



## MRR INNOVATION LAB PROJECT IN BRIEF

# MOVING FROM HUMANITARIAN TO DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN SOMALIA

### Lead Principal Investigator

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### Project Partners

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), University of Alicante

### Development Innovation

Cash transfers with complementary programming to facilitate transition from humanitarian to development assistance

### Commodity

Multiple

### Targeted Population

Small-scale farmers and agropastoralists

### Country/Location

Somalia Baidoa and Baki districts

### Timeline

2022-2025

### Funding

\$626,960 (USAID)

Cash transfers have become central to development interventions around the world and are often coupled with complementary programming for targeted outcomes. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has implemented new programs that leverage this approach in Somalia, a fragile state affected by crises caused by conflict and climate change. This MRR Innovation Lab project in Somalia is testing whether cash transfers and complementary programming help transition from humanitarian to development assistance and build resilience among vulnerable rural families.

### The Challenge

In 2016, FAO began providing short-term humanitarian assistance, including cash transfers, alongside tailored livelihood packages to households in crisis in Somalia. However, the assistance is typically available for only a single cropping season in order to provide support to other households in need. Some families may still be in crisis when the assistance ends. In a region where multiple frequent shocks are common, the short-term nature of this assistance limits families' opportunities to leverage that support into permanent gains in self-reliance and resilience.

Recent global crises and economic recession have created new urgency to identify effective ways to transition from expensive humanitarian assistance to more financially sustainable approaches to promoting self-reliance. In 2020, FAO introduced a productive safety net pilot program called Long-Term Cash and Livelihood Support that targets its former short-term humanitarian aid beneficiaries with longer-term support.

### Research Design

An MRR Innovation Lab research team led from Middlebury College is partnering with FAO in Somalia to conduct a randomized evaluation that tests the impacts of two components of its Long-Term Cash and

### RESEARCH INNOVATION

Over the last two decades, cash transfers have become a central component of many development interventions around the world, frequently coupled with complementary programming to enhance specific targeted outcomes such as human capital or agricultural productivity. Often referred to as "cash plus," many such programs operate in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Cash transfer programming also has been extended and adapted to various emergency relief and humanitarian development programs, for example to address the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Despite the increase of cash assistance, however, rigorous empirical evidence examining the effectiveness of the role of such social protection interventions in fragile and humanitarian settings is rare.<sup>3</sup>

Evidence on the interplay between the two types of interventions is necessary to ensure they work in concert. Evidence on effective programming is also necessary because there are limitations on state and donor capacity to continuously fund humanitarian assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Daidone, S., et al. 2018. "Synergies between Social Protection and Agriculture," in *Boosting growth to end hunger by 2025: The role of social protection*. IFPRI.

<sup>2</sup> Gentilini, U., et al. 2020. "Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures." Working Paper.

<sup>3</sup> Bakrania, S., et al. 2021. "Impact Evaluation in Settings of Fragility and Humanitarian Emergency." UNICEF.



Livelihood Support pilot program. The MRR research team follows this program to examine the impact of the transition from humanitarian to development programming.

At the start of the study, each household participating in the study receives a short-term basic relief package of cash and agricultural inputs for up to six months. The cash transfers of about \$70 monthly are 80 percent of the cost of an average households' monthly consumption.

Afterward, two groups of households are randomly selected to receive up to 18 additional months of cash transfers valued at roughly half of the short-term basic relief package. Of these two groups, one continues to receive cash only while the other group receives cash as well as a comprehensive livelihoods package of productive inputs and services.

Households in this second group who receive the comprehensive livelihoods package also receive access to an intensive mobile phone-based digital extension program under development by FAO-Somalia. In a region where disruptions to travel and extension services are common, digital-based extension has the potential to improve technology adoption and resilience.

Because all three groups will receive the short-term basic relief package, all estimates will be relative to receiving the basic relief package rather than absolute program effects.

Beneficiaries are smallholder agricultural households in 90 communities across the Baidoa and Baki districts. These districts were selected based on having large numbers of households in crisis or in emergency according to the Integrated Phase Classifications (IPC) used by USAID. The 1,800 households selected to participate in the study are the most vulnerable in their communities. The research team is measuring impacts that include economic diversification, income, agricultural productivity and food security.

Estimates of how the programming may generate resilience are based on multiple approaches. They consider factors that can

make households more resilient to climate-related disasters or other shocks, such as adopting climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices or stress-tolerant crops. They also measure probabilistic-resilience scores based on prior research<sup>1</sup> on resilience and estimate the programming's effect on the FAO Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) using its Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) tool.<sup>2</sup>

### Development Impact

After decades of persistent conflict, the Government of Somalia is forging a new path forward by taking steps to strengthen its governance and enhance the wellbeing of its citizens. Fundamental to this transition is a shift from humanitarian assistance that responds to recurrent shocks to a sustainable approach that promotes the economic prosperity and resilience of the Somali people.

This research supports Objective 2 from the USAID Somalia Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) to enable marginalized Somalis to more effectively withstand shocks and stresses. It does this by strengthening and diversifying livelihoods of marginalized populations.

Within Somalia, there is strong demand for rigorous evidence on ways to improve wellbeing and resilience. The study builds on relationships and collaborations between FAO-Somalia and three key Government of Somalia ministries: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management (MoHADM) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The research recognizes the various vulnerabilities of rural Somalis and provides critical evidence on the impacts of integrated assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Cissé, J.D., et al. 2018. "Estimating development resilience: a conditional moments-based approach." *Journal of Development Economics*.

<sup>2</sup> FAO. 2016. Resilience index measurement and analysis-II.



### Development Opportunity: Somalia

- 15.4** : Population in millions (2019)
- 68.6%** : Poverty rate at \$1.90/day, 2011 PPP (2017)
- 8.6** : Rural population in millions (2020)
- 80.3%** : Total employment in agriculture (2019)
- 59.5%** : Prevalence of undernourishment (2019)
- 25.9%** : Prevalence of stunting for children under 5 years (2009)

Source: World Bank

Since 2007 Somalia has been classified among the top three most fragile states in the world.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there are more than 60 militant groups currently operating across the country. Somalia also regularly faces an array of climate-related shocks including cyclones, floods and droughts that threaten the livelihoods of its people.

Agriculture in Somalia is critical for people's livelihoods and future economic growth. Rural livelihoods differ by region in Somalia but are characterized by pastoral, agropastoral and irrigated or riverine agriculture. Advances in the nation's agriculture, the recent creation of regional states, rebuilding of institutions and positive re-engagement with the international community all point to a brighter future for the country and the region.

<sup>1</sup> Fragile States Index (FSI). 2021. The Fund for Peace.

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