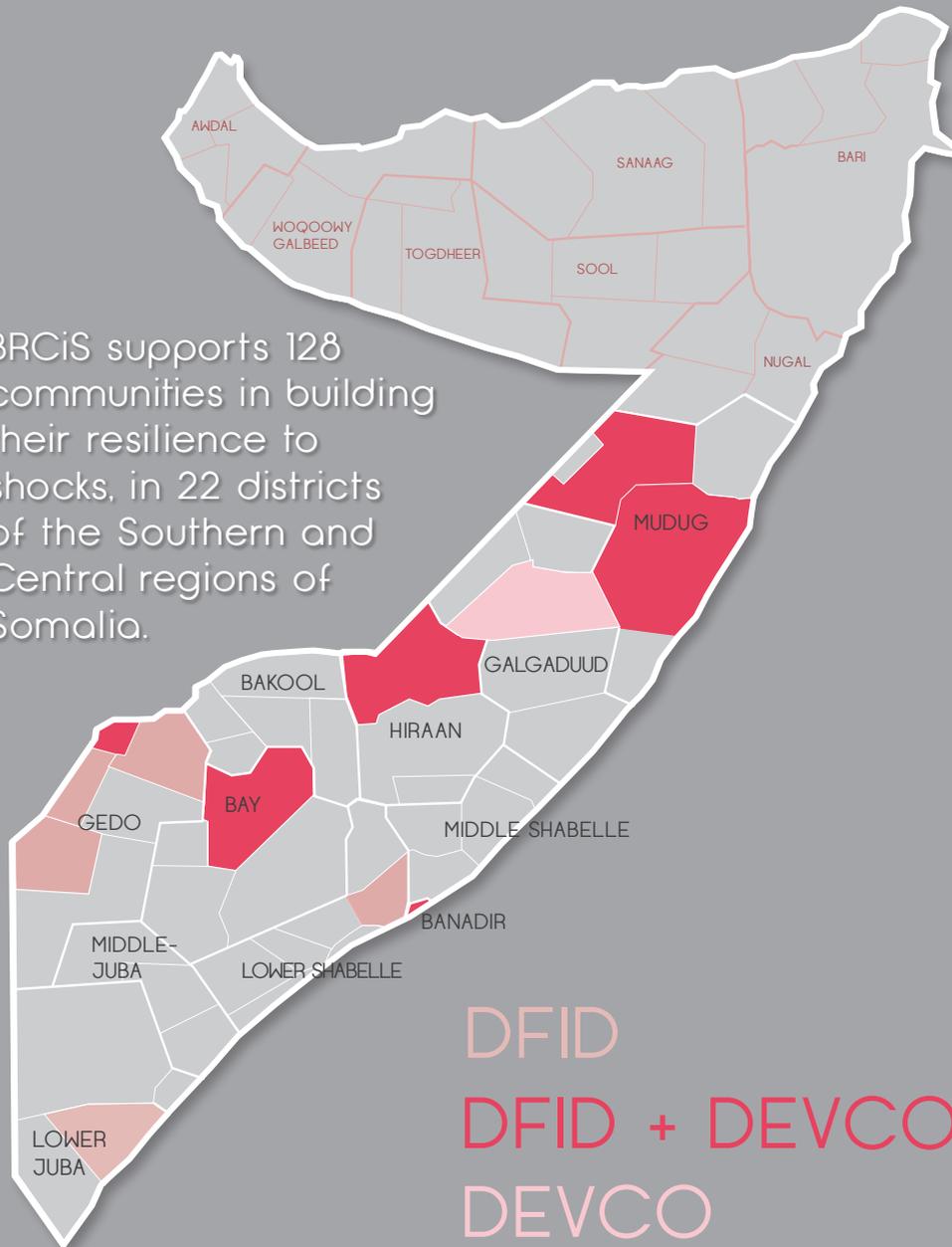




BRCiS

Building Resilient
Communities
in Somalia

BRCiS supports 128 communities in building their resilience to shocks, in 22 districts of the Southern and Central regions of Somalia.



DFID
DFID + DEVCO
DEVCO

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UKaid
from the British people

EUROPEAN UNION



Supporting the Somali New Deal



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

CONCERN
worldwide



CESVI



Save the Children



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

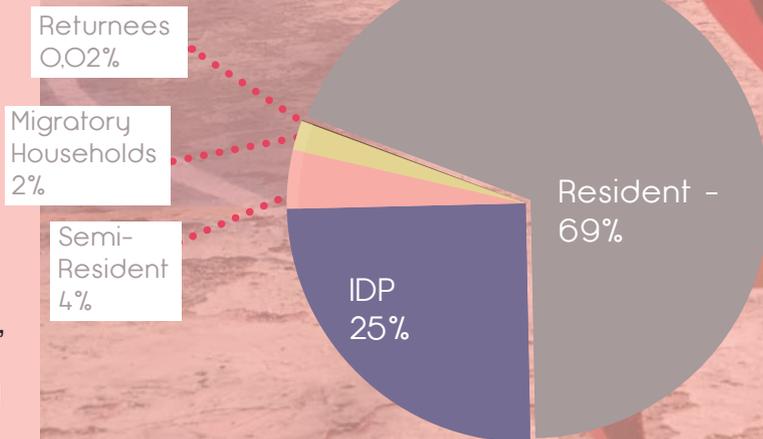
Who are we?

BRCiS is a Consortium that takes a holistic approach to supporting Somali communities in developing their capacity to resist and absorb minor shocks without undermining their ability to move out of poverty.

In 2013, five international NGOs with long experience in Somalia – Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), Concern Worldwide (CWW), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Save the Children International (SCI) – formed a Consortium to address Somalia Communities' long-term exposure to recurrent disasters and destitution.

The Consortium was named “Building Resilient Communities in Somalia”, or BRCiS, and received financial support from the Government of the United Kingdom to target directly 30,100 households (around 210,700 individuals). The implementation of the programme started in November 2013 simultaneously in 99 communities spread across 7 regions.

In 2016, the European Union provided the Consortium with additional three years grant, which funding was channelled to four of the Consortium members. From this additional funding, 37 new communities were incorporated into the programme, while 18 of the initial communities had their resilience activities scaled up.





24,222 Households
registered (by May 2016)

The Consortium has embraced digital technology in processing and storing real-time information. Our platform captures information about direct primary beneficiaries. It is then processed into a dashboard where users can easily follow-up on the programme's progress.

Main Shocks and Stresses

- Climate-related shocks: drought, flooding
- Conflict
- Health-related shocks: animal and human outbreaks
- Economic stresses: lack of unemployment and access to credit, Terms of Trade variations.



Impact:

“Men, women and children in vulnerable communities are more resilient to shocks.”

BRCiS

Principles



Understanding Resilience

BRCiS defines resilience as the ability of communities and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses – such as drought or violent conflict – without compromising their longer-term prospects.

Resilience Programming

BRCiS recognizes that resilience needs to be operationalized differently depending on the context to which it applies, as what makes a community resilient differs from place to place. Our approach to programming means redefining resilience with and for each household or community, and translating that into community-specific interventions and indicators.

Activities that lead to Resilience

We believe that resilience is built through a combination of targeted activities that overlap between traditional humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and development assistance. In the communities where we work today, this generally includes (but is not limited to) combinations of interventions related to Food Security, Livelihoods, WASH, nutrition, disaster risk reduction, natural resource management, and notably, an increased community capacity to organize and react to shocks.

Balancing long-term goals and short-term emergency needs

Cutting across the ‘Humanitarian – Development’ spectrum, the BRCiS programme balances its

response to short-term humanitarian needs with the longer-term aim of building community and household capacities to deal with the shocks and stresses that drive those humanitarian needs in the first place. Thus, the project provides a continuum of humanitarian and rehabilitation/development assistance that improves the absorptive (short-term) and adaptive (medium- and long-term) capacities of communities and households. The nexus of the two results into transformation of the communities from cyclically vulnerable ones to ones having in-built capacities to handle shocks and stresses.

For the Communities, with the Communities

Communities are the unit of reference in the BRCiS programme design. The outline of the communities are drawn according on the context and the local dynamics. It can be a stand-alone village, or a cluster of small settlements in a rural area. In an urban context, it can be part of a group of people who have been displaced for some time. It often includes members of both displaced and host communities. Finally, it can be a community defined by a common livelihood, be it fisheries, agro-pastoralism, pastoralism or other.

In any case, the communities are the first stakeholder of the project. They co-lead the design and the implementation of the activities and the long-term impact of the project is largely dependent on their commitment throughout the programme.

Participatory programming

The first phase of the programme gives time for BRCiS Members to go through an inclusive consultation process with local authorities and with each individual target community. This creates a deeper understanding of which hazards are most threatening, identifies the root causes of vulnerabilities and allows the people affected most to define what solutions are best for building their resilience over the long term.

This process is lengthy and starts by consulting national, regional and district authorities. Once the external stakeholders have been informed of the project, the dialogue with the communities can start, first with the elders, traditional and religious leaders.

Thereafter, representatives of the various groups existing in the community, along divisions mostly related to clans, gender and age, are pro-actively selected to participate in the planning process. The BRCiS teams use participatory techniques and tools to trigger communication, collect feedback and reach consensual decisions. This process is essential as it is the basis of a four-years

A woman wearing a white headscarf and a light-colored top is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is standing in a rural, open field with some trees in the background. Another person is visible in the distance, working in the field.

relationship between the community and the BRCiS Members. It leads to the development, together with the communities, of locally-adapted understanding and definitions of resilience, based on the attributes of each village or community.

The Disaster Management Plans

As a result of the planning process, Disaster Management Plans are designed and approved by the communities. They lay out the theory of change of the community and the plan of action to address causes of vulnerabilities, as prioritized by the communities. The plans also detail the nature of the activities, and the agencies and communities' contributions. They are the work plans that will be referred to for the duration of the project.

They are a living document, constantly adapted and updated based on community feedback, external or internal events. They are co-owned by the communities and the BRCiS Members. They soon become an essential tool of communication and accountability between the villages and the Members.

Community Engagement

Every time a change is needed in the plans, there is a dialogue between the two parties. Every year, during the last quarter, all the plans are revised through an inclusive participatory process when the community is invited to take stock of the achievements and impact of the project so far, discuss the next steps and make sure that the planned actions are still adapted to the context and the capacities.

The Community Disaster Management Committees

The implementation and the follow-up on the plans is only possible thanks to the creation of a Community Disaster Management Committee in each location. Depending on the communities, they are comprised of 9 to 13 members that have been selected during the participatory planning process as community representatives who often further represent specific demographics and perspectives. They are essential to the process of resilience building and their tasks and responsibilities are numerous.

They are the primary interlocutors of the BRCiS Consortium in the communities. They share information with the community about the implementation of the plans and they also regularly inform the NGOs about what is happening in the community. They have a special responsibility to represent and communicate on behalf of the community, and especially, of the most vulnerable people.

Throughout the programme, they benefit from specific trainings regarding Early Warning and Early Action, as well as Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. In case of disaster, preparedness or early action response, they are the focal points in the communities, disseminating information, and organizing the response. The committees are a cornerstone of the BRCiS approach to building durable resilience to shocks.

IRF, Preparedness and Early Action



Climatic disasters are regularly pushing Somalis into distress coping strategies (migration, skipping meals, conflict for pasture land, etc.) that can result in a loss of assets and a drastic degradation of the households wellbeing. Drought and flooding are two of the most recurrent hazards identified at community level. To mitigate their effects, the BRCiS plans include specific activities as required by the context. For example, in

terms of water management, and depending on the situation prevailing in each village, irrigation canals could be dug, river embankments could be reinforced or culverts could be procured.

Additionally, when meteorological events are unusually intense, BRCiS can also mobilize funding to support the communities through a crisis-modifier mechanism, providing emergency relief for a few months and thus protecting the previous gains of the long-term programme. This support can be funded through internal contingency lines or, when necessary, through the Internal Risk Facility (IRF), a DFID funding mechanism specifically ear-marked for this type of assistance.

This emergency mechanism can also address conflict-related mobility, thus allowing the affected population to go through the first period of displacement or resettlement with dignity. This type of intervention also goes a long way in relieving the host community of part of its burden and to facilitate the integration of the newly-arrived. It is also a dependable resource in case of outbreak as it also allows addressing health emergencies.

Provision of emergency unconditional cash transfers is often used as a rapid response to support the food security of populations affected by disasters. It enables the families to avoid recurring to negative coping mechanisms such as child labour, tree cutting or displacement and stimulates local economic activity.



The IRF is also used to provide services to populations in situation of forced displacement. Provision of health services, child protection, and GBV activities are some of the sectors that this flexible funding mechanism allows the Consortium to address.



No Regrets Response to El Niño

In 2015, El Niño predictions for the southern and central regions of Somalia indicated a risk of higher precipitations that could lead to heavy flooding in the riverine areas. In Lower Shabelle, local communities identified 70 villages that were historically most at risk of flooding. Concern Worldwide, present in the region through their BRCiS programme and the IRF, designed a low-cost and high portability No Regrets response to enhance community preparedness. The long-term resilience programme provided the basis of a trust relationship between the communities and the BRCiS Member. The intervention was made possible by the availability of flexible funding earmarked for preparedness and crisis modifying.

Concern kept supplies available in local hubs and the communities accessed them upon request, based on local early warning triggers like river levels,

weather forecasts received through the radio. The communities then quickly proceeded with their own action, using mitigation supplies to fortify and repair river embankments where needed most, and often re-directing supplies to new weak-points as they began to form. This approach allowed extending the response to hard to reach areas where no direct access was possible.

An evaluation of impact was conducted based on the actual water-levels. It concluded that 4,779 households were spared displacement and destruction of assets, while 12,111 hectares of farmland were spared a lost crop. For every USD 1 spent on this mitigation activity, USD 28 was saved on emergency response and spared farmers from USD 91 in lost profits. In total, BRCiS estimates that USD 1 spent on mitigation saved USD 119 of actual costs or profits.

Learning, Innovation & Technology

Online Registration

The BRCiS Consortium registers beneficiaries thanks to a mobile-phone app that then uploads the data to an online server. Registration is individual and geo-localized. Our registration questionnaire touches upon a variety of indicators across different sectors: demographics, food security, coping strategies, water, hygiene and sanitation, income, shelter... The data is then processed through an analytic visualization tool that create a dynamic dashboard.

12 Accessible to managers and donors, the dashboard is a direct and transparent information channel from the field to the various levels of management. It updates the program in real-time, region by region, district by district, location by location by providing reliable and detailed information on how the population is faring month after month. Data collection in Somalia is not systematic and the information that is available to the humanitarian community is at best patchy, so many programmes are based on assumptions and approximations. Our system allows us to build a greater understanding that we can use to validate or challenge the various qualitative inputs that guide our every-day decision making.

Third Party Monitoring

Whenever possible, we also collect beneficiaries' phone numbers. This allows a donor-accountable third-party monitoring company to do phone surveys and get direct feedback about the programme's implementation. Further, these contacts enable BRCiS members to directly follow-up on the impact of the activities, or to conduct targeted ad-hoc research.

Remote Monitoring Standards

Another remote management mechanism that was designed by and for the BRCiS Consortium is an online tool that provides a follow-up by activity. We call it the Managers' Tool, as it allows managers to remotely access activity forms for rapid field-requested changes to the system. They can add, remove or update activities regularly, enabling programme adaptations based on fluctuations to the local situation or just good new ideas coming from a community. When an activity is completed, the managers mark them as such. The activity forms are linked to the registration files of the people who are benefitting from them, meaning that it is easy to know precisely who is currently participating in one, or more activity. The



information collected is also visualized through a dynamic dashboard.

This is not only a practical way to track activities implementation but it is also highly relevant to produce accurate reports by type of activities or output.

Learning Loop and Value for Money

With a four-year program, we learn as we go and we adapt the program to changes of context (shocks, socio-economic events). Preparing communities to the impact of El Nino, responding to emergency situations, e.g. flooding in BeletWeyne in May 2016, or flooding in Kismayo in April 2016, are some of the disastrous situations that the programme has already dealt with, working with the communities to prepare for the shocks, mitigate their impact and support early recovery.

We also improve the design of our long-term activities, based on systematizing community feedback into our programme designs. Further fine-tuning the implementation of activities thanks to day-to-day community feedback is something that the BRCiS programme excels at. For example, switching from a canal rehabilitation activity to prosopis clearing activity in one of our community in Dollow, has not only allowed for the reclamation of farm land, but has also generated additional income from the sales of wood from the invasive trees. This is how we make sure that the resource allocation is always relevant and that we have the most durable impact.

Gianmaria Pinto
Consortium Manager
email: gianmaria.pinto@nrc.no
Tel.: +254 (0) 733 888 484
+252 (0) 616 462 983

www.brcis.org

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