

## Somalia Gender and Resilience Project



### The Project at a glance

The Gender and Resilience project was created as a response to Diakonia's ambition to strengthen its work on disaster risk reduction and to bridge our humanitarian and development work. The vision of the project was to contribute to gender equality and resilient communities through disaster risk reduction innovation projects.

Somalia was one of the six countries involved in the pilot project. Diakonia's partner KAALO developed an innovative project to improve the food security and resilience of vulnerable communities. Participants were mostly women who knew little about modern climate smart techniques, they were trained to better manage climate-related shocks and disasters through community contingency planning and increase food security using climate adaptive livelihood interventions; irrigated agriculture, and green house technology.



Tomatoes harvested from the greenhouse



## Somalia Gender and Resilience Project

In Somalia, most families depend on livestock for their livelihoods. For decades, extreme weather conditions, poverty, and prolonged conflict, have deprived habitats to achieve their full potential. In the recent years, subsistence and commercial crop farming has significantly increased although coupled with a wide range of challenges.

In Puntland, Somalia, climate related problems such as droughts, wipe out crops and livestock, causing widespread shortage of water and pastures. This leads to health problems and food insecurity among poor households. As a result, families split and more people are displaced both within the country and outside, as they sought access to pastures, food, and water.

The participation of women in decision-making and their influence is extremely limited in Somalia. Women's involvement in identification and planning of disaster risk reduction interventions is crucial, to build community resilience and ensure that gender-specific needs and their concerns are addressed.

Villagers in Cuun face several challenges such as poor methods of farming, little access to markets, low productivity, and lack of access to agricultural information and technical expertise or support services, including innovative farming technologies. This is increasingly noted as one of the key barriers, small-scale farmers, in the region are facing.

In a bid to strengthen the community's resilience to droughts, famine, and floods, residents of Cuun village including women and youths were trained on how to deal with environmental problems in the region. They identified areas affected by gully erosions and agreed to build a dam; a water harvesting point that would also keep farmland protected from floods.

To improve food security five green houses were constructed using modern farming techniques, to keep pests away and save water through drip irrigation.



## Innovative Greenhouse technology with a local touch

The aim of the project was to enhance food security among the communities adversely affected by climate change, strengthen right holders' livelihoods and build resilience. Workshops were held in the community to identify environmental problems they face.

“We built a water dam of 100 meters and a water diversion system so that the farmlands weren't damaged. If these preventive measures were not put in place immediately, farmers would lose their land due to soil erosion carrying away the topmost fertile soil”.

The other major activity was introducing modern farming systems such as water management through drip irrigation and greenhouses which were originally made from imported materials and later from local materials which- protecting from strong winds and prevented insects and other pests from attacking the crops.

To be more climate smart farmers were trained to use local seeds and organic fertilizers. The farmers were then able to produce tomatoes and sweet peppers. This is important as they were becoming rare due to pests and insects.



## Food on the table boosts women's self-esteem

The project increased food security, nutrition, and the income of the families as the surplus could be sold.

“The project makes me to be proud of myself. I now work to feed myself and family. To be honest, the farm sector is dominated by men, although there are number of ladies who have farms to feed their family. Men in our village now consider women as important pillar of the society,” says Nadifo.

The pilot project was deemed successful and will now be spread to other areas. The families planted a second time and the tomatoes that were extinct are now back on the local market.

The project participants were mainly vulnerable women that struggled to put food on the table. Now, their self-esteem has improved and they are confident as they can provide for their families. Like other communities in Somalia, Cuun is a male-dominated village, most of the farms belong to men.

Now, the project has established more than six farms which are owned and run by women. Women are now also viewed not only as careers but also as farmers and providers which will tackle social norms and male dominance.

Diakonia and KAALO are committed to continue to mitigate the effects of climate change such as recurrent floods and droughts that could impact the community. The project positively changed the lives of these women and their families in Cuun.

These experiences are inspiring other women and families to adapt their farming techniques. The community is now better prepared with skills and knowledge to adapt to climate change. Women are empowered and can also financially provide for their families.



## Nimco's Story

The project has increased the livelihood income of the households in Cuun village. The living conditions of these families has greatly improved and they received income to manage their lives. The harvested tomatoes were sold at Garowe town and in the village itself that was experiencing shortage of tomatoes that was coming from other far places.

“I have been struggling to feed my family, now I have a reliable source of income - the greenhouse. I can distribute my harvest to towns like Garowe because tomatoes don't grow well in our region as pests and diseases are common.”

“I co-own this greenhouse; it is cooler than the one we previously used which was hot. Now I have a farmland that I can cultivate anytime no matter the season. Previously, water shortages threatened our crops and even when the rain came the floods used to damage plants, now this farming method saves water and control flooding.”

“Today, I am working to feed my children and family. Most of the men used to underestimate our ability to work, we were not perceived as important as men, but now the community is changing their attitudes towards us. Before this farm I was vulnerable to droughts and disasters. Previously, water shortages threatened our

crops and even when the rain came the floods used to damage plants, now this farming method saves water and control flooding. Now I am more resilient and with this farm I can supply for my family during hard times,” says Nimco Mohamud.

