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A review of approaches to the integration of humanitarian and development aid: the case of drought management in the Horn of Africa

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Whether and how to link humanitarian assistance and long-term development aid are questions that have underlain polarized debates in policy, practical, and theoretical spaces over recent years. This is due in large part to the diversity of actors, institutional mandates, funding sources, programmes (themselves always changing), and operational dynamics that exist between the two domains. In pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa, which experience recurrent drought emergencies, integrating the two forms of assistance has been attempted in several instances, which have often been disjointed and have sought to grapple with an unpredictable terrain of shifting policies and program designs. Such challenges have been further compounded by a substantial disconnect between programming (across humanitarian aid and resilience building) and existing pastoralist practices and strategies comprising local social safety nets. Using a comprehensive literature review, this paper explores some of the practical strategies that have been implemented to integrate these two forms of assistance over recent years. It surveys implications that arise in relation to the question of how best to address persistent drought in the Horn of Africa. Interrogating mechanisms for enhancing aid efficiency and effectiveness including crisis modifiers and contingency planning, the paper examines what progress has been made in transitioning from reactive, short-term emergency response to long-term development and what barriers still exist. It also considers Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR), a modality envisaged by many as a bridge for enhancing local ownership and thus sustainability of both kinds of intervention. In doing so, the paper argues that despite multiple policy shifts and the adoption of new frameworks (including, recently, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative - IDDRSI), when it comes to practical implementation, there has been little progress. We suggest that this is due in part to the well documented complexity of the aid system, and the forms of

bureaucracy and upward accountability that make change extremely difficult, and in part to a lack of meaningful community participation in planning and practice.

KEYWORDS

development aid, integration, drought management, resilience, Horn of Africa, humanitarian assistance

Introduction

Linking short-term humanitarian aid and development assistance has been a mainstream agenda in the Horn of Africa since the early 1980s. It is an agenda that relates closely to the persistent humanitarian crises and forms of structural marginalisation that the communities face in the region (Terefe, 2012; Sandstrom and Juhola, 2017; Derbyshire et al., 2024). Between 1970s and 1990s, these two forms of aid co-existed in the form of relief food provision and livestock development projects such as provision of permanent water sources and irrigated farming (Kilby, 1993; Bush, 1995; Behnke and Kerven, 2013; Mohamed, 2022). Extreme droughts occurred in the 1980s, 1991, 1996, 2006, 2011, 2017, and 2022, which have all resulted in massive loss of livestock and livelihoods (Bush, 1995; Hillier and Dempsey, 2012; Grünewald et al., 2019; Farr et al., 2020; Mohamed, 2022; UN OCHA, 2022). In 2022 alone, livestock loss in the region is estimated to have reached 3.5 million in Somalia, 4.5 million in Ethiopia, and 2.5 million in Kenya (Kelly, 2023). Such livelihood losses are often situated within and exacerbated by various protracted conflicts and other human and animal health related crises, which are often inadequately managed via external assistance of any variety, leaving local populations' capacities and preparedness to withstand shocks and stresses greatly diminished.

Complex and persistent humanitarian needs coupled with limited recovery periods compete with inadequate resources. Humanitarian crises in multiple areas compete for support from already fatigued donors. Global inter-agency humanitarian appeals rose from $4.8 billion in 2006 to $19.7 billion in 2016, while as of 2024 the total international humanitarian appeal is at $46.4 billion (UN OCHA, 2017a; UN OCHA, 2024). In response to the recent 2022-2023 drought emergency in the Horn of Africa, the United Nations and its partners appealed for $7 billion, and the donors pledged $2.4 billion (United Nation News, 2023). This scarcity underlines the need for new approaches that might enhance humanitarian aid effectiveness.

It is difficult to specify total investment in development/resilience interventions in the Horn of Africa, owing to the lack of aid classification for "resilience building" and the overlapping nature of multilateral and bilateral aid covering both long-term and short-term emergencies. A handful of evaluation reports reveal integrated humanitarian and development program investment. For instance, between 2007 and 2015, Devco and ECHO funding for resilience programs in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel is estimated to be 5 billion Euros (EU, 2017), and through EUTF for Africa 2015–2020, the European Union has supported about 131 projects in the HoA – equivalent to 1.1 billion Euros – to strengthen resilience (EC, 2022). The Horn Africa Initiatives have invested $8.74 billion through a Multi-donor Trust Fund (MDTF) between 2019 and 2024 to support regional infrastructure, economic integration, strengthening human capital, and resilience building, and about 49% of the total funding is for resilience building (HOAI, 2024). Meanwhile, USAID humanitarian and development assistance for the Horn of Africa in 2022 alone is estimated at $1.3 billion (USAID, 2022b). While between 2012 and 2022 Kenya spent $8.1 billion towards ending drought emergencies through a multi-sectoral approach (USAID, 2022b).

Owing to the shrinkage of humanitarian resources, development actors, humanitarian agencies, governments and donors have continuously transformed their programming, policies, and operations, often seeking to reduce the cost of humanitarian needs by linking their operations. As such, the past four decades have seen significant transformations toward linking relief and development aid. This process began in the early 1980s in response to widespread food insecurity and was initially framed by the "continuum" model, a model seeking to transition from relief to development in linear programming, epitomized by the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development approach (LRRD) (Mosel and Levine, 2014). The LRRD was criticized for its limitations in adapting to complex conflict situations. Later in the 1990s, a "contiguum" model emerged, which entailed doing development and humanitarian simultaneously through increased coordination between actors. However, the contiguum approach was argued to be limited for different reasons, most prominently its failure to acknowledge the protracted nature of emergencies and its implicit assumption of stable governance (for a broader discussion on these linkages, see Otto and Weingärtner, 2013; Mosel and Levine, 2014; Murphy et al., 2018; Dijkzeul and Addis, 2022).

In the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004, the international community came together at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. They adopted the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) 2005–2015, an integrated approach to disaster prevention in development assistance. The aim was to shift from

reactive emergency response and build the "resilience" of nations and communities to disaster (UNISDR, 2005). During the review of HFA at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the goal of reducing disaster was relaunched through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015–2030. The outcome of the SFDRR was the triple nexus: linking Humanitarian, Development, and Peace (HDP) through ambitious "new ways of working" that hinged on four priorities: joint problem analysis, better joined-up planning, leadership and coordination, and collective financing modalities (UN OCHA, 2017b). These shifts in policy and programming have enhanced international cooperation and collaborative resource mobilisation, but the disconnects between policy, knowledge and practice and reconciling functional and institutional cultures of development and humanitarian aid remain challenging (Mosse, 2004; Mosel and Levine, 2014; Otto and Weingärtner, 2013; Stevens et al., 2018; Howe, 2019; Stoddard et al., 2020).

Despite significant transformations, the agenda to link humanitarian and development aid continues to be framed around disaster risk reduction and preparedness, often culminating in approaches that entail the deployment of pre-planned activities to reduce risks and protect development gains. Different agencies prioritise and promote distinct practices. For instance, the European Commission and the European Union have focused on the LRRD approach, and creating synergies in responding to crisis (EU, 2012, 4). On the contrary, UN agencies have generally adopted "early recovery" (ER), a multidimensional process of recuperation that begins in a humanitarian setting, encompassing the restoration of essential services in diverse sectors, security, livelihoods, and health (UNDP, 2008, 6; Hilhorst, 2018). "Resilience" oriented approaches have largely emerged as a bridge between humanitarian actions and development programs in response to persistent disasters through a multi-sectoral approach (Hargreaves et al., 2012; Davies et al., 2013).

"Resilience building" has come to play a central role integrating different forms of assistance with a view to enhancing community capacity to withstand shock through market diversification, social protection, the strengthening of institutional capacities, and participatory rangeland management, among other things (Lind et al., 2016; Little and McPeak, 2020; Flintan and Eba, 2023). It also involved strengthening of land tenure security to allow pastoralists to sustainably manage vast landscape through appropriate laws and policies that promote the collective management of rangelands (Roba, 2014) Its initial emergence can be tied to the 2011 famine that devastated the Horn of Africa, affecting 13 million people. During a summit in Nairobi in 2011, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) launched the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) to end drought emergencies (EDE) by 2022 (see IGAD, 2013). It was after the publication of the EDE framework I and associated regional planning policies, that various humanitarian and development agendas came to orient themselves toward the task of "resilience building" (USAID, 2012; DFID, 2011a; EU, 2012; Carabine et al., 2015). However, the extent to which different resilience programmes have enhanced people's capacity to manage crises effectively remains contentious (Semplic, 2020; Semplici and Campbell, 2023).

The review takes responsive approach to the points raised during engagements with humanitarian and development practitioners in Kenya (undertaken during a scoping study) about a lack of practical approaches to embedding community practices in approaches to the linking of humanitarian and development aid in drought management. Through a close analysis of IDDIRSI's priority intervention areas (PIAs[1]), the review assesses the extent to which various key programmes have oriented their preventive actions toward locally rooted forms of resilience in the drylands.

It takes a detailed look at this era of resilience-oriented intervention (2011–2022), and the two major droughts that have been experienced in this period, this review explores the theoretical and practical approaches to aligning short-term emergency response and long-term development that have surfaced. It pays particular attention to the IDDIRSI strategy, a framework of far-reaching relevance fundamentally shaped by a desire to do things differently by combining "preventive (rather than reactive methods), acting regionally (rather than as individual member states) and using twin-track (rather than only emergency) and holistic (rather than silos) approaches" (IGAD, 2013, 15). IDDIRSI's aim has been for drought-oriented interventions to be more sensitive to long-term resilience building, protecting livelihoods through proactive early action instead of waiting for disasters to occur. This review asks to what extent this has been achieved, and whether older, more limited approaches and dynamics have gained traction amidst this new landscape of planning and practice, however forward thinking it claims to be.

Review methods

This review analyses approaches used by humanitarian and development agencies in the Horn of Africa between 2011 and 2022. It is greatly informed by wider stakeholder discussions with practitioners across multiple key organisations involved in drought management and response, including various UN agencies, financing institutions, government, development and

1 IDDIRSI is organised into eight priority intervention areas (PIAs): natural resource and environmental management, market access, trade and financial services, enhanced production and livelihoods diversification, disaster risk management, research knowledge management and technology transfer, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, coordination, institutional strengthening and partnerships and human capital, gender and social development (IGAD, 2019).

humanitarian agencies[2]. These discussions provided a detailed picture of practical experiences of broad systemic issues, relationship dynamics and processes. Connecting these discussions with key literature, we deployed wide search parameters, exploring multiple databases and forms of published and unpublished work. Databases consulted included Google Scholar, the Humanitarian Evaluation, Learning and Performance (HELP-ALNAP) library, the global database of humanitarian organizations (GDHO), and various websites.

A mix of materials were drawn from these databases, including peer-reviewed academic papers, books, project reports, international appeals, blog posts and public policy documents produced in response to drought emergencies in the Horn of Africa. Alongside our desk-based review, we obtained significant data through participating in seminars, policy workshops, and stakeholder discussions with colleagues from humanitarian and development agencies. Generally, we limited our thematic focus to projects that support livelihoods, food security, social protection, community disaster risk reduction, and the linking of humanitarian relief and development.

The selected materials were organized into three distinct themes: (1) Resilience-building programs, (2) Humanitarian interventions and (3) Policies and frameworks for integrating resilience and humanitarian assistance programmes with community practices for drought management. We analysed case studies comprising the use of crisis modifier funds and emergency multi-purpose cash through sequencing, layering and integrating (SLI) activities. We observed key intervention activities within these programs and compared them with older approaches to disaster response through emergency food aid, cash assistance, nutrition support and infrastructure management. We also reviewed programs that have been oriented around the modality of Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) and examined the extent to which community practices have been harnessed and strengthened to enhance capacity to withstand future shocks. A key guiding principle to our synthesis was IDDIRSI's priority intervention areas (PIAs), and particularly PIA 4 (disaster risk management) and PIA 8 (coordination, institutional strengthening and partnership). Our choice of IDDIRSI's PIA 4 and PIA 8 is to examine the extent to which disaster risk management have integrated community practices and enhanced the effective of humanitarian and development aid.

The review noted the possibility of omitting some relevant data due to the large number of resources on the examined topic. We overcame the risk of omitting essential resources by carefully extending the search terms as broadly as possible and following up on specific program details with the implementing agencies involved.

Secondly, resilience is not a distinct form of "aid" and therefore a lack of harmonized resources that cover the total resilience investment in the Horn of Africa between 2011 and 2022. On the contrary, humanitarian assistance and appeals are visible and often coordinated by the UN OCHA and country-specific disaster management programs. The lack of harmonized resilience investment is partly due to the thin line between resilience building as a form of aid and development programs, especially in managing drought emergencies. We managed these challenges by triangulating internet search results with internal organizational reports from our diverse networks.

Unpacking humanitarian and development aid integration

During a workshop we convened in Nairobi in May 2024 to understand the siloes that exist in various institutions, two stations were assembled, one labelled "humanitarian" and the other "resilience." Participants drawn from a diversity of institutions across the spheres of humanitarian and development aid were asked to position themselves on the spectrum according to how they saw their role in their respective institution. We were interested to watch most participants assemble somewhere in the middle, highlighting to us the prominence of the idea of integrated interventions. To some extent, the exercise articulated the widespread conceptual proliferation of the twin-track approach: concurrently building resilience and responding to humanitarian emergencies. But beneath this surface level coherence, the wider workshop identified a deep pool of complexity and a diversity of concepts and approaches existing in varying degrees of comprehension and functionality.

One of the more prominent of these approaches, "contingency planning," constitutes a "process that analyses potential events that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable a timely, effective and appropriate response to such events and situations" (UNISDR, 2012, 4). Drought contingency planning is enhanced through effective early response to drought early warning information and through participatory disaster risk reduction processes (comprising preparedness and mitigation, see Lembara et al., 2011). Such principles are also present in operational conceptualisations of resilience, which, according to IDDIRSI, is "the ability of a system and individuals to remain stable and withstand shocks and stressors" (IGAD, 2019). They also seem to shape CMDRR, a "process where the community systematically manage its disaster reduction measures through planning, preventing and responding to hazards towards becoming safe and resilient"

2 Stakeholder list annexed.

(Cordaid, 2011; Cordaid, 2013). The emphasis of CMDRR is on people's interactive participation, learning and implementation of any given disaster response.

Disconnect between humanitarian aid and development assistance

In principle, humanitarian and development aid should complement each other both to save the development gains and reduce the cost of humanitarian intervention. It does so by establishing a long-term capacity of people and institutions to withstand shocks through resilience building; and humanitarian aid providing immediate relief from disasters and crises. However, in their current forms, these two arms of assistance are largely siloed (Manyena et al., 2019), and these disconnects can be linked to several factors. Humanitarian aid is crisis-specific, short-term, costly, and focused on saving lives without addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability. On the other hand, development aid is long-term, holistic, and focused on strengthening institutions, improving the quality of life and strengthening institutions (Hargreaves et al., 2012; Mena and Hilhorst, 2022a). These diverse institutional cultures, principles, administrative requirements and distinct operations make humanitarian and development programmes incompatible. There is also a lack standard risk-informed and vulnerability analysis tools for a collective outcome for both aid system.

There has been a plethora of theoretical and policy frameworks for linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) spanning time and space since the early 1980s, each with a compelling element to achieve coherent aid delivery but lacked a harmonized measuring and evaluation instrument (Faulkner and Sword-Daniels, 2021). Mosel and Levine highlighted that most LRRD policies define ways to organize aid systems rather than coordinating the needs that aid systems address. For instance, the United Nations agencies and International NGOs have committed to the New Ways of Working (NWOW), aligning Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP-nexus) through joint planning and risk analysis for a collective outcome. Such effort is, however, translated into a standard humanitarian response plan, priorities and common country strategy. The mismatch between these diverse policy priorities arises from a lack of collective understanding of each policy component, such as HDP and how they are interconnected and operationalized at regional, national and local levels (OECD, 2022).

Finally, with only 5 years to the culmination of the ambitious Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the world is still grappling with the extreme humanitarian crisis. The ambitions to shrink humanitarian needs through efforts such as the Grand Bargain, Agenda for Humanity, and coherent humanitarian-development intervention are far from reality. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) estimates that about 300 million people are in dire humanitarian need, of which 74.1 million are from East and Southern Africa (UN OCHA, 2023). The UN and partners have reduced global humanitarian appeal by 20% owing to donor fatigue and frequent humanitarian crises. A recent report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2024) has highlighted that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell by $ 4 billion for developing countries, affecting over 70 countries, while loans increased by $61 billion. Such back scaling and pressure on the aid system could undermine the achievement of the development goals, compromising affordable financing and priority investment in long-term resilience programmes, ultimately resulting in disjointed aid.

Contingency planning and crisis modifiers

The linking of different forms of aid is often rationalised on economic grounds – it is seen as a means of reducing the cost of humanitarian intervention and protecting development gains. Having said this, it is significant to note that the concept is also instrumental within processes of resource mobilization (UNISDR, 2012). Indeed, for many programmes contingency financing is a "mandatory" practice (especially among development actors) through the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction (DRR) into long-term development operations (Mosel and Levine, 2014). A notable example of this is "crisis modifiers" – flexible financing within development programs that aims to enhance humanitarian response during crisis (such mechanisms are promoted by leading donors, including USAID, the EU, and the FCDO, among others, see USAID, 2015a; DFID, 2011b; EU, 2021). Crisis modifiers work differently in the development and humanitarian spheres. Within development projects, the aim is to protect the beneficiaries from falling back into crisis, hence protecting productive assets. In humanitarian programming, crisis modifiers aim to provide life-saving support to the affected population within a crisis setting.

In principle, USAID's crisis modifiers include 10% of the overall development funds to be channelled to humanitarian crises within the development program phase, without necessarily getting approvals from office of foreign disaster assistance (OFDA) and without waiting for an emergency declaration by the national government (USAID, 2015a). The USAID mission in the Horn of Africa region allows up to $1 million per year and a funding cap of $500,000 per event (USAID, 2015a). Some programs incorporating crisis modifiers include the USAID-funded multi-agency Somalia Resilience Program (SomRep) and Mercy Corps' Implemented Resilience in Pastoral Areas, North (RIPA-North) in the Somali region of Ethiopia. RIPA activated crisis modifiers through market-based interventions, providing multipurpose cash assistance, vouchers

for livestock inputs, commercial destocking, and water systems rehabilitation during the 2021-2022 drought (Mercy, 2022). Equally, SomRep consortium NGOs activated crisis modifier pooled funds to respond to the 2019 drought by providing unconditional cash, food distribution, and water trucking for immediate recovery (DRA, 2020).

The EU's crisis modifiers include investment in joint "resilience initiatives" merging humanitarian actions and development programs. Joint programming is implemented in Ethiopia, whereas in Kenya, the European Commission (EC) and European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (ECHO) align their programs with ASAL (Arid and Semi-arid Lands) donor groups within the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) by reallocating drought response budgets to broader development programs (EU, 2021). The Joint EC and ECHO's crisis modifiers work in three distinct ways: ensuring that beneficiaries of development programs will not be affected by humanitarian crises, ensuring that development programs will budget for a timely response (including through supporting customary drought response), and ensuring that programmes align with government initiatives (including social protection programmes in the pastoral region such as the Pastoral Safety Net Programme and the Hunger Safety Net Programme, see EU, 2021; DRA, 2020). Some of the ECHO's priorities include multi-sectoral approaches to meeting essential needs through emergency preparedness and early response by incorporating crisis modifiers in multi-year development funding (EU, 2023).

The FCDO's (initially DFID's) crisis modifier aims at supporting Multi-Year Humanitarian Programs (MYHP) and comprises a humanitarian contingency budget between 10% and 30% of the total program budget, depending on the region. The FCDO's Horn of Africa multi-year funding totals £430 million for Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia (USAID, 2015a; DFID, 2011b). An example of MYHP is Building Resilient Communities in Somali (BRCiS), a humanitarian NGO consortium established in 2013 and funded through FCDO and other partners (NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2024). BRCiS incorporated crisis modifiers of 10% and an internal risk facility of up to $10 million (DRA, 2020). During the recent 2022 drought in the Horn of Africa, FCDO and USAID contributed $10 million to support BRCiS drought response activity for health and nutrition programs, emergency food aid, and access to water (USAID, 2023).

Lately, owing to improvements in early warning prediction in the Horn of Africa, there has been a significant move towards early response through anticipatory action (AA) involving pre-emptive measures using predictive indicators to mitigate the potential impact of a crisis thereby preventing losses, while protecting development gains (WFP, 2023a). Several anticipatory action protocols have been piloted recently, including World Food Programme (WFP) and Save the Children's response to drought in Somalia and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) response to El Niño flooding in Somalia (WFP, 2023b; SCI: Save the Children International, 2024; ICRC, 2024). In these instances, activities undertaken in anticipation of drought and floods included cash assistance, dissemination of early warning information, nutritional support, provision of clean water, and fodder support. Although both ICRC and Save the Children reported the cost-effectiveness of early response and the usefulness of climate data, the usefulness of the modality of anticipatory action remains contested, particularly in pastoral areas (see Derbyshire et al., 2024).

Anticipatory action is supposed to be carried out in ways that incorporate an alertness and sensitivity to long-term livelihoods security through pro-active early action and timely response to acute shocks. On the contrary, humanitarian and resilience-building initiatives through cash transfers are often implemented as a form of "protective" approach, helping households absorb shocks without slipping into severe food insecurity and malnourishment and failing to enhance adaptive capacity to transform amidst crises. Complimentary development investments from government, private sectors and development actors should align their respective early actions, including direct assistance, information dissemination, community involvement, and disaster preparedness towards enhancing adaptive capacities. As Mwangi et al. (2022) postulated, such a push requires a systemic shift and overcoming both political and financial bottlenecks for effective early action.

Taken together, contingency planning, crisis modifiers, and anticipatory action serve roughly the same purpose, drawing on the availability of "flexible" and multi-year funding that enables integrated approaches to protect livelihoods during a crisis. For instance, crisis modifiers allow the use of development funds for emergency response, however, the amount to be used is limited to 5%–10% of the total project funds per year and is thus often not sufficient. Besides, activities supported through crisis modifiers, such as emergency food aid, multipurpose cash, water trucking, and borehole maintenance, do not differ from traditional humanitarian assistance and in this sense remain relatively unproductive in the long-term (i.e., in relation to sustainable livelihoods). Short humanitarian aid often arrives too late, when disasters have already resulted in the loss of lives and livelihoods. Contrary to the assumption of "flexible" funding, strict bureaucracies and upward accountability undermine effective utilization of the emergency resources (Caravani et al., 2022). Emergency response also draws on early warning information based on predictable and controlled risk analysis, failing to account for the surprises and uncertainties pertinent to pastoral production (See Scoones and Nori, 2021) and disregarding the political, economic, and structural conditions that underlie people's vulnerability to drought.

In this regard, there is a clear need for modalities of intervention built around the concept of anticipating crisis to

find better ways of syncing with the everyday surprises and indeed associated forms of local crisis management that predominate in effected areas. One way of doing this is through investing in the relationships and networks that make local level crisis management possible — by converse implication, this would be a means of moving beyond traditional assistance and exploring the underlying conditions undermining persistent vulnerability to drought emergencies.

Resilience building-path to linking humanitarian and development aid

We have noted how, since the 2011 famine in Somalia and the adoption of IDDIRSI's strategy to end drought emergencies by 2022, most governments in the Horn of Africa have promoted "resilience" as a regional, preventive, and holistic approach (Republic of Kenya, 2015a). The IDDIRSI strategy outlines four objectives: for countries to work as a region, to undertake preventive twin-track drought management by combining short-term and long-term intervention, for investment to be guided by the key PIAs and finally, to ensure that the design and the implementation of the interventions are people-focused (see IGAD, 2019). To this end, countries in the HoA have adopted national frameworks to end drought emergencies (EDE) and subsequently established national drought management institutions, such as Kenya's National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). The NDMA provides early warning information and coordinates humanitarian and development interventions, including Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), a national social protection program (NDMA, 2013). In line with these institutional and policy shifts, the EU, USAID, and FCDO (previously DFID) have positioned their resilience frameworks towards disaster preparedness, institutional strengthening, market support, and community capacity development (EU, 2012; USAID, 2012; DFID, 2011a).

Resilience, in this context, has come to be about building initiatives that link different forms of aid through disaster risk reduction and social protection, augmenting people's capacities to "adapt" and "transform" in the face of crisis (Manyena, 2006; Reyers et al., 2022). Many have argued that such a deployment of the term "resilience" has largely served to repackage prior disaster risk responses and incorporate them into the new framework, prioritising short-term projects, cash transfers, and natural resource management, and failing to address underlying vulnerabilities to recurrent crises (Béné, 2013; Semplici and Campbell, 2023). Others have criticised the general context in which the term has been deployed, including prevailing emphases on institutional support and a corollary disinterestedness in the power dynamics between drought affected communities (aid recipients) and larger systems, bureaucracies and institutions (Atyang and Standley, 2014; Hilhorst, 2018; Derbyshire et al., 2024). Nevertheless, multiple drought related programmes that exist in the Horn of Africa do so under some kind of resilience label. In this section, we explore some of the key attributes of these programmes, interrogating their alignment with the IDDIRSI strategy.

The EU implements its resilience agenda through the traditional LRRD activities using the joint humanitarian development framework (JHDF) as a tool for investment and coherent planning (EU, 2017). ECHO and DEVCO resilience funding commitments for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel between 2007 and 2015 are estimated to be about five billion Euros (EU, 2017), while the European Union Trust Fund for Africa (EUTFA) has invested close to 1.1 billion euros in the Horn of Africa across 131 projects, between 2015 and 2020, with an objective of "strengthening community resilience" (EU, 2021). Across these interventions, the EU aims to provide institutional support for elementary service provisions, bolster early warning systems, mainstream drought preparedness into development planning, and coordinate national disaster and drought contingency funds (NDDCF) (Pavanello, 2009; EU, 2017; Greene et al., 2015). The NDDCF was intentionally created to link relief, rehabilitation, and development between ECHO and DEVCO through programs such as Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE), which has committed over 270 million Euros for drought recovery (Stevens et al., 2018).

USAID has been operationalizing its resilience activities through the Horn of Africa Resilience Network (HoRN), with the goals of "strengthening resilience, ending extreme poverty, and promoting regional collaboration" (USAID, 2022a). HoRN works at the intersection of arid regions of the greater Horn of Africa to bolster cross-border coordination and encourage resilience learning among the partners through the 5-year USAID-led Resilience Learning Activities (RLA), focussing on capacity development among regional, national, and local institutions in East Africa and the Horn. Through RLA, USAID has established the Partners for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) in Northern Kenya, bringing together development, humanitarian, and government actors to enhance resilience and economic growth. Between 2013 and 2024, PREG invested $400 million in strengthening partner coordination through layering and sequencing activities, learning and information sharing, promoting the livestock value chain, improving governance and accountability, and ecosystem conservation (USAID, 2018; USAID, 2022c).

USAID undertake joint risk analysis and planning by sequencing, layering, and integrating (SLI) development and humanitarian activities (USAID, 2015b). Sequencing entails the assumption that shocks will arise while undertaking long-term programs and, therefore, embedding humanitarian activities within these long-term projects; layering deliberately overlaps related projects and activities in each geographical region to increase stakeholder and program complementarity. On the other hand, integration brings together both sequenced

and layered programs and effectively coordinates actors and funding tools to achieve collective resilience objectives (USAID, 2015b). Like USAID, the EU's strategy integrates development and humanitarian activities through coherence, coordination, and alignment, working together based on comparative advantage and responding to the crisis by logically connecting humanitarian and development interventions (OECD, 2017). The aim is to interlink multiple actors and sectors and respond to systemwide challenges, supporting institutions, promoting community capacity and aligning these strategies with national policies such as Kenya's Vision 2030 Development Strategy for Northern Kenya and ASALs and Ethiopia's Progressive Safety Net Program (PSNP).

USAID's partial funding towards Kenya's EDE strategy is a notable institutional support for a country-led resilience roadmap for ending drought disaster through collective action and partnership across administrative, political, and program cycles. Between 2013 and 2023, the Government of Kenya spent about $8.1 billion towards operationalizing the EDE strategy and USAID supported with $661 million through PREG (USAID, 2022b; USAID, 2023). The EDE strategy is anchored on CPF-I, implemented between 2015 and 2022 through Kenya's Vision 2030 MTP II (2013–2017) and MTP III (2018–2022), guided by a holistic resilience goal to tackle intersecting crises, including drought, conflict and food insecurity, and yet, it yielded little fruitful outcomes. A recent EDE review established advancement in supportive drought resilience policies favouring alignment of national and county level development planning; however, EDE failed to practically end drought emergencies, partly due to inadequate coordination between governments, shifts in policy priorities and insufficient budgetary allocation (NDMA, 2024). For instance, the counties with the highest EDE budgetary allocation invested less than 2% of their resources in supporting pastoralism, despite livestock production being the main livelihood underpinning their local economies.

Similarly, United Nations agencies align their humanitarian and development interventions within national systems, such as Kenya's HSNP, Ethiopia's PSNP, and Somalia's Baxnaano — an extensive national safety net for human capital funded by the World Bank and implemented by WFP. Using the United Nations' comprehensive framework for action through the twin-track approach, linking immediate community needs to long-term sustainable food security, WFP has invested about $2.4 billion in drought emergencies in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia in 2022 (WFP, 2023a). These activities include providing cash assistance, relief food, and nutrition support and investing in capacity strengthening for government institutions, water system rehabilitation, and anticipatory action. Nonetheless, as noted in the EDE strategy review, policy priorities and objectives shifted, resulting in uncoordinated drought responses, especially between national, regional and local governments (NDMA, 2024). This means that, despite progress in policies to foster humanitarian and development alignment through the twin-track approach (as outlined in IDDIRSI strategy and adopted by various international agencies) fundamental limitations are clearly palpable in terms of the kind of alertness and sensitivity that engender the effective management of drought emergencies, in practical terms. These limitations have been associated with unstable priorities, strict bureaucracies and insufficient funding (Hargreaves et al., 2012; Knippenberg and Hoddinott, 2017).

Resilience-building initiatives have shown some success by promoting holistic programming and enhanced collaboration around shared visions for resilience to food crises. Nonetheless, despite the hypothetical flexibility, the lack of distinct funding tools for resilience as a form of aid category and restrictive donor funding criteria reinforce traditional reactive drought management (Hamann, 2013). Still, most interventions fail to underscore the root cause of vulnerability as historical marginalization, a lack of political accountability, and a general disconnect from local realities and planning and practice. This is mostly because strategies are often guided by a "views from above" (Murphy et al., 2018; Semplici, 2020; Mohamed and Scoones, 2023a). To this end, resilience initiatives are often embedded in sophisticated frameworks but nevertheless divorced from the actual dynamics of transforming livelihoods and thus fail to create an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods (Frankenberger et al., 2014; Atyang and Standley, 2014; Konaka, 2017).

Community approaches to disaster management

IDDIRSI's objective four emphasises the need for community-focused intervention, a practice that is often prioritised by international humanitarian and development agencies. For instance, Integrated Risk Management (IRM) – a holistic approach linking community practices, policy perspectives, and private sector investment for effective response to a crisis – is employed by the Partners for Resilience (PfR) alliance through a consortium involving Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and Cordaid among others (Kapoor and Ulrichs, 2018). IRM integrates community knowledge and practices into disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to enhance community resilience and protect development gains. It is also a common belief across humanitarian and development spaces (one articulated to us throughout our various engagements for this review) that it is good practice to engage beneficiary communities in designing and implementing interventions to foster ownership and alignment with local needs and practices (Murphy et al., 2018; Cordaid, 2013). To this end, "community led" initiatives, including Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDDR), "locally led approaches," and "survivor-led

initiatives," reinforce the capacity of the beneficiary communities to manage disasters, but they are severely underfunded (Murphy et al., 2018; Manyena et al., 2019).

A notable example of a CMDRR project is the EU funded Regional Resilience Enhancement Against Drought (RREAD) programme, implemented by CARE International in Kenya and Ethiopia. RREAD aims to enhance pastoralists' capacity to withstand drought emergencies through preparedness and early response focussed on community participation in disaster management in cross-border towns (Pavanello, 2015). In assessing challenges and opportunities in RREAD programs, communities have grappled with environmental, economic, and political turbulence, and participatory disaster risk assessment and contingency planning improved crisis management (Pavanello, 2015). Additionally, Cordaid has pioneered CMDRR within Drought Cycle Management (DCM) in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Sudan. CMDRR has five essential elements – risk assessment, DRR plans, contingency plans, building and establishing local management organisations/committees, and participating in monitoring and evaluation (Cordaid, 2013). These CMDRR elements respond to shortcomings in current disaster management (i.e., the little attention paid to addressing community dynamics, priorities, capacities, and resources, see Headey and Kennedy, 2012; Manyena et al., 2019).

Despite a decade of attempts to integrate emergency response into long-term development, effective integration has not yet materialised in any convincing sense. Disconnects between top-down perspectives and local practices and aspirations is clearly a key part of this (Murphy et al., 2018). Through a "survivor-led" approach, Murphy and colleagues brought together the voices of program implementors and program beneficiaries across eight humanitarian interventions. They concluded that effectively giving precedence to the experiences and needs of local communities and program implementers hinges on providing six elements: psycho-social support, early livelihood response, empowering the affected community, establishing cohesion among the beneficiaries, collaborating with the government, and addressing the root cause of vulnerability. These six elements foster holistic approaches to managing disaster and improve resilience to shocks but remain severely underfunded once the program cycle ends. As such, they are not scalable

An effective locally led and community-managed disaster response should centre on shifting authority from international agencies and local NGOs working in disaster regions to the affected communities, particularly when it comes to defining and prioritising needs. Community-led disaster resilience must provide a practical avenue for incorporating social values, norms, and local knowledge and transferring authority to communities to decide what is best for them (Manyena et al., 2019). The fixed programme cycle, earmarked funding for predefined risks, and competition from International NGOs all constitute substantive barriers to this and mean that "survivor-led approaches" remain elusive (Howe et al., 2019). Additionally, the political economy of targeting and prioritising humanitarian and development interventions is often tied to "path dependency," primarily due to convenience, logistics, and trust, which usually take time to mature (Mena and Hilhorst, 2022b). To this end, despite policies calling for flexibility, community engagement, and timely action, donor priorities and implementing agencies' existing convenient pathways are what determine practical operations. Once again, this often creates significant barriers and an overall dynamic of complexity that undermines the meaningful integration of humanitarian and development aid.

Rethinking integration

The ambition of aligning short-term humanitarian aid and long-term development first featured in the international development agenda nearly 40 years ago. More recently, this ambition has manifested itself in the IDDIRSI strategy. In exploring this strategy and the shifts it has engendered at the level of programming in drought management in the Horn of Africa, this review has focused on three main approaches – contingency planning, resilience building and CMDRR. Contingency planning and crisis modifiers have arguably demonstrated little success as means for responding to drought early warning information and saving lives and livelihoods. Throughout this review and the wider stakeholder engagement that was undertaken, a financing gap was often highlighted as a fundamental impediment to effective early action. A point that provokes further questions as to justification. How can shifting emergency resources for development be justified? And how can the resilience-building funding stream be supercharged?

All the humanitarian response plans reviewed indicate a substantial financial gap, yet consolidated appeals and joint resource mobilisation among various actors remain a high priority. In the 2022 drought, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) required $219 million to manage drought emergencies in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia but only received $47 million; hence, the response remained grossly underfunded (FAO, 2022). Perhaps there is a need, considering the scale of the shortfall and the evident limited success of otherwise reasonable policies, for the exploration of new opportunities beyond the traditional funding landscape (i.e., the engagement of private partners and capitalising on quality investment over quantity).

In the case of resilience initiatives, through IDDIRSI, collective resource mobilisation for regional programs has been enhanced, including the HoAI (Horn of Africa Initiative). The resilience approach, in its broadest sense, has

been an effective tool for collaboration across sectors, policies, and actors. It seems clear that it has served to alter longstanding, persistent narratives around pastoralism and the drylands that frame them as unproductive zones with limited carrying capacities that are prone to human induced desertification (Swift, 1996; Krätli et al., 2015; Semplici and Campbell, 2023). Today, states in the Horn of Africa for the most part see pastoral drylands as places with potential, they are variously conceptualised as food baskets and potential green energy hubs in need of urgent "development" and "transformation" (Mosley and Watson, 2016; Lind et al., 2020).

It is worth emphasising here, as we have done elsewhere, that such visions come with substantial risks, not least the undermining of pastoral livelihoods as they are – new constraints to mobility and new patterns of entrenched vulnerability via differentiated resource access and control. Perhaps a key aspect of ameliorating this risk lies in achieving a clearer shared understanding, particularly in the aid sector, of "resilience" (Campbell, 2021). Most interventions oriented towards resilience resemble traditional forms of humanitarian support, albeit with different branding, involving unsustainable service provision that folds up once the crisis is perceived to be over, and the funding disappears.

While CMDRR harbours potential as a tool for fostering community engagement and ownership of development intervention. It has not yet brought forth the opportunity to learn and build on existing community practices, including the kinds of networked, relational approaches to drought management that predominate in drylands contexts. This networked and relational resilience established via expansive forms of collaboration and redistribution has enhanced pastoralists' capacity to be resilient. In Northern Kenya's drylands, Diba, a disabled pastoralist, overcame illness and drought through care and herding assistance from relatives and neighbours (see Semplici et al., 2024). Diba received reciprocal livestock from relatives for his family's sustenance, his younger brother herded livestock on his behalf and the young people who provided wheelchairs through social media campaigns. This case shows the agency of diverse relationships and redistribution in enhancing people's capacity to manage multiple intersecting uncertainties.

On the contrary, most CMDRR seem to be premised on the assumption that reducing any given community's vulnerability to drought is best achieved through linear, prediction-based programs and interventions. In most cases, such interventions are defined in relation to a crisis narrative that inadvertently renders the drylands as somehow inherently vulnerable, failing to account for the successes of existing institutions, knowledges and practices that are critical in the management of disasters at the local level.

These narratives are often embedded in mega-programs, such as large-scale social protection, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation programmes, which all tend to miss pastoralists everyday costs, practices, sacrifices, and investments to manage shocks (Davies et al., 2013). Depicting pastoralists as always in need of help (support for which is costly to sustain) is itself a core feature enabling seemingly endless interest in aid in the international sector, with little concomitant interest in actually addressing the systemic problems, and indeed the inequalities, that lead to various negative contemporary phenomena in the drylands (see Keating and Hanger-Kopp, 2020; Mohamed and Scoones, 2023b; Semplici and Campbell, 2023).

While IDDRSI outlined the key PIAs for disaster risk management (guided by the objectives of ensuring a twin-track approach, strengthening institutions and community-focused interventions), measuring the extent to which development and humanitarian actions have aligned with these pre-defined objectives is complex. The context-specific nature of risk, the heterogeneity and diversity that characterises the drylands, and the dynamic nature of socio-economic and political change itself all defy universal indicators. In any case, indicators are often weak or non-existent in the first place (see Fitzgibbon et al., 2014; Stoddard et al., 2020). To what extent has the plethora of livelihood diversification, WASH and capacity development initiatives improved food security for beneficiaries, particularly considering the short-term nature of their interventions and the overriding lack of resources for monitoring resilience capacities over a long period?

Kenya had a resilience strategy through its Common Programme Framework for ending drought emergencies. The overall goal of the strategy was to enhance community resilience to drought by effective coordination of interventions between national, county and local communities (Republic of Kenya, 2015b: 3). Yet the response to the 2022 drought is not substantively different from previous interventions (UN OCHA, 2022; Derbyshire et al., 2024). Significant disconnects exist between the availability of progressive policies for drought management and the practical implementations of the policies.

Both development and humanitarian aid are underpinned by linear principles and a prioritisation of single sources of knowledge and protocols, despite their various claims for incorporating flexibility in program execution. Many of the drought responses reviewed have taken the form of predictable cash-based assistance, nutrition support and water services, and have been triggered by drought early warning information and national appeals. On the contrary, pastoralists' practices of disaster risk management are rooted in multiple forms of knowledge coupled with dynamic and agile decision making. Pastoralists respond to drought by scouting for better pasture, securing proximate water sources and negotiating access to other resources even across potentially dangerous and protected areas, including conservancies and national parks.

Unlike more formalised and technical social assistance, these local forms of collective decision-making are more flexible and adaptable means of crisis management. This is because they are based on mutual solidarity, obligation, lateral accountability and shared knowledge, not just when disasters occur, but continuously (Mohamed, 2023). A key question for the future of drought response in the drylands remains the extent to which humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence align with pastoralist principles and approaches.

Regional frameworks such as IDDIRSI can potentially provide a roadmap to drought management and development investment. However, actions need to be tailored to the needs of the affected population through malleable programmes that adapt to the changing ecological, social, political and economic context, ensuring the sustainability of the interventions. In the recent past, sustainable pastoral livelihoods and its development is undermined by weak land tenure security. This has led to the loss of dry season grazing reserves, restricted livestock movements, increased land degradation, consequently weakening the resilience of pastoralists livelihood system, yet this is receiving limited attention and investments (Herrera et al., 2014). Rethinking the context of linking relief and development is elemental, especially in the framework of a conflict setting, pertinent to the HoA. For instance, mobility is an essential response to drought, with policies such as the IGAD-transhumance protocol providing an enabling environment (IGAD, 2020). Yet, domesticating and operationalising such a protocol is challenging, especially in fragile states, where even humanitarian interventions are constrained by underlying political economy, and state priorities and underlying fragility (Cao et al., 2021; Lind et al., 2022).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the linkages between humanitarian assistance and long-term development aid in response to drought emergencies in the Horn of Africa. We have argued that, in pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa, the integration of these two forms of assistance has in practical terms remained a disjointed and largely unsuccessful project. We have explored three main approaches to linking the two kinds of aid: contingency planning, resilience-building initiatives and community-managed disaster risk reduction. We have identified pressing challenges stemming largely from the disconnect between programming (across humanitarian and resilience building initiatives) and existing pastoralists strategies for disaster management. We would suggest that two fundamental factors work to undermine the effective integration of any kind of intervention (whether humanitarian or development oriented) with community practices.

Firstly, humanitarian programs are not designed to tackle the root causes of crises. They are short-term, crisis-specific, and informed by national appeals. As such, they lean towards addressing acute and immediate suffering, often quantified by numbers of individuals or homesteads reached, instead of long-term systemic change. Secondly, development interventions are anchored on national or regional policies, which change rapidly due to shifting political regimes. The political economy of the ruling government and their priorities primarily determine what development needs supersede others. Indeed, throughout the period explored in this paper, Kenya has domesticated multiple seemingly progressive policies, including the Ending Drought Emergencies Framework (EDE-2013–2022), a strategy for ending drought related disasters by 2022, itself rooted in IDDIRSI priority areas. EDE clearly failed to end drought emergencies, as Kenya experienced severe drought (and concomitant emergencies) between 2020 and 2022 (see UN OCHA, 2022). This drought was met with an exceptionally disjointed effort by both national and county governments and insufficient budget allocation for long-term livelihood support (NDMA, 2024).

Meanwhile, interventions oriented towards "resilience building" have seemingly remained rooted in a more classic version of humanitarian aid, often coming to be entangled in the provision of food aid, the rehabilitation of water sources and the distribution of cash during emergencies. Instead of this kind of repackaging of old approaches, a detailed analysis of operational constraints would seem timely. Either way, it is perhaps even more important to emphasise that the technical and operational disparities between different humanitarian and development actors and the complexity of the bureaucracies that characterise them all work to undermine the pragmatic adoption of constructive policies for effective drought management.

Having said this, we would also suggest that despite a seemingly long timeframe with very limited success, the linking of humanitarian relief and development aid should not be written off entirely. New thinking on ways to bridge policy and action divides should include moving away from dominant vulnerability and crisis narratives (and the practical implications these tend to entail), and conceptions of pastoralists as perpetually in need. Ultimately, the goal should be for humanitarian aid, resilience building initiatives and community practices to speak to, not across (or indeed against) each other. Timely lessons across the three must be learnt, and a central, perhaps more honest agenda promoted. For pastoralism to prosper, it must be supported through the securing of resource rights, the legitimisation of local/customary governance institutions and the enhancement of social cohesion among various communities. Such points have been argued for decades, and in this regard, rather than investment in new polices and frameworks for drought management, lessons that might be learned from previous ones should perhaps be prioritised.

Author contributions

TM wrote the entire manuscript, undertook literature review, data analysis, stakeholder engagement and synthesised the key findings. TC supervised, reviewed and assisted in the writing of the manuscript. SD assisted in the review, editing and writing of the manuscript. GR assisted in the writing of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that no Generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript.

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