for the past twenty years, which have intensified since 2015 in terms of consecutive rainfalls failure. Jama, a farmer from Dhalacad village said, "We used to have droughts before, but they would be 10 or 15 years apart, now every year we have severe drought which is worsening year after year." Data from the household survey indicated that 62 per cent of the households are not prepared for future shocks, which suggests that these frequent droughts are an alarming situation for continued food security in the area. This means the project food security gains are very vulnerable and unsustainable if further investment is not made to the critical infrastructure and strategies that insulate the communities from the shocks of the recurrent droughts.

The evaluation administered the Household Diet Diversity Score (HDDS) with the survey population to measure how many of the 12 food groups are consumed during a week reporting period. Over a seven-day period, households reported that they consumed foods from fewer than four of the 12 groups, meaning they are classify as having low dietary diversity. The following set of 12 groups[7] was used to calculate the HDDS: (1) cereals (2) fish and seafoods (3) root and tubers (4) pulses/legumes/nuts (5) vegetables (6) milk and milk products (7) fruits (8) oil/fats (9) meat, poultry, offal (10) sugar/honey (11) eggs (12) and others/miscellaneous. The evaluation survey questionnaire listed different foods under some food groups to better reflect the most common foods in the project areas. From the below table, only 0.6 per cent of the households consumed nine different groups, which is the highest food group consumption recorded. Only 31 per cent of the households consumed foods from three or more food groups over a seven day period while 69 per cent of the households consumed foods from two or fewer food groups, hence classified as having low dietary diversity.

Table 6 Food groups consumed by households

District by gender	**Number of food groups**									
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Total
Abdaal	4.2%	27.3%	2.5%	5.6%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	41.4%
Female-headed household	1.4%	14.4%	1.1%	3.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%
Male-headed household	2.8%	13.0%	1.4%	2.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.3%
Dacarbudhuq	5.6%	31.8%	8.5%	8.2%	1.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%	58.3%
Female-headed household	4.5%	14.9%	3.4%	3.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	28.7%
Male-headed household	1.1%	16.9%	5.1%	4.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	29.6%
Grand Total	9.9%	59.4%	11.0%	13.8%	3.1%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%	100.0%

The findings indicate that the food groups that almost every household consumes are cereals; sugar; pulses; oils/fats on average, while fruits, vegetables and fish are the least consumed. Most of the heavily consumed foods in the cereal food groups are pasta, rice, wheat flour, bread, pancakes,

[7] This set of food groups is derived from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (Food and Agricultural Organization. Food Composition Table for Africa. Rome, Italy, 1970. As viewed at www.fao.org/docrep/003/X6877E/X6877E00.htm.

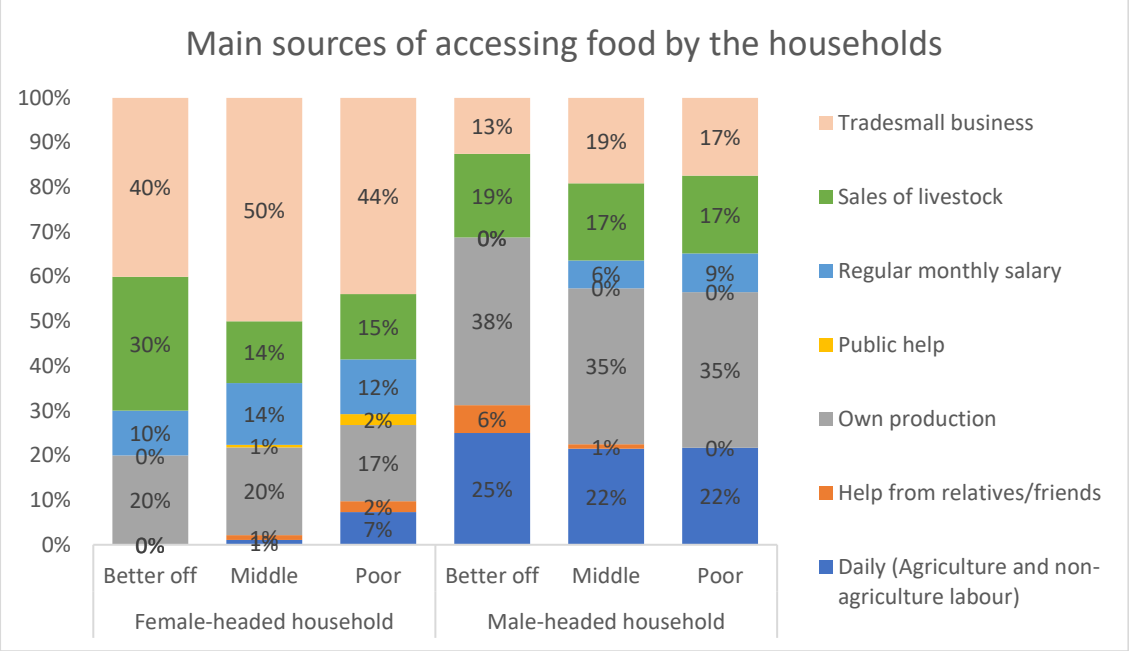
sorghum and maize. Wheat, sorghum and maize are locally produced, imported from neighbouring Ethiopia and/or supplied by World Food Programme (WFP) as part of humanitarian assistance. Hence, they are available in the local markets at cheaper prices. Rice and pasta are imported from Asia at a cheaper price and is part of the average Somali cuisine. Sugar is also imported and is used to make tea which is usually taken with the breakfast and drunk on its own at break times (known as Qaxwe in Somali) and afternoon (known as Casariya in Somali) to drive energy. Fruits and vegetables are produced from the project areas, but they are sent to the bigger cities in exchange for cash to be spent on most needed goods and services for the household. Fish is rarely consumed despite the proximity of both communities to the port of Berber. The FGD participants mentioned that fish is very expensive compared to meat except in coastal areas i.e. Berbera where it is cheaper. Communities also lack knowledge on how to store and prepare it. There is also a concern of swallowing bones especially for younger children when consuming fish, therefore households with young ones sometimes opt to purchase the canned tuna fish with no bones.

In general, any increase in household dietary diversity reflects an improvement in the household diet. Also, an increase in the average number of different food groups consumed provides a quantifiable measure to improved household food access. We therefore calculated the average HDDS of the project community dividing the sum of the HDDs by the total number of households. The community average HDDS is 2.53. This means on average, each household in the community consumed food from three food groups in the last seven days.

In order to use this indicator to assess the improvements of the communities' food security level, we need to compare the value of the HDDS to some meaningful target level of diversity. Unfortunately, normative data on 'ideal' or 'target' levels of diversity are usually not available. Hence, we use the average diversity of the 33 per cent of the household with the highest diversity (upper tercile of diversity) as a target. The target diversity's HDDS is 4.06 meaning that these household consumed from more than four food groups in the last seven days. There is no significant difference between the communities' average HDDS and the target diversity score, which means that they were consuming their food from nearly the equal number food groups in the past seven days. This is good in as it suggests the community food security gains are inclusive across different wealth groups. Nevertheless, it can also be concerning as their food group choices are limited due to availability, which can negatively impact their nutritional requirements for productive lives.

It appears engaging with small businesses including small shops, restaurants, grocery stores, livestock, cafeteria, kitchenware stores and farming is the main source to access food for all the wealth groups of female-headed households. The second main source to access food for female-headed families varies with the wealth groups: for better-off families the sales of livestock are key, whereas for middle and poor families, it is more likely to be farming. For male-headed households, farming was found to be the main source to access food in all wealth groups, while daily (agricultural and non-agricultural) labour is the second main source to access food. Sale of livestock is the third most popular source to access food by the male-headed household in all wealth groups.

Figure 3



The findings indicate that the sectors the project was investing in (such as livestock, agriculture, cash grant/revolving fund for SHGs) were key sources to access food for the households. It is also interesting that for female-headed households, 40 per cent of the better-off, 50 per cent of the middle and 44 per cent of the poor are involved in small businesses as their main source of accessing food; while for male-headed households 63 per cent of the better-off, 58 per cent of the middle, and the poor are involved in agriculture as their main source of accessing food. This indicates that the project has hugely contributed to the food security of the target communities.

Coping strategy or mechanisms to overcome daily food insecurity

In the focus group discussions, the participants were asked what the common coping strategies are to overcome daily food insecurity. The participants mentioned that daily food insecurity has significantly reduced in the project areas in the last two years. However, in cases where households experience daily food insecurity, they usually use their savings or borrow money from relatives or neighbours. More extreme coping strategies of sending family members to live with relatives, adults eating less so that children to could eat more, and selling household articles (utensils, blankets, jewellery) have not been common in the project areas recently. This is another good indication that the food security level of the project communities has significantly improved since the project has started in the area.

Outcome one: To improve the total income/livelihoods of 6,954 households in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts from the base line to $3 by four years of the project implementation

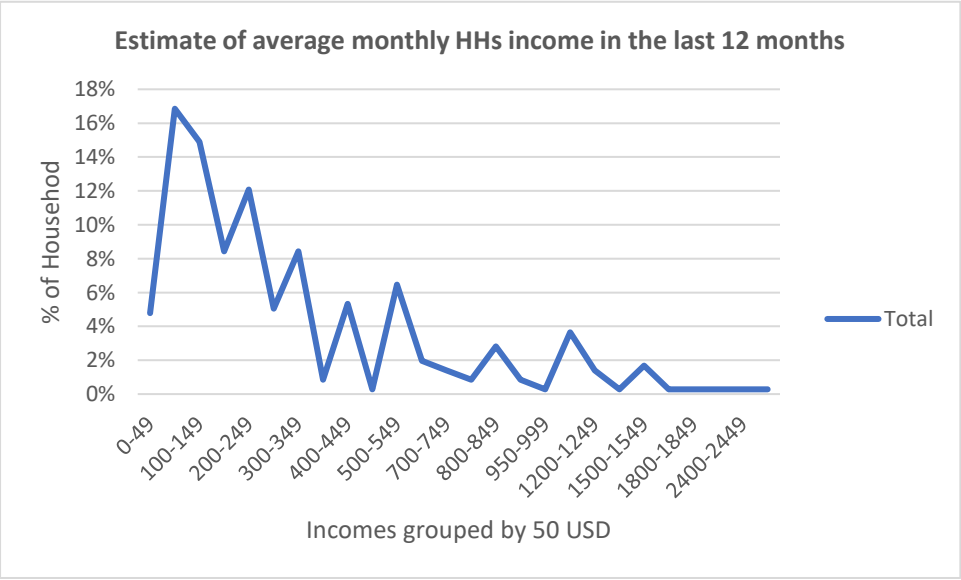
Increased income is one of the main determinants of accessing food. The project aim was to increase the income of 6,955 household in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts. The respondents were asked about their average household income and expenditure in the last 12 months.

Table 7

Average monthly income and expenditure (USD) in the last 12 months				
	Average # of HHs	Income	Expenditure	Variance
Female-headed household	6	306	210	95
Moderately stable (No income for six of the last 12 months)	7	180	159	22
Stable	7	174	123	51
Unstable	6	421	276	145
Male-headed household	7	368	295	73
Moderately stable (No income for six of the last 12 months)	6	199	210	-10
Stable	7	247	180	66
Unstable	7	470	366	104
Total	7	337	253	84

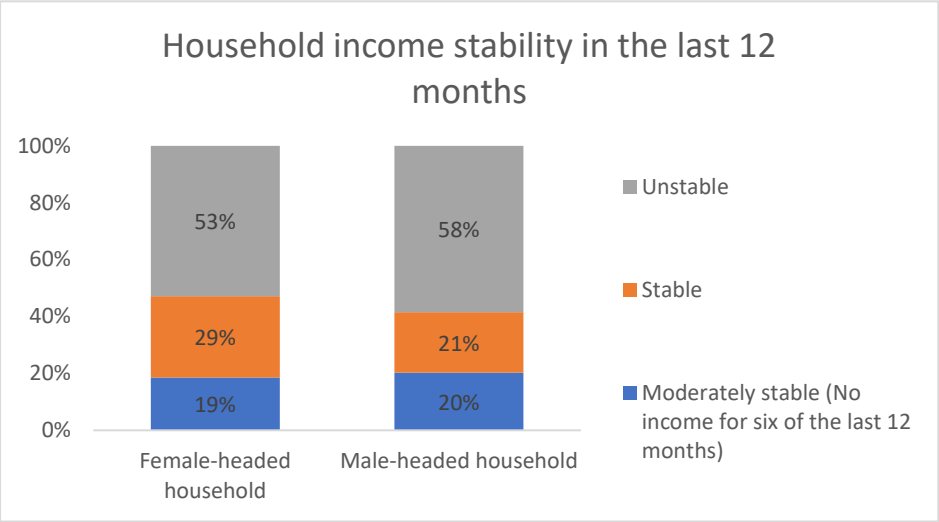
The average monthly income for a household in the community in the last 12 months is $337 while the average monthly expenditure in the last 12 months was $253. An average household has made $84 monthly savings in the past 12 months. The average daily income for a household of 6-7 members on average was $11.2 while their expenditure was $8.4 per day. However, the household income standard deviation is $399.6 which is very high. This means that the household income is dispersed over a wider range of values. To contextualise this, the household monthly income is presented in a line chart. The project baseline found out that the daily household income was $1 while the target was to increase the daily household income by $3 by the end of the project. The project has successfully achieved the set target as the current daily household income stands $12.7 on average.

Figure 4



From figure 4, it shows that only five per cent of the project area household earn less than $50 per month while 95 per cent of the household earn more than $50 per month. The project has enabled 95 per cent of the household to earn $3 or more per day which exceeds the baseline target.

Figure 5



The survey participants were also asked a perception question of how stable/unstable their household income has been over the previous 12 months. 58 per cent of the male-headed household and 53 per cent of the female-headed household had unstable incomes in the last 12 months; 20 per cent of male-headed household and 19 per cent of female-headed household had moderately stable incomes in the last 12 months; while only 21 per cent of male-headed households and 29 per cent of female headed households had stable incomes in the last 12 months. The large number of households facing unstable income in the communities is likely to threaten the improved food security level. Income fluctuates and varies with the seasons. Income is usually stable in the rainy season and very unstable in the dry seasons. During the rainy seasons agricultural harvest and livestock body conditions improve leading to an increase in their market sale prices; thus helping to secure a stable monthly income for the household. The increased household income resulting from the sale of agricultural produce and livestock increases their purchasing power, market activities and the local economy improves. In the dry seasons, agricultural harvest decreases, and livestock body conditions deteriorate. This reduces the household income; the local economy weakens and the food insecurity level increases in the area.

Dahir is an agro-pastoralist from the Dheenta village and recalls the 2016-17 drought, “Three consecutive rainfalls failed, the livestock died because there was no food to eat, crops failed because there was no rain and the local economy weakened. People couldn’t get money to buy food and started moving into IDP camps to seek assistance. The situation was very bad, and some people lost their lives.”

Again, this indicate that majority of the project communities derive their livelihood from agriculture and livestock and if these sectors are vulnerable in dry seasons, people’s food security is also under threat.

Cash grants/revolving funds

As part of the strategy to increase income to achieve sustainable food security in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts, the project organised 600 women via SHGs across the project areas. The project coordinated 20 women groups with around 30 members each in Madheera, Laforuug, Maqaaxida-inanta, Dacarbudhuq, Dhubato, Dheenta, Abdaal, Jaleelo, Dararwayne, Hunbawayne, Macaaneeye,

Dohoguban, Abdaal and Hamaas villages. Each group has selected a chairwoman, treasurer and secretary. The chairwomen steer the leadership and strategic decision-making processes of the group in consultation with the secretary. The treasurer is responsible for financial books and ensures that all accounts are up to date. SHGs received financial management and business skills training and were given pass books to record their monthly and daily transactions.

The selected members were ultra-poor and from extremely vulnerable households. A rigorous due diligence exercise was undertaken to ensure that the selection process was fair and thorough. The project coordinated with district commissioners, community leaders, religious leaders and the wider community in selecting SHG members. The careful consideration undertaken at the set-up stage paid off in the implementation stage as there has not been any conflict, dispute or issues between the parties involved. The selected members were also vetted regarding their integrity and readiness to start business.

The selected members submitted business proposals. Their proposals were assessed, and the necessary feedback was given to make sure that their ideas are competitive and marketable. When they implemented their business ideas, the project has closely monitored the progress and provided any support required in a timely manner.

Group structure and governance

The women's groups are well-organised and elect their leadership through a democratic process. At the end of each year, they hold a meeting and elect the leadership team who will lead the group for the next year. The process is very consultative, transformative and empowering. This is not only an economic platform for women but rather a leadership one, as women are trained and likely to help transition other community leadership structures, which are currently male dominated. The women's groups believe that they can achieve more and change their communities through collective action rather than individual action. Someone from a SHG mentioned a Somali proverb which literally means: "One finger can't wash a face properly." Hence, there is strong sense of group spirit between the members. The women's groups do not only exist for economic purposes but also for public matters including community sanitation, supporting funeral services, sick people and other vulnerable women in the community. By-laws exist in all Self-Help women groups which clearly outline the group structures and other key issues to avoid disputes. Islamic Relief and the local authorities have given women's groups enough space to innovate and try new ideas while providing an oversight in the smooth running of the activities. This is a key aspect of their sustainability, as women's groups are more likely to develop their own indigenous solutions for issues rather than relying on those potentially imposed by outside actors such as Islamic Relief or the local authorities.

Managing funds at group level

The project provided funds twice to SHGs in the project area. The fund is owned by the group and it revolves within the group members. In the first year of the project, each woman was given $475 meaning that each group received $14,250. The members invested in small businesses including small shops, restaurants, grocery stores, livestock, cafeteria, kitchenware stores and farming. Each woman returned $40 to the treasurer for 11 months, except the last month where only $35 was returned. That means each woman has returned the principle amount of $475 to the group treasurer and retained the profit from her business. At end of the year, the treasurer returned the principle amount of $475 to each woman to reinvest. This was further topped up with additional $240 from the project making a lump sum of $715 for each woman. In the second year, each woman deposited $60 per month for 11 months and $55 in the last month. The second time, each woman was paid back $715 to reinvest in her business. The third cycle is ongoing, and they intend to continue doing it. Each woman is running a successful business and deposits the principle amount on monthly basis, enabling her to use the profit for her daily household needs. Interestingly, women

also run another saving scheme alongside the project. Each woman deposits 20,000 Somaliland shillings equivalent to $2 each month and they use to pay group expenses including rent, meetings and so on.

The group fund management strategy is a triumph of effectiveness and must be studied more for further learning, in order to replicate in other countries where Islamic Relief implements similar interventions. In addition to the fund management and governance strategies mentioned above, the selection criteria used identified the right participants for the SHGs.

Impact of the funds on the lives of the recipients

The SHG participants were asked what the biggest difference in their life was since Islamic Relief provided them with financial assistance. Below are anonymised responses from the participants.

Table 12

District	**Response**
Abdaal	"Previously, I was very poor. After Islamic Relief assisted us, I was able to pay the school fees for my children, take my children to the doctor and pay the charges and earn my daily living. I am feeling big difference in my life, all praise due to Allah."
Abdaal	"I am a member of Tawakal group. Prior to Islamic Relief's assistance, I was very poor as well. Now, I am a shop owner. I pay my children's schools fees. My children's father died, so I am raising orphans."
Abdaal	"I am a divorced mother of six children. I buy and resell livestock in the local market. I use the money to pay for my household and children needs. I am grateful to Islamic Relief."
Dacarbudhuq	"My life changed for the better. I have a small shop and cafeteria. I do earn my living. I pay the school fees of my children."
Dacarbudhuq	"I am a tailor. Before the financial assistance given to me, I was poor. Afterwards, my life became better. I sent my children to the school because I can afford to pay their school fees now."
Dacarbudhuq	"I had a small shop which didn't produce much profit. I have a big family. I could only send some of my children to the school. But now, all praise due to Allah, I can afford to send them all to the school. We are very thankful to Islamic Relief."
Dacarbudhuq	"I sent one of my children to the university. One of my children now works at an NGO based in the country. I used the assistance from Islamic Relief to buy livestock. My livestock reproduce every year and I resell them. I am very thankful to Islamic Relief."
Dacarbudhuq	"Previously, I had a tailor shop. After I got the money from Islamic Relief, I opened small clothes shop and my business is running well."
Dacarbudhuq	"When received assistance from Islamic Relief, I became a butcher and would slaughter a sheep or a goat. But now I slaughter a camel (laughs). I pay now my children school fees. Previously, our daily living was less $1, but it now rose to $2-3. All praise due to Allah."
Dacarbudhuq	"I am a butcher as well. I have nine orphan children. Three of my children were going to the school before but that number rose to five now. I also buy and resell livestock. All praise due to Allah."

Dacarbudhuq	"I started selling clothes at my house by instalments. Now I opened a small shop near my house. I send my children to the school."
Dacarbudhuq	"I have a shop and a cafeteria. My economy status changed for the better. We are thankful to Islamic Relief."

It is becoming apparent that cash grant/revolving fund has not only empowered women financially but also promoted gender equality and improved household food security. There is evidence that SHG participants are able to demand their rights and community level. A female beneficiary from Abdaal district said, "district leadership team consult with the SHGs when making decisions on different issues in our community." The financial empowerment has also given women the confidence to speak publicly on issues that affect their lives and participate in community decision-making circles. Women participants are also able to make meaningful choices on how to spend their income, which is a very strong indicator for improved women's economic and social rights. The SHGs are among the institutions the project created which will remain after the project ends and will continue delivering the stream of benefits the project created for the women participants.

Another member of the Abdaal Women SHG and said, "My business went through a lot of ups and downs, but today it is in the best position. I am a tailor and I earn a good enough living from it. I am responsible for four kids, my elderly mother and my husband who has a mental illness. Previously, I had the most problems with my kids who demanded pocket money which I couldn't afford. Now, I give them the pocket money and pay their school fees. I hope that the Islamic Relief project is extended for a further five years. We are very thankful to Islamic Relief."

The RIDES project has set microcredit guidelines with indicators to assess the performance of the SHGs. As part of the of the evaluation process, a check list was run to assess the performance of sampled SHGs in the project areas.

Table 13

	checklist for SHG		
No	Areas to be assessed	Standard	Findings/findings
1	Group size	20-30	There are 20 SHGs each with membership of 30 participants.
2	Participants wealth group	Poor	The participants were very poor but now are better off due to assistance from the project.
3	Frequency of the meetings per month	Four	The members in each group meet more than four times per month.
4	Time of the meetings in a day	Afternoon or evening	The groups confirmed that they usually meet in the afternoon when they have more spare time for discussion.
5	Meeting attendance rate in a group	90% of the members	The attendance rate is very high – almost 100% of the participants.
6	Frequency of members contribution per month	Monthly	The members pay group contribution monthly.

7	Monthly savings	Fixed	The groups pay $60 each month for RIDES project. They also pay $2 per month for their internal saving to cover rent and group expenses.
8	Saving utilisation through loans to members	Fully utilised by loaning to members	By the end of the year, the full principle amount is deposited by each group. The fund is given back to the members for further .investment, and the process is then repeated.
9	Loan recoveries	More than 90%	The loan recovery is at 100%. Each member has been able to pay back fully given funds.
10	Maintenance of books	All books are regularly maintained and updated	All books are regularly updated and checked. When a deposit is made, the payee and treasurer sign and a receipt is issued to the piece confirming receipt of money.
11	Knowledge of the group by-laws by members	Known by all	There are by-laws and they are known by most of the members.
12	Members are able to read and write	More than 20% can read and write	For the interviewed groups, more than 80% of the members are able to read and write.
13	Knowledge of RIDES project's objectives.	All members know the objectives of the RIDES project	The members are well-versed with RIDES project and its objectives. They are able to list down activities the project carried out in their communities. They have also served as voluntary ambassadors for the project to sensitise their communities for upcoming activities.

From table nine, all of the sampled SHGs have met all the 13 assessment criteria used for performance assessment. The assessment criteria were drawn from Islamic Relief microcredit guidelines.

Challenges faced by Self-Help Groups

SHGs do not have their own room for meetings and they usually use government offices or private halls which they pay rent. Rent is too expensive to maintain, and government halls are sometimes occupied, meaning that they end up unable to hold some of their key meetings. Though the project provided some capacity building training, the SHG participants have limited business skills, basic accounting and a limited understanding of the negative effects of inflation and exchange rates on their earnings. Therefore, any future interventions should prioritise investing in these areas for the SHGs.

The SHGs face growing resistance from their male counterparts and community's religious leaders. The religious leaders (Imams) in both districts who were interviewed separately in their own districts shared similar doubts; "Islamic Relief have helped community but the only problem they caused is that they brought women into men's public domains". In the FGD with the VDCs, there was a discussion in which some men said women should stay home and women declined. Somali society is patriarchal in nature, entrenched in traditional and religious dogmas, meaning male dominance is

prominent. The organisation of women into groups facilitated them to have voice on community issues and to decide over their income and assets. This challenges the status quo and it was clear that men, including religious leaders felt threatened.

Though there are men who support women's economic empowerment, there is increasing resistance against it. Due to this heightened public anger, there could be backlash for some women from their husbands in the future though the evaluation has not yet recorded such cases. Therefore, there is a strong need for Islamic Relief to carry out sensitisation interventions for men and women showcasing the positive impact of women small business holders on their families and the wider community.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important economic activity in the Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts not only in terms of meeting the food needs of the population but also in terms of generating income through crop sales and agricultural labour opportunities[8]. Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq communities are agriculturalist (agriculture-based livelihoods) and agro-pastoralists (mix of agriculture and livestock production-based livelihood). Crop production performance is mainly determined by the amount of rainfall the area receives. One of the main challenges that the farmers in the project area face is the recurrent and irregular droughts with devastating impact on communities and their livelihoods, increasing food insecurity, cash shortages and resulting in outward-migration and death of livestock.

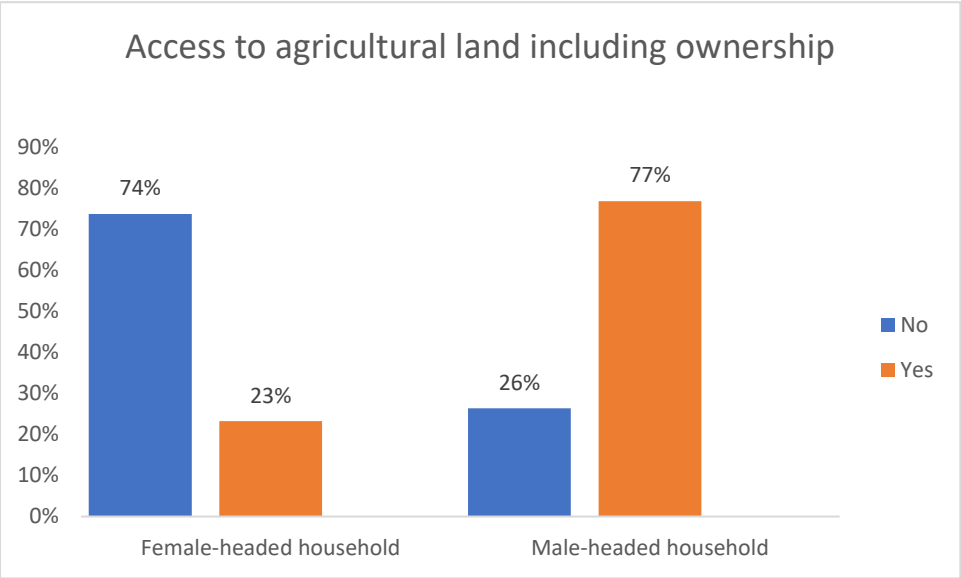
Other major challenges that farmers face that were identified in the 2013 PRA exercise. These included lack of irrigation facilities, deforestation, overgrazing, seeds susceptible to diseases, inability to purchase the pesticides, expensive to hire/own tools and machineries, and absence of extension services. These challenges undermine farmers' ability to produce for family consumption and to supply the local markets.

The project invested in agriculture sector of Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts. The project provided agricultural inputs and equipment to 200 farming households, 1,600 farmers were given support packages, 3213 tractor/tillage hours were provided to 1,0711 farming households, 2,000 fruit seedlings were provided to 50 farmers, irrigation pumps and fuel were provided to farmers, 35 women in eight project locations received kitchen garden training and seed bed preparation, 250 farmers attended GAP training and eight extension services were conducted in the project locations.

Access to land is very important for the household farmers to grow and produce crops. Since the project started farmers' access to agricultural land including ownership has increased from 26 per cent[9] to 47 per cent, though the gap between male-headed and female-headed households has widened. Of the 47 per cent of the households who have access to agricultural land, 77 per cent are male-headed households while only 23 per cent are female headed households.

Figure 9

[8] http://www.fsnau.org/analytical-approach/methodology/agriculture
[9] 2015 baseline data

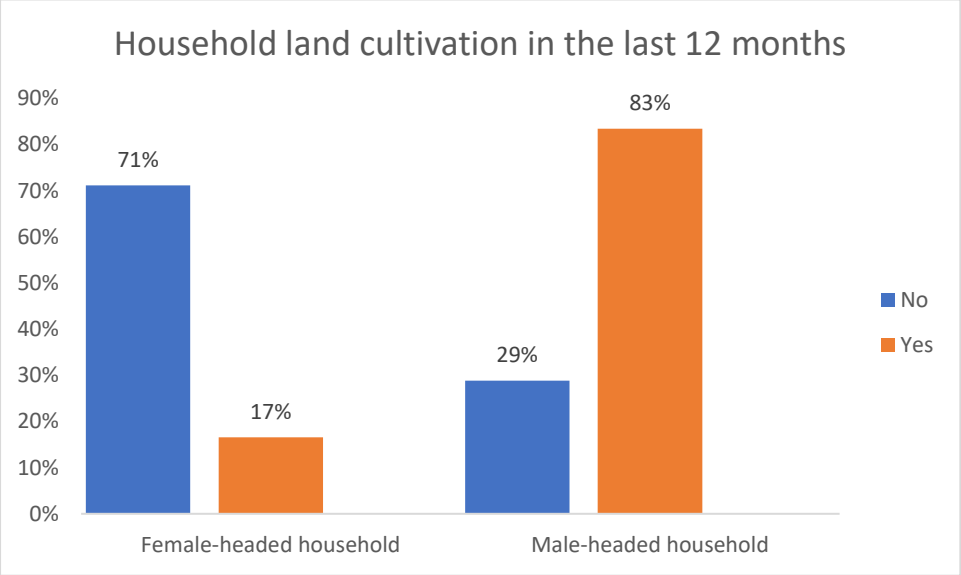


The increase of access to land is associated with RIDES project awareness raising on agriculture and the subsequent support provided to the household farmers. A male farmer from Dacarbudhuq district said, *"In the past I didn't have land and never farmed. When I saw Islamic Relief supporting farmers, I have asked my father to give me a piece of land and he gave me. I started cultivating and Islamic Relief supported with me tools and inputs, and now I produce for my family consumption and for sale. I earn income which I use to pay school fees for my children and other family expenses. I am very happy and thanks to Islamic Relief for the support*."

In the focus group discussion, the participants mentioned that many people have started farming since the project began, because the community realised that they can produce their own food and earn income from the sales of the produce. The increased produce of the local farmers is manifested in the fact that each day, two lorries full of vegetables and fruits are now supplied to Hargeisa and Buroa markets from each district. The evaluation took place in December 2018, a harvesting season in which all farmers were extremely busy picking and packing the crops for sale and sometimes the data collection team had to wait to interview them until the sun set, when they were free. This is practical evidence of the level of community engagement and their commitment to farming.

The 47 per cent of households who have access to agricultural land were asked if they have cultivated in the last 12 months or not, and only 39 per cent of them had. Out of this 39 per cent, 83 per cent were male-headed household while only 17 per cent were female headed-households.

Figure 10



Those that cultivate their agricultural land grow variety of crops. Vegetables (tomatoes, watermelon) are the most common crops grown in the project areas. This has increased the demand for vegetables from Hargeisa and Buroa city markets. The main tarmacked road that connects Hargeisa and Buroa passes through Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts. The good road connectivity means that the fresh vegetables picked from Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal district can arrive Hargeisa, Buroa and Berbera in a few hours. There is no storage or refrigerating costs involved in the transport of the crops to the big cities. The geographical proximity and the increased demand for fresh vegetables in bigger markets is another driving force the cultivation of vegetables in the project areas. The second most popular crops in the area are cereals which makes part of the daily food consumption of the household in the project areas. The cereals from the project areas are mainly for local consumption. From the household Diet Diversity analysis, it also shows that every household consumes cereals as part of their main meal. The large cereal market in Somaliland is supplied by the harvests from western regions of Somaliland and imports from neighbouring Ethiopia. Legumes are also cultivated in the project areas for household consumption only.

Table 9

Crops cultivated in the last season	Female-headed household	Male-headed household	Total
Cash crop (sesame, cotton etc.)	0%	1%	1%
Cereals (wheat, maize, sorghum etc)	0%	8%	8%
Fodder crops (grass etc.)	0%	0%	0%
Legume (beans and peanuts etc)	0%	6%	7%
Tree crops (lemon, orange, mangoes, papayas etc)	4%	21%	26%
Vegetables (tomatoes, watermelon etc)	10%	48%	58%
Grand Total	**15%**	**85%**	**100%**

Households were asked about the size of the harvest (kilograms) of different crops cultivated last season. On average each household produced 264.4 kgs of cereals, 312.9 kgs of legumes, 15.0 kgs of cash crops, 807.2 kgs of cereals and 533.0 kgs of tree crops. Vegetables and tree crops are the most popular crops cultivated in the project area with the most kilogrammes produced by the households in the last season.

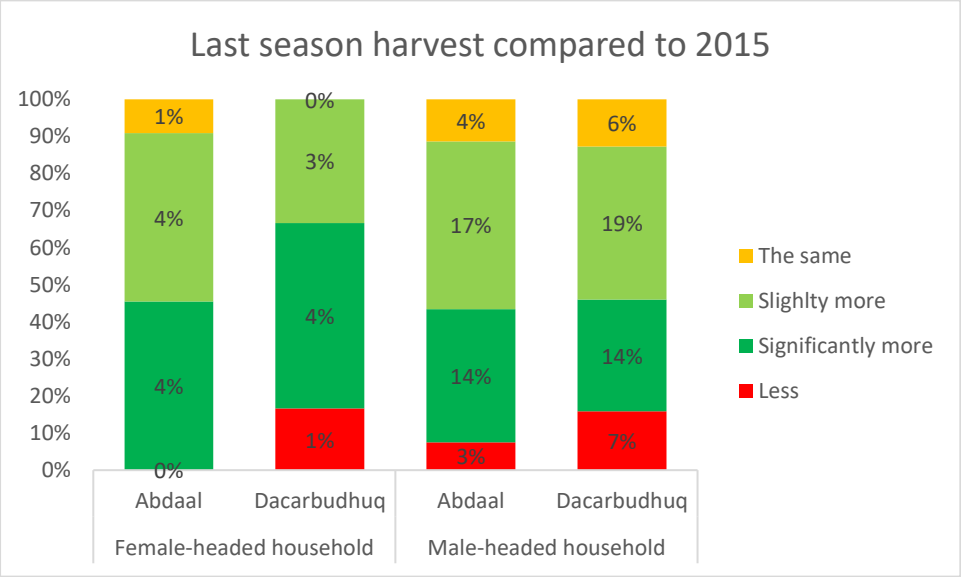
To contextualise these averages: for cereals the highest harvest recorded was 2000 kgs while the lowest harvest was 5 kgs; for legumes 800kgs and 35kgs; for cash crops 20kg and 10 kgs; for vegetables 6500 kgs and 6 kgs; and for tress 3600 kgs and 6 kgs.

Table 10

The average crops in kg produced by household in the last season					
Gender by district	Cereals	legumes	Cash crops	Vegetables	Tree crops
Female-headed household		250.0		747.3	330.7
Abdaal		250.0		453.6	63.2
Dacarbudhuq				1040.9	665.0
Male-headed household	264.4	317.4	15.0	819.7	571.8
Abdaal	250.0	307.0		764.5	220.2
Dacarbudhuq	270.3	323.1	15.0	870.8	790.0
Grand Total	264.4	312.9	15.0	807.2	533.0

Based on the last season's harvest, the household farmers were asked how their current harvest compared to 2015. 78 per cent of the households consider that their last season harvest increased, 11 per cent consider that their harvest remained the same while 12 per cent consider that their harvest has reduced compared to their harvest when the project started in 2015. Farmers (female-headed and male-headed households) in Abdaal district have recorded highest harvest compared to their Dacarbudhuq district counterparts.

Figure 11



The increased harvest in the project area is due to:

The provision of agricultural inputs, training, technical know-how and equipment have helped farmers to produce more. A farmer from Abdaal area said, "Islamic Relief had helped Abdaal community very well. I am one of those who received assistance from the RIDES project after the severe drought that left with me nothing. I was given water pump and hoses to irrigate my farm. I was given 10 livestock and now they increased to 15. Now, we are in a good level, but we need more assistance from Islamic Relief to reach a sustainable level. I request from Islamic Relief to extend the project for another five years. In my farm I have vegetables, fruits and now I planted big trees like

papayas and mangoes. We are three families – my family and the families of two of my sons and we are all neighbours. The farm now provides enough food for all the three families."

Again, he is among the few farmers who are fully prepared for future droughts and said, "For me, I have saved some loads of fodder to feed my livestock in case of drought, but this is not enough if the drought continues long. Moreover, the farmers and the government authorities doesn't have the capacity to cope up with severe droughts."

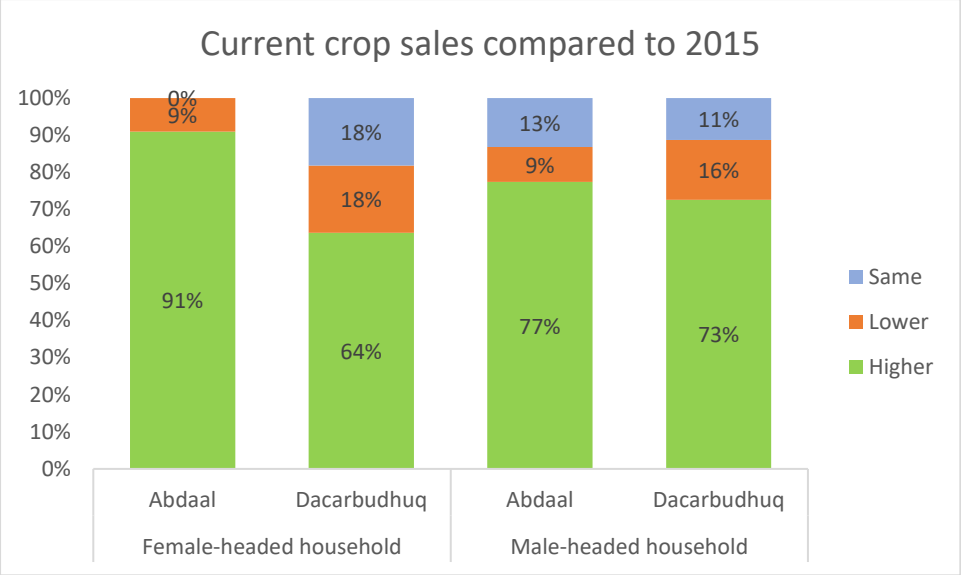
The project set up two FFSs in Dohoguban and Jaleelo villages. The project invested two selected farms from the two villages and used them ass training centres for the farmers in the project areas. All project agriculture training took place in the Farmers Field Schools in the project area. This has been successful initiative as the farmers had to conduct practical experiments on the farm. This has also saved a huge cost for the project that could have been used for expensive transport and accommodation for the training participants if it was held in Hargeisa city. Due to the reduced costs and proximity for the farmers to travel to the field school, all of the project farmers have attended at least one training. The farmers shared ideas, knowledge, expertise, technical-know how, what works and what does not. Another male farmer who attended a Farmers Field School exchange visit in Dohoguban in October 2018 and said, "My crops failed and had very difficult time. I attend the exchange visit and I learnt ways of reducing crop failure. I have applied the knowledge I learnt and didn't have crop failure this season. I am very happy, and my harvest increased this season."

Furthermore, the demand for the local produce increased in the project areas and in the neighbouring big cities. This is due to increased improved conditions of the local economy and the proximity of two districts to the big cities. This means that harvests shipped either of the two districts are likely to arrive nearby cities within the same day. The increased demand of the local produce in both markets have driven farmers to cultivate more land to supply the markets.

The increased harvest improved the frequency of the household farmers attending market to sell their agricultural harvest. Currently 58 per cent of the farmers attend the market more often (once every three weeks), 19 per cent attend the market less often (once every three months) while the attendance of 24 per cent of households in the market to sell their agricultural produce remained the same compared to 2015.[10] The crop sales in the market have also increased compared to when the project started in 2015. Overall, the level of crop sales in the market increased in both districts, though Abdaal sales were higher compared to Dacarbudhuq district. The increased harvest guaranteed reliable supply for the consumers i.e. hotels, restaurants and grocers. Though communities in both districts are agro-pastoral, geographically, Abdaal is more suitable for agriculture while Dacarbudhuq is more suitable for pastoralism. Hence, Abdaal crop sale market is larger and more thriving than that of Dacarbudhuq district.

[10] Attending market means only for business purposes. The terminologies of 'more often, less often' were defined in consultation with the local project staff and the farmers in the project areas.

Figure 12



Abdaal female-headed household farmers enjoy the highest crop sales in the market. The Abdaal local market is dominated by women who are involved in variety of small businesses. Some of the women also serve as brokers by buying harvest from the local farmers and selling it to company agents. There could be more reasons why women farmers enjoy higher rates of sale which may be useful to explore in future studies,

Even though farmers enjoy good seasons, they are not immune from crop failures, widespread pests, poor soil fertility, uncertain exchange rates and limited market information and other challenges. Hence, further investment on agriculture sector should be prioritised in these areas.

Livestock

The livestock sector is the largest contributor to the Somaliland economy with over 65 per cent of the population engaged in some of the industry. Exports of livestock and their products account for 80 per cent of exports in normal years but exports have been periodically interrupted by droughts and international bans such as the one imposed by Saudi Arabia in 2000. In spite of this, livestock business remains the largest traded export commodity in the local market11.

In the project areas, 65 per cent of the households derive their livelihoods from livestock. Out of those households who own livestock, 58 per cent are from Abdaal while 42 per cent are from the Dacarbudhuq district. The project investment in livestock in order to improve income and food security level of the communities in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq district is thus very relevant.

The 2016-17 drought has devastated livelihoods, income and vital productive assets of the project communities, leading to severe food access constraints and acute food insecurity. The communities reported that they have lost almost all of their livestock, which is a massive loss of one of the principle resources of the rural communities. Losses in crop production and livestock have driven food prices well above the average and lowered household access to food and income. The project distributed 2,380 goats to 170 HHs equivalent to 14 goats per household in 15 project villages. The

[11] http://www.fao.org/somalia/programmes-and-projects/livestock/en/

restocking helped the communities to recover from the hit of the severe drought and restart their agro-pastoral life again.

Table 8 and 9 show the average livestock count in households who own livestock in the project district areas. The tables compare the stock in 2015 (the project start date) with 2018 (project evaluation).

Table 11

Average livestock of household in January 2015						
Type of household	Camels	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Chicken	Donkeys
Female-headed household	11	15	35	13	7	1
Male-headed household	8	4	55	35	3	1
Grand total	9	13	46	26	6	1

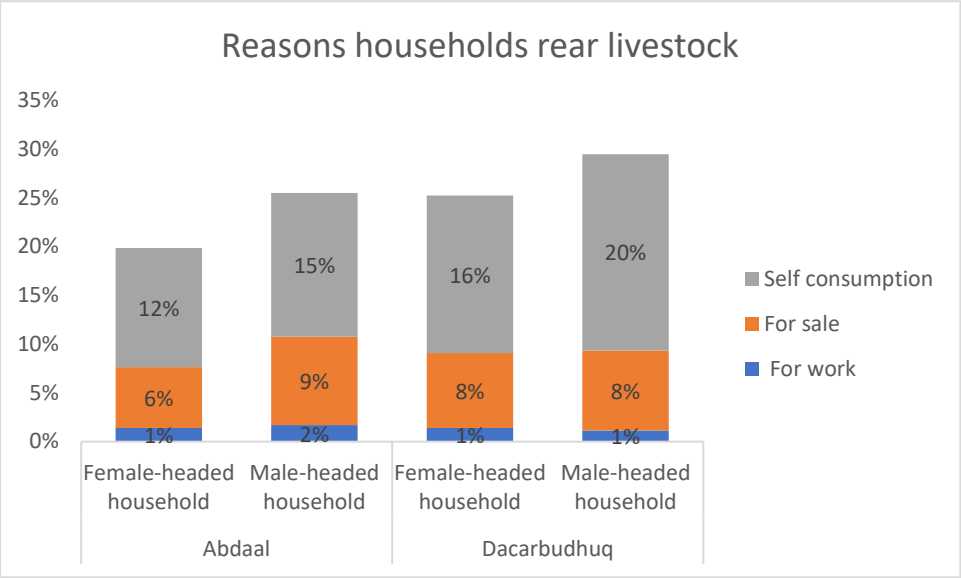
Table 9

Average livestock of household in December 2018						
Type of household	Camels	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Chicken	Donkey
Female-headed household	21	15	17	8	7	1
Male-headed household	6	1	23	11	2	1
Grand total	11	12	21	10	5	1

Comparing the data in table 8 and 9, the average number of camels per households in December 2018 increased compared to January 2015. The average number of cattle, goats, sheep and chicken reduced while the average number of donkeys remained the same. The massive decrease of livestock per household is evidence of the sheer force of the drought 2016-17. Though the majority of the households lost all of their all livestock, the restocking intervention of the project was a timely response to community needs. A male from the Dacarbudhuq district said, “The restocking was a lifeline for the communities. When Islamic Relief gave us livestock, we resumed our agro-pastoral life otherwise we could have ended up in the IDPs.”

The communities in the project areas derive their livelihoods mainly from livestock and agriculture. The households were asked the most important reason they rear livestock. 63 per cent of the households in the project areas rear livestock for household consumption, 31 per cent use it for sale while only 6 per cent use for work i.e. for transport and for ploughing farms. The percentage of families who rear livestock for work and for sale is equally split between the two districts while 36 per cent of the households in Dacarbudhuq rear animals for household consumption compared to 27 per cent in the Abdaal district. The percentage of male-headed households who rear livestock for sale and for household consumption is higher than the percentage of female-headed household in both districts while they are equally split in rearing for work. This likely due to the tradition of livestock being the property of men – however, women are the ones who look after livestock and shoulder the heaviest burden.

Figure 13



The PRA exercise conducted in February 2014, identified lack of water, lack of pasture, diseases and limited market as the main constraints to livestock production in the project areas. The project has addressed those issues through relevant interventions. Currently 30 per cent of the households in project area said that there are no constraints to livestock production, while 32 per cent identified access to pasture/animal food as the main constraint, 29 per cent diseases, 9 per cent access to water and 1 per cent droughts. The construction and rehabilitation of boreholes, shallow well and berkads in the project areas have increased water supply for the livestock. The increased supply of water for the livestock reduced the hits from the recurrent droughts to the livestock. An agro-pastoralist from Abdaal district said, “The construction and rehabilitation of the borehole and shallow wells in the Abdaal district increased the supply of water for human and animals and helped livestock to survive in extreme drought conditions. This will reduce the death of livestock in increase their numbers.”

Despite reduction of existing constraints to livestock production, access to pasture and diseases pose serious threat to livestock production in the project areas. The Village Development participants mentioned that recent increased private land enclosures have limited communal grazing areas for livestock in the project areas. Somaliland is a drought prone country and rainfall was below the average in the last five years,[12] meaning that projects must have prioritised disaster risk reduction linked interventions including fodder production and grazing land rotation through fencing so that livestock have access to pasture/food in dry seasons. The project was coordinated with the Ministry of Livestock and treated 23,862 livestock in the project areas. The results indicate that 52 per cent of the households had their livestock treated, dewormed and/or vaccinated. Strong evidence has emerged from discussions with the VDCs that the livestock who received veterinary services became healthier and are now more likely to survive in mild droughts. Those families whose livestock were not treated or vaccinated may lose their livestock and fall back into the food insecurity threshold if further support is not provided soon.

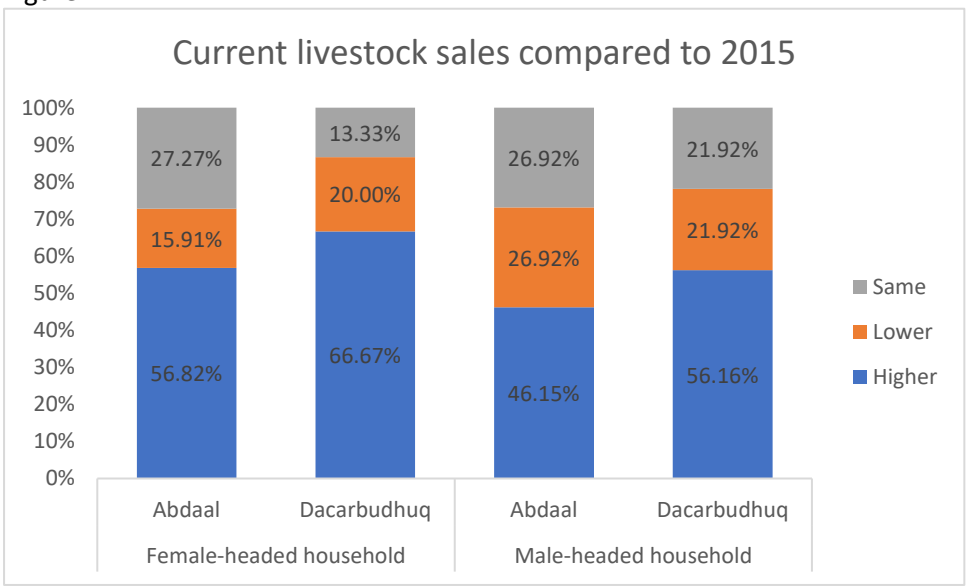
[12] https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som

Access to market was identified another key challenge in the PRA exercise conducted in February 2014. The main issues were falling livestock prices, limited market information and limited information about livestock value chain. The PRA exercise has identified multiple solutions, of which some of them are beyond the scope of the project. The project has been very effective in selecting relevant, affordable and achievable solutions in addressing those challenges. The project's huge investment into the water infrastructure and the livestock veterinary services has not only helped the survival of livestock during droughts, but has also improved the livestock body condition, leading to their increased demand and higher market prices. The project trained Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) in all the project villages and they supported large campaign to treat, deworm and vaccinate livestock population in the area. The veterinary services had mixed results on the livestock population in the project area. 53 per cent of households think that the veterinary services were effective, and their livestock has increased as result, 24 per cent think that veterinary services had no impact on their livestock whilst 24 per cent think that the veterinary services has not been effective, and their livestock has decreased.

52 per cent of the households who said veterinary services were not effective were from Abdaal (27 per cent), Maqaaxida-inanta (50 per cent), Dohoguban (70 per cent) and Dhalacad (100 per cent). The case in Dhalacad is very alarming and need specific attention to further understand why all survey respondents think that the veterinary services were ineffective. The FGDs and KIIs have not captured further explanations for these results.

The increased availability of pasture, water and the veterinary services have improved the body conditions of livestock leading to higher demand and price in the market in some areas. As a result, households have been able to access market and sell more of their livestock. 57 per cent of the household said that their livestock sales have increased compared to 2015, 23 per cent said their sales remained the same while 21 per cent think that specific project interventions on livestock were not effective to drive their sales higher. Dacarbudhuq household recorded the highest drive of livestock sales in the market while Abdaal household recorded relatively lower drive of livestock sales in the market. This is because geographically Dacarbudhuq is more suitable for livestock production and has larger livestock sales market than Abdaal district.

Figure 14



Again, restocking intervention has been very successful and has had big impact on the lives of the recipient households. Currently, the livestock population in the project area is an increasing trend, which is good sign for improved food security level. But that trend can be reversed by future shocks if major investment is not made to the critical DRR infrastructure that enables them to survive through severe recurrent droughts.

Casual labour/TVET

The project has trained 90 youth (60 male and 30 females) on vocational skills in a four month period. 85 of the participants have successfully completed the course. They were trained in plumbing, electricity, tailoring, Henna and make-up designing and so on. The evaluation team were only able to trace five trainees for a focus group discussion. All the five trainees mentioned they have been able to get income at least once in the last twelve months using the skills they gained from the training. A trainee from Madheera village said, "I am trained as electrician but in Mandera there is no supply of electricity and I am forced to go to big cities to find job with my skills." Though all the skills were useful, some of the training received by some participants was not contextually relevant.

Four out of the five participants interviewed were working using their skills. One works for construction company in Hargeisa, another one works for Iftin Electric company in Abdaal district, one is self-employed, and one runs Henna design services for women and girls. They mentioned that the new skills helped to earn income for living and support their families and they are grateful to Islamic Relief for the training opportunity.

Outcome two: To increase Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal communities' access to quality social infrastructure (water for agriculture, human and animal consumption; education; and health)

Access to water

The PRA exercise conducted in December 2013 and the project baseline identified water as priority area for the project intervention. The water sources were few and far from the community. Drinking water was obtained from shallow wells or direct from the streams which are shared with animals. The in-stream in Dacarbudhuq was polluted by chemical toxic waste effluents from the two tanneries on its banks. A few people who are better-off in both communities were able to buy water from tankers that fetch it from cleaner sources about 17km away.

The project has constructed one new borehole, one berkad (underground water storage reservoir), eight shallow wells and rehabilitated two boreholes with piped networks. The project has increased the quantity and the quality of water for the communities in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq district. In the very early stages of the project, the government closed the tanneries that were causing pollution. The main reason they were closed was due to pressure from the local community that the tanneries are risking their health and livelihoods.

In the baseline, 31 per cent of respondents used to get water from public berkads, 22 per cent private berkads, 20 per cent tap water, 13 per cent unprotected wells and 14 per cent from shallow wells. Currently 58 per cent of the households in the project areas, drink water from the water sources constructed or rehabilitated by the project, 35 per cent rely on water tankers, 3 per cent streams and the rest from roof water catchment. This means there is a reduction of 10 per cent from the 13 per cent of households who drink water from unprotected sources (wells, streams and lakes). The construction and rehabilitation of the water sources provided cleaner and sustainable water supply. For example, in Abdaal the project laid down a piped network which runs from newly

constructed boreholes to provide households with potable water. This has increased the availability of water in the village and reduced the distance that members of the family to travel to fetch water from. 76 per cent of the households in the project areas also consider their water sources permanent, 18 per cent seasonal and 6 per cent occasional.

Regarding the quality of the water, 93 per cent of households consider the that the water used from their water sources is safe for human drinking while seven per cent consider it to be unsafe for human drinking.

Chart 1

Those who consider the water they drink as unsafe are those who collect water from streams. They live in remote areas and are unlikely to reach the reconstructed or rehabilitated water sources. For those who live in remote areas and unable to reach the water points, they use local methods to clean water for drinking. The methods they use to clean water includes cloth filtration, sedimentation, boiling and simple sand filtration.

The baseline found out that the average time it takes to collect water was 346.78 minutes in 2015, while currently it only takes 11.5 minutes to reach nearest water point. The longest time it takes a household to collect water is 200 minutes while the shortest time is one minute. The focus group discussions also confirmed that a full journey to collect water from nearest water point is approximately 30 minutes. This includes traveling to the water point, queuing time and coming back to the home. The construction and rehabilitation of water sources in the project areas, reduced the time the household took to collect water from their nearest water point by almost 12 times.

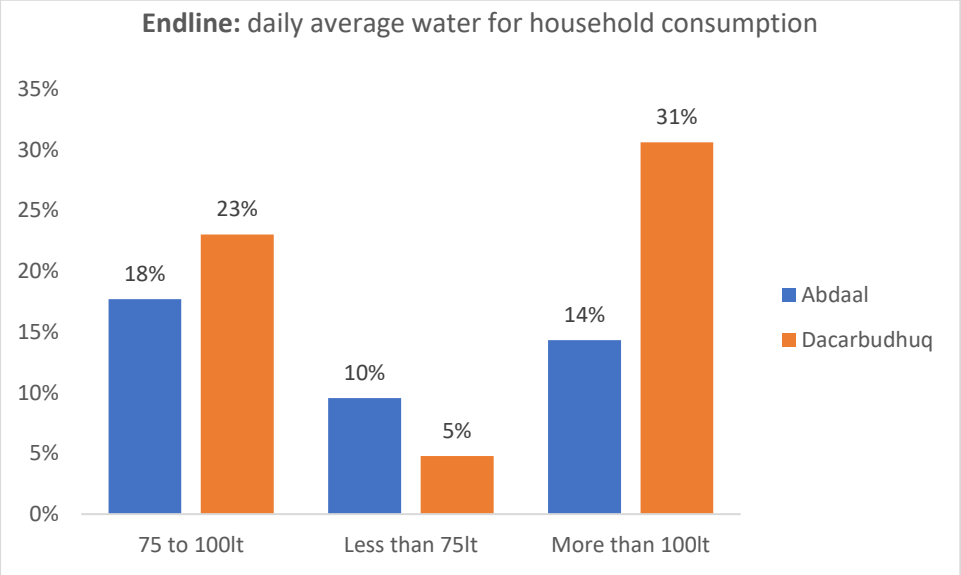
Table 8

Distance from water sources disaggregated by district			
Water sources	Abdaal	Dacarbudhuq	Total
Berkads	23.4		23.4
Borehole	22.0	7.7	11.3
Community shared piped water point	20.2	8.7	9.9
Lake, river, stream	17.9	19.3	18.3
Others		14.2	14.2
Rain water catchment	13.3	8.3	10.4
Shallow well	14.8	21.8	18.8

Water tanker	6.2	8.5	7.0
Total	11.0	11.9	11.5

The average household comprises of seven members in the project areas. According to the SPHERE standards, the amount of water required by person for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene per day is 15 litres. In the context where the project is operating, 15 litres of water per person is an acceptable quantity. For a household that comprises of seven members, 105 litres of water are needed per day for consumption.

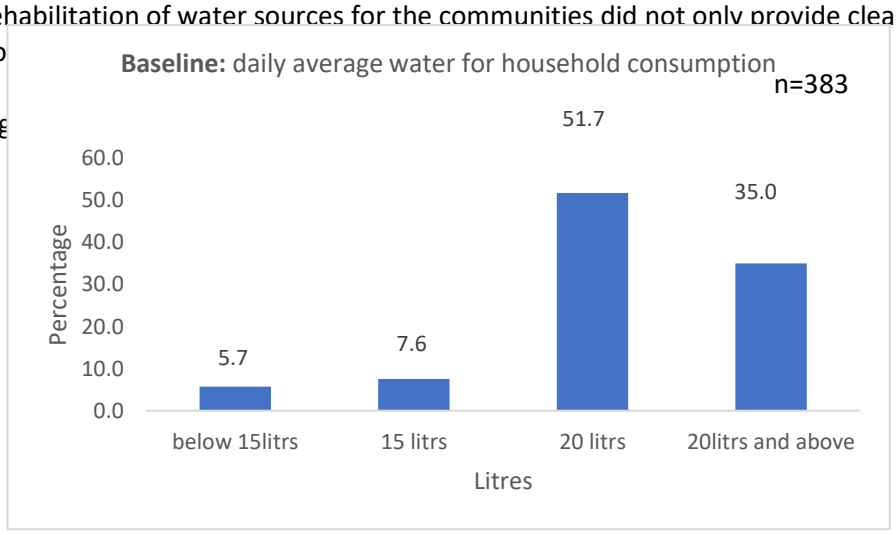
Figure 6



Currently 45 per cent of the household consume more than 100 litres of water per day, 41 per cent consume 75 to 100 litres per day while 15 per cent consume less than 75 litres per day. The results indicate that 86 per cent of the household falls within or close to the threshold level for the SPHERE standards for water consumption. There is a significant increase in the quantity of water available in the project area for human consumption.

The baseline found out that the average household was six members in the project areas. Therefore, for a household that comprises of six members needs 90 litres of water per day for consumption. According to Figure 5, the baseline found out that 65 per cent of the household were consuming less than 20 litres of water per day while 35 per cent were consuming 20 litres or more per day. Though it is not specific what "more" means but it is very likely that all the household in the project areas were consuming less than the recommended 90 litres of water per day. Hence, the construction and rehabilitation of water sources for the communities did not only provide clean water but sufficient vo

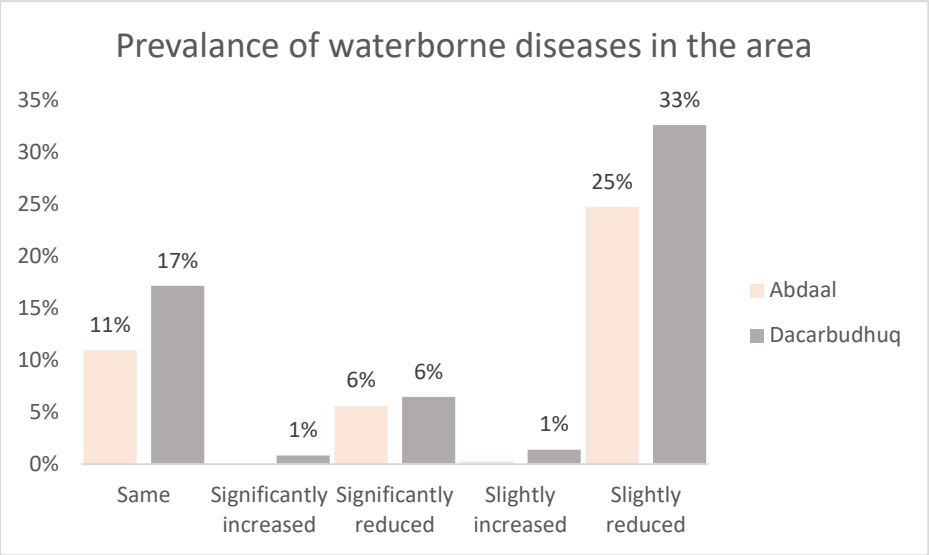
Fig



The baseline found out that 50.4 per cent of the households live 1,000 metres or more to the nearest water point. Currently the average distance from the household to the nearest water point is 500-700 meters which again falls within the SPHERE standards of the maximum distance threshold to the nearest water point. The nearest household is 50 metres away while the furthest household is 950 metres away. The queuing time has significantly reduced to 10 minutes on average which is three times less than the 30 minutes SPHERE standard limit.

The improved quality and increased quantity of water have reduced the prevalence of water-borne diseases. 69 per cent of the respondents consider that the prevalence of water-borne diseases has significantly or slightly reduced, 28 per cent think that nothing has changed while only 3 per cent think their prevalence has slightly or significantly increased.

Figure 8



This result indicate that the project has not only increased the availability of water but also improved quality of the drinking water, significantly reducing the prevalence of water-borne diseases. The increased availability of water for the household has other benefits for the community:

In the past young girls used to fetch water from far distances in the early morning. After such an arduous chore, they usually arrive late and tired at school. Being 'needed at home' was a major reason why many girls, especially from poor families dropped out of school. Now the water sources closer to home has increased girls' free time and boosted their school attendance. This is evidenced by the school records of enrolment that the enrolment and attendance.

The education VDCs also mentioned that in the past when young girls were sent to fetch water from far distances, there was a very high risk of being drowned in the streams or being attacked by men.

Asha, is a mother from Abdaal village and said, "*Before, I used to be very worried for the safety of my daughter when I send her to fetch water from stream, but now I am not worried to send my daughter to fetch water from nearby tap water."* This means that many more girls in the project areas are safer because drinking water is now closer to their homes.

The increased availability of water also had a significant positive impact on the provision of the public health services in Abdaal district. Abdaal district health facility needs a constant water supply to serve for the patients. Abdaal village has constant water supply from a borehole constructed by the RIDES project. The water supply is powered by the solar system which replaced costly electricity generators used in the past. Before the borehole was constructed, private tankers supplied water to the hospital. They used to fill the hospital water storage twice a day. The cost of purchasing water from the private tankers was very high for the health centre to pay. Usually, the tankers did not deliver water to the health centre on time. Khadar is one of the health workers attached the RIDES project at the Abdaal health centre: "*In the past, the situation was very difficult. Sometimes the centre water tank finished while pregnant woman were giving birth in the theatre and that could threaten the life of the mother and the baby. We are happy now. The centre has constant free water supply and the water tank is always full."*

The fact that water interventions have improved health service delivery is an indication that some integration between the project sectors existed and have not only improved food security level of the community, but also health provision services.

Even though the water sector of the project is having positive impact on the lives of the project communities, the borehole constructed in Dacarbudhuq district supplies a lower quantity of water in dry seasons compared to rainy season. The evaluation found out that the required technical survey was carried out before drilling the borehole, but the depth of the water table can change (rise or fall) depending on the time of year. In rainy seasons (when the water table rises) the borehole produces 35 barrels of water per hour while in dry seasons (when the water table falls) the borehole produces less, depending on the severity of droughts. The drilled borehole is 110 metres deep and an Islamic Relief engineer confirmed that it is not possible to drill any deeper than that. The borehole provides water for human and animals. The main challenge that the borehole faces is a reduced water supply during the dry seasons unlike Abdaal district borehole which supplies enough water irrespective the seasonal variations.

Education

Both the project baseline and PRA exercise found low school enrolment and high dropout rates in the project areas. There were fewer classrooms, inadequate seating facilities and unconducive learning environments for students. The teachers were poorly paid which has negatively affected school teaching operations.

In the second quarter, the project carried out an assessment on the existing schools in the project areas to determine the education gaps which prevent all school-aged children, boys and girls to complete their full primary education. Table 10 below shows the assessment finding.

Table 14

Assessment on schools in the project areas	
Districts/village	**Remarks**
1. Dhubato 2. Aw-Barkhadle	Those two areas were found out that they need new Early Childhood Development centres so that young children are prepared for primary schools.

3. Dacarbudhuq 4. Dohoguban 5. Abdaal 6. Hamaas	These areas were found to have dilapidated school building conditions. The shabby structures of the school building prevent children to have access to a conducive learning environment. There is urgent need to address the situation.
7. Maqaaxida-inanta 8. Jaleelo 9. Dheenta	Classrooms in these locations were not enough to accommodate students. There is a need to construct new classrooms to accommodate the increasing school enrolment rates.

The assessment was very useful. It helped the project to establish a baseline reference point to measure and compare against the project progress. The project constructed or rehabilitated school classrooms, administration blocks, toilets and Early Childhood Development Centres (EDCs) in the project areas. Scholastic materials and uniforms were given students in the schools. 400 girls from Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts were given hygiene kits. The school teachers have received training to improve their knowledge and teaching skills. The project also paid the monthly salary of five school teachers.

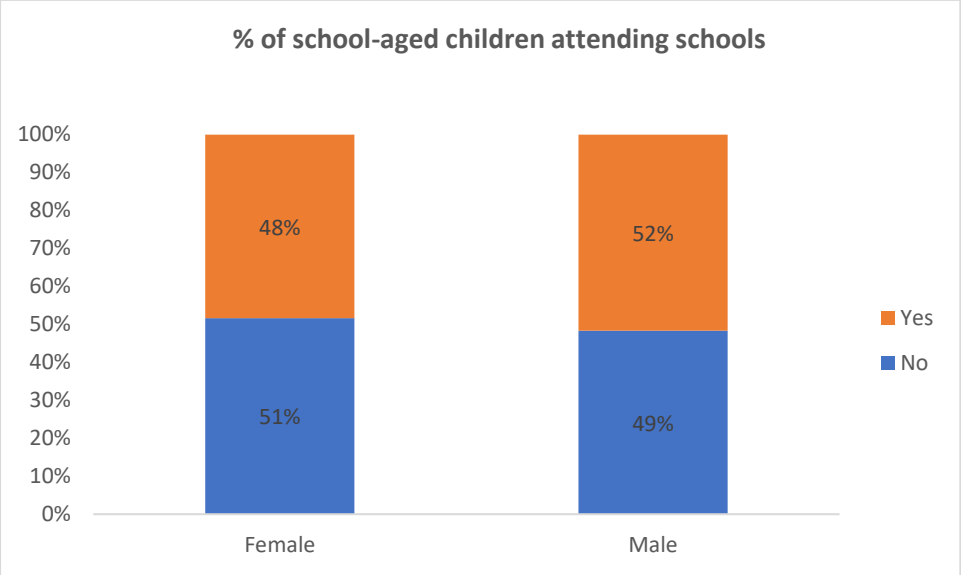
Impact of the education intervention

The Somaliland government specifically the Ministry of Education has limited capacity and resources to meet with the education needs of the local community. In such circumstances, even minor interventions to support schools particularly those in the remote rural areas are very likely to make positive impact to the quality and quantity of schools. Although the project has not made major investments to the education sector, the interviews with the school principals and the evaluation team's school visits have shown that the impact of the project has helped to increase school enrolments, retention, reduced school drop outs and improved the learning environment for children. Currently in Abdaal, there are 14 primary schools and nine primary schools in Dacarbudhuq which are all fully functional. Five primary schools were sampled from the nine schools the project worked with, and assessments were made to the retention, enrolment and dropout rates of the schools via principal interviews and school visits.

In Somaliland, the recommended starting primary school age is six years old.[13] It takes eight years for a child to complete the primary and intermediate school. Using the household members data collected in the survey, we carried out analysis of the number of school-age children that attend schools. In the 356 households that were surveyed, 900 school going children were recorded (445 girls and 455 boys).

Figure 15

[13] https://www.unicef.org/somalia/education.html



In total 51 per cent of the school-age boys attend school while 48 per cent of the school age girls attend schools. The results also indicate that 48 per cent (24 per cent boys and 23 per cent girls) of the school-age children do not attend schooling. The percentage of school-age boys attending schools is little bit higher than the girls. Many girls are withdrawn from school to help parents with the house work. In some areas including Dohoguban and Dheenta villages, some children travel one hour and twenty minutes to go to school and back. This long distance in a difficult environment has discouraged many parents to send their children to school for safety reasons.

There is no baseline value to compare this result in order to measure the project progress, but it is very clear that the project has not achieved its related indicator target of "95 per cent of the eligible children from the targeted areas are enrolled in nearby schools with parental and community support." According to table 11, the evaluation team's school visits and the interview with school principals confirmed that significant progress was made in reducing the gap between number of girls and boys attending schools. They also mentioned that both boys' and girls' enrolment rates have increased.

Furthermore, the sample of five schools was randomly selected. The evaluation team spoke with their principals and visited some of them to find out the number of students enrolled in 2015 and the current number of students.

Table 15

Data from sampled schools in the project areas				
Villages	2015	2018	2018	2018
	Total # of students	Total # of students	Change in the # of students	% change
Dacarbudhuq	230	450 (290 boys and 115 girls)	405	176.1%
Dheenta	70	143 (93 boys and 50 girls)	73	104.3%
Abdaal	154	322 (174 boys and 148 girls)	168	109.1%
Hamaas	45	102 (67 boys and 35 girls)	57	126.7%

Dohoguban	35	70 (47 boys and 23 girls)	35	100%
Aw-barkhadle	38	81 (41 boys and 40 girls)	43	113.2%

The 2015 student records disaggregated by sex were not available from the sampled schools. The total number of students was the only data available from the schools' 2015. This limits the analysis to compare the change from 2015 to 2018 disaggregated by sex. However, all the school principals interviewed confirmed that the number of girls in the schools has increased in the last three years. The number of students (girls and boys) in Dacarbudhuq increased by 176.1 per cent, Dheenta by 104.3 per cent, Abdaal by 109.1 per cent, Hamaas by 126.7 per cent, Dohoguban by 100 per cent and Aw-barkhadle by 113.3 per cent.

There were no organised accessible records available on student retention, enrolment or dropout rates in schools. However, the school principals interviewed confirmed that the enrolment rates significantly increased, student retention significantly improved, and students dropping out from schools reduced significantly.

Why improved retention, increased enrolment and decreased dropout rate at schools in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq district

The construction and rehabilitation of schools enabled conducive learning environment for students and teachers. An official reported, "*The project improved the quality of education of Dacarbudhuq district. For example, about our school: previously, our school had wooden doors and windows which forced us not to leave expensive and important materials like laptops in our office. The project repaired the school and installed steel doors and windows. They have repaired all school structures and painted. It was the first repair done to the school structure for nearly 20 years. The project also supported school girls by providing sanitation kits. This has reduced significantly girls dropping out from the school and encouraged many more to join the school. Moreover, the project provided remuneration unpaid teachers, especially for the last two months. We are asking ourselves why the project is being ended promptly since Islamic Relief has just started to offer salary to the teachers."* However, one must be careful about the impact of the sanitation kits for girls. Usually in Somaliland, issues related to girls' sanitation is considered taboo, very little is discussed and thus known about in the public domain. Understanding more about such issues needed gradual and close discussion with the girls and their mothers which could have been done by female gender specialist as part of the project M&E work. Hence, the absence of a female gender specialist from the project staffing arrangement and the fact that our female enumerators were strangers who could not be trusted with such sensitive information, limited any deeper analysis on how sanitation kits might have increased girls' school enrolment, retention and attendance rates.

Interviews with school principals confirmed that the provision of seating facilities and the scholastic materials including stationery, uniforms and other equipment have increased the school enrolment rates and attendance. The teacher training in July 2018 has improved the knowledge and morale of the teachers (specifically new staff) at the school. They were trained on lesson preparation and class management. The establishment of two school libraries in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq schools and the provision of around 600 books each have helped student learning. The grade eight students have library reading period each week. Also, whenever a teacher is not available for a period, students are sent to the library for self-study.

Dacarbudhuq school principle said, "*The conducive learning environment helped students from the project areas to compete with their peers in other parts of Somaliland and perform good grades in the national exams. Last year, in the grade eight national exams, a student from Dacarbudhuq school ranked 11th best student in Somaliland. This has encouraged number of students to transfer schools*

from Hargeisa and Berbera to come and study at Dacarbudhuq school. The transferred students are originally from Dacarbudhuq district but preferred to attend schools in Hargeisa and Berbera looking for quality education. They are now transferring back because of the improved quality of education at the project areas."

The schools in the project areas have active Parent Associations. The Parent Association closely works with the teachers and the community to support school development objectives. The school Parent Associations have supported the project in delivering school interventions in the project areas. The principals confirmed they work with the school Parent Associations closely to run the schools smoothly.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the only other organisation that is operating in the project areas. WFP runs a school feeding programme in the project. The WFP school meals are helping to retain and encourage students who have dropped out of school back to their classes, specifically girls who have often been expected to stay at home and help with chores. To increase community ownership, WFP offers food and the Parents' Associations (PAs) by providing water, salt, firewood etc. The food is cooked at the schools and students receive breakfast and lunch. The coordination between RIDES project, school Parent Association (PA), teachers, community and WFP has contributed to the overall wellbeing of students in the schools.

The toilet facilities constructed or rehabilitated in the schools have also improved girls' retention at schools. Before the toilets were constructed or rehabilitated in the schools, girls used to go back to their homes to use toilets. Some of them could not come back to schools in the same day. Having missed many classes, they could easily drop out of the schools. The principals said that the separate toilet facilities for girls has been very useful for the continued school attendance.

Challenges that the schools face

Many of the households in the project areas are very poor and unable to buy uniforms and scholastic material for their children. Though the project increased the income of many households, there are many others who remain in extreme poverty. The children of such households are likely to drop out of schools if they are required to pay monthly school fees. The number of teachers in Dacarbudhuq school increased from six to eleven in the last year. The project gives monthly stipend to the new five teachers. The official said, "*…the project has ended, we will charge each student $2 of school fees per month to be able to pay teachers' salaries. We understand that many parents can't afford to pay this amount specifically when they have large number of students studying in the school, but we don't have alternative strategy to retain the teachers. We are worried that this will reduce the enrolment rate and increase the number of students dropping out from schools."*

Interviewees confirmed that the government is unable to continue paying the salary of those school teachers. Hence, it is very likely that the charging school children $2 is the only option unless Islamic Relief Somaliland continues paying their salary until another arrangement is made.

Health

The project health interventions focused key main activities: (1) eight health workers were attached to the two main public health facilities in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal; (2) refresher training for the health workers on handling antenatal and neonatal facilities and child nutrition; (2) rehabilitation toilet facilities both in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal health centres; (3) and establishing health VDCs in the project areas. The objective of the project's health interventions was to is reduce under-five children mortality by 10 per cent. To assess the extent to which project was achieving this result, this evaluation relied on interviews with the health workers and reviewing the available documents in the two health facilities in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts. The reasons for this are: (1) to conduct

survey on child mortality needs specialised tools, methodologies and ethical considerations which is beyond the scope of this evaluation; (2) the 10 per cent target was arbitrary as there was no baseline value hence it is difficult to determine the impact with survey-based methods; (3) and finally, the project investment on health sector was very small and unlikely to achieve the expected results. Against this background, the evaluation assessed the impact of the implemented health activities and the wider project integration impact on communities' health.

Dacarbudhuq district

Even though the design of the health interventions was not strong, and the planned activities were few, they remain relevant and made huge impact to the lives of the communities. The health workers from the project attached to Dacarbudhuq Maternal Child Health (MCH) have improved the centre's services, documentation and systems, including keeping patient records properly. They also used WHO growth standards to follow up the growth of the children. The MCH centre is the only functioning health facility in Dacarbudhuq district providing health services for more than 21,000 patients according to the health workers. The health workers mentioned that the health conditions of pregnant, lactating mothers and children under-five have improved due to the better health services they receive from the centre and the overall improved hygiene and sanitation in the project areas. During the lifecycle of the project, the death of only one child resulting from malnutrition was recorded in Dacarbudhuq area on 28 February 2018. The health workers said that the mother of the deceased child had taken him to a remote village, and he was not able to receive the nutritious biscuits from the health centre. The World Health Organization (WHO) in coordination with the Somaliland Ministry of Health (MoH) supplies nutritious biscuits to the health centre to help reduce children malnutrition within the district. The health workers provide biscuits for the malnourished children in the village until he/she reaches the desired nutrition levels. The Dacarbudhuq health centre also serves as information centre for the community on health issues. Pregnant mothers receive antenatal services while the lactating mothers receive neonatal services.

One of the RIDES project health workers at the Dacarbudhuq health centre, explained the centre services and the impact of their live-saving services for the communities:

"I am RIDES project health worker in Dacarbudhuq health centre. I specialise in mother and child health care. This health centre has two fully functioning divisions: antenatal care (ANC) and postnatal care (PNC). There are also other divisions including OTP, nutrition, TSVP. Islamic Relief has assisted the development of the OTP section. For two years, we treated 179 children with mal-nutrition with the OTP biscuit. Moreover, the last few months we have done massive vaccination campaigns. I must emphasise, that during the RIDES project, all expecting mothers were offered due care. Islamic Relief has offered salary -although small- to the health workers which enabled for the workers to dedicate their time to the patients. As people of this district, we are very grateful to Islamic Relief. As evidenced by the reports we sent to Islamic Relief, there was no expecting mother that died without the due care in the area. The centre midwives had even walked to the hard-to-reach areas to attend to the expecting mothers. All this was made possible by the salary that the RIDES project offers. In addition, during the cold weather, there is an outbreak of communicable diseases. Therefore, the need for Islamic Relief to continue this project is at its peak at the current moment. I am sorry that Islamic Relief is leaving during a hard time of malnutrition, communicable diseases and droughts. I hope that Islamic Relief comes back, or another NGO fills the gap. The RIDES project also improved the district hygiene by constructing garbage pits. The training on sanitation, hygiene also improved the overall health of the community. I must emphasise that when an expecting mother suffers from malnutrition, if not attended urgently it will affect the unborn babies who can born with physical or mental deformities. The project is providing life-saving services and responding to the community health need. We request Islamic Relief to continue the project implementation."

Abdaal district
Abdaal health centre is a referral centre and has more staff and facilities compared to that one in Dacarbudhuq district. The project has attached four health workers to Abdaal health centre to support efforts reducing the mortality rate of children under five years.

Abdaal health centre serves 25 satellite villages in the area. The attached health workers currently work with the Mother and Child section that aims to reduce mortality and morbidity of children and adults. The staff provide excellent services to the patients. The centre is open 24 hours and staff attends shifts. Around 74 women give birth in the centre per month. For complicated cases, they refer to Hargeisa city for urgent action. The health centre screened 421 children in 2018 for malnutrition. The number of those severely malnourished children fluctuates during different months. Despite this, all the patients were treated successfully.

Another RIDES project health worker in Abdaal health centre and said, *"Islamic Relief health activities have improved the health conditions of Abdaal community. Islamic Relief health activities has reinforced HPA and WFP efforts to reduce malnutrition in Abdaal district. The increased number of staff and their improved capacities helped the centre to provide additional and better health services. The sanitation interventions have also reduced waterborne diseases. Though waterborne diseases can breakout in rainy seasons, the incidence of waterborne diseases have significantly reduced in the district. The Islamic Relief stipend has increased the moral and energy of the health workers. Though it is small money, but it helps us to work extra hours and serve for vulnerable people. We request Islamic Relief to extend the project so that we can continue delivering life-saving health services to the community."*

Overall remarks on health intervention both in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal district
The project initially planned to attach two health workers to each health centre in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts. The implementation of the health activities delayed, and the project duration was cut by six months leaving large unspent funds in health workers' budget line. This forced the project to attach eight health workers to the health centres rather than four to spend unspent funds in the last six months of the project. Even though the project attached the health workers in the last six months of the project duration, the impact they made is massive as they have filled an existing gap and their services are easily visible.

Health Poverty Action (HPA) provides drugs to the health centres and WFP and WHO provide nutritious diet for malnourished children in the health centres. Hence, the project's strategy to attach qualified health workers to reinforce existing efforts to deliver life-saving health services for the patients is extremely relevant and should be continued. The evaluation team spoke with the District Commissioners to ask how the government plans to sustain the health stream of benefits the project has created. The District Commissioners mentioned that the government does not have the financial capacity to replace Islamic Relief services and they request Islamic Relief to continue supporting the Health Centres.

Hygiene and Sanitation
The project sanitation activities included organising Hygiene and Sanitation Committees (HSC) in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts; training the HSCs as ToTs (Training of Trainers); and excavation of two garbage disposal sites in the two districts. These activities were very relevant and improved the health and sanitation conditions of the villages to an extent.

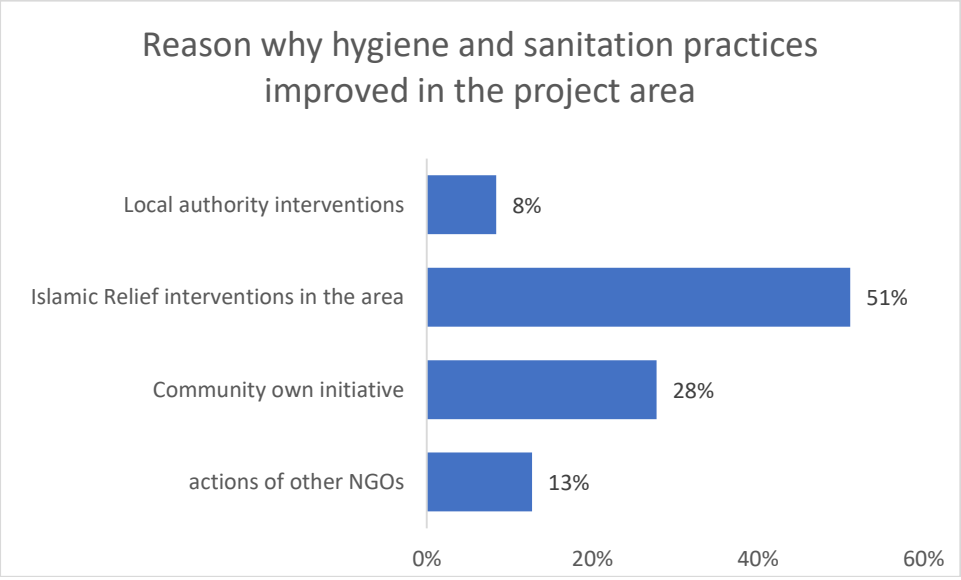
64 per cent of the households surveyed said that their hygiene and sanitation have improved since the RIDES project started while 36 per cent said that no improvement had taken place. The improved hygiene and sanitation conditions of the project areas is associated with the monthly

campaigns that the HSCs organise to sensitise households on the benefits of cleanliness. The garbage disposal sites also helped communities to dispose their garbage properly. When the garbage pits become full, they are burnt. Ahmed is the health worker at Dacarbudhuq health centre and said, "In the past household used to dispose their garbage in open spaces near their houses. The rain used to drain all the garbage into the water sources. We had many water-borne diseases. Now, the majority of the household garbage disposal is in the pits, and this has reduced water-borne diseases. We have not recorded water-borne diseases in our health centre in the last rainy season."

Though the one garbage pit has helped many households to dispose their garbage properly, those who live further to the sites are still dumping in open spaces. A female from Abdaal said, "We would like to dispose our garbage to the garbage pits, but I live 20 minutes walking distance, so we dispose it in open spaces. We know this is not good idea, but we have no option. We request Islamic Relief to excavate another garbage site as this one is not enough for Dacarbudhuq village"

For total sanitation to be achieved in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal villages, at least one more garbage site is needed to be constructed in each area for those households who live far away from the existing ones.

For those households who experienced improved hygiene and sanitation, they were asked the reasons why. 51 per cent of the households mentioned Islamic Relief interventions, 28 per cent community initiatives, 13 per cent actions of other NGOs while 8 per cent said local authority interventions. The focus group discussions confirmed that "community initiatives" are the campaigns Islamic Relief HSCs organise to sensitise communities. Hence, 79 per cent of the communities think that Islamic Relief Interventions are the reason why their community hygiene and sanitation practices improved.



Outcome three: Vulnerable communities in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq are resilient to hazards and related shocks

Somaliland is a drought prone country and rainfall was below the average in the last five years[14]. In the last two decades, the droughts became more frequent with harder hits and shocks to human life and property. In the rainy seasons, large volume of surface runoff water flows from highlands and

[14] https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som

ends in the sea. The irrigated farms in the project areas are located along the dry river banks that channels surface runoff water to the sea. During heavy rains, the dry rivers bursts banks and damage neighbouring farms. Though this is common in the project areas, Dohoguban village suffered the most in the last decade, where farmers lost large amount of their plantations and vegetation.

The project was employed to build on the existing local DRR knowledge and practices working with the local elders and creating Disaster Risk Reduction Committees across the project areas. The Disaster Risk Reduction Committees are organised groups which meet on a demand basis with a mandate to reduce the impact of disasters, provide indigenous warning to the communities on potential disasters, prevent conflict and maintain social order. Even though there is an organised DRR committee, they lack resources and plans to execute their mandate. The main DRR activities that the RIDES project has delivered include asset protection for two villages, stream bank erosion control training for local communities, training on modern farming techniques, radio programmes to create awareness on the Early Warning Systems (EWS) information, and a national workshop on advocacy for climate change and disaster risk reduction in coordination with Somaliland National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authorities (NADFOR).

The project in collaboration with NADFOR and the Ministry of Information released early warning messages on climate change and DRR through radio Hargeisa. The coverage of the radio messages was extensive as Radio Hargeisa is the only active radio in Somaliland, helping to relay information to those living in remote areas. The radio messages reinforced the messaging from the project's other DRR interventions. This included sensitising communities on the utilisation of indigenous EWS to mitigate or minimise the impact of droughts on their lives and livelihoods. The discussions with VDCs revealed that communities became more aware of the risk of frequent droughts in Somaliland and the need to invest in necessary DRR activities that are likely to reduce the drought's impact on human life and property. Even though communities are sensitised with the risks associated with droughts, they remain very vulnerable to future droughts.

In the project area, drought is considered the most common shock that is very likely to affect communities. 60 per cent of the respondents said that drought is the most common shock that the communities experience while crop diseases, animal diseases and flooding are also likely to affect communities to smaller extent. According to the baseline data, drought has also been the most common shock that affected communities in 2015. The number of households who consider drought as the most common shock that affect their communities has reduced from 88 per cent at the baseline to 60 per cent at end of the project. This means that there is a slight increase of the number of households who are resilient to droughts. The number of families who were hit by Livestock diseases, crop diseases and flooding have slightly increased compared to the baseline.

Table 16

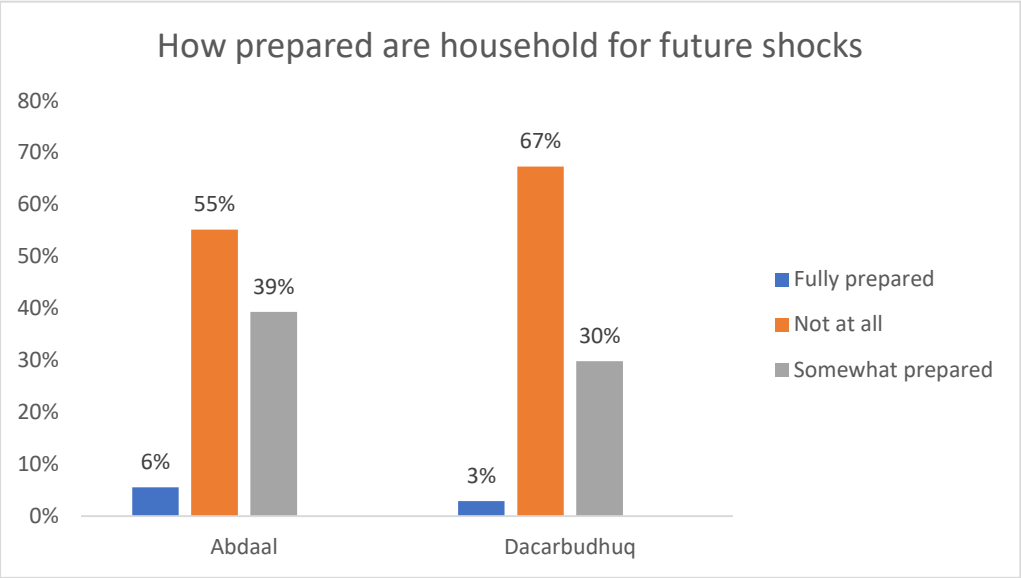
Types of shocks	Baseline data - % of respondents	Final evaluation data- % of respondents
Animal diseases	4	13
Crop diseases	N/A	14
Drought	88	60
Flooding	3	11
Insufficient water	N/A	2
Human diseases	6	N/A
Grand Total	100	100

The focus group discussions with the VDC both in Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts have mentioned there were some families affected by the floods due to heavy rain fall in 2018. Some farmers have linked the crop diseases with the new seed varieties distributed by the project. They argued that the seeds distributed by the project was susceptible to fungus or insects. To ascertain this claim, further discussions were held with farmers and the agriculture VDCs. The discussions reveal that the crop diseases were not caused by the seeds, rather by widespread pests that damaged many crops in this year. A member of an agriculture VDCs in Dacarbudhuq district said, "there were few cases that some farmers said the seeds distributed by Islamic Relief were bad, but the seeds grow well majority of the farms in the district." It also became apparent in the focus group discussions that sprayed farms had more harvest than those that haven't been sprayed which indicates that pests have damaged the seeds.

The evaluators asked Islamic Relief project staff about the claims of some farmers regarding the distributed seeds and failed crops. The Islamic Relief project staff said, "*The project coordinates with Somaliland Ministry of Agriculture on all agriculture related activities. The seeds provided to the farmers were tested with the Ministry laboratory. The seeds scored 85 per cent of germination which is above the ministry accepted seed germinations score. The project also tested the seeds in the Farmers Field Schools (FFSs), and they recorded higher germination performance. One of the main reasons that some farmers' crops last season is the full army worm that spread in some parts of the country which damaged crops. Islamic Relief communicated to the Ministry of Agriculture about this and they notified that scientific investigation is underway to understand more about it. There could be also extreme case where farmers cultivation process fails the seeds, or the soil type may not be appropriate for the seeds*."

The household survey participants asked how prepared they are for future shocks. 63 per cent of the households feel that they are not prepared at all, 34 per cent somewhat prepared while only 4 per cent feel they are fully prepared. Dacarbudhuq households are more vulnerable to shocks and disasters than Abdaal households.

Figure 16



The project interventions were very relevant to the DRR needs and priorities of the communities, although 63 per cent of the households in the communities remain vulnerable to future shocks and stress. The main reason is that all the DRR activities were implemented in the last six months of the project lifecycle and it is likely that the impact of the DRR activities has not yet fully matured. Many

of the DRR activities - radio programmes, capacity development etc. are focused on increasing knowledge, changing attitude and practices of the communities and their impact is likely to take more time.

DAC Criteria

Relevance

Appropriateness of project concept

With the overall objective of the RIDES project being to reduce poverty and hunger in selected districts of Somaliland, it is instructive to look at the prevailing conditions in Somaliland during the project period. It reveals that there was a devastating drought in the middle of the project period in a context of low levels of infrastructure development. The reliance upon large-scale humanitarian assistance in Somaliland reveals low levels of resilience. In contrast, 2018 was a year of above average rainfall, permitting some recovery of agricultural and livestock production. This context made any project focussing on drought resilient livelihoods and development of permanent water sources highly and immediately relevant to the needs of the population in Somaliland.

Food Security - Somaliland- Somalia 2015-2019

The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon had a severe impact on vulnerable people in Somalia - it worsened an already widespread drought in Puntland and Somaliland with a devastating impact on communities and their livelihoods, increasing food insecurity, cash shortages and resulting in out-migration and death of livestock. Somaliland and Puntland have experienced below average rains for up to four seasons, spanning two years, and affecting nearly 1.4 million people. As of 31 May 2017, 3.2 million people were severely food insecure.

In 2018, food security improved significantly in many of the areas worst affected by the 2016-17 drought, as a result of large-scale humanitarian assistance and improvements in seasonal performance. The record levels of rainfall seen during the April – June 2018 Gu rainy season saw the substantial replenishment of water resources, and the restoration of cropland and livestock numbers across many areas of Somalia. The latest food security outlook by the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) and the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) reports that food security will improve significantly in many of the areas worst-affected by the 2016-17 drought, as a result of improvements in seasonal performance supported by large-scale humanitarian assistance[15].

The project is in line with the key priorities of Somaliland National Development Plan II (2017-2021)[16] and five key UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); goal 1: no poverty, goal 2: zero hunger, goal 3: good health and well-being, goal 4: quality education and goal 6: clean water and sanitation. Again, the government of Somaliland's budget is mainly spent on defence and security. This presents INGOs with the challenge of needing to complement or substitute for weak or absent government services whilst at the same time building the capacity of government staff to provide better services in future if governments increase.

[15] Relief Web -https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som

[16] https://slministryofplanning.org/images/front-page/Somaliland_NDPII_Final.pdf

RIDES Project Justification

In December 2013, Islamic Relief Worldwide commissioned an in-depth PRA exercise in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq districts in Somaliland. According to the study and analysis, basic Human Development Indexes (HDI) in the two areas is 47.9 per cent, which is slightly lower than the national index level (48.2 per cent). National and local development plans for the rural development of the Somaliland government were also studied. A workshop was conducted to examine the immediate and underlying factors responsible for this situation. It was established that the ultimate barrier to improving outcomes, and the root cause of deprivation across all sectors, is underpinned by three key factors: drought, caused or exacerbated by climate change; weak community institutions; and the inability of the Somaliland government to provide basic services.

This process of participatory needs assessment was very well regarded by the Government of Somaliland. Within prioritised sectors, activities were carried out with a high level of technical quality and prioritisation was done in a consultative way. This was considered as deviant from the norm in Somaliland with its long exposure to top-down relief interventions. For example, according to the Ministry of Agriculture in Somaliland, since the foundation of Somaliland as an independent entity, this is the first and biggest project based on the needs of the agriculture sector having been determined before the project began (Interview, Regional Director, Ministry of Agriculture). Therefore, the project remains very relevant to the context, needs and priorities of the beneficiary communities and is in line with the Somaliland, regional and international development policies and strategies.

Quality of project design

Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq were chosen for the Islamic Relief field study for the RIDES project for several reasons, including: low monetary income; poor food security; poor access to clean water and good sanitation and a weak local government. In the grading of districts in Somaliland based on the extent of decentralisation and capacity of public institutions, the districts that Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq belong to are rated Grade D on a scale of A to D.

A PRA exercise carried out in late 2013 and the findings were converted into a problem/solution tree. The report identifies poor government capacity at the root of the problem tree: *most regional and district offices are understaffed (Abdaal) or not staffed at all (Dacarbudhuq) and have no infrastructure, transport or other necessities. Therefore, coordination and regulation are very weak. Therefore, most services are delivered by default through local communities, the private sector, national and international NGOs and international donors*. However, the solutions to this government capacity gap are not covered in the problem solutions or subsequent project design, with the project therefore representing continuity/perpetuation in the sustainability problem of NGO service delivery. An output to create a partnership for systematic local government tier capacity building would have made the project more relevant to local conditions.

The project design could have been more relevant to the local context if some of the critical sectors and population groups highlighted in the PRA had featured in the subsequent project design process. For example, since the plight of IDPs, displaced previous droughts were highly emphasised in the PRA, thus some more specific activities targeted on the living conditions of IDPs could have been considered, such as addressing the very poor shelter conditions faced by IDPs. The reasons why project design did not closely follow the findings of the PRA are not clear, but it is possible that this can be traced to an international programme framework in which the RIDES project was required to fit. The PRA contains the following section which shows that the Integrated Sustainable Development (ISD) programme design had some pre-set objectives.

*There are five main desired outcomes of the ISD programme. The programme **must** deliver for at least 1,000 households within a defined geographical area the following:*

- *Lifting at least 1,000 people above an income of £1 a day in each area.*
- *Providing sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation for at least 75% of the local population.*
- *Ensuring that all children, boys and girls alike without gender disparity, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.*
- *Reducing infant & child mortality by 15 per cent.*
- *Communities have sufficient governance skills and are empowered to manage their own development processes successfully.*

The RIDES project closely followed this global ISD design, aiming for significant gains for all these outcomes across the 6,955 households in the target districts. This could explain the inclusion of child mortality reduction outputs, a specialised health sector intervention which did not seem to fit well into an integrated livelihoods project design. Child mortality reduction was not a prominent issue in the PRA but was nevertheless, it was included as a project outcome. It was stated in the KII with the health official that whilst the short-term salary support for community nurses was welcome, the key factor in reducing infant mortality was seen to be the improvement of the income of vulnerable women through the enterprise development in SHGs. In other words, the project could have done more to monitor the impacts of improved income on improved health instead of trying to intervene directly with health.

In an environment of overwhelming vulnerability and unmet basic needs, there are trade-offs needed to maximise the impact of the approximately £2 million RIDES budget. This was done by implementing each component with a sufficient scale in such a way as to guarantee multiplier effects from integration. By spreading its efforts across four sectors, the design of the project did not allow for such maximisation. The intervention design was not strong in the education and health sectors, injecting some short-term resources into infrastructure and salaries with little prospect of sustainability.

Project staffing

The design of the project was also ambitious in relation to existing Islamic Relief Somaliland competencies. More systematic thinking, restructuring and support were needed to bring about a relevant integrated implementation team and strategy design to avoid the project being done along conventional technical or sectoral lines. There was a low allocation and provision of expertise, capacity on integration, resilience and gender. The project was characterised by a high staff turnover which led to massive implementation delays. The implementation delays squeezed a huge bulk of activities into the last six months of the project which are likely to have compromised the quality and the desired impact of the project. The project saw three project managers, two community development officers, two livelihood/micro-credit officers, two WASH officers and two M&E officers. Again, in the 3.5 years of the project lifecycle, Islamic Relief Somaliland had four area managers. The high turnover of the project staff and the area managers had negative impact on the strategic steer and implementation of the project. Each new area manager needed the time to fit in and adjust with Islamic Relief thinking and understand the programme policies and procedures which ultimately delayed the project implementation.

However, in the final year, there was huge improvement in terms of the staffing of the project which led to better implementation arrangement. The workload was so huge for the current number of staff to deliver effectively, but it has so far, been managed successfully. There is strong team cooperation which allowed the staff to work together and implement the remaining activities successfully in the last six months.

Staff capacity building was not focussed on integrated sustainable development and gender capacity. Absence of women among project officers was a serious constraint. The staff attended trainings mainly on monitoring which contributed to the improved reporting in the final year of the project.

- MEAL coordinator visited Kenya for M&E training, Bangladesh for peer learning for cross learning on monitoring.
- Acting area manager, had exposure visit and learning in Bangladesh and is currently the child welfare coordinator.
- Project manager/Area manager attended Kenya training for results-based monitoring
- Core humanitarian standards training was delivered for all staff and the community development officer attended community-based targeting in Hargeisa.
- DRR officer attended MEAL training in Hargeisa.

The project had a sectoral design around four objectives, in line with the Islamic Relief ISD design guidelines: Livelihoods, Water, Education and Health. There was no active consideration of risks and assumptions during implementation as the design of the project did not contain a theory of change or associated logframe. The risks and assumptions therefore remained implicit and were not formally addressed throughout the project. A review of the design of each objective yields the following observations:

It is noted that in the third interim report of December 2016, the wording of the objectives appears to have changed to reflect more precisely the selected implementation strategies. This is because the objective statements were being used to drive implementation and set output level targets rather than a logical framework. Reporting against outputs was introduced into the reporting from June 2017 onwards. The Islamic Relief Somalia staff were requested in the evaluation workshop to provide explanations for the targets, of which the standard approach was to derive the target from allocated budget and establish unit costs of delivering the activity /output in conformity with prevailing standards, which is an arbitrary approach. For example, the project design featured distribution of livestock to 1,350 households (RIDES Proposal, Section 5.1) but given the national standards and costs for goat distribution it was possible to target only 120 households with the activity.

As far as design is concerned, the RIDES project featured some weaknesses in the baseline and monitoring framework, a lack of theory of change and weak logical framework and, in some cases, incoherent/unrealistic targets (e.g. 100 per cent of children to be enrolled in school without the attendant strategy or monitoring. These prevailed through the lifetime of the project without any rectification from Somalia, regional or UK levels of Islamic Relief. The Somaliland team provided their best efforts to implement the project but, in the process, as is extensively explained in the efficiency section below, it turned into an essentially multi-sectoral service delivery project that was not flexible or adaptable in the face of climatic, environmental or macro-economic shocks.

Efficiency

Translation of Resources into Results

The project lacked a logframe, and this seriously hampered the effectiveness of the project as there was no direction for staff on the necessary sequencing of activities, meaning that they could, in theory, take place at any time during the three and a half years of the project. As a result, there was very little continuous, cumulative implementation of activities such as training, capacity building or awareness raising. The lack of a theory of change also meant that there was little formal guidance from the official project documents on how the different outputs should be sequenced and structured to achieve integration and thereby enhance gains in resilience building.

Annex 1 is the results table from the sixth interim report, the most recent document available to the evaluation team, which shows that all planned activities and outputs were completed or were due to be completed by December 2018. The full completion of activities was confirmed by the Islamic Relief Somaliland project team. However, this does not tell the story of the project. As shown in Table 1, the project was subject to very considerable delays in implementation, creating a backlog of activities that were then rapidly implemented in the last 12 months of the project.

Figure 17

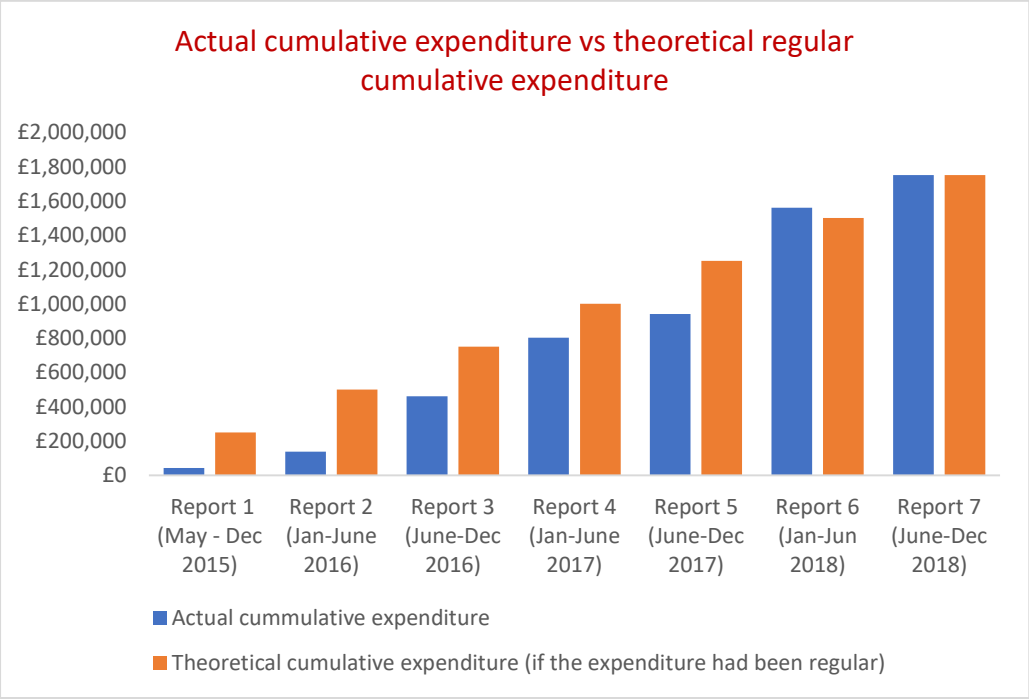


Figure 17 gives an overview of the transfer of project resources into results over the lifetime of the project. It assumes a total operational budget of £1.9 million as 10 per cent of the budget was retained in the UK for overheads. It demonstrates a massive acceleration of activities in the six months from January to June 2018, with 33 per cent of the project budget being spent. If the budget had been spent evenly over the project time period, it would have led to 14 per cent being spent during each six-month reporting period. This can be explained by the dynamism of the current project manager/Somaliland area manager appointed in the latter half of 2017. The acceleration can

also be attributed to favourable seasonal conditions for agriculture in 2018, making the planned agricultural investment activities worthwhile (they had to be postponed during the drought period) and the resolution of the exchange rate issues affecting the project. If the cumulative list of activities is examined, only the micro-credit and water activities were implemented in a timely and continuous fashion, uninterrupted by climatic conditions. It is not surprising that these are the highest impact areas of RIDES as far as the community is concerned. Note the marked slowdown of expenditure in the fifth reporting period when the communities were suffering from the effects of drought. During this time, there was uncertainty concerning which activities would go forward and which would be cut in the realignment of the budget required due to the Brexit devaluation. It was also a period of changeover of project manager.

Adaptive management

It would be expected that unrestricted Islamic Relief internal funding would allow for more flexibility and adaptation to the changing demands on the ground than restricted funds from an external donor. It appears that there has been little deviation from original budget line item allocations and adaptive management practices were not introduced in the RIDES project. This was highlighted in the MTR:

"The need for flexibility was highlighted in many conversations and observations. For instance, a focus group of villagers reported that the biggest threat to their wellbeing and livelihoods was that the bore-hole pump needed replacement. An official in Abdaal identified the need for a town slaughterhouse, and environmental protection training. Staff members suggested water storage cisterns and improved water harvesting techniques to develop assets and build resilience of pastoralists during drought. The project was not able to help because there was no budget allocated for these particular items and they were not part of the project plan."[17]

Within these limitations however, there are examples of responsiveness to the recommendations of government stakeholders regarding implementation priorities.

"Construction of four school administration blocks were changed to construction of three primary classrooms and two latrines (boys and girls) in Dheenta village under Dacarbudhuq district occurred after the government specifically the Ministry of Education affirmed that the priority need of the target areas is construction of primary classrooms as the students were sitting under the sun." *(*Fifth Interim Report Dec 2017).[18]

Stakeholder collaboration

There were no partnerships with other NGOs in RIDES but in some areas such as the townships of Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq and rural Jaleelo village, local NGOs have worked with the population for some years, and people were ready to be engaged in self-help and farming groups in the project area. Implementation of the activities sector by sector was very effective in terms of government coordination as demonstrated by the following feedback from a Ministry of Agriculture representative:

The Ministry was very closely working with the project from beginning to end. The project focussed on increasing crop production, addressing needs, and supporting them through a community driven approach. The Ministry took part in beneficiary selection, monthly monitoring activities, as part of the implementation team. The Agriculture sector also has a working group which meets every month and finds ways forward for the subsequent months (example of minutes available). The project

[17] Rides project mid-term review

[18] Fifth Interim Report Dec 2017

process was very transparent and accountable. The MoU states the resources allocated. We knew what has been planned – in terms of seeds and irrigation pumps and what is supposed to have been done. Awareness was high.

Similar very positive feedback was obtained from the Ministry of Water:
We rate the Islamic Relief partnership as excellent. It is one of the best partnerships in terms of collaboration, information sharing, quality of infrastructure, responding to Ministry priorities, cost effectiveness and value for money. The biggest successes in the project were the borehole drilling, the urban connection systems, and the water supply systems.

Effectiveness

In the absence of a logical framework, all project documentation related to project progress was contained in the interim reports at six monthly intervals. This was a suitable reporting cycle for the project, enabling regional and international Islamic Relief teams to know the state of implementation. In the reports, there is some presentation of challenges faced, broadly equating to a risk log, although mitigating actions are not specified. Actions taken to address the risks are not mentioned in subsequent reports. From the available monitoring documentation, principally the narrative from interim reports, it was possible to establish the following assessment of the achievement of the project outputs. Targets varied and were finally standardised in the interim reports from June 2017 onwards.

Objective 1: Output targets June 2017 onwards

- *1,000 targeted HHs earning increased income from adopting improved methods of crop and/or livestock production and marketing.*
- *720 targeted HHs (600 women and 120 youth) earn income through engaging in small businesses and/or doing casual labour.*
- *At least 1,000 households in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq have adequate disaster preparedness and response*

Assessment: In this objective the primary focus at the activity level was on supporting crop production, with due attention being given to irrigation and other drought resilient production techniques. Livestock activities were restricted to restocking, water provision and animal health rather than wide-scale production support. Small business support was focussed on women with cash grant provision through SHG structures. There was no specific programming for casual labourers, but instead, a programme of vocational training for unemployed youth was prioritised. The Islamic Relief Somaliland team stated that casual farm labourers were included in the agricultural programming by involving them in the provision of seeds and tillage and other farmers offering a parcel of their land for the landless labourers to participate in the farming activities. The fact that Disaster Risk Reduction was not clearly articulated in this objective, together with the lack of accompanying theory of change and logframe weakened the role of DRR in the project as a cross cutting priority for implementation, only being introduced as an output from 2017 as a response to the mid-term review.

Self-Help Groups

The SHGs supported in the RIDES project were a **triumph of effectiveness**. Apart from the reasons given in the section above, the evaluators would note that in comparison with other experiences, the oversight by Islamic Relief and local institutions/leaders was supportive but not too prescriptive, giving the women members considerable space to find the best indigenous solutions to micro-enterprise self-help.

Targeting criteria of poverty and vulnerability were used for eligibility in all cases and levels of support to individual household (e.g. cash grants) were set according to established guidelines for Somalia. Evidence from FGDs is overwhelming that targeting was done through community identification processes and was considered fair.

"There were characteristics used by Islamic Relief to select the women to receive the financial assistance. They have selected women who were raising orphan children, women whose husbands have mental illness or disability or women who are very poor. All of us here are able-bodied, but all of us from those backgrounds. For me, my husband has had a mental illness for the last 12 years. So, we were selected because we were the people who most needed the assistance. A committee was tasked to select the best fit of women for the assistance, and we went through a vetting process."

"We are Muslims who believe that the destiny is written for all of us. People could see that we deserved due to our low economic status and already existing businesses that enabled us to use the donation as an investment, not as a salary."

The SHGs worked throughout the project lifetime with a simple and extremely effective Shariah-compliant revolving fund methodology, as clearly explained by the women themselves in the FGD.

"In the first year, we were given $475 each. Each of us returned $40 to the treasurer for 11 months, except in December where only $35 was returned. That makes up the total of $475. At the end of the year, the treasurer had given each of the $475 we saved and then Islamic Relief topped up for us another $240 for the second year. So, the lump sum we received from Islamic Relief is $715. In the second year, we also saved an instalment of $60 for 11 months and the last month only $55. Again, each lady was paid back the $715 she saved with the treasurer and she invested it in her business. This is our third cycle going on. This means we save the investment money each year and use the profit for our daily needs."

The criteria of extreme vulnerability used for Self-Help Group membership selection (Microcredit Component Practice/Guideline In RIDES Project Context p.3) can impact its effectiveness if applied too strictly as there can be too low levels of literacy for leadership. It is evident from FGDs that there was sufficient literacy to provide for sound group leadership and administration.

"We usually choose the most educated among us to lead the group. But we also choose an individual with patience, good manners and integrity. We usually elect person with due to her leadership experience."

Livestock and agriculture

The evidence for the effectiveness of this area of implementation is much more mixed. There are examples of failed project investments in seeds which failed and livestock that died. Some could be regarded as unavoidable consequences of severe drought but given the vulnerability of drop out pastoralists to extreme poverty, other off-farm livelihood support might have exposed them to less risk. Overall purchase and distribution of seed carries inherent risks of mal-adaptation even though seeds procured by Islamic Relief passes through Ministry of Agriculture testing to ensure an 85 per cent or above germination rate. In terms of widespread pest outbreaks, although the distribution of organic pesticides was an excellent response from the project team, it came too late for many farmers to protect their crops. In the FGDs, there were a number of complaints about seed quality which were impossible to corroborate with the frequency of seed quality problems and yield data.

Another important observation was that the project provided diesel and petrol pumps for irrigation rather than solar or wind powered options, which have major ongoing cost implications for farmers. *"As the village development committee, we had an agreement with Islamic Relief to provide machines working on solar and wind electricity to the farmers. That agreement was also botched when Islamic Relief provided diesel machines instead of the renewable energy powered ones. The aim to reduce the cost for farmers was not achieved."*

Regarding the livestock treatment campaign resourced by Islamic Relief, one interesting observation from the local context came up which may have impacted on the effectiveness of the activity. This would be worth following up for future animal health activities.

"We don't know whether the drugs were used owing to the intense phobia of the village people about drugs and vaccination of their livestock."

The DRR activities were mentioned considerably in the FGDs but this could be because they had only been implemented at the very end of the project. This will inevitably put limitations on their potential impact as observed by NADFOR officials.

"More emphasis is needed on DRR in future and not just one-off activities on training/awareness. There has to be periodic and continuous awareness programme throughout the project lifetime."

Objective 2: Outputs June 2017 onwards

1. *5,246 HHs have available potable water*
2. *5,000 heads of livestock are provided with drinking water*
3. *Sufficient water is provided to irrigate 50 hectare of land*
4. *Level of contaminants in surface water is reduced to meet national quality standards*

Assessment: This was a well-balanced objective designed to develop the broad range of water resources to underpin the other objectives in livelihoods, education and health. In the very early stages of the project, the government closed down the plants that were causing pollution. Opportunities to increase the quality and quantity of water were maximised and therefore the intervention was substantially achieved over three and a half years of the project with the provision of one new borehole, two rehabilitated boreholes with piped networks, eight shallow wells and one berkad.

Water effectiveness

The Islamic Relief Somaliland staff explained how they had achieved effectiveness in water quality: The Ministry of Water has a laboratory for water analysis which checks salinity and the pH of the water. If the salinity is above 3,000 which is the limit for the human consumption, it is not accepted. Fortunately, all of the boreholes and shallow wells are within the accepted threshold of water quality. The borehole drilled under the RIDES project at Dacarbudhuq produces 35 barrels per hour. Surveys were done, and only one suitable site was found for a new borehole. It seems that the RIDES project had some difficulty communicating the geological limitations on borehole provision. This is the only place that can produce water, and solar system is used for sustainability.

"The only complaint that we have for Islamic Relief is that we requested the water production to be made the priority. Although a well was drilled in the district, the water that it produces is scarce and not enough to cover the needs of the people who live here."

Solar powered pumping of water provides sustainability in terms of running costs which are a contrast with the irrigation pumps.

Objective 3 Outputs June 2017 onwards

- *80 per cent of school-age children, boys and girls alike, enrolled in primary schools and attend regularly.*
- *80 per cent of school children have necessary school education materials.*
- *The four schools in project areas have necessary facilities conducive for learning.*

Assessment: This objective was set in a highly ambitious manner considering the limited capacity of the project to overcome some of the major issues affecting school education in Somaliland, primarily the lack of trained teachers. It is noted that the objective was changed from all to 80 per cent to make it more realistic. The project provided salaries for five teachers and a training in teaching methodologies, although this only happened in the final six months of the project. The proposed activities of upgrading school infrastructure and librarie, providing uniforms and equipment to children are a substantive contribution in the project localities but the overall design of this objective lacked sustainability.

Objective 4 outputs June 2017 Onwards

- *40 per cent of the project's targeted HHs combat incidence of malnutrition in under-fives.*
- *Project targeted households adapt improved child hygiene and sanitation practices.*

Assessment: The desired reductions in under-five mortality have occurred in line with this objective. In practice, the project setting of a goal of a 10 per cent reduction was arbitrary as the project had no viable monitoring strategy for this outcome. At first, this was due to apply to all households in the project area and this was later reduced to 40 per cent of households without a rationale being provided. The cash grants to Self-Help Group members were particularly instrumental in this regard, as they were focussed on the poorest and most vulnerable mothers. This objective was reinforced through awareness training and by the payment of stipends to community nurses and midwives, but these were only paid during the last six months of the project.

Delivery

Despite overstressed staff because of the work overload, the team work has been good, and the cooperation is very high. Few challenges were experienced with the government in terms of implementation of the project activities. The staff maintain that whilst the pace of implementation was greatly accelerated, due consideration was always given to the self-help philosophy for sustainability of distribution of agricultural inputs and cash grants. Benefits to the community in terms of improved farming practices, women's economic empowerment and improved WASH through water provision. In the fields of DRR and education, the delayed implementation of capacity building activities makes it impossible to arrive at an assessment of benefits at this time.

Operational work planning

In terms of operational work planning and delivery, broad sources of delay have been identified: slow start up, drought, currency devaluation and staff turnover. The project lacked a risk management strategy, so these risks all took significant time to address. The situation was only well-managed from September 2017 with the appointment of a highly committed project manager leading to a dramatic acceleration in the quality of operational work planning to ensure delivery.

Slow start up of the project implementation

It is difficult to obtain testimony on the reasons for the extremely slow start up process for the project which led to just £13, 298 of direct charitable expenditure in the first year (Second Interim Financial Report). The MTR notes that there was a "slow start to the activities largely as a result of staff turnover both in the project and in the district and national offices." In the first 18 months of the project, staff claimed that they were hampered by isolation of the field office. There is no

internet for support staff and stakeholders in the field office. It is an isolated office with little resources, hence leading to delays in terms of project implementation. There is still no internet in the field to boost communication between project staff and country office. Since the project started, the problem of internet unavailability in the whole coverage area and lack of support for staff as well as stakeholder detachment (all stakeholders and line ministries are in Hargeisa town) still exist and nothing was done to redeem them (Third Interim Report Dec 2016).

Drought

From mid-2016 to mid-2017, Somaliland was hit by a devastating drought. The implementation was not designed to manage a drought period, which might have been predicted and factored in during a four-year implementation period in Somaliland. As the MTR pointed out, the project design and implementation strategy were not itself climate resilient:

The continuing drought conditions have disrupted project outcomes dealing with seeds, irrigation, pesticide use, etc. and have limited the benefits of animal re-stocking. Water source identification has been prioritised over other pressing needs such as waste management in the township areas. This has meant that WASH and livelihoods interventions have been advanced, while health, education and DRR has been left for future action. While understandable, and recognising the pressure of community feeling, this de-facto separation of interventions has undermined somewhat the advantages of an integrated approach. The neglect of DRR in the early stages of the project has lost the opportunity mitigate the erosion of gains from other interventions.

The project did not have a built in "crisis modifier" - capacity to switch budget resources to more appropriate assistance in drought emergency, e.g. support to purchase of fodder. It simply meant delays in implementation of DRR, agriculture and livestock activities and incapacity to respond to humanitarian need.

"During drought seasons which still exist up to now, there were huge numbers of IDPs who were displaced from their sites and they were looking for pasture and water in that case they settled in our operating – Dacar budhuq and Abdaal Villages, therefore, they request food packs, and water trucking but we were unable to provide emergency staff since the project was in development." (Project Review Document (no date) -Lessons Learned).

Devaluation

In early 2017, it was realised at the different levels of Islamic Relief, that the devaluation of the pound sterling was not a temporary phenomenon and that a project budget realignment would be required. The project had a fixed pound sterling budget whilst the project operational currency was US dollars. The project was planned in 2014-15 and set up with an exchange rate of 0.58 yielding a total project budget of $3.55 million, by 2017 the exchange rate had deteriorated to 0.77 yielding a total project budget of $2.7 million. The Somaliland team entered into dialogue with regional and UK colleagues for a realignment which was conducted between May and September 2017. This further impacted on the efficiency of implementation, as during that period most activities were on hold until the prioritisation of budget cuts was finalised. The realignment itself was carefully handled to minimise the impact upon the project: six months were cut from the length of the project with a new end date of December 2018, primarily saving on staff costs. This did reduce the prospects for monitoring and follow up of training activities implemented in the last six months of the project. In addition, the following activities were cut from the project.

a) The second planned tranche of $475 to be distributed to 600 SHG members to boost their circulating capital was reduced to $240, representing a saving to the project budget of approximately $140, 000.

b) Construction of division boxes: another solution for irrigation was found using pipes.
c) Consultant for community mobilisation training: taken over by staff.
d) Community simulation and awareness using CLTS approach: covered under latrine construction.
e) Motor vehicle purchase: switched to two motorcycles.

Staff Turnover

In three and half years there were four area managers. The staff reported to different persons who came with different style of leadership – so activities were often halted as the new area manager exercised caution whilst they made their own situation assessment. The slow pace of implementation early in the project, led area managers into a culture of activity target chasing rather than participatory leadership based on evidence. The current project staff had to bear heavy load of work (estimated 60 per cent of activities) in the last 18 months to deliver the project within a limited time frame. At the project inception participants and communities were told the project timelines, but further delays struck doubt from within the communities and at times the district commissioners resisted.

Working with local structures.

The project was able to induce sustainable chance due to excellent structures, relationships and lines of communication between the project, governmental structures and the communities via VDCs. It was already recognised in the MTR that this was the key strength of the project:

Community mobilisation has been widespread and successful. In some areas, such as the townships of Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq and rural Jaleelo village, local NGOs have worked with the population for some years, and people were ready to be engaged in self-help and farming groups. Here, the RIDES intervention has taken advantage of already raised awareness and made substantial progress in developing women's self-help, farmer and pastoralist groups. In Abdaal, there were three self-funded voluntary community groups, collecting garbage, advocating for disadvantaged people, and helping each other with social issues. Several members of the current self-help group were members of these groups previously. The community development officer reports that in other rural areas progress has been slower, but that the receptivity to the project approach of facilitating people's organisation and structures is widespread, especially amongst women. (MTR)

Quality of reporting

The quality of the reporting improved throughout the lifetime of the project, with each interim report being more detailed than the last and providing an increasing commentary on emerging impacts from previously implemented activities.

The project was managed as a set of sectoral service delivery activities: there was an implementation framework but no logical framework for the project, meaning that there were no annual milestones against which project performance could be measured. In the narrow sense, all of the outputs have been achieved but there is a large number of one-off activities which have been implemented with little chance of sustainability. Examples include the DRR training and teacher training carried out in the last six months of the project.

It was confirmed by an Islamic Relief staff member that the RIDES proposal document, February 2015 has a Section 5.1 Activity Table and an Annex 2 Performance Management Framework which have been used to guide implementation. There are various unrealistic targets set at the outset which proved to be not feasible or suitable for monitoring. For example:

- *Provide shoats for restocking to pastoralist drop outs in 1,350 households*. In practice the budget allocation only allowed for 170 households to be restocked.

- *100 per cent school enrolment to be achieved in the project coverage area.* This was unrealistic given the resource allocated by the project and the fact that achieving it is subject to so many external variables beyond the scope of it.

Staff spoke of an enriching experience of on the job learning which had built their capacity. However, there is no evidence in the project documentation of a formal process of lesson learning at the project level, and a culture of lesson learning is not apparent through regional and international Islamic Relief support structures. Clear setbacks to agriculture and livestock interventions caused by the 2016-17 drought (livestock mortality and crop failure) were not detailed in the reporting, which continued to stress successful delivery of activities. Poor documentation produced at the Somaliland level has not been met with any capacity building/learning/adaptive management response. Documents are commented upon, requesting clarification and pointing out the weakness of certain indicators and the evidence provided against them, but there is no evidence of follow up support or revision. For example:

Progress Update on RIDES project Results Framework, December 2016.
Result 4.2 The project targeted households to improve child hygiene and sanitation practices
Progress Highlight: Full hygiene kits were distributed to 200 school girls in Abdaal and Dacarbudhuq District
Comment added to document: *This result can only be achieved through a combination of function boreholes providing clean and safe water, hygiene and sanitation training, and function health facilities. So, it depends on effective implementation of those components. Please make sure that this integrated approach is considered. In other words, all those activities/interventions must be implemented hand-in-hand to achieve the desired results*

Here it is shown that the higher-level staff in Nairobi/UK were aware of the significant lack of capacity for integrated development suggested by the activity reports, but there is no evidence of any systematic follow-up or capacity building in this area.

Impact

The project did not overlap with other Islamic Relief Somaliland interventions which have a more humanitarian orientation and are targeted on other geographical locations. RIDES is the only substantive development intervention by Islamic Relief Somaliland. The core contribution to reducing vulnerability has come through the training and provision of cash grants to 600 vulnerable women in SHG structures with a clear and effective revolving fund methodology. At least 1,600 farmers have been supported with training, seeds, irrigation equipment, tillage hours and organic pesticides enabling them to substantially increase crop production and created a pathway towards a sustainable livelihood. The organisation of FFSs was an important element of the capacity building. Water provision has also been substantially improved for domestic and productive purposes, having clear benefits for improved hygiene and health in the community. The overall rise in household income has permitted a substantial rise in school attendance.

De facto increased provision of clean water has greatly boosted the sustainability of agriculture, livestock, education and health outcomes. This was not achieved by integrated implementation as such but demonstrates the critical importance of water provision to the success of the RIDES project. For example, the FFS with access to irrigation water, was a great success whereas the FFS that relied on rainfall was much less effective in boosting knowledge and production.

The additional activities in the project in the field of education and health have had significant short-term impacts in further boosting attendance, attainment and health indicators but medium to long term impact is likely to be lacking.

Overall permanent water provision and micro-enterprise are the highest impact areas of the project as they can be sustained by the communities regardless of the unpredictable seasonal and long-term climatic conditions. The key to long term sustainability is linking SHGs to competent government structures for registration which would regulate their interaction with public and private service providers, and for irrigation facilities to be supported through the government with technical assistance for maintenance of the infrastructure.

Sustainability

Most informants consulted emphasised the need for continued presence of Islamic Relief. Elements with sustainability are FFS, SHGs and water facilities to be supervised and maintained by communities. Diesel and petrol pumps not sustainable compared to solar or wind solutions. These are demanded by the community.

The project design included some payment of salaries for nurses and teachers which can only improve government services whilst the project is running. This is explicitly mentioned as a concern now that the project is phasing out:

"Islamic Relief has offered salary -although small- to the health workers which enabled the workers to dedicate their time to the patients. Therefore, the need for Islamic Relief to continue this project is at the peak at the current moment. I am sorry that Islamic Relief is leaving during a hard time of malnutrition, communicable diseases and droughts. I hope that Islamic Relief comes back, or another NGO fills the gap." (Interview, Public Health Officer)

"Five teachers now work full-time in the school, but currently they are feeling anxious about the ending of the Islamic Relief project and worried about their salaries. I told them that if this project finishes, they may get salary from somewhere whether it is Islamic Relief again or another NGO." (Interview, Principal)

The effectiveness of exit strategies was compromised by the rush to complete all activities in the last year of the project. Staff stated that this was done effectively in the last semester of the project- July to December but given the fact that local government capacity remains low, questions remain. Some exit strategies were *ad hoc* - e.g. providing contact details of organic fertiliser suppliers to farmers, but do they have the capacity to procure?

Overall, the Ministries that worked closely with Islamic Relief throughout the implementation were very satisfied with the exit process, although they do demand a new project from Islamic Relief as soon as possible.

"Handover of assets to the community has been done. Responsibility and ownership for wells and irrigation equipment has been assigned. There will be monitoring to ensure facilities are long lasting and maintained in the proper manner." (Ministry of Agriculture)

"In the exit strategy, communities are responsible for sustainable and beneficial use. Islamic Relief took part in maintenance training. There are guidelines on how the committees will function and upward and downward accountability with the Ministry. e.g. tariffs are established for the sale of water if that is the decision of the committee." (Ministry of Water)

Cross Cutting Issues

The project has been working with communities with a high degree of social solidarity and this has fostered social inclusion.

Focus groups reported that microcredit and self-help groups have increased social and economic cohesion, both among the participants and beyond. The groups get together on a regular basis to talk through problems and share ideas, and the attitude is that there can be no failures because the group will support members in trouble, even by making repayments on their behalf. Each group listed helping others as the main priority for utilising the benefits from the scheme. Internally

displaced people were the most vulnerable, and both such informants interviewed agreed that they had received some limited support from the established community. Even the 'drop-out' pastoralists who are struggling to benefit from the donation of livestock from the project due to the continuing drought said that they were intent on helping others worse of themselves even on their meagre means.[19]

In terms of negative effects, empowering of women and girls has generated some unease and tensions in the community. The staff mentioned that the message to women in the community was that due to religious conceptions, the women should not disturb the patriarchy as a result of their economic empowerment in the FGDs. This is problematic in terms of handling the changing gender dynamics and suggests a lack of a suitable gender strategy for the project.

"And the other thing is that when the women were given the financial assistance, they were instructed to not share it with their husbands, hence, the widespread marital problems in the village,"[20]

It should be noted that there were external macro-economic factors that increased vulnerability but were beyond the control of the project:

"Inflation has had an extreme effect on low income families whether it is impacting their commodity basket, education or even their morale. One of the core things that make them more vulnerable is that the price of food items and the exchange rate have risen. Most of the poor families' project target area receives their income in Somaliland shillings, while many transactions take place in USD (including but not limited school fees and daily live subsistence)."

"Unprecedented high inflation of the currency caused pressure on household income as a result of increasing commodity prices and limited access to market. The inflation has its toll on the project progress towards the impact of project deliverables to the beneficiaries, as it seriously dampened the boosting up of households' income in the target district of Dacarbudhuq and Abdaal districts."[21]

Core humanitarian standards and commitments

In this section, the achievement of the nine commitments has been assessed and then scored according to a 1 -5 scale (see Annex 2 for the scoring criteria).

Standard 1: The programme is principled, appropriate and relevant meeting the needs of different groups.

Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.

Programme has need assessments and analysis of the context and stakeholders: The RIDES project had a very thorough needs assessment and analysis process in 2013-14 as it brought the communities and the relevant government officials in a participatory process. However, this was not done on an annual basis during the project to build a feedback mechanism, in order to give formal steering to the adjustment of activities to increase the responsiveness on an ongoing basis.

Targeting criteria exists: Targeting criteria for the two main programmes on micro-credit and farming were set and implemented with the support of the community. This is a testament to the mobilising work of the community project officers and capacity building of the VDCs in all the sub-

[19] Project mid-term review report
[20] FGD with the Village Committee.
[21] Fifth/Sixth Interim Reports

villages in the project area. They were able to work closely with Islamic Relief Somaliland to select 600 women and 1,600 farmers in a smooth and consensual manner.

Assistance is adapted to different capacities and capabilities: Above the excellent adaptation of micro-credit and water activities for long term sustainability is highlighted. The adaptation of the assistance was a mixed picture, with some activities being less well-adapted. Giving out goats to displaced pastoralist families in the absence of a programme to build capabilities, resources and knowledge in drought resilience, increased the likelihood of those animals dying when the drought struck. Also distributing hygiene packs to schoolgirls in the absence of sensitisation, broader gendered interventions and follow up by any female staff member from Islamic Relief to monitor the use of the materials was not a well-adjusted activity. Overall, there is a concern that despite the communities reporting that their material well-being has greatly improved for now, they have not necessarily gained increased capabilities in drought resilience.

Risk assessment/risk mitigation plan are done: A risk mitigation matrix for the project exists for the project, signed off by the area manager in March 2016. It is minimally developed in both context and detail and a risk register connected to the plan to monitor recommended measures has not identified. For example, in the case of natural disasters it was stated that there would be an emergency needs assessment. This may have been undertaken more broadly by Islamic Relief Somaliland at the time, but there is no record stating whether it had any beneficiaries in the RIDES project area or what the role of the RIDES project might have been in coordinating it.

Overall rating: 3

Standard 2: The programme is timely and effective.
Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.

The programme is timely and effective: As described in detail above, the programme activities were timely but could have been made more effective by a more systematic integration with resilience building. Vital time was lost in the first year of the project for disaster risk reduction activities. Then with the onset of drought in the second half of 2016 the development activities in agriculture, livestock and DRR activities were suspended as attention turned to coping with the drought. Fortunately, the large injection of working capital into off-farm retail micro-enterprises that were not directly affected by the drought acted as a buffer for the most vulnerable households in the communities.

Evidence that the project adapts to the changing context: The mid-term review was the most significant opportunity to adapt the project to a changing context, and its central recommendation to redouble efforts on increased provision of water for human and animal consumption as well as for irrigation, was a significant gain for the community which will mean that they are better protected from drought conditions in the future. The adaptation potential of the project was reduced by insufficient support for implementing the more demanding recommendations on better integration of activities.

Activities are implemented without unnecessary delays: The delays experienced by the project were caused mainly by factors beyond the control of the project like drought and devaluation. They were nevertheless, were exacerbated by the project design, staff turnover, and weak support from regional and international levels for a project of unprecedented complexity for Islamic Relief Somaliland.

Contingency plans are in place: The project did not feature any contingency plan. Different modalities for contingency plans are explored in the recommendations of this evaluation.

Overall rating: 2

Standard 3: The programme strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects
Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.

Local leaders and/or authorities consulted to ensure strategies are in line with local/national priorities: There was a high level of consultation with local leaders and both local and national authorities. This was especially strong at the beginning of the project with transparency on the RIDES resource developed with community leadership and policy officials in dedicated project launch workshops. The uncertainty around how to manage activities during the drought combined with the devaluation later created uncertainty, but the dynamic consultative implementation in the last 15 months of the project restored the satisfaction of stakeholders that their priorities were being addressed.

Equitable opportunity for participation of all groups: The project could have benefited from an explicit gender strategy to safeguard against any adverse reactions to women's economic empowerment and generally maintain a much more systematic monitoring of the progress and emerging issues around women and girls. This would also facilitate much needed learning about the changing dynamics within the household of women's SHG programming. The project did not maintain records on the displacement status of the beneficiaries were, meaning it cannot be proven that IDPs were involved on an equitable basis.

Overall rating: 2

Standard 4: There is accountability all stages of the project and functioning system in place for information sharing and community feedback.
Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.

Though the project has mainly focussed on service delivery, there were elements of participant empowerment that were mainstreamed. The focus group discussions and interviews revealed that people were aware of some their basic rights including water, health and political participation. The project has used service delivery as a vehicle to empower rights holders so that they can ultimately hold to account the duty bearers responsible for the provision of the service or basic need. The organization of SHGs, VDCs and the participatory approaches used in delivering the project facilitated discussions and debates on issues that affect the lives of communities. The local duty bearers attended some of these discussions and the participants have been able to hold them into account around on community development issues. The radio programmes on droughts have also helped the communities to be more aware of the existing DRR institutions and their roles.

Even though there was some progress on knowledge of their rights, the project participants need further specialised support to understand that their needs are related to specific rights. They need to be assisted to identify and target specific duty-bearer, or bearers, who are accountable for ensuring the realisation of their rights. The duty bearers responsible for each right should be identified, targeted and held into account. On the political front, Somaliland is democratic country and many of the duty bearers are elected by the citizens, but there is need to sensitise communities to use their voting power to hold them into account for delivering basic services.

The project communities are male dominated, and women play a lesser role on social, economic and decision-making issues. Though the SHGs gave women voice on social and economic issues, they still face challenges to fully enjoy equal rights with men on decision-making issues. Men are exclusively

taking major decisions even though those decision affect women and girls. Though the project focus was not women's empowerment, there is need for any such future interventions to centre efforts for women to identify and challenge different forms of subordination and exploitation – whether cultural, political or economic. For example, men own land and the project ended up supporting all male farmers. This could be achieved through capacitating poor and excluded women and challenging unequal relations between men and women.

Overall rating: 2

Standard 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.

Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.

Islamic Relief Somaliland has a written complaints policy in place. During the project inception, complaint mechanisms were adapted and oriented in the community. The mechanism took four forms – through direct contact to the field teams, a complaint response number, posters in public places visited by community members and a monthly CRM discussion the community.

The project only has only records for complaints stretching back just over a year from when the current M&E manager joined. It is not known what was done prior to the arrival of the current M&E manager who is based in Mogadishu. The complaints documentation is gathered for the whole of Somalia and reviewed on a monthly basis, with a record of responses to the complaints. Only very limited examples for a couple of months were made available to the evaluation team, suggesting that this activity is not done systematically as clearly stated in the policy. An excel sheet covering the complaints for the period May to October 2018 showed seven complaints registered in Somaliland, with two in the month of October from the RIDES project which were complaints about late and insufficient outputs. Both were resolved through dialogue with the relevant staff member. A summary report produced in October 2018 states that the feedback received from the beneficiaries and community members are still not satisfactory enough despite continuous community engagements on the use Islamic Relief Somalia CRM system. A review might be advisable on whether this challenge is being resolved. There was no overall analysis of complaints on a periodic basis throughout the project, which could lead to a performance review and improvements by Islamic Relief Somaliland.

Safeguarding: the safeguarding policy exists, and the staff know about it, but it is not fully understood from gender perspective. According to the Islamic Relief RIDES team, the previous country director was expert in safeguarding and placed some emphasis on the topic but this is cannot be corroborated as no documentation in this regard was provided to the evaluation team. The lack of a highly visible safeguarding practice is somewhat but not wholly compensated for by the fact that FGDs reported an unfailingly professional and courteous relationship between project staff and the communities. Ultimately if there was some secretive wrong-doing by a staff member, the safeguarding approach of the project would have been too superficial to identify it.

Overall rating: 2

Standard 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.

Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.

The project benefitted from strong support between existing and joining project staff which enabled a strong theoretical memory to be sustained in the project and built up learning and improvement, resulting in stronger performance towards the last 18 months of the project.

Approximately 60 activity reports and ad hoc monitoring reports of different kinds were made available to the evaluation team and learning points have been captured occasionally in these documents. In terms of formal written knowledge production there was no learning strategy to follow and no such specific documents are available from the RIDES project which explain how learning was incorporated into implementation that could be shared with communities, government and other stakeholders.

Overall rating : 1

Standard 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably.
Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.

The project was characterised by a high staff turnover which led to massive implementation delays. The implementation delays squeezed the huge bulk of activities into the last six months of the project which are likely to have compromised the quality and the desired impact of the project. The project saw three project managers, two community development officers, two livelihood/micro-credit officers, two WASH officers and two M&E officers. Again, in the three and a half years of the project lifecycle, Islamic Relief Somaliland has had four area managers. The high turnover of the project staff and the area managers had a negative impact on the strategic steering and implementation of the project. Each new area manager needed the time to fit in and adjust with Islamic Relief thinking and understand the programme policies and procedures which subsequently delayed the project implementation. However, in the final year, there was huge improvement in terms of the staffing arrangement of the project which led to better implementation arrangement. The workload was significant in size for the current number of staff to deliver it effectively, but it has been successfully managed. There is strong team cooperation which allowed the staff to work together and implement the remaining activities successfully in the last six months.

Overall rating: 2

Standard 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.
Commitment: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.

Apart from the issues raised under the effectiveness section concerning lack of logframe/theory of change, it can be noted that the project has a weak baseline document against which to measure progress which proved to be of limited value in this final evaluation. For example:

- The baseline has not captured values for all the relevant indicators of the project which makes it difficult to measure any project progress.
- The hunger scale calculations were based on an experiential question rather than an in-depth survey on food items actually consumed, and this might have not reflected the actual living conditions of the communities.
- The number of each type of livestock owned by the household and not just type is required to know the asset levels of the population.
- There is no indication of the percentage of children that were in school at the start of the project.

In six monthly reporting, implementation challenges are listed, however these are not accompanied with proposed strategies and there is no reporting on how the challenges were dealt with in subsequent reports. The reporting process was therefore not used as a supportive tool to project management which could support adaptation to prevailing circumstances.

The project produced a detailed expenditure review every six months. Timely reporting was done systematically on a six-monthly basis. This did not necessarily ensure the efficient and timely use of resources due to a combination of reasons: drought emergency conditions in second half of 2016 and early 2017; uncertainty regarding future allocations due to budget revision process following devaluation of pound sterling; significant turnover of area manager/project manager positions affecting the assertiveness of decision making at the project level.

The fact that various budget lines were almost unspent entering into the last six months of the project is indicative of the problem, meaning it was still initiating activities rather than follow up and exit planning.

Overall rating: 2

Conclusions and related recommendations

Food security

The project has boosted food security by investing the three main income sources for accessing food by the households - agriculture, small business and livestock. However, dietary diversity remains limited. A more diversified diet is an important outcome associated with several improved outcomes in areas such as birth weight, child anthropometric status, and improved hemoglobin concentrations. A more diversified diet is also highly correlated with such factors as caloric and protein adequacy, percentage of protein from animal sources (high quality protein), and household income. Even in very poor households, increased food expenditure resulting from additional income is associated with increased quantity and quality of the diet. Therefore, in cases such as this, where increasing dietary diversity does not appear to be in line with growing incomes, intensified awareness raising and capacity building on the importance of dietary diversity would be advisable.

Disaster Risk Reduction
The project has made Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) interventions in the project areas, but the magnitude of the work needed is much greater and the capacity building effort much more sustained to achieve preparedness. Therefore, there is need for continued investment on DRR activities in the RIDES project areas. Otherwise, this will be a missed opportunity and it will be extremely expensive and time-consuming if the community falls back to their previous situation.

Livestock and agriculture integration: fodder
The majority of Somalis are pastoralist and agro-pastoralist which drive their livelihoods with livestock and related activities. Hence any interventions that increase the resilience of the livestock population is guaranteeing their food security. A missed opportunity that the project could have heavily invested in, which came out in the focus group discussions, is the fodder production and storage. Harvesting fodder in the rainy seasons and storing for animals to feed on in dry season is an indigenous strategy which the Somalis have practiced mitigating the risks of the droughts. Though the project mainstreamed this in different training sessions, there was no specific activity or investment that was dedicated to fodder production and storage. The communities have mentioned that the communal grazing land is disappearing due to land enclosures by private companies and the local business people. Hence, awareness raising and physical infrastructures that helps the community to agree and demarcate land for fodder production would provide enough food for the livestock to feed on in dry seasons.

Women's empowerment and gender relations
The project community is highly patriarchal in nature and the subordination of women is widely accepted. Because of their socially ascribed roles, women in the communities are constantly denied their basic rights including education, land ownership and political voice. They remain subject to traditional male dominance and as a result are expected to live by rigid customs and traditions which limit their ability to drive forward a meaningful life. The engagement of SHG participants on business activities gave them financial independence and voice over social, political and economic issues and that challenged the accepted social norms in the community. The interviews with the religious leaders in both districts and the discussions with the VDCs have surfaced men's resistance to women's empowerment.

Organising, strengthening and empowering women groups is one of the main opportunities for tackling gender equality in in the community. This can be done with Somaliland women's networks like Negaad. Economic empowerment can be achieved through collective income generating activities like farming, animal rearing and off-farm activities. These groups can work together to develop advocacy and campaigning plans that outline key policy demands, engage with the media, civil society and the private sector to advance women and girls rights. Opportunities also lie in the establishment of women and youth-led food processing groups as well as access to financing for formal professional trainings. Both men and women work on the farms. However, as regards access to land, women are not allowed to own land if they do not purchase it with their own money. Programmatic attention is therefore required for understanding how women can access land and to implementing a programme to increase the access accordingly

Sensitisation of religious leaders is required to ensure that they understand gender equality, because they influence the public. There should be gender equality training for the religious leaders and men in the community – sensitisation and awareness raising on gender equality showcasing women's recent successes on different things and why this is not a threat to men.

Education

Schools principals are now saying that the parents will be asked to pay school fees because teachers are unable to work without a salary. As the project has ended, Islamic Relief is no longer paying any teacher's stipend. This is a relatively low-cost item which can be included in a new project as soon as possible. The danger exists that the parents will withdraw their children as they cannot afford school fees. Schools should be supported to make proper documentation and records on total numbers of students, disaggregated by sex, school drop-outs, retention rates and school enrolment rates. This would be a useful capacity building role of third parties for a project M&E officer. Also, Islamic Relief might consider helping the government of Somaliland institute a model of Community-based Education Management and Information Systems (C-EMIS) to collect and respond to data, perhaps using the project area to pilot the approach.

Internal Islamic Relief issues

As has been well noted, there was no structured implementation processes followed in the project implementation due to lack of logframe and theory of change. Obviously, this would need to be rectified in a future project.

Regarding knowledge management, the project has produced significant knowledge and learning, but documentation was not well archived. Systematic archiving and documentation was missing from the project which obliged the evaluation team to be very persistent in the pursuit of documentation to try to piece together the project story.

There should be specialised technical units (gender, health and DRR) that support the projects to make necessary impacts around these areas. For example, it is not desirable that any project that involves around 600 women and also hundreds of schoolgirls should proceed without a gender technical specialist being adopted and readily available.

The amazing success of story of SHGs needs massive media engagement and proper documentations so that it can be used to show case success and achievement and to use for fundraising purposes by Islamic Relief.

The project population has a very low literacy level which will impede the growth of the local economy, hence, further interventions should also prioritise adult literacy classes for both women and men.

Learning shared by Government of Somaliland.

For the government stakeholders that will take the project outcomes forward in conjunction with the community, the shared learning are as follows:

i. NADFOR

Radio is the most appropriate to overcome barriers to information regarding EWS, public awareness, preparedness, resilience building. It overcomes the literacy barrier.

- Project design should include capacity building for NADFOR staff.
- Resource persons/experts for best practice on drought adaptation for communities.
- If farmers produce enough, then the WFP has a scheme where it can buy for food reserve and fodder supplies. Production currently too low due to insect outbreaks.

ii. Ministry of Agriculture

- The project is unique as it established a FFS. This made possible extension visits, knowledge exchanges within the farmers themselves and increased crop production in the area.
- The capacity produce in the area has caused the minister to visit to see how this can be replicated in other areas.
- In terms of climate change effects and resilience building, the area has been capacitated in terms of crop production knowledge and tools. They ensure that indigenous seeds are not lost in order to continue plantation in the next season.

iii. Ministry of Education

- At the beginning of a new project, all kinds of directors within the education ministry must be involved. To be impactful the scale and coverage of the activities must be increased. The contribution of the RIDES project was useful but little, e.g. teacher training.
- There should be coverage on subject matter training as well as teaching methods.

Future Project

Considering the above recommendations, these are the specific recommendations for a new phase of RIDES.

- Firstly, in the interim period prior to the establishment of a new project, or in the absence of a new project, the project benefit and sustainability would be strengthened from having one or two staff members to follow-up with communities for a further six months to one year after project closure. This would help to compensate for the rapidity of the phase-out caused by the six-month cut in the project period.
- The overall recommendation is that a new project should take the learning concerning the most successful elements of the RIDES project in a new underserved part of Somaliland.
- A proportion of the budget should be used to further institutionalisation and sustainability of the stream of benefits created by the project in the existing project areas. This phase should focus on reinforcing existing achievements to increase the resilience of the communities to recurrent droughts. Even though there is an increased food security level, the community the gains are likely to be wiped out if substantial investment is not made to the critical DRR infrastructures that sustain the gains in extreme dry conditions.
- The project should be implemented in partnership with local/national NGOs so that Islamic Relief can build high quality local implementation capacity in the case of continued absence of strong government service provision.
- It will prioritise and build on the lesson from the successful elements of SHG microcredit and micro-enterprise, water resource development and agricultural interventions in RIDES.
- Livestock and agricultural Interventions will feature a new integrated element in fodder production, storage and marketing. Staff will be trained to follow the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards so that relevant intervention activities such as animal feeding are maintained throughout the drought period.
- Consideration should be given to the option of unconditional cash transfers to IDP pastoralists to enable them to decide whether to restock or to pursue alternative livelihoods. Climate change and increased frequency of drought make pastoralist restocking a risk prone support strategy in the absence of a wide basket of livestock support interventions.
- Given the proneness of imported seeds to mal-adaptation, the project should have technical capacity building component on local seed production.
- Health, education and DRR components will have work plans that run from start to finish of any new project. They will count on specialised staff that are well networked with the relevant ministries.

- The project should have a robust logical framework and theory of change with annual milestones and a clearly established sequence of implementation for maximisation of integrated sustainable development impacts.
- The project should have its own technical capacities in the fields of gender and M&E and have a plan for more systematic support from regional and international colleagues.
- The project should have an adaptive management approach that allows it to switch activities to maintain project momentum in drought periods.