Kenya has a population of over 38m (1) with 2.3 million in North Eastern Province who are mainly of Somali origin, pastoralists, 60-80% dependent on livestock (2), with high poverty (3), lowest literacy rates in the country (64% of men and 21% women) (4). Only 12% have piped water as main water source compared to 30% national average (1). Two-thirds of the North Eastern population don't have access to toilets compared to 14% national average (1). It also has the highest proportion of malnourished children under five years age below -3SD height for age, weight for height and weight for age (4).Very few deliver in a health facility or are attended by a trained health provider (3). Rainfall is scarce, with frequent episodes of drought that results in loss of livelihoods. Droughts are a natural hazard and with climate change their occurrence is increasing in the Horn of Africa. Famine, however, is unnatural and depends on government policies and the capacity of local and international partners to respond to emerging crises. For this, the crisis presents itself as an opportunity to find sustainable solutions to crises which are becoming more frequent and more intense (5). Refugees fleeing violence, drought and famine in Somalia have sought refuge here and now total over 500,000 (6). Food and water is scarce and malnutrition has increased by 30% (7). As of March 31, 2011, an estimated 1.4 million pastoralists in northern Kenya remained moderately to highly food insecure due to consecutive seasons of failed rains, resulting in grazing land and water shortages, weakened livestock, declining livestock prices, and limited household milk availability, according to the USAID-funded Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Declining livestock prices combined with increasing food, water, and fuel prices have prevented artisans from exporting their products. In addition, increased migration has led to conflict over grazing land and water, resulting in death, livestock losses, and decreased market access (7). Their purchasing power reduced 25% and 30% increase in risk of acute malnutrition among under-five children. Refrigeration, hospitalization, and deaths were very frequent, and the North Eastern Province had an extremely high risk of food insecurity (8). This crisis, then, demanded a rapid response. CHEPs, a joint venture of NGOs and individual disinterested volunteers, was established to respond to an immediate need to provide food relief services to the people of the region. They were asked by national leaders on the ground to convert their personal networks into food relief networks and distribute food to the needy, focusing on the Horn of Africa, particularly Kenya. The initial efforts were very successful; the efforts led to expanding the plan to 37 villages all over Northeastern Kenya. Plans for relief efforts were made in 3 phases: 1. Emergency food relief. 2. Recovery. 3. Rehabilitation. 4. Community mobilised to buy carcasses to prevent diseases and recovery and rehabilitation efforts, and long term programmes, should follow emergency food relief and can be very effective.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Relief efforts by small well managed groups & purchase of relief food locally saves on logistics costs , serves more beneficiaries and injects resources directly into the local population
- It is important to seek advice and work with local contacts on needs and methods
- Recovery and rehabilitation efforts, and long term programmes, should follow emergency food relief and can be very effective.

**PLANS**

- Plans and efforts are ongoing to dig and rehabilitate more wells in drought affected villages, provide seeds and train pastoralists to take up irrigation farming through greenhouses, follow up on micro-credit projects, meet the demands of mobile phone services by providing students with monitoring of their academic performance and community projects, build classrooms and provide desks and books to schools, build dispensaries and maternity units, and undertake health and promotive services, plant more trees around wells and in schools.

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