



Enhancing food security and sustaining livelihoods through social protection in Somalia

Learning from FAO’s long-term cash and livelihoods intervention

Context

Somalia has endured decades of complex and subsequent emergencies, stemming from climate shocks, conflict, disease and political instability. Since 2016, the country has experienced eight consecutive agricultural seasons marked by climate shocks, including droughts and severe floods, with adverse climate events becoming more frequent and unpredictable. These shocks, combined with outbreaks of fall armyworm and desert locusts, have further threatened food security, nutrition and livelihoods in rural areas.

Consequently, food security has remained precarious, with a cyclical high prevalence of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Phase 3 or above) observed over the last five years (FAO, 2022a).

In November 2021, the Government of Somalia declared a state of emergency due to drought. The situation worsened, with the number of people experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3 or above) increasing from 2.3 million in December 2021 to an estimated 7.1 million between June and September 2022 (FAO, 2022b).

Political instability and weak government structures have negatively affected the response to crises and slowed down the development processes necessary for building resilience. Somalia is also one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a high incidence of poverty in rural areas and among internally displaced persons. Somalia’s Multidimensional Poverty Index Report 2024 shows that 67 percent of Somalis are classified as multidimensionally poor, with rates observed as highest among the nomadic population (82 percent) and rural populations (74 percent), compared to urban communities (62 percent). The livelihoods of a large part of the Somali population depend on agriculture and livestock. Climate shocks, such as drought and flooding, affect the main economic sectors, severely testing the coping capacity of households and communities.

Key facts



Social protection intervention

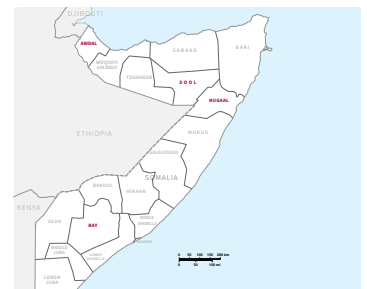
Implementation of long-term cash and livelihood (LTCL) assistance through:

- provision of unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) to targeted households;
- distribution of livelihood support packages identified through community engagement;
- formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) to promote income diversification; and
- delivery of training on agriculture, food safety, healthy dietary practices and nutrition.



Geographical coverage

Somalia: Awdal, Bay, Nugaal and Sool regions



Note: Refer to the disclaimer on the last page for the names and boundaries used in this map.

Source: United Nations Geospatial. 2014. Map of Somalia. In: *United Nations*. New York, USA, UN. [Cited 4 December 2025]. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/somalia>



Target group

- 2 140 households



Gender

Female-headed households were prioritized and constituted a minimum of 30 percent of households targeted



Types of shock/crisis

- drought
- food crisis



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Sustainable, nationally led approaches like LTCL are essential for resilience beyond short-term humanitarian aid.

In the recent past, humanitarian response efforts in Somalia have shown that large-scale assistance can improve food security, particularly after shocks. However, these isolated response efforts also highlight the opportunity to engage more sustainably with the country's protracted crisis. A shift away from "business as usual" is necessary; without it, sustainable outcomes for the population will not be realized.

This good practice factsheet documents the LTCL intervention implemented by FAO in Somalia from 2019 to 2022. The initiative aimed to improve and sustain food security in rural Somalia while testing the feasibility of integrating the model into government-led social safety net programmes. By doing so, FAO sought to ensure that lessons learned and approaches tested could inform and strengthen nationally owned systems for greater sustainability and long-term impact.

At the mid-point of the intervention period in 2021, Somalia experienced a severe drought, the effects of which were clearly observed in the midline surveys of the impact evaluation. This shock and its consequences enabled FAO teams to measure the contribution of the LTCL interventions in mitigating the negative impacts of the drought on recipient households.



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LTCL provided support over a long period, reinforcing stability while encouraging investment in livelihoods.

Methodological approach

Comprehensiveness

The LTCL, delivered in two phases by the FAO Country Office in Somalia from 2019 to 2022, was designed to address the recurring challenge of households slipping back into food insecurity once emergency assistance ends. The programme sought to bridge the humanitarian–development divide by combining predictable cash support to cushion families from shocks with measures that promote a gradual transition to resilience and self-reliance (FAO, 2022b). Unlike short-term cash transfers such as those linked to singular shock events, the LTCL intervention provided support over a long period, reinforcing stability while encouraging investment in livelihoods. By relying on past humanitarian gains and offering continuous support, the initiative aimed to reduce dependency on short-term assistance and create opportunities for households to strengthen their long-term food security (FAO, 2022b).

The LTCL was structured around four complementary and mutually reinforcing core components:

- **Unconditional monthly cash assistance:** Target households received a UCT of USD 35 every month for 14–24 months.
- **Livelihood inputs:** The provision of livelihood assistance was determined through consultations with beneficiary communities, where recipient households were offered a choice of inputs, including agricultural and fishing inputs, fodder seeds, or machinery.
- **VSLAs:** Target households were trained and supported to form VSLAs. These associations empowered vulnerable households to engage in economic activities, enabling the diversification of livelihoods.
- **Nutrition education and sensitization:** Food safety and nutrition education was provided for participants.

The LTCL intervention provided sustained support over a long period, reinforcing stability while encouraging investment in livelihoods.

The pairing of these components was intended to provide a more comprehensive package of support for poor and vulnerable rural populations facing recurrent shocks. This work was complemented by other FAO interventions, including coordination of the Somalia Food Security Cluster to support response planning, partner coordination, advocacy and capacity strengthening of local actors. FAO also worked to improve local food availability and quality by strengthening producer associations, supplying agricultural inputs and strengthening capacities in post-harvest management, marketing and extension services (FAO, 2022a). Together, these activities demonstrated the value of an integrated approach, aimed at fostering solutions beyond short-term humanitarian cash and livelihood assistance programmes, towards longer-term and multisectoral resilience building (FAO, 2022a).

VSLAs at a glance



VSLAs are self-managed groups of 15–25 people who meet regularly to save money and access small loans. These groups provide financial services in communities with limited access to formal banking institutions (Palombi and Matras, 2025) and they are effective tools for building social safety nets in rural areas. Members contribute regular savings to a shared fund, which is then used to provide small loans to the members. These are repaid with minimal interest, helping to grow the group's capital. A typical cycle lasts 9–12 months, after which savings and interest are distributed based on individual contributions. This system enables households to meet essential needs without relying on banks or informal lenders charging high interest.

VSLAs also foster social cohesion and trust, promoting collective decision-making and empowering potentially vulnerable groups, particularly women, through leadership roles. Digital tools like mobile money and SMS alerts enhance safety, flexibility, and transparency. Beyond financial access, VSLAs help households diversify income, cope with shocks, and invest in other sectors such as education, health, nutrition and livelihoods. They offer a scalable, sustainable model that reinforces socioeconomic resilience at the community level.

Sources: **FAO**. 2025. *Village Savings and Loans Associations: a catalyst for resilience in Somalia*. Internal report.; **Palombi, L. and Matras, F.** 2025. *Localization in action: Compendium of FAO experiences and good practices in food crisis countries*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5789en>; **Gavrilovic, M., Davila, P., Chandaria, S., Shao, P., Conway, T.** 2025. 'Scoping paper on complementary social protection and economic inclusion programming for rural women's economic empowerment', Social Protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources (STAAR), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd6012en>



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Coverage

The intervention was piloted in the Awdal, Bay, Nugal and Sool regions of Somalia, targeting 2 140 vulnerable households. These four regions were chosen because they had persistently high levels of acute food insecurity. The number of households reached was as follows:

- Baki District: 596 households
- Baydhaba District: 700 households
- Eyl District: 287 households
- Taleex District: 557 households

The pilot selected beneficiaries from FAO's database of previous emergency programmes in rural areas that relied on FAO-supported livelihoods, focusing on households identified as having below-average food security outcomes. Priority was given to the most vulnerable and chronically poor, comprising households that included:

- pregnant and breastfeeding women;
- households with children below 5 years of age;
- households with people above 65 years of age;
- households with people with disabilities (at least 5 percent of targeted households);
- households with one or more malnourished members, identified through coordination with Nutrition Cluster focal points, therapeutic feeding centres, health centres, maternal and child health centres and other nutrition-specific interventions related to care and infant and young child feeding; and
- households with vulnerable orphaned children.

Importantly, female-headed households were prioritized, representing at least 30 percent of targeted households.

Through cash transfers, VSLAs and tailored support, LTCL strengthened household resilience and promoted inclusive livelihoods.

Adequacy

As stated, the LTCL intervention delivered a comprehensive package of support, merging cash assistance, capacity development and livelihood inputs. A monthly UCT of USD 35 was provided to 2 140 households across Baki, Baydhaba, Eyl and Taleex, thereby ensuring predictable financial support for basic needs. Beneficiary identification was made possible thanks to local engagement with older people in villages and council members to ensure inclusivity and community-based participation (FAO, 2021b; FAO, 2022a).

The programme also supported long-term financial resilience through the formation of VSLAs comprising 1 669 members, over 60 percent of whom were women. Participants benefited from training and mentoring to access loans for household assets, small business investment and basic needs such as education and health (FAO, 2021b).

The LTCL programme also supported livelihood diversification and value addition. Beneficiaries were consulted on their preferred activities and inputs were tailored to their specific needs: seeds and tools for pastoralists and agropastoralists, fodder seeds and machinery for pastoralists and fishing kits for coastal households. These inputs were paired with customized training and ongoing mentorship to ensure proper use and productivity.

From a governance and coordination perspective, LTCL activities were aligned with Somalia's National Development Plan-9, aiming to reduce reliance on humanitarian assistance and strengthen livestock and agriculture recovery. Emergency and resilience activities also followed Food Security Cluster priorities and collaborated with other humanitarian actors.

However, government involvement was limited, and while federal and regional authorities were consulted and occasionally engaged in data collection, they were not significantly involved in programme planning and design. This reduced alignment with Somalia's emerging social protection programme but also produced important lessons on the importance of designing and delivering adequate and appropriate interventions in close collaboration with government authorities to ensure future opportunities for adoption and ownership to be realized (FAO, 2022a).

FAO's comprehensive and multilayered risk-mitigation strategy was designed to safeguard programme integrity, ensure accountability and maintain continuity despite operational disruptions.

Risk management and conflict sensitivity

Risk management was a central pillar of the LTCL, primarily because implementation took place in a highly fragile, conflict-affected and shock-prone environment. Recognizing these complexities, FAO adopted a comprehensive, multilayered risk-mitigation strategy designed to safeguard programme integrity, ensure accountability and maintain continuity despite operational disruptions.

Clear institutional roles and responsibilities were established at programme inception across all levels of implementation. Local partners were tasked with beneficiary identification, drawing on their contextual knowledge to improve accuracy and reduce exclusion errors. Mobile money operators then facilitated secure digital cash transfers, while independent monitors and remote verification tools strengthened transparency throughout the delivery chain. Complementing these systems, the FAO Call Centre served as a central accountability mechanism, verifying beneficiary eligibility, monitoring activity progress, confirming payments and providing an accessible channel for feedback and complaints (FAO, 2021a).

Continuous learning was integrated into the programme's delivery systems to ensure responsiveness and adaptability. Routine process monitoring and reporting uncovered occasional delays and inconsistencies in the timing of cash transfers and input package distribution, which in turn affected the speed of recovery across different livelihood groups. To mitigate these impacts and reduce the risk of households reverting to negative coping mechanisms, the programme introduced a start-up ration consisting of two months of cash assistance in the form of UCTs. This measure helped stabilize households during initial implementation and provided a buffer against delivery constraints. The systematic documentation of implementation challenges and adjustments to delivery modalities in real time ensured that the programme maintained relevance and better aligned support with evolving beneficiary needs (FAO, 2021a).

Finally, given decades of conflict and recurring climate shocks, the application of a humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach in Somalia was both highly relevant and urgently needed. Food and natural resources are major drivers of conflict and its casualties (FAO, 2019). In such a context, it is vital to ensure conflictsensitivity approaches and principles are integrated into programme design and delivery. Given that peace, resilience and livelihoods are deeply intertwined in Somalia, structuring interventions in line with this approach is critical for sustainable food security and stability (FAO, 2022a).

At endline, 54 percent of beneficiaries relied on more than one income source, compared to 38 percent of non-beneficiaries.

Results and impacts

In the delivery of the LTCL, FAO included a detailed impact evaluation, with baseline, midline and endline surveys comparing recipient and non-recipient households. The impact evaluation combined both desk review and quantitative survey methods and was guided by FAO's Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis Model, which helps to assess how households cope with and recover from disasters. Within this framework, a resilience capacity index (RCI) was utilized, built around four core pillars: access to basic services, adaptive capacity assets and social safety nets.

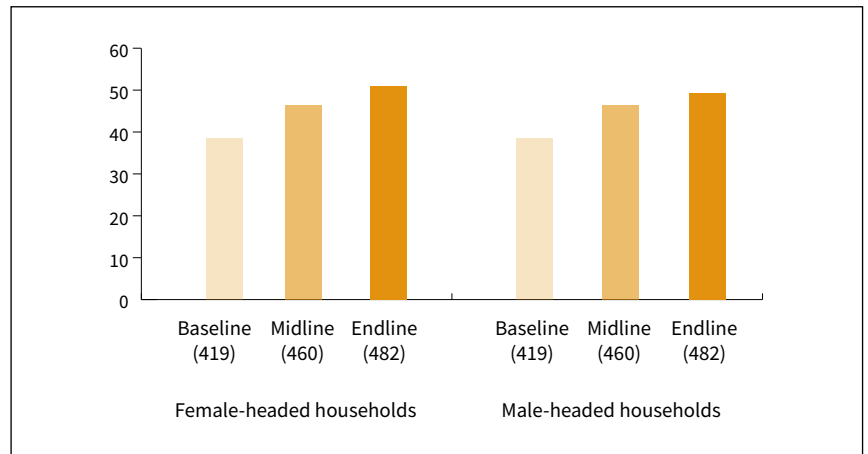
These pillars are directly linked to sectoral, as well as individual, wellbeing outcomes, particularly food security, as reflected in key indicators such as household food consumption score (FCS), reduced coping strategy index, dietary diversity, crop and livestock production, diversification of income sources, annual household income and the application of knowledge gained from training. As a result, it was possible to measure a household's capacity to withstand shocks, while the surveys also supported activities to more accurately and reliably identify which groups are most vulnerable and why (FAO, 2022a; FAO 2022b).

FAO conducted a rigorous impact evaluation of the LTCL to assess its results over the intervention's 24-month period. Some of the results evidenced include:

- **Income increase:** Average annual income earned by beneficiary households (USD 652) was higher than at baseline (USD 639), though slightly lower than at midline (USD 675). LTCL beneficiaries began with lower food security and income than non-beneficiaries, which informed their selection. The decline in average income among non-beneficiaries from baseline to endline aligns with expected trends during a prolonged drought, driven by five consecutive seasons of below-average rainfall, which led to low production, increased costs, and pushed some districts to the brink of famine. In contrast, the overall increase in beneficiaries' income, despite the midline-to-endline drop, reflects greater resilience and improved coping mechanisms under drought conditions.
- **Income diversification:** Beneficiaries' sources of income increased from 39 percent at baseline to 54 percent at endline.
- **VSLA formulation and training:** Over the course of the intervention, 73 VLSA groups were formed and approximately 71 percent of targeted beneficiaries chose to become VSLA members, up from a baseline of 11 percent. The proportion of targeted beneficiaries that received VSLA training was 85 percent at endline, while good agricultural practices (GAP) training increased slightly from 25 percent at midline to 28 percent at endline. At the endline, most beneficiaries reported putting the training lessons into practice. Among those who participated in VSLA training, 89 percent indicated they had applied what they learned, with 47 percent strongly agreeing and 42 percent agreeing. Similarly, 97 percent of participants who received GAP training stated that they implemented the lessons, including 30 percent who strongly agreed and 67 percent who agreed (FAO, 2022b).

- **Household dietary diversity scores:** Beneficiary households had a higher average household dietary diversity score (7.5) than non-beneficiary households (6.7). Similarly, beneficiary households were also able to maintain consistently higher dietary diversity, compared to non-beneficiary households.

Figure 1. Comparison of the average resilience capacity index from baseline to endline for female- and male-headed households

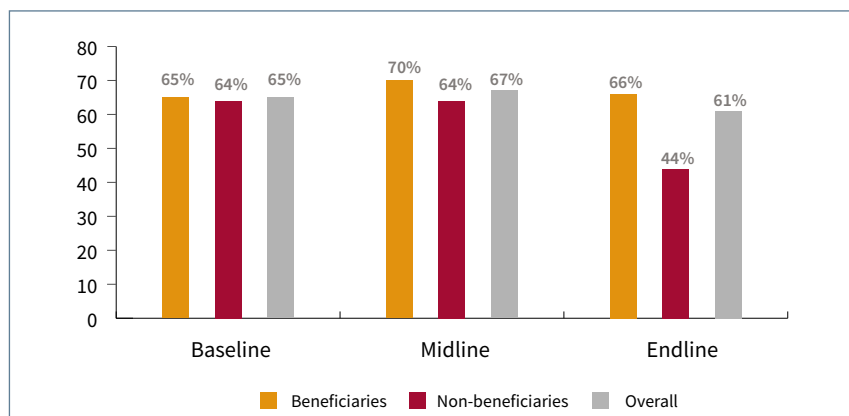


Source: Authors' own elaboration.

- **Access to land:** At endline, 53 percent of beneficiaries reported access to land, compared to 36 percent of non-beneficiaries. Similarly, at endline, 52 percent of those with access to land were from male-headed households, compared to 45 percent from households headed by women, highlighting the challenges faced by women and their families in gaining access to land, a barrier that evidence shows is strongly associated with increased poverty (Mohamed Bobe, B. A. 2025). However, this represents a notable improvement, as only 31 percent of female-headed households had access to land at midline. The increase suggests that the intervention helped more women acquire or lease land, a point reinforced in focus group discussions, where participants noted how cash support had been instrumental in facilitating land renting.
- **Resilience capacity index:** Utilizing the RCI and analysis methodology, beneficiaries recorded a positive change in RCI from 39 to 51 (34 percent increase) from baseline to endline. Interestingly, the breakdown of changes in the RCI between female-headed and male-headed households showed that female-headed households started with a higher baseline RCI (39 compared to 36 for male-headed households). By endline, both groups had improved, but the relative increase was marginally higher for female-headed households (+32 percent) than for male-headed households (+28 percent).
- **FCS:** At endline, 66 percent of beneficiaries were within the acceptable FCS compared with 44 percent of non-beneficiaries. The proportion of beneficiaries within the acceptable FCS has been homogenous from the baseline (65 percent), midline (70 percent) and at endline (66 percent), indicating that the programme was effective in sustaining beneficiaries' food security and adaptive capacity during and following periods of shocks (see Figure 2).

Approximately 71 percent of targeted beneficiaries opted to become VSLA members, up from a baseline of 11 percent.

Figure 2. Comparison of food consumption scores between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and overall from baseline to endline

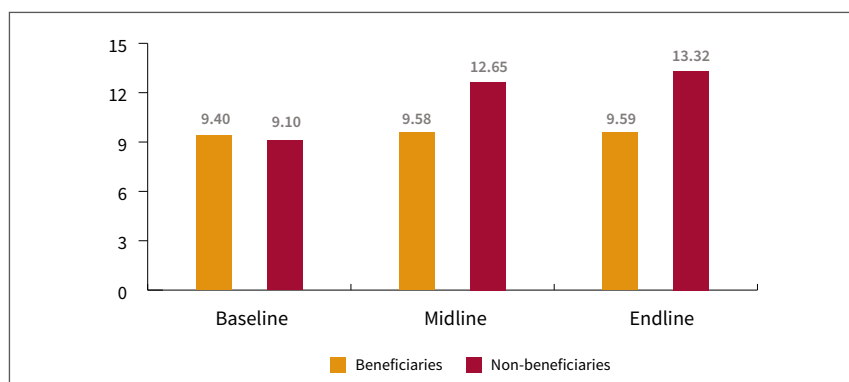


Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The findings underscore the importance of long-term cash transfers in helping households maintain stable food consumption during crises such as drought. However, when food prices rise and transfer amounts stay the same, households may struggle more, especially if they are still recovering from earlier shocks. This shows the value of combining cash transfers with livelihood support and income diversification, which helps explain why beneficiary households were able to maintain a stable FCS.

- Reduced coping strategies index:** The impact evaluation indicated that beneficiaries were better able to manage stress and shocks. Their scores remained stable throughout the project (9.4 at baseline, 9.6 at midline, 9.6 at endline), while non-beneficiaries' scores worsened over time. These findings indicate that the LTCL helped households reduce their reliance on negative coping strategies¹ by improving their resilience (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Comparison of the reduced coping strategies index for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from baseline to endline



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

- Tropical livestock unit:** On average, households owned 3.4 tropical livestock units, with beneficiaries owning slightly more (3.5) than non-beneficiaries (3). However, beneficiary households also saw a drop in livestock numbers, mainly due to the prolonged drought and its impacts.

¹ Negative coping mechanisms measured by the index include at least five universal behaviours adopted by fragile households for a minimum of seven days, and that are indicative of food insecurity. The behaviours identified in Somalia included: relying on less preferred or less expensive food; eating borrowed food or using borrowed money to buy food; limiting portion size at mealtimes; restricting adult consumption so small children can eat; and reducing the number of meals eaten in a day.



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Given recurrent crises, climate shocks and weak government services in Somalia, sustainability is a challenge for delivery of social protection.

Sustainability

Ensuring the sustainability of social protection in Somalia remains challenging due to recurrent crises, climate shocks and weak government services. Short-term provisions such as cash+ and cash-for-work interventions can provide immediate relief, but challenges remain with regards to sustaining positive outcomes. Longer-term multisectoral support packages that combine cash assistance, livelihood interventions and other human capital development and resilience-related support demonstrate greater potential for sustained positive outcomes.

The LTCL delivered such a package while recognizing the challenging operating environment in the country, which required balancing intervention complexity with the practicalities of delivery to rural populations in Somalia. While the impact evaluations described previously show notable positive outcomes, the LTCL intervention remained vulnerable to cash tokenism, whereby transfers were often used for immediate consumption rather than long-term investments.

One promising component of the project that could be scaled up to promote greater sustainability of outcomes was coupling LTCL interventions with loan fund models through VSLAs or other village-level savings platforms, to generate self-sustaining community investment (FAO, 2022b). This, along with similar interventions, could provide larger and more reliable capital for recipient households to invest in longer-term needs.

Training households to invest in on- and off-farm productive activities, diversify livelihoods and accumulate assets in the long term are key actions that can contribute to durable solutions for the LTCL intervention and similar programmes, including government-owned social protection schemes. Importantly, these lessons from the LTCL intervention have informed the development of the second phase of the Federal Government of Somalia's National Social Protection Programme, which includes social assistance schemes, social insurance and social care service measures to promote employment and financial assistance, in collaboration with FAO and other partners (MoLSA, 2019).

In 2021, FAO, at the request of MoLSA, provided support in conceptualizing a Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)² within the broader social protection strategy of the government. Through the Technical Cooperation Programme seed funding, FAO engaged technical experts to conduct a feasibility study to inform the design of a productive-oriented safety net programme. Evidence generated through the LTCL intervention contributed to the proposed design options of the programme, leveraging the data and results to inform multipronged approaches linking cash+ and cash-for-work with livelihood programming for vulnerable populations. Subsequently, a multisectoral team of government officials was supported to engage in a South–South learning visit to Ethiopia to learn from the country's long-running PSNP.

However, despite progress made in delivering the LTCL intervention and efforts to support the government in applying key lessons, challenges hindered sustainability, most notably COVID-19 and budget cuts affecting the sector. The LTCL intervention stands out for its resilience-building potential, although its impact depends on deliberate investment in capacity development, civil networks, livelihood diversification and phased conditional support. Maximum impact and sustainability are achieved when programmes are integrated, community-owned and linked to longer-term development pathways. These fundamental challenges have and continue to affect the ability to bring forward lessons from the LTCL intervention and apply them as part of Somalia's ongoing efforts to build a well-functioning social protection system (FAO, 2022b).

2 The PSNP is Ethiopia's flagship programme, launched in 2005. It is a key intervention aimed at tackling chronic food insecurity, building resilience and implementing targeted natural resource management activities, such as reforestation and other climate actions. It provides vulnerable households with support (typically cash or food) linked to participation in community projects or labour-based activities, which simultaneously strengthens local infrastructure and builds household resilience. Beyond immediate relief, the approach connects small-scale farmers to essential agricultural inputs, financial services and market opportunities, enabling them to diversify livelihoods, increase production and improve food access. By combining short-term assistance with measures that address the structural causes of hunger, this approach promotes long-term food security and sustainable rural development (IFPRI, 2014).

Coupling long-term cash and livelihood interventions with village-level savings platforms could provide larger and more reliable capital for households to invest in long-term needs.

Replicability and upscaling

The LTCL has the potential to be replicated and scaled up, provided the right enabling conditions are in place. Evidence shows that improvements in household resilience were made possible thanks to expanded access to productive assets, increased land under cultivation and stronger access to income and credit, particularly through the combination of cash assistance, VSLAs and related community support systems. These outcomes highlight the importance of scaling up interventions that combine asset building, income support and related social protection and livelihood development measures.

The LTCL approach has enabled households to adopt sustainable farming practices, diversify income, increase livestock holdings and improve food security. Beneficiaries also reported applying training and GAPs, which underpins the model's potential for replication in other regions of Somalia and beyond (FAO, 2021a).

Applying the lessons of the LTCL, FAO has worked to promote replicability, ownership and greater scale of the approach by government authorities, through the development of a Productive Social Safety Net Model. The model was developed by the FAO Country Office in Somalia, at the request of and in collaboration with, the Government of Somalia's MoLSA (FAO, 2022a; FAO, 2022b). The model applies the lessons learned from the LTCL and aims to encourage and support efforts to refine and improve the design and delivery of the current government-led programme³ launched in 2019 with the support of the World Bank. Likewise, the Somali Cash Consortium, funded by the European Union, supports hundreds of thousands of households with cash+ packages. Applying the lessons learned from the LTCL and other programmes such as PSNP in Ethiopia could contribute to improved outcomes for recipients of social protection programmes in Somalia, while reducing fragmentation and duplication across actors (FAO, 2022a; FAO, 2022b).

Through this work in Somalia, FAO is leveraging its experience in cash programming, rural resilience building, impact evaluations and evidence generation, as well as its technical expertise in areas such as agricultural inputs, climate-smart agriculture, extension services and natural resource management. Many of these capacities and areas of expertise are already present across FAO Country Offices. In this regard, lessons learned from FAO's work in Somalia show that other FAO Country Offices could offer similar contributions, in collaboration with government authorities and other non-government actors when social protection, agrifood system transformation and resilience building in rural populations come together.

In short, the LTCL approach can be scaled up and replicated elsewhere, and in many cases, FAO's contributions build on technical areas in which the Organization is already a recognized and respected technical and implementation partner.

³ The Baxnaano programme supports 200 000 households with regular UCTs and other economic inclusion activities for youth and women. The programme also supports emergency scale-ups during times of shock. To date, 590 000 households have benefited from the programme's emergency expansions in response to droughts, pest outbreaks and other shocks.



Testimonies

- “VSLAs have built our confidence. We now know that we have a place to turn to in case of an emergency”, said a female focus group discussion (FGD) participant from Baki District.
- “VSLAs groups will not come to an end if we follow the rules, contribute the monthly premiums, borrow when the need arises and pay back within the required timeframes”, said a female FGD participant from Baki District.
- “Cash support from FAO has enabled us to access credit. Mostly, we borrow from the shopkeepers who trust that we will pay them because they know that we will receive USD 35 per month from FAO”, said a female recipient from Cadaad village in Baki District.
- “The money I received from FAO helped me to purchase donkey carts for transporting and selling firewood to urban centres. This has provided me with a new way of making money and increased my household income”, said a male FGD participant from Dedboy village in Baidoa District.
- “The wells have dried up because of drought. All beneficiaries in this village formed a group and contributed money to rehabilitate our well, located approximately 1.5 km out of the village to supply water, especially when quick rains come”, said a male FGD participant from Herta village in Taleex District.

All testimonies retrieved from: FAO. 2022. *Long-term cash and livelihood intervention: Endline Impact Assessment Report*. Mogadishu.

Key learning

- **Combining long-term cash transfers with agricultural inputs and VSLA participation helped households move beyond short-term coping mechanisms.** Beneficiaries invested in productive activities – such as renting land and purchasing livestock – leading to asset building, income diversification and improved food security.
- **Stable and sustained financial support is critical to maintaining gains.** Irregular or short-term assistance risks reversing progress and pushing households back into negative coping strategies. Long-term planning requires reliable and sufficient resources.
- **The LTCL intervention implemented by FAO in Somalia successfully laid the foundation for transitioning from emergency assistance to resilience and self-reliance.** By addressing chronic food insecurity and supporting livelihood recovery, the programme contributed to breaking cycles of poverty and reducing long-term humanitarian dependence.
- **Localized, conflict-sensitive approaches enhance impact.** In fragile contexts like Somalia, embedding LTCL within a conflict-sensitive humanitarian–development–peace framework strengthens its long-term effectiveness. Leveraging community-based models such as VSLAs and aligning with local systems ensures sustainability and promotes social cohesion.
- **Government ownership should remain the goal.** A robust impact evaluation of the LTCL intervention was essential to demonstrate its impact across multiple sectors. The evidence generated, along with operational lessons learned from its delivery, has informed the FAO Country Office in Somalia’s continued collaboration with MoLSA to develop a Productive Safety Net Model that promotes the adoption of the LTCL approach within current and future government-led social protection programmes.



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Partners

Technical partners

- Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Southwest State
- Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Hirshabelle
- Ministry of Agriculture Development, Somaliland
- Ministry of Agriculture, Jubaland
- Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Puntland
- Ministry of Livestock and Animal Husbandry, Puntland
- Ministry of Livestock and Fishery Development, Somaliland
- Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range, Jubaland
- Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range, Southwest State
- Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range, Hirshabelle
- Ministry of Livestock, Galmudug

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