

NEWS COUNTIES

VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Inside cash transfer project reviving hope in small ravaged Garissa village

Over 2,000 households that are either food insecure or malnourished have benefited from the programme

AGATHA NGOTHO
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The quiet village of Maalimin has seen a surge in small businesses thanks to a cash transfer programme.

This is courtesy of a locally led multi-purpose cash response to affected communities in Kenya by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi.

The funds cushion residents in arid and semi-arid lands against climatic shocks such as floods and drought.

The project is aimed at providing multi-purpose cash assistance to 2,564 households that are either food insecure or malnourished.

According to Unicef, cash transfers are regular money payments to poor households facing vulnerabilities and risks. They can be provided by the government or donor-funded organisations.

Kuresha Abdi, a resident of Maalimin village, Laudera subcounty, in Garissa county, is among the beneficiaries.

She told the Star that Sh11,530 she has been receiving for the past three months has gone a long way in catering to food and basic needs for her family as she and other beneficiaries transition from drought to the now severe floods.

Abdi says the money came at a time when there was severe drought that affected many people in her village.

"I am able to buy food for my family, clothing and also pay school fees balance for my children. After the drought, there were heavy rains that led to flooding which has affected people in my community," she says.

She calls for an extension of the cash transfer for them to cope with the floods.

She saved about Sh5,000 in the first month and Sh6,000 in the second month to get capital to start selling vegetables at the local shopping centre.

"I allow those who are not able to pay cash for the vegetables to take on credit and pay back once they have received the cash for transfer money," the mother of six says.

Abdi buys the produce from a trader in Garissa town. On a good day, she makes between Sh400 and Sh500 profit. Besides earning some money, the produce from her small vegetable business has helped improve the nutrition of her children.

Hindia Maalim Kassim is another beneficiary who has started a small income-generating activity with savings from the funds.

She is part of a group of five women who came together to start a butchery. Theirs is the only butchery in the less busy shopping centre, which is along the Garissa-Wajir route.

"Each of us saved Sh3,000 from

the cash we received and we were able to start the first butchery in the small town. We slaughter two goats daily and by afternoon all the meat has been bought."

She says they make between Sh1,500 and Sh3,000 on a good day depending on the kilos of the goat, and share the profits of between Sh100 and Sh200.

"For instance, if we get Sh1,500, each of us will receive Sh100 that day. The remaining Sh1,000 will be saved for the group. If we get Sh2,000 profit for the day, each of us receives Sh200, then save Sh1,000," Abdi says.

Each member also gets half a kilo of meat daily to add to the nutrition of their family.

Norwegian Ambassador Gunnar Andreas said this is a response to an emergency situation in three Asal counties of Tana River, Baringo and Garissa due to the drought and then the flooding that came afterwards.

"The frequency and scale of the flooding that we see now is clearly a result of climate change. We need to work together at all these different levels to address the challenges of the people, and at the global level to deal with the issues that are driving these changes," he said.

Anna Martyres, Acted deputy country director, said they have gone the last mile to save lives.

"Currently, Acted supports people across 43 countries to meet their needs in hard-to-reach areas and pursues a triple mandate as a humanitarian, environmental and development aid actor," she said.

Martyres said currently, the project is running successfully in Baringo, Tana River and Garissa counties.

"The cash assistance has been able to support households in vulnerable communities, especially at this time of crisis. The beneficiaries are utilising these funds to recover from the El Niño rains and the resilience that is coming with such assistance," she said.

Shalom Magoma, Acted country programmes coordinator, said the initiative is a six-month project



Hindia Maalim from Maalimin village in Garissa county /AGATHA NGOTHO

funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The project is led by Acted, in collaboration with Asal Humanitarian Network partners, across Asal counties of Baringo, Tana River and Garissa.

"Its primary objective is to provide cash assistance to help food-insecure and vulnerable households in these counties. This multi-purpose cash project is set to benefit a total of 2,564 households, equating to 15,384 individuals, with three rounds of cash assistance. The project is being implemented by four local partners operating under the Asal Humanitarian Network," he said.

"These partners include Reconcile in Baringo county, RRDO and PGI in Garissa county, and ALDEF in Tana River county. Furthermore, Impact

will provide third-party monitoring and evaluation, while Acted established a complaints and response mechanism to ensure that accountability to the affected population is maintained in a timely and responsible manner."

He added that the cash provided to each household is determined based on the most up-to-date monthly expenditure basket rates specific to each respective county.

Magoma said Kenya is currently experiencing heavy rainfall caused by the El Niño.

The rainfall has grown intense in several counties in northern Kenya, leading to the closure of major roads and bridges in Mandera, Wajir and Samburu.

Floods have engulfed most of the towns and villages in these areas,

causing extensive damage to homes and infrastructure.

More than 20,000 people have been affected by the floods, with more than 13,000 being displaced. Hospitals and public offices have been submerged in water in most of the affected counties.

"Several other counties, including Garissa, Tana River and Kilifi, are at risk of flooding, which could lead to loss of lives and livelihoods," he said.

Magoma said this has become a major concern, and humanitarian actors are calling for more safety measures and protocols to be considered to ensure minimal to no loss of life in the affected areas.

"It is crucial to prioritise the safety of communities residing along the riverbanks to prevent any possible disasters," he said.



Kuresha Abdi Nasir from Maalimin village in Garissa county /AGATHA NGOTHO

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KURESHA ABDI

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