

FOOD INSECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA



Food Insecurity

- Almost 44 percent of the population in the Horn of Africa live in areas prone to extreme food shortages. These areas have been experiencing extreme drought conditions and harsh weather conditions during the last few decades leading to **water scarcity issues and challenges in having sufficient food produce**. The condition is caused by several factors e.g., *climate change, lack of successful local agriculture within the regions, and also an inability or disinterest to act by local officials*. The situation has been further complicated by an ineffective and disorganized international response to the calamity. The causes of food insecurity vary from country to country but face similar troubles brought on by natural elements. There are many examples of food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, some of them having reached catastrophic dimensions. For example, In the Horn of Africa, the situation affects some common groups, eg.
 - Younger age **groups** (16 to 24 and 25 to 34)
 - Non-white identity.
 - Children in the household.
 - Low levels of education.
 - Unemployment.
 - Life-limiting health problems or disability.
 - Single mothers

Underlying causes

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS in East and Southern Africa is the region worst hit by the disease accounting for a total of 800,000 people in the past year (2020). It has affected not only those with the disease but impacting those living with them which in turn reduces the income for that particular household due to the time spent caring for the sick.

Population Growth

Since 1973, there has been a continued growth in population within the Horn of Africa putting pressure on the availability of natural resources, specifically Land and Forests. People use this for agriculture and other economic activities such as mining. It has also led to rural-urban migration and an increase in the consumption rate of food, oil, and luxury goods.

Poor-Agricultural Systems

This is because most of the time farmers do not have the necessary training and knowledge to carry out their jobs using the latest technology giving them the best opportunity to increase production, however, due to lack of financial resources these machines cannot be attained.

Governance

Unstable and often incapable governance may lead to exploitation of resources and land grabbing thus blocking local farmers from exercising his or her farming practices.

Neglected Pastoralism

The government has withdrawn its attention from the pastoralists' system leading to them not being able to cope with the extreme conditions of weather depleting their abilities to combat droughts.

Poverty



Horn of Africa Map

Droughts and floods undermine farm yields, the national harvest, reducing household and national harvest, food availability, and the agricultural income derived from crop sales.

Poor harvest threatens food security and livelihoods from households on a national level. Although it may be to varying degrees in different regions and districts, the severity of the impact on the livelihoods of these families is due to their heavy reliance on agriculture to provide



income to sustain their way of life. Households diversified are less vulnerable to these direct impacts of droughts and floods, expressing that their alternative income sources are neither correlated with

rainfall nor directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture.

Horn of Africa food crisis

Natural hazards

Natural Hazards are extreme natural events that can cause loss, life, extreme damage of property, and disrupt human activities eg. Drought, floods,

Conflicts

Conflicts within the society prevent the International Agencies such as Aid Workers eg. (WFP- World Food Program) from giving their services in the community. This leads to the destruction of crops and makes it difficult for communities to maintain their agricultural Status because of conflicts and it may take significant time to resolve such issues. It is such skirmishes that lead to mass migration and or immigration which further decreases the human capital working in agriculture and in turn weakens the economy.

Ancestral Land grabbing and loss of local plant/seeds varieties.

There has been ongoing land grabbing by multinational Corporations and other private organizations which has squeezed farmers out of lands that they have been farming for years and sometimes decades. Corruption is high in Somalia and in most incidences, farmers are either cheated or intimidated into giving up lands they have rightful ownership over.

Once forced out of their lands because of illiteracy farmers are unable to continue running their agribusiness and will struggle to make an income using other means due to their illiteracy.

Poor water management

Countries in the Horn of Africa depend on agriculture for their daily income, due to extreme climate change they in some instances go hungry because they can't produce their own food and in some occasions having to sell cattle that is a key resource for agriculture to make ends meet.

Weakened Social services

A deprived educational structure, cultural norms, lack of financial resources contribute to mass illiteracy in the Horn of Africa. These are just a few of the factors hindering economic growth and since education and training farmers in the latest agricultural techniques and methods aren't prioritised cause heightened food insecurity, scarcity, and little yields.

Slow response to emergencies

Emergencies like floods or droughts are harmful to both crops and human beings, when the response is slow or prevention methods are poor it can cause a strong wave of destruction thus leading to farmers not getting enough of their Agriculture produce.

In other words, Floods will always sweep away crops and also can cause soil erosion, on the other hand, drought cause loss of moisture from the soil thus leading to dryness and food becomes scarce.



Outbreak of pest and diseases (eg Locust)

The outbreak of pests and diseases (e.g Locust)

Somalia and mainly other areas in The Horn of Africa have experienced the worst locust invasion for the last 70 years. These insects are the primary threats to increased agricultural production in these regions. In 2020 and early 2021 these areas have experienced a number of issues concerning agriculture eg. Outbreak of locusts that destroyed crops in North Eastern Kenya (areas like Mandera, Beledhawa, Wajir, Takaba), and the current measures being taken is to use a sprayer to sprinkle the pesticides on the crops.



Photo: *African countries fight locust invasion*

Efforts to control pests and disease requires application of various pesticides which often causes side effects such as toxicological and environmental problems which also affects human health.

- The government should also support farmers in dealing with crop pests and diseases.
- Increased social services eg, training, health, and education.
- Developing of Good road network (Infrastructure)
- Quick response to emergencies eg: Slow onsets of disasters.

The mismanagement of water in the west may be viewed as careless but in this region of the world, it can be detrimental. It affects water supplies (Lakes, Rivers wells, Man-made lakes) making the ecosystems far less able to cope with climate change and natural disasters when it comes to agriculture.

ACTION

What Can be done to Prevent Food insecurity Within The Horn Of Africa Countries

- **Improve agriculture systems**

This requires the government to support the local farmers to improve nutrition through agriculture and also learn new technology to apply during the process.



Green house Horticulture for vegetables.

Photo: Conflict and drought deepen food insecurity in Africa, Middle East -UN Agency

- **Support the Pastrololists**

Most pastrololists depend on animals and the government should help in the form of providing veterinary services by giving them animal health checkup and support them in increasing their market reach in order to earn more and should these services become sustainable, it'll empower economic growth in the Horn of Africa.

Solving conflicts

Conflicts are caused by Land grabbing, theft, resources, religion, and politics, to solve this peacekeeping initiatives have to be put in place to not only respond but prevent such violence from happening. Thus, farmers will be able to conduct their farming practices in the security of knowing prevention methods have been put in place to stop conflicts that may harm their agribusiness.



- Training the youth on TVET programs will enable them to secure employment and they will be able to provide for their families and this will reduce poverty.



Photo: WFP (World Food Programme delivering food)

CONCLUSION:

- To eradicate food insecurity, there needs to be a commitment by the Governments, NGO's, INGO's and regional organizations
- The governments should also come up with food security programs eg: Poverty elimination, famine, and drought prevention methods and maintain initiatives such as the Cash and Voucher program being carried out by CARE International
- Improving and enlarging market opportunities to sustain livelihoods.
- Providing the necessary support to those in extreme poverty and protecting programs doing just that



Framework to Action

This requires National and Regional Governments to work collaboratively with their international development partners to come together and provide solutions highlighting goals , programs and policies which will narrow the food insecurity gap in the Horn of Africa.

The main purpose of **greenhouses** is to provide favorable growing conditions and to protect crops from unfavorable weather and various pests.

- The government should also restrict the grabbing of land and also exploitation of resources, This will protect fertile and farmers will have enough land for cultivation
- Expansion of market/ improve marketing
This will enable the farmer to have links on how to market his/ her produce at a good price and will enable reach his sustainable goals and development.

