

CASE STUDY

ETHIOPIA 2019–2020 / CONFLICT

KEYWORDS: Conditional Cash Transfer, Local construction techniques, HLP, Returns

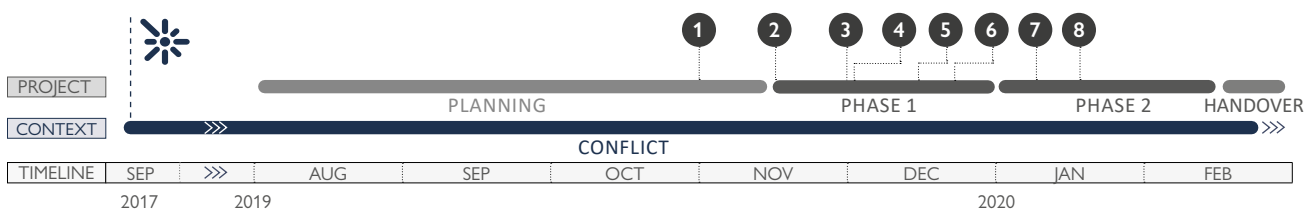
CRISIS	Inter-Communal Conflict between Somali and Oromo communities, September 2017 onwards
PEOPLE DISPLACED	43,918 HHs (209,165 individuals) displaced within East Hararghe Zone of Oromia Region*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	75% approx. 32,939 houses fully destroyed 25% approx. 10,979 houses partially damaged
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	43,918 HHs in 2017 (209,165 individuals)
PROJECT LOCATION	Chinaksen and Babile Woredas, East Hararghe Zone, Oromia Region
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	1,250 HHs (9,339 individuals, including 296 female headed households)
PROJECT OUTPUTS	1,250 shelters repaired or reconstructed, 127 carpenters trained, 1,250 HHs received HLP support
SHELTER SIZE	21-25m² on average
SHELTER DENSITY	3.6m² per person on average
DIRECT COST	USD 240 per HH (including cash instalments and materials provided)
PROJECT COST	USD 345 per HH



PROJECT SUMMARY

Using a conditional Cash-for-Shelter approach with strong community engagement, the project supported 1,250 conflict affected IDP households to return to their places of origin and repair or reconstruct their homes which had been damaged or destroyed during the 2017 conflict. Local carpenters were trained on carpentry techniques, market vendors in the local towns were engaged to prepare for the increased demand for shelter materials, and where needed the organization's Housing Land and Property (HLP) team were engaged to secure land tenure approval documentation.

* Source: [DTM Report](#), November–December 2017



Sep 2017: Inter-communal conflict erupted between Somali and Oromo communities.

- 1 **1–15 Nov 2019:** Household verification.
- 2 **16–30 Nov 2019:** Door-to-door HLP assistance.
- 3 **1–4 Dec 2019:** Carpenter training in target villages.
- 4 **4–10 Dec 2019:** Households formed groups of approximately 12 households.
- 5 **15–19 Dec 2019:** First cash distribution - households received cash equivalent to 100 USD + tarpaulin + rope.
- 6 **20 Dec 2019 - 14 Jan 2020:** Verification of phase 1 construction.
- 7 **15–19 Jan 2020:** Second cash distribution - households received cash equivalent to USD 90.
- 8 **20 Jan - 14 Feb 2020:** Verification of construction completion.



The main shelter typology in East Hararghe is typically a wooden structure that consists of wooden poles harvested locally, wooden infill from wild bushes, and mud plastered walls.

CONTEXT

In 2019, Ethiopia hosted approximately 3.2 million IDPs; the third largest number of IDPs in the world. The majority of IDPs were displaced due to inter-communal conflict which surged in late 2017. Many of these IDPs are hosted in areas reeling from past droughts and continue to be challenged by acute malnutrition, disease outbreaks, protection risks and other hazards, including floods.

RETURNS AND SECONDARY DISPLACEMENT

In April 2019, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) developed a strategy to address internal displacement in the country under the pillars of peace and security, rule of law, short-term relief assistance and longer-term recovery and rehabilitation of IDPs. Subsequent to this, the government reported that 1.3 million IDPs had been returned to their areas of origin, thus, the IDP camps were decommissioned. However, according to the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ethiopia, as a result of insufficient support provided, returnees in some areas were facing dire living conditions, were still not fully back in their homes, had not resumed their livelihoods and had no adequate access to basic services.

Many “returned” IDPs remained secondarily displaced. These IDPs were now living close to their areas of origin, sheltered in public infrastructures (such as administrative offices, coffee harvesting structures and schools) or simply in open spaces. Assessments showed these living situations posed severe protection and security concerns, including risks of gender-based violence (GBV), psychosocial distress, and negative household coping mechanisms that could result in family separation, child labor, or child marriage. IDPs living in the open air without any protection were susceptible to heavy rains and associated negative health

consequences. Though closer to their areas of origin, IDPs were unable to return to their homes that had been mostly damaged or destroyed, and security concerns meant that a critical mass of returnees was needed for many households to feel safe.

Following assessments, the Shelter/NFI Cluster proposed that shelter repair support for returnees be prioritized in five zones prioritized by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and UNOCHA. Implementation of shelter repair projects was carried out by organizations with operational presence and shelter expertise in the prioritized locations.

PROJECT STRATEGY

The goal of the project was to provide critical shelter assistance for the most vulnerable households in East Hararghe, and to support recovery and a transition to durable solutions.

The Shelter/NFI Cluster & partners conducted a contextual, market and HLP analysis in prioritized locations. The findings highlighted:

- That existing markets had the capacity to respond to sudden and large increases in demand for shelter materials;
- An absence of security of tenure among displaced households; and
- That shelter needs varied from fully destroyed to partially damaged homes.

As a result of the analysis, it was decided to use a Cash-Based Intervention modality to support repairs and reconstruction, and HLP support was integrated as a key component within the project.



Carpenter training was undertaken in the villages with a focus on practical demonstrations of techniques to improve durability of structures.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project implementation consisted of four components:

COMMUNITY, LOCAL AUTHORITY AND MARKET ENGAGEMENT

Cash as a support modality was unfamiliar to local authorities and communities in this part of Ethiopia.

- Sensitization sessions were held with households and community leaders to discuss the key elements of the project such as selection criteria, type of assistance, feedback mechanism, conditions and timeline.
- Through the local authorities, an understanding was reached and agreed with market vendors in the local towns that they would not unduly raise the price of shelter material following the cash distribution, and vendors were also engaged to prepare for the increased demand for shelter materials.
- Households were asked to form groups of approximately 12 households and nominate a representative of each group. The representative acted as a focal point for communication. Thereafter the groups were treated as one entity and progressed through the stages of the project based on completing conditions as a group and not as individual households. Later a discussion was held with the group representative for feedback and any questions or concerns were addressed. Each household was provided with a unique numbered token to identify them to the organization for subsequent stages of the project.

HLP VERIFICATION SUPPORT

Prior to the project the organization trained enumerators for individual door-to-door HLP assessments. The organization recorded the details of households' lease or land tenure agreement. If a household could not present a lease or land tenure agreement, then either three neighbors or the local authority could verify that the household owned the land. Following this verification, the organization engaged with the local authority to ensure a lease or land tenure agreement was created for the household.

CARPENTER TRAINING IN COMMUNITIES

Carpenters were trained in the villages so that once the cash was distributed households could choose to hire the carpenters to carry out the shelter repair. For every 12 households, an average of one carpenter was trained. The training concentrated on practical demonstrations of building back safer. The trained carpenters were not to be employed by the organization, but rather the households had the option to engage the carpenters for some or all of their shelter repair depending on their situation and need. The fair price that the carpenters could charge per day was fixed with the carpenters and local authorities prior to their training.

INSTALLMENTS OF CASH AND MATERIALS

First installment: on the condition that all the members of the group (12 households per group) had attended the sensitization meeting and all were in attendance for the distribution, the households each received cash equivalent to USD 100, a 6x4m tarpaulin and 10 meters of nylon rope. The USD 100 was calculated to be sufficient to purchase, transport and build the structure of a 20m² shelter (tukul type). The tarpaulin was provided to act as temporary roof and wall covering until the final cash installment.

Second installment: USD 90 was provided to each household on the condition that all the members of the group had completed the primary structure and that this was verified by the organization. This USD 90 was calculated to be sufficient to purchase and install CGI sheets to cover the roof of a 20m² shelter based on local market prices.



Plastic sheeting distributed in the first installment was used as a temporary roofing material prior to households receiving the second installment.



The project supported both households who could repair their partially damaged homes, and households whose homes were beyond repair and needed to be rebuilt.

TARGETING

The Woredas to be targeted were selected in coordination with the Shelter/NFI Cluster prioritization. Thereafter the Kebeles (the more localized administrative units) to be targeted were prioritized by the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO), the government entity at Woreda level with a mandate for coordinating humanitarian response. The initial list of target households was provided by the DRMO. The organization then carried out final household selection, following door-to-door verification, collecting data based on vulnerability criterion and household size.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As Standard Operating Procedure, households were consulted on the distribution process, location, timing and entitlements prior to distributions. This included consultations with men, women, boys, girls and Persons with Disabilities, and involved considerations of timing of distributions and distribution locations to ensure the safety and security of households.

In previous pilot cash projects, in many cases projects were delayed due to different households completing their work at different stages. Grouping the households into groups of 12 fostered a community dynamic that supported the implementation. In many cases groups combined their cash and negotiated prices for material, transport and labor. This solidarity among villagers especially aided the most vulnerable households whereby tasks such as transporting material from the market back to villages was done collectively rather than individually. As a result, all households and groups qualified through the stages to receive the full assistance. Households reported that they welcomed the formal accountability of group members within the group system as it reduced the risk of a household provided with cash deciding not to spend it on shelter material as intended. Rather than receiving the cash installments in their villages, household members preferred to travel to the town market to receive the cash so that they could immediately purchase the materials.



Each group of 12 households were responsible for progressing all the group's shelters in order for the group to collectively qualify for the next stage of assistance. The image above shows a group of women carrying out mud plastering.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Second cash installment not always used to complete shelters. The provision of tarpaulin with the first cash installment was intended as a temporary roof and wall covering until the second cash installment. However, in many cases it dissuaded households to invest the final cash installment into durable materials to complete the roof and walls. As a result, the final cash installment of USD 90, which was intended to enable the households to purchase and install durable materials such as CGI sheeting was in some cases spent on other priority needs. The

organization's field staff went to great efforts to sensitize households and village leaders to explain that this was an opportunity to construct a shelter that would endure for many years and not simply to last them for the short term. Many of the households responded to this; however, some did not. It was felt by the project team that in order to ensure that the second installment of cash is spent on shelter needs, using a commodity voucher for the final cash installment or retaining 10-15% for a third cash installment as an incentive may have been more effective. This was trialled by the same implementing team in a later project in 2020 and proved to be largely successful.

Lack of water for mud plastering. The main shelter typology in East Hararghe is typically a wooden structure that consists of wooden poles harvested locally, wooden infill from wild bushes, and mud plastered walls. Due to a lack of abundant water in some locations, the mud plastering of the walls could not occur until three months after the end of the project, once the wet season had started.

Tensions created by targeting. Following consultation with the Zonal authority, it was recommended that cash assistance would not be suitable for many of the border villages between the Somali and Oromia Regions which are traditionally volatile and insecure. As such, these villages were not targeted through this project. Later, during the cash distributions, this created tension between the village leaders of locations that were not selected. During the project implementation, meetings were held between the village leaders, Zonal authorities and the organization to explain that the border villages would be prioritized for subsequent in-kind emergency assistance distributions. This resolved the tensions.

WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

The project strengthened households' security of tenure by supporting the provision of basic tenure documentation through building the capacity of the local government on the protection of HLP rights. This approach aimed to support prevention of further displacements and forced eviction by assuring the right to a safe home, and to support prevention of discriminatory tenure systems or customary practices that could compromise the ability of women and other vulnerable groups to exercise their HLP rights.

Through using a cash modality, the project strengthened local markets, ensuring that money was spent locally. **The project trained and engaged local carpenters,** creating livelihood opportunities.

The project was conducted at a large scale, supporting 1,250 households in eight villages and was designed to be scalable for future large or small responses. **The lessons learned from this project have since informed various cash projects in Ethiopia** such as multi-purpose cash transfer for households who have had their crops destroyed by desert locusts. It has also informed a pilot Cash-for-Shelter & Latrine project which was later carried out in East Hararghe.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- √ **Strong community engagement.** The grouping of households fostered a community dynamic and the collective approach taken by groups for activities such as transportation supported vulnerable households. Grouping households also enabled groups to collectively negotiate prices of materials, transportation and labor.
- √ **Enabling choice through use of cash.** The conditional cash modality enabled households to have choice over what materials they needed to purchase and what aspects of construction they undertook themselves. They were also able to design and construct their shelter as per their household need and in line with local building techniques and capacities.
- √ **Timeliness of the assistance and cost-effectiveness.** The project was implemented within a tight timeframe. Using a cash modality supported both the timeliness and the cost-effectiveness of the project. The cost of transport and storage would have been greater if the project had used a direct in-kind modality, and due to the dispersed location of the households, the speed and reach of the assistance would not have been as fast through in-kind support.
- √ **Market engagement.** The use of cash as a modality meant that money was spent locally, supporting local markets. Additionally, the project also succeeded due to the agreement of the local market vendors, local carpenters and local authorities to ensure that prices would not be unduly raised for material or labor once the cash was distributed.
- √ **HLP verification support.** Ensuring that HLP support was integrated into the project increased the tenure security of households and built the capacity of the local government on the protection of HLP rights.

WEAKNESSES

- × **WASH component not integrated.** Although hygiene promotion was mainstreamed during the community sensitization there was no budget to directly integrate support for latrine provision as part of the project. The result was that 1,250 households returned to their place of origin with shelter assistance but not WASH assistance for latrine or water supply. As a result, it was necessary for the households to rely on the existing infrastructure and coping mechanisms.
- × **Inflexibility of modality impacted targeting and created tensions.** The Cash-for-Shelter modality was not suitable for many of the border villages between the Somali and Oromia Regions which are traditionally volatile and insecure. As the Cash-for-Shelter modality had been decided upon, these border villages were not included in the project despite having shelter needs, which created tensions.
- × **Households not using second cash installment for completion of shelters was unforeseen.** Not all households utilized the final installment of USD 90 as had been intended (for the completion of shelters) because they understandably prioritized other critical needs that could not be addressed by the project such as food, clothing and medicine. This outcome had not been foreseen by the project team during project design. Project design did not include measures to better ensure that the final installment would be used for shelter, for example through ensuring shelter assistance was part of more holistic support (so that other needs were also addressed), and/or through adding restrictions or further conditionalities to the final installment process.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **WASH should always be integrated into shelter programming.**
- **Flexibility of modalities is needed to support different communities in different ways.** Selecting a single modality or approach - in this case cash assistance - can lead to communities for whom this modality is not appropriate being excluded from receiving shelter assistance and can also create tensions between communities. Assistance needs to be flexible enough to offer support to different communities in different ways. This could be either through a single project or through multiple complementary projects.
- **The grouping of households** had multiple positive impacts including fostering a community dynamic, cost savings due to collective negotiation on prices, and vulnerable members of the group being supported by groups addressing certain tasks collectively.
- **If cash assistance is unconditional/unrestricted and households have multiple critical needs, then cash inevitably won't always be used for shelter.** Projects need to take this into account during project design. Unrestricted and unconditional cash has the advantage of households having the choice of what to use it for according to their own priorities. If cash assistance is intended only to be used for shelter support however, then a combination of restrictions and/or conditionalities can be introduced to support this.