



## Building Resilience

Resilience is a person's ability to withstand or recover quickly from a crisis or natural disaster<sup>1</sup>. Incorporating resilience into programming means holistically assessing and addressing the risks that are prevalent in any environment. World Vision does this by building foundational assets, as well as protecting lives and livelihoods, with a strategy that combines quick wins with systemic change. Resilience programs such as Community Based Disaster Risk Management, Credit-led Microfinance, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), Savings-led Microfinance (Savings Groups), Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Soil and Water Conservation Practices.<sup>2</sup>

### Children in Ethiopia

Over 400,000 children are in severely malnourished

More than 1.7 million children, pregnant and lactating women need supplementary food

Over 40 % of the population is stunted

10% of the population is wasted

UNICEF

### Ethiopia

*Ethiopia is facing its worst drought in decades, with over 10.2 million people in need of food aid due to El Niño. The failure of rains that normally feed 80 to 85 per cent of the country between June and September has left livelihoods devastated and greatly increased malnutrition rates across the country. The drought has also affected school attendance, with more than 2 million children on the verge of dropping out and over 3,000 schools at risk of closure.<sup>3</sup>*

### Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration

Devised in the 1980s Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR - [fmnrhub.com.au](http://fmnrhub.com.au)), is basically a low-cost, sustainable land-restoration technique used to combat desertification and natural resource degradation. By protecting existing vegetation from people and livestock, it regrows and the soil is replenished.

Farmers are encouraged to manage the forest by pruning, thinning and reducing tree stumps. All of these practices help to revitalize and regenerate the local ecosystems. FMNR nurtures environments that are rich in biodiversity and are more resilient ecosystems than artificial plantations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/resilience/en/>

<sup>2</sup> Promoting resilience in development programming: World Vision UK's Approach 2013

<sup>3</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/humanitarian-action-children-2016-ethiopia>

The benefits of FMNR include restoration of soil fertility, increased supply of fodder and firewood, greater retention of rainwater in the soil and stabilization of the micro-climate. FMNR was formally introduced to Ethiopia in 2004 and World Vision is currently implementing FMNR in more than 36 districts across the country covering more than 600 hectares.

In two districts, in South Ethiopia, 13 springs were restored and five of them became permanently flowing. Agricultural productivity downstream has increased more than three-fold, increasing the income earned from firewood, grasses and fodder more than ten times. The productivity of areas where FMNR is practiced people profit by supplying neighbouring districts with agricultural products during drought years.

**By far the biggest pay-off has been the earnings from carbon credits - USD425,074 - in Africa's first large-scale carbon trading project.**

Funded by the World Bank, the income from the carbon trading scheme has paid for the construction of a grain store, irrigation schemes and a flour mill - benefitting over 5000 households. FMNR not only protects these districts from the worst of the drought, but has helped them to benefit from climate change making them truly resilient.

### **Ramate's Story - *There is no life without the forest***

In Ethiopia, there is a group of 300 men and women called the Edget Behibret. They are a forest-farm co-operative and one of their strongest advocates is a woman called Ramate Ashuro (35). "For many years, we have, sadly, abused the forest. We are hopeful that it is not too late to bring it back to life. After the training we received, I came to understand that this land and water is important to us in many ways," said Ramate.

The group understands that they are responsible for reviving the area so that the barren soil will turn fertile and that water will again flow from the springs; that floods will recede and they will profit from the land.

"Anybody could just take whatever they needed from the forest. Aside from crop failures caused by drought, flooding is also a serious problem ... There are not enough trees to hold the soil. Even a small amount of rain washes it away," said Melesse Morku, a World Vision staff member.

Ramate has seven children but still finds time to manage a plant nursery that has been funded by World Vision and the local government. The nursery has produced around 150,000 drought-tolerant seedlings that will be planted across 112 hectares of land. Seeds have also been given to members of the cooperatives so they can plant trees on their own land. Eventually, the bare soil will be covered with trees. "Now, we are committed to caring and protecting the forest. We have heard about the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and have started to let the soil and the newly planted trees recover," Ramate said. As land for FMNR has been sequestered, the cooperative has cleared it of grass and trees. They used the grass to feed their animals, repair their homes and to sell.

Many members of the cooperative have families to support, yet they all understand that the benefits of FMNR are long term. "While we can earn from the sale of grass, the future benefits of this forest are what I most look forward to," said Ramate.

"This cooperative was only formed in 2015, but we are already seeing impact. Five of our leaders were trained on forest, land, seedling and nursery management...The forest is the source of fresh air, clean water and food. There is no life without the forest," said Tadesse Getiso, cooperative chairman and father of six.

**Diwa Gacosta**