HORN OF AFRICA RESILIENCE W·O·R·K·S·H·O·P
APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE FOR DECISION MAKING

Ethiopia Livelihoods for Resilience Learning Activity

Baseline Survey Brief


Photo: Zacharias Abubeker / Save the Children

Introduction

The Livelihoods for Resilience (L4R) program operates in four highland regions of Ethiopia to support and enhance livelihood opportunities for chronically food insecure households. USAID launched the L4R Learning Activity to provide data for assessing outputs, outcomes, overall impact, and performance of the five-year L4R program. The baseline study provides an evidence base against which to monitor and assess the progress and effectiveness of L4R interventions during and after the program. It also supports a robust learning and adapting agenda and a related research agenda.

This brief presents findings about resilience capacities, elements that contribute to well-being outcomes and recover, and programming implications. Data were collected for households in woredas with active L4R programming and households in woredas without L4R programming, allowing comparison between "intervention" and "control" households, respectively.[1]

Key points emerging from the baseline study include:

- The most common shocks overall are increased food prices and delays in PSNP transfers.
- Climate-related shocks such as drought and flooding were also important shocks, with downstream effects such as food price increases and crop disease.
- Nearly all households rely on PSNP support or safety nets/cash transfers as livelihood strategies.
- L4R households eat more diverse foods, are more food secure, and have less poverty and higher income than non-L4R households.
- Households' absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities are low to mid-range.
- Asset ownership is the only component of resilience capacity that is a significant predictor of greater per capita expenditures and less poverty, as well as greater diet diversity and less food insecurity.

[1] Data disaggregated by region/program area are available in the full report.

Key Findings

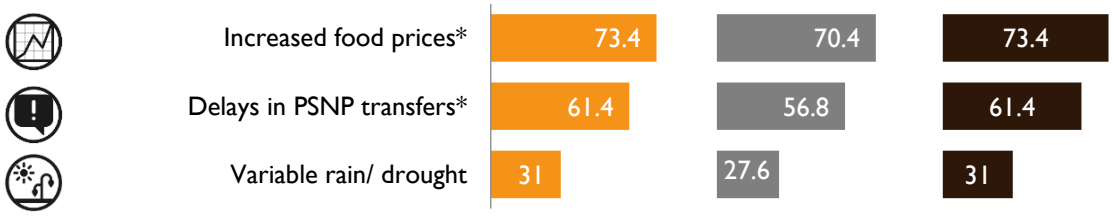
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Overall, about 6 in 10 households from the sample are below the international poverty line of US$1.90 per capita per day and experience moderate-to-severe food insecurity. SNNPR, an area where CARE works, has the highest proportion of households in poverty and experiencing food insecurity compared to other regions, with over 80 percent prevalence for both indicators in both L4R and non-L4R areas. Oromia, in the CRS program area, has a similar proportion of food insecure households. In both regions, slightly fewer L4R households experience food insecurity and poverty. Households in all program areas engage in an average of three livelihood activities, two of which are vulnerable to climate-related shocks. Nearly all households reported PSNP support or reliance on safety nets/cash transfers as key livelihood strategies.

SHOCKS

The most commonly reported shocks across the four regions were increased food prices and delays in PSNP transfers, followed by variable rainfall/drought as a distant third (Figure 1). Prevalence of most shocks varied dramatically between regions, e.g., over 80 percent of Oromiya households reported delays in PSNP transfers, compared to less than 30 percent of Amhara households. Qualitative findings suggest that climate-related shocks—drought and/or variable rainfall and in some cases heavy rainfall/ flooding—were key shocks that had cascading, or downstream, effects that were also perceived as shocks (e.g., food price increases and crop disease). The implications of climate-related shocks were no crops harvested, limited agricultural employment opportunities, and rising food prices at a time when households were forced to switch from producing food to purchasing it. Lack of pasture and water for livestock caused low livestock reproduction, livestock disease, and death. Households that sold their livestock received lower-than-usual prices due to oversupply and the poor condition of the animals. Overall, more non-L4R than L4R households experienced shocks, but this varied by region.

Figure 1: Most common shocks for overall sample, L4R, and non-L4R (% households)



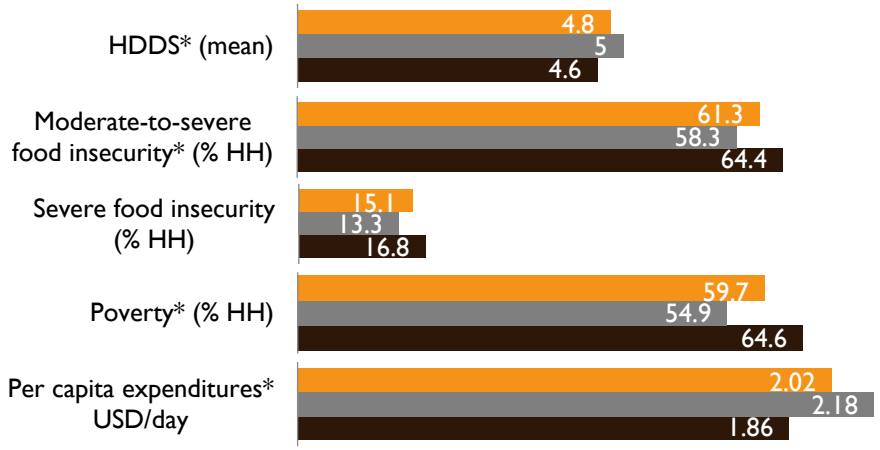
N for **overall sample** =*3335*, **L4R**=*1537*, **non-L4R**=*1798*

* reflects a statistically significant difference (p<0.05) between **L4R** and **non-L4R** households

HOUSEHOLD WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

For the purposes of the L4R Learning Activity, households are considered resilient if they maintain or improve their well-being in the event of shocks. Well-being was measured with five outcomes (Figure 2). There were statistically significant differences between L4R and non-L4R households in four out of five well-being outcomes: L4R households eat more diverse foods, are more food secure, and have less poverty and higher income than non-L4R households. Panel data will be used to compare baseline and endline values to see if households maintain or improve their well-being after any shock.

Figure 2: Well-being outcomes for overall sample, L4R, and non-L4R



N for **overall sample** =*3334*, **L4R**=*1536*, **non-L4R**=*1798*

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RESILIENCE CAPACITIES

Households' absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities are low to mid-range across all regions; absorptive capacity is the lowest and adaptive capacity the highest (Table 1). L4R households have higher capacities than non-L4R; differences are small but statistically significant.

Adaptive capacity is driven almost entirely by a very high rate of adoption of improved practices, as well as a sense of control and confidence to improve one's life, and exposure to information.

Transformative capacity is driven by access to agricultural extension and livestock services and household participation in local decision-making.

Multivariate regression analyses suggest that households with higher per capita expenditures and those with higher dietary diversity are more likely to have higher absorptive and adaptive capacities and are less likely to experience hunger or poverty.

Asset ownership is the only component of resilience capacity that is a significant predictor of greater per capita expenditures and less poverty, as well as greater diet diversity and less food insecurity

Table 1: Resilience capacity indices and components

	Total	L4R	Non-L4R
Absorptive capacity (mean, 0-100)	39.0	40.6	37.3 *
Bonding social capital (mean, 0-6)	2.9	2.9	3.0
Shock preparedness & mitigation	1.3	1.4	1.3
Households with cash savings (%)	52.4	64.6	39.8 *
Availability of humanitarian assistance (%)	47.8	53.4	42.1
Asset ownership index (mean, 0-53)	9.2	9.3	9.2
Adaptive capacity (mean, 0-100)	50.9	52.2	49.5 *
Adoption of improved practices (%)	90.1	90.9	89.3
Exposure to information (mean, 0-19)	7.2	7.7	6.8 *
Aspirations/confidence to adapt (mean, 0-16)	9.9	10.0	9.7 *
Transformative capacity (mean, 0-100)	41.7	44.9	37.1 *
Availability of/access to ag extension services (%)	41.7	38.3	45.3
Availability of/access to livestock services (%)	25.8	26.2	25.4
Participation in local decision-making (%)	37.1	41.9	32.6 *
N	***3335***	***1537***	***1798***

* reflects a statistically significant difference (p≤0.05) between L4R and non-L4R HHs

for both L4R and non-L4R households. Otherwise, L4R and non-L4R households differ in the make-up of their resilience capacities.

Results from multivariate regression analyses indicate elements associated with higher expenditures are assets, aspirations, education, cash savings, bonding social capital, diversified livelihoods, access to formal safety nets, access to communal natural resources, or access to basic services.

Education is an important predictor of economic well-being for non-L4R households; it is positively associated with higher per capita expenditures (i.e., income) and negatively associated with poverty.

The resilience capacities that contribute to household **recovery** from either increased food prices or drought vary for L4R and non-L4R households. L4R households with assets or that adopt improved practices tend to recover better from increased food prices, whereas recovery of non-L4R households is only associated with access to formal safety nets. In the case of drought, L4R households tend to recover better when they have cash savings, availability of humanitarian assistance, access to communal natural resources or diverse livelihoods, whereas non-L4R households tend to recover better when they have diversified livelihoods, aspirations, access to communal natural resources, or have access to agricultural extension services.

Implications for Programming

Results of the baseline survey provide insights into existing levels of resilience capacity for both L4R and non-L4R households across intervention areas. Generally, households have low to medium levels of absorptive, adaptive or transformative capacity; are poor; lack diversity in their livelihood strategies and diets; and experience moderate-to-severe food insecurity. Multivariate analyses suggest the importance of specific components of resilience capacity that can be strengthened through L4R programming that will contribute to (1) improvements in household income and dietary diversity, (2) reductions in risk and vulnerability to climate-related shocks and stressors, and ultimately, (3) reducing poverty and food insecurity among chronically food-insecure households in highland areas of Ethiopia.

Background

The L4R program contributes to USAID's Feed the Future (FTF) program, whose goal is to address the root causes of global hunger, and to USAID Ethiopia's aim to increase economic growth and resilience in Ethiopia. L4R operates in chronically food insecure woredas in the four highlands regions of Ethiopia.

- **CARE** implements L4R in 27 woredas in Amhara, SNNPR, and Tigray, in partnership with the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development (Amhara), Agri-Service Ethiopia (SNNPR), and the Relief Society of Tigray.
- **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** implements L4R activities in nine woredas in Oromia. It works in consortium with the Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission of Meki and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. CRS' L4R activities overlap with two CRS-led programs – the Joint Emergency Operation and the CRS Development Food Assistance Activity (DFSA) – as well as with the World Vision DFSA.

L4R activities focus on four priorities that support and enhance livelihood opportunities for chronically food insecure households in targeted regions and woredas: (1) on-farm income generating activities (IGAs) and crop and livestock market systems; (2) off-farm IGAs and nonfarm enterprise development; (3) non-farm labor and wage employment; and (4) collaborative learning for scaling and sustaining gains made in the three

livelihood pathways (i.e., on-farm, off-farm, and employment). The interventions support household participation in income-generating and value-chain activities, create market linkages and employment opportunities, link beneficiaries to financing, and help Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP4) beneficiaries increase their incomes, build assets, and reduce risk, which in turn facilitates their ability to sustainably graduate from the safety net. L4R also supports the cross-cutting areas of nutrition, climate adaptation, gender empowerment, and youth.

SURVEYS AND ANALYSIS

The baseline study consisted of a qualitative component and household and community quantitative surveys. Data collection took place from July 18 to August 22, 2018. Surveyed households were spread across 57 woredas (34 L4R, 23 non-L4R) in the four program areas. The household questionnaires collected information on variables identified in the research questions, including food security, shocks, coping strategies, recovery, livelihoods, expenditures, and aspirations. Community survey topics include government and NGO programs, governance, and community infrastructure, services, and organizations.