Overcoming Chronic Famine and Drought

The consequences of the 2003 drought conditions that affected close to 14 million people severely impacted the ability of rural communities to respond and recover, despite improved humanitarian conditions. Ethiopia continues to suffer from the effects of this difficult situation today.

Since CHF International began working in Ethiopia in April 2004, we have established ourselves as a leader in mitigating chronic food insecurity and complex emergencies, by focusing on livelihood recovery and income generation. Currently, CHF is implementing three grassroots programs throughout rural regions of the country:

**LIVE-WATER Program** is diversifying livelihoods and increasing access to safe water for more than 100,000 direct beneficiaries. However, LIVE-WATER interventions reach far beyond this primary target population through multiple activities. CHF International anticipates that our partnership with Population Services International (PSI) and Water Action (WACT) in the sectors of health, water, and sanitation is reaching 173,000 indirect beneficiaries in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) – as well as 72,000 direct beneficiaries in the desert conditions of the Somali Region – through the social marketing of a home-based water treatment product, the Water Guard Safe Water System (SWS).

Program interventions affect a significant portion of the emergency-affected and food-insecure population in both regions, targeting the most vulnerable people in the kebeles (villages) where CHF operates. The LIVE-WATER Program has two primary goals:

- to rehabilitate and maintain the livelihood assets and skills of the most vulnerable households in the south to help them cope effectively with current and future economic, climatic and health shocks; and
- to increase the water supply and improve sanitation practices in the Somali Region, as well as promote hygiene education in both regions.

Intensification of the Generating Employment and Building Independence (I-GEBI) is a continuation of our successful USAID-funded GEBI program, which delivered resources and training to over 14,400 vulnerable households to help them increase income and assets, while providing capacity-building support to government officials.

A recent GEBI impact assessment reveals a 28% increase in household assets among GEBI beneficiaries, while the percentage of GEBI households running two or more micro-enterprises (such as vegetable production and crafts production) increased from 58% to 92%.

Building upon these successes, I-GEBI continues to focus on the seven woredas of Maskan, Marako, Dalocha, Silti, Kadida Gamela, Kacha Birra, and Angacha in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR). I-GEBI is intensifying income generation with existing GEBI households organized into Asset Building Groups (ABGs) by forming cooperatives and facilitating delivery of business development services and market linkages, while expanding initial livelihood diversification interventions to newly targeted PSNP beneficiaries in the target woredas.

Under I-GEBI, at least 28,400 food-insecure individuals will be reached, including 10,500 who have not previously benefited from CHF activities.
Ethiopia

Dire Dawa Interim Shelter Construction (DISC) represents a unique collaboration between CHF International and the Dire Dawa city government to jointly construct 330 transitional housing units to provide relief following a severe flash flood in the eastern town of Dire Dawa in August 2006. As a result of the flooding, more than 1,600 households and 9,600 individuals were displaced and are now living in desperate conditions in informal settlements. Official estimates place the number of deaths at nearly 300 people, although it is likely that significantly more people lost their lives, as many households and individuals in the impacted communities were not registered. DISC housing units will enable beneficiary flood victims to expand upon the construction design and transition the structures into permanent settlements and communities.

Gurage Livelihood and Agricultural Development (GLAD)
In the GLAD program, farmers were trained in modern and high-yield methods of beekeeping. The purpose was to increase household assets and improve food security by diversifying the income generating activities of farmers, otherwise dependent on low-production crops in minimal rainfall conditions. Additionally, GLAD introduced women of beneficiary households to a locally developed technology known as a hay-box chick brooder that can increase the reproduction of chicks by up to 70 percent. A further income generating activity implemented by CHF was multi-purpose tree planting, which provides communities with fruit, fodder, and fuel, along with natural resources rehabilitation and the prevention of soil erosion.

Emergency Livelihoods Recovery (ELR)
In order to address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations, the ELR strategy was based on the principle that for communities to graduate from relief to development, it is essential to establish them into short-term disaster mitigating livelihood activities, while simultaneously establishing preparedness plans to decrease the vulnerability of the households from the impact of future droughts. Under ELR program, the following four objectives were accomplished:

- Income diversity through the creation of rain-fed agriculture;
- Increased agricultural productivity to improved soil fertility through effective management;
- Improved asset management, resulting in increased revenue; and
- Improved water resources, security, and management.

ELR reached more than 35,000 people in the heavily drought affected regions of Meskan, Dalocha, Siltie, Sankura and Alaba.

Safe Water and Improved Sanitation in Somali Region (SWISS)
To address the largest non-food emergency appeal in Ethiopia since the 2003 drought, CHF International and our local partner Al-Nejah Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organization (ARRDO) established the SWISS program to increase access to safe water and to improve sanitary and hygienic conditions in the targeted zones. Under the SWISS program, CHF accomplished the following three sub-objectives:

- Increased access to water by establishing or rehabilitating shallow wells for people and livestock.
- Improved hygiene and sanitation practices at the household level to mitigate the spread of disease.
- Improved water source management, maintenance, and sanitation practices by ARRDO, the Water Management Committees (WMCs) in the target communities, and the local governments.