



Towards an improved understanding of resilience and vulnerability in Somalia

September 2019



About the study



Overview and objectives

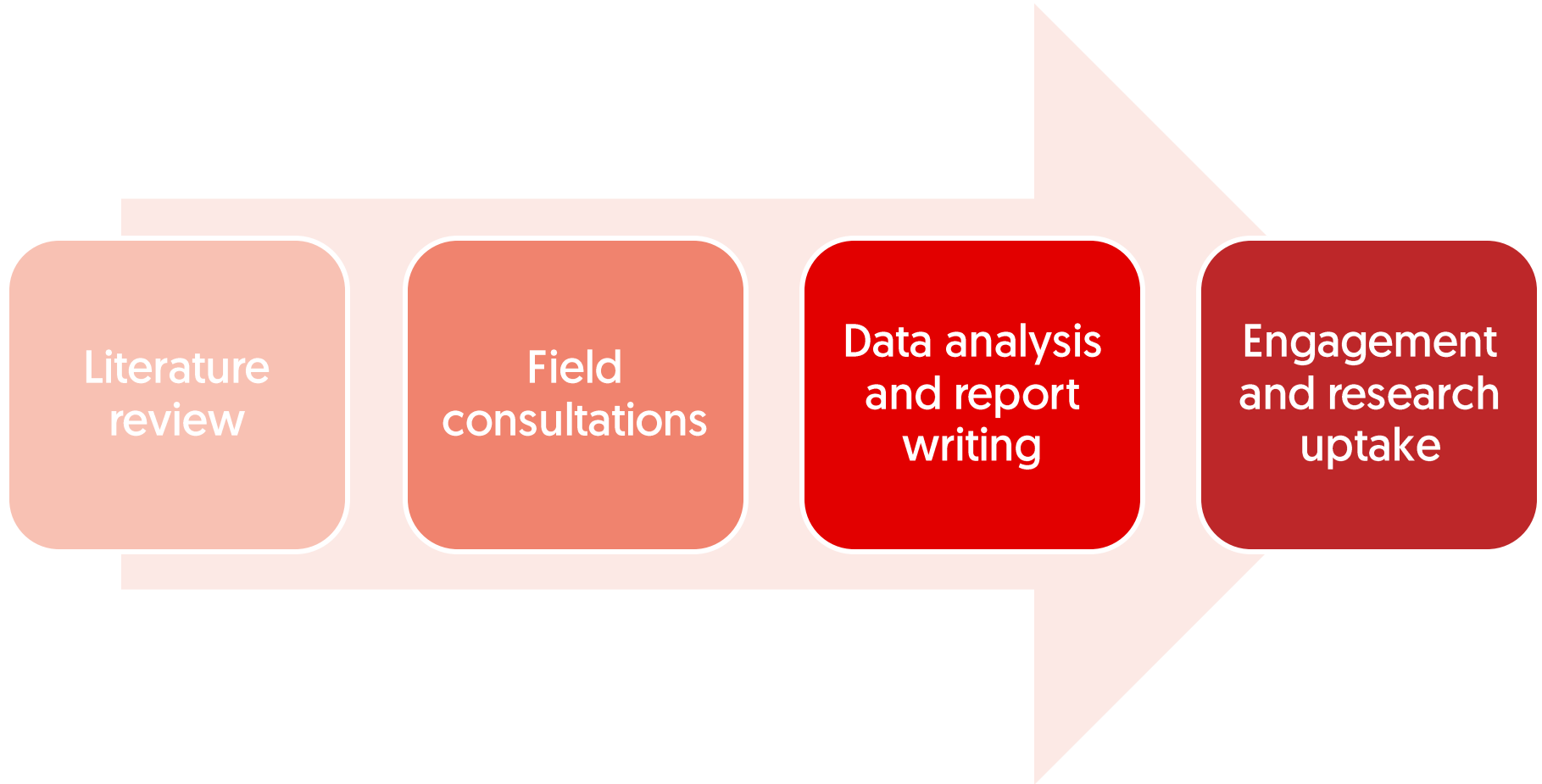
The study aimed to examine factors influencing the vulnerability and resilience of households and communities during the 2011 and 2016/17 crises in Somalia. These factors included:

- how population groups responded to and survived recurrent shocks;
- the prevailing drivers of marginalisation and exclusion, and the mechanisms that maintained them;
- the role of donors, international agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders in influencing the coping strategies communities used, and the efficacy of these strategies.

It was:

- funded by the UK's Department for International Development and the East Africa Research Fund;
- and conducted October 2018 – April 2019.

Methodology





Four interrelated factors influence vulnerability

1) Preparedness to prevent hazards and disasters and to respond and cope effectively with their impacts

2) Capacity to understand and adapt to future uncertainty and long-term trends, including climate change

Resilience requires:

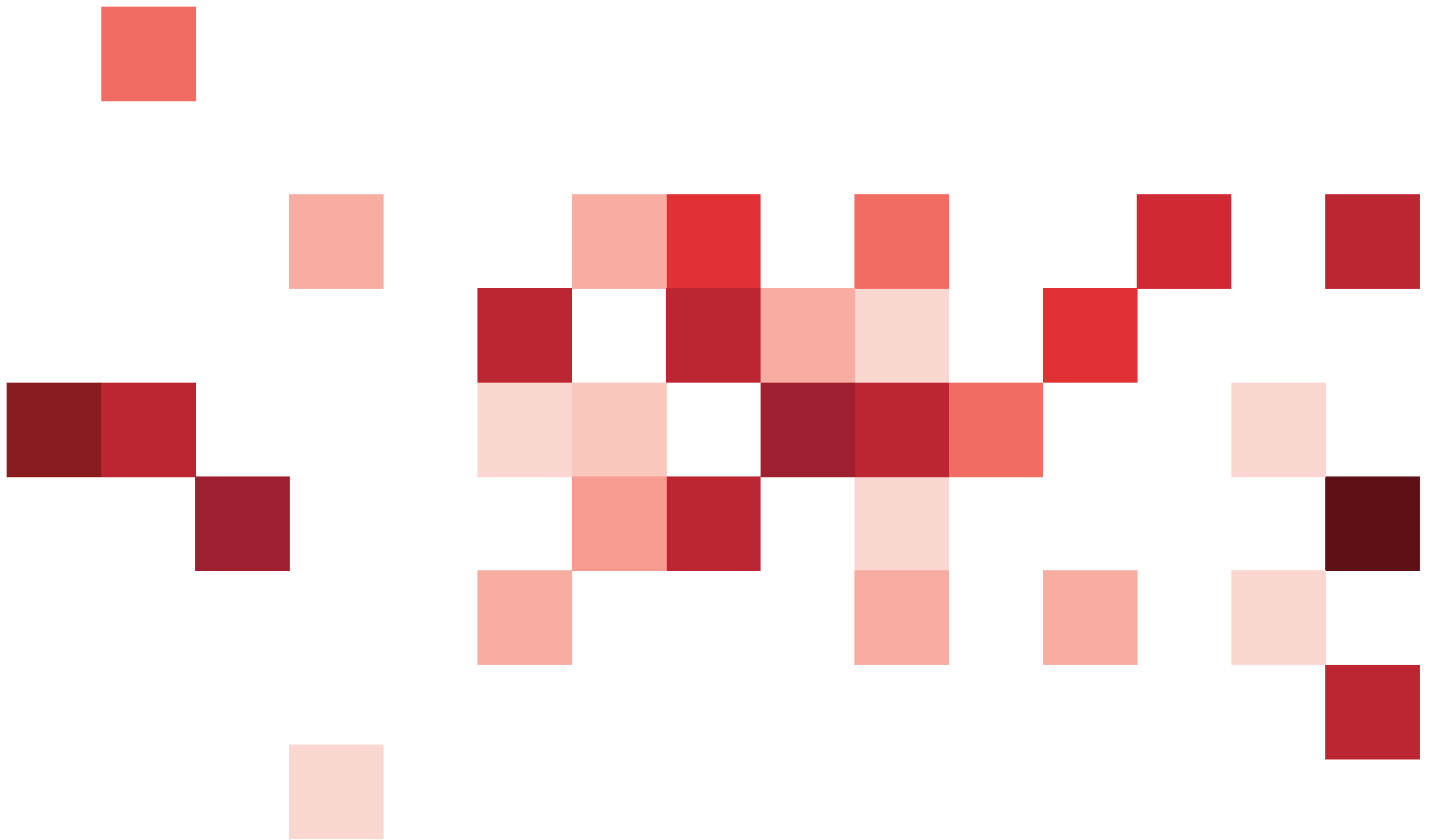
3) Diverse and secure livelihoods, enabling individuals to move out of poverty

4) Good governance – creating an enabling environment, including establishment of social safety nets



Description of study locations

Location	General description	Humanitarian landscape	Livelihoods
Kismayo Urban 81 respondents	Commercial capital of Jubbaland	Civil unrest, frequent inter-clan conflict	Commercial activities
Kismayo Rural [Gobweyn] 27 respondents	Located in southern part of Lower Juba region	Insecurity, floods along the Juba Valley River and droughts	Riverine gravity irrigation/rainfed agriculture, pastoral livelihood zones
Beledweyne 68 respondents	Capital of Hiran – fourth largest town in Somalia	Affected by displacement, flash flooding, and recurrent clan conflicts	Pure pastoralists [25%], agro-pastoralists [50%] farmers [10%] and urban [15%]
Baidoa 66 respondents	Economic centre and capital of the Bay region	Insecurity – Al Shabaab, incursions in the west of the town	Agro-pastoral zone, agricultural and livestock trade centre

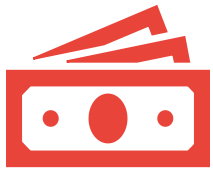


Findings



Somalis used four broad categories of coping strategies

Social and organisational



e.g. remittances from relatives in urban areas and diaspora

Divestment and disposal of assets



e.g. selling livestock

Diversification of sources of income and food



e.g. paid domestic work in other households

Spiritual and behavioural



e.g. prayer and fasting for long continuous periods of time

Of these, 'social and organisational' was most important.
Some illicit strategies were used.



Three key factors drive marginalisation

Ethnicity, kinship and clan identity

Social and economic organisations are based on clans and lineage: dominant groups possess greater economic, social and political assets.

Gender

The culture of patriarchy leads to gender inequality, excluding women from leadership and access to, and control over, resources.

Livelihood and employment

Conflict and climatic shocks have impacted the livelihoods of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, perpetuating economic marginalisation of populations unable to practise alternative livelihoods.



Actions by humanitarian and development actors that had impact

1. Increased investment in cash transfer programming and remittances after 2011 → enhanced access to food, improved ability to recover from the crisis and helped to diversify livelihoods
2. Larger and more varied forms of humanitarian assistance, mostly through NGOs → better access to aid by vulnerable populations
3. Accentuation of skills-building and empowerment programming, especially for vulnerable people who have been internally displaced → helped to diversify income and enhance food security



But humanitarian and development actors also faced challenges

- In 2011 there were challenges getting aid to the most vulnerable people due to information gaps, poor coordination/lack of collaboration with local organisations, insecurity, and collusion between aid agencies' staff and local authorities to divert aid.
- In 2016 community needs and humanitarian aid were better aligned, yet humanitarian response and development approaches remained divided.
- Throughout the period under study:
 - delivery of assistance in urban rather than rural areas led to influx of people, straining infrastructure/absorptive capacity of host communities;
 - some groups such as ethnic minorities and people living with disability were excluded due to the unequal distribution of aid;
 - gender-based and sexual violence remained widespread – with minorities suffering disproportionately.

Recommendations



Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
Social connectedness as a preferred coping strategy	Government, NGOs, academic organisations and think tanks to protect and promote efforts towards social connectedness by supporting households and communities to maintain this through the establishment of mutual support groups
Marginalisation of vulnerable populations	Government, NGOs, donors and diaspora to address the drivers of poverty, marginalisation and exclusion including renegotiating preferential terms agreed with major ethnicities such as the 4.5 power-sharing formula
Support by external actors	Government, NGOs and clan elders to scale-up social protection, align more with diaspora on remittances, and upscale skills-building



Recommendations (cont.)

Issue	Recommendation
Gender-based violence	All actors to move beyond awareness raising to holding perpetrators to account, challenge patriarchy
Declining livelihoods	Government, NGOs and donors to support development of alternative livelihood options and promote adoption of integrated planning, strengthen disaster risk management planning

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