

Photo Stories from the Field



Health Education: The First Activity in One Health Outreach Services



A team of health workers from Melbana Health Center in Moyale Woreda of Oromia's Borena Zone, Ethiopia, always start their regular outreach services in target health posts with health education. On December 13, 2021 here they were in Chaliliche Health Post, some 20 kilometers into rural Borena to discharge their scheduled outreach duties. Through logistic, technical and financial support from the HEAL project of VSF-Suisse, service providers in Melbana Health Center reach out to communities in two kebeles of Moyale together with the Woreda's animal health workers and natural resource management experts to provide integrated services to improve the livelihood of communities through one health approach. The services have helped communities to gain access to human and animal health services in nearby health posts and save their money and time they must otherwise spend from traveling distances to access these services.



Trained Service Providers onboard for OH Services

Bekila Getachew is Deputy Head of Melbana Health Center in Moyale Woreda of the Oromia region, Ethiopia. Having Received VSF-Suisse's One Health training through the organizations One Health 4 Humans, Environmental, Animals and Livelihood (OH 4 HEAL) project, he co-plans outreach services to target communities with animal health and environment experts in the local government to ensure access to integrated health services for pastoralists and their livestock. The service team also help raise community awareness on environmental health.



Animal Health Services: Critical for Pastoralists as Human Ones

OH 4 HEAL project also covers seven kebeles in Somali's side of Moyale Woreda in the region's Dawa zone, Ethiopia, through interventions aiming to care for humans, animals and their environment. While VSF-Suisse's support focuses more on improving the livelihood of pastoralists in target Woredas of Oromia and Somali regions from development perspective, the current drought from two failed rainy seasons in both Borena and Dawa zones has made it critical to engage also in the life saving endeavours particularly for livestock resources as can be seen in an outreach site at Egal Kebele of Somali's Dawa zone.

One Health Services: A Novel Approach



Adoy Sheik Oumer, 42 and a villager in Egal Kebele of Moyale Woreda in Somali's Dawa zone, Ethiopia, says "I am so happy to receive health services and the medicine prescribed by the nurse at a walking distance from my home, "thanks to nurses who come all the way to us, not we to them." She is referring to the outreach health team supported and strengthened through VHF-Suisse's OH 4 HEAL project to serve target pastoralist communities. Previously, she had to pay 200 birr (\$4.5) only for the return bike ride to access health services for any member of her family or to bring medicine for any sick livestock of hers. "Add the discomfort of the ride on the rough road sitting behind the rider," she explained.

OH 4 HEAL project pursues a novel approach to improve the livelihoods of pastoralist communities by integrating human, animal and environmental health services for them. Deploying female nurses has particularly made women like Adoy to freely and honestly communicate their problems and needs.

Hydroponic Fodder: An Innovative Drought Response Mechanism



Darmi Wako Kiyo, 30 and a mother two, is among the 60 community members who received VSF-Suisse's training on hydroponic fodder production, savings and tapping local market opportunities for better gains from selling livestock products in Ethiopia. Before the drought hit hard in Mermera, her locality, and the whole of Borena zone in Oromia, Darmi joined a group of six trained pastoralist households to grow hydroponic fodder, an innovative way of growing fodder within 7 days from seed and water, without soil. "Our animals didn't take too long to get used to it, and we started to collect much more milk than we used to get after cows started consuming this grass. We were even able to make common savings in our group until drought hit back in August 2021. Now we resorted to saving our cattle, and luckily the hydroponic fodder is much more effective in uplifting our cattle than the expensive fodder transported from the distant regions," explained Darmi.



Habiba, a Mother of Eight Received her First Ever Maternal Care Services

Habiba gave birth to seven of her children at home often assisted by a traditional birth attendant. “I live in a remote village, and I never entertained the idea of traveling a long distance to give birth in a health facility,” says Habiba despite the pain and bleeding she experienced while delivering at home.

Habiba’s latest birth experience, however, was different because of the One Health intervention in her village implemented by HEAL project, in Ethiopia. She says “I received counseling on varying my diet during pregnancy, keeping personal hygiene, taking iron [IFA] tablets regularly and so on. Because of their counseling, I was able to care for myself and the offspring like never before. I finally have the safest delivery with a trained midwife assisting me for the first time.”



MSIP- An Implementation Platform for Communities

VSF-Suisse utilizes community and local government platforms to implement its One Health interventions. The Multi-Stakeholder Innovative Platform (MSIP) is amongst those grassroots platforms that brings together community members and service providers at Kebele level in Ethiopia. The platform plays a key role in identifying pressing community issues and bring them to relevant government actors and partners for timely response and support. Members of the group include community elders, women, development agents, animal and human health extension workers, opinion leaders etc.

Multi-Stakeholder Innovation Platform (MSIP) Beyond Participation: Leading and Owning Hygiene and Sanitation Initiatives



Apparently, the community in Osobay Kebele, Filtu Woreda of Liben Zone, Somali region, Ethiopia, practiced poor hygiene and sanitation with rampant open defecation polluting the environment. The pond which is the sole source of drinking water for the Kebele had been also poorly handled for generations.

The situation has now changed. MSIP members take lead role and mobilize the community to keep their surrounding including the pond area tidy. Abdurrahman Mealim Hussen, MSIP leader, confidently says “the community in our village have now significantly improved their hygiene and sanitation practices because of the awareness raising works of the One Health Unit and MSIP’s mobilization efforts. Our community’s waste disposal practices have also improved significantly and some households even built their own toilets.”



Woreda Taskforce: A Critical Structure for the Sustainability of OH Services

A Woreda taskforce in Ethiopia is another set up composed of the relevant sectors of local government including health, agriculture, education, women and youth affairs, and led by the woreda administration aiming to address outstanding community problems as related to one health issues. A decision-making body in the local government, the taskforce engages in planning and providing direction to government experts in order for them to collaborate with implementing partners such as VSF-Suisse to address issues brought forth through MSIP deliberations and other mechanisms.



Crisis Modifier: An Emergency Response Mechanism

According to Mohammed Ahmed VHF-Suisse's Field Office Coordinator in Moyale Woreda of the Somali region, Ethiopia, the current drought in the area is "the worst in decades." Out of its seven intervention Kebeles, VSF-Suisse provided Total Mixed Ration (TMR) for 300 households in four Kebeles (Arda Ola, Dhukisu, Bede and Halo Huluko) designing a crisis modifier that urgently responds to the dire situation.

Similarly, 400 households in drought hit Moyale and Miyu woredas of Borena zone, Oromia region were supported with animal feed in October 2021.





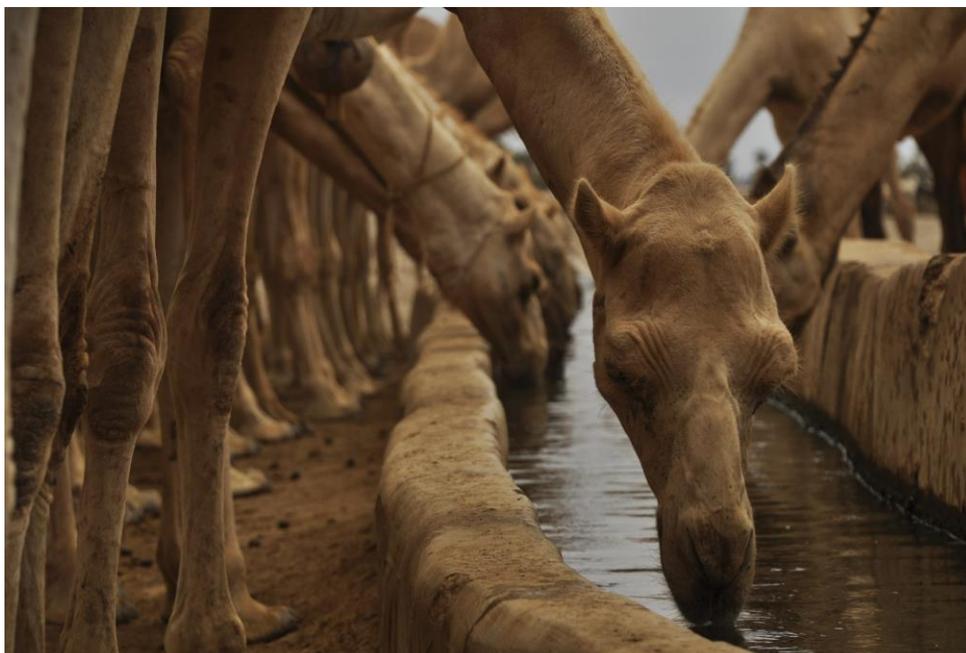
Immunization

“Before, children used not to go for immunization but now, we are able to complete their immunization doses because of the services coming closer to us and they are free.” Community members in El Beso, Kenya, mentioned this during focus group discussion that preventive services were given to children by Governmental officers during One Health Units’ integrated service provision.



Ante-natal Service in Marsabit

Many marginalized communities such as pastoralists continue to live in remote areas where access to formal health services is limited due to a complexity of factors, including migratory lifestyle and long distances to health facilities. One Health Units service provision contributed to the improvement of mother and child health services nearer to their villages. The picture shows a pregnant woman attending Ante-natal service (nutrition) in Marsabit County, Kenya.



Environment-Animals-People

Sick environment can lead to sick animals and sick people. Keeping water clean from contamination and poor sanitation helps preventing the transmission of diseases both to animals and humans. A picture from Kenya on this.



Health Education

Health education is a combination of learning experiences designed to facilitate voluntary actions conducive to health. One Health education sessions benefiting patients during one health service provision in Balesa community, Kenya.



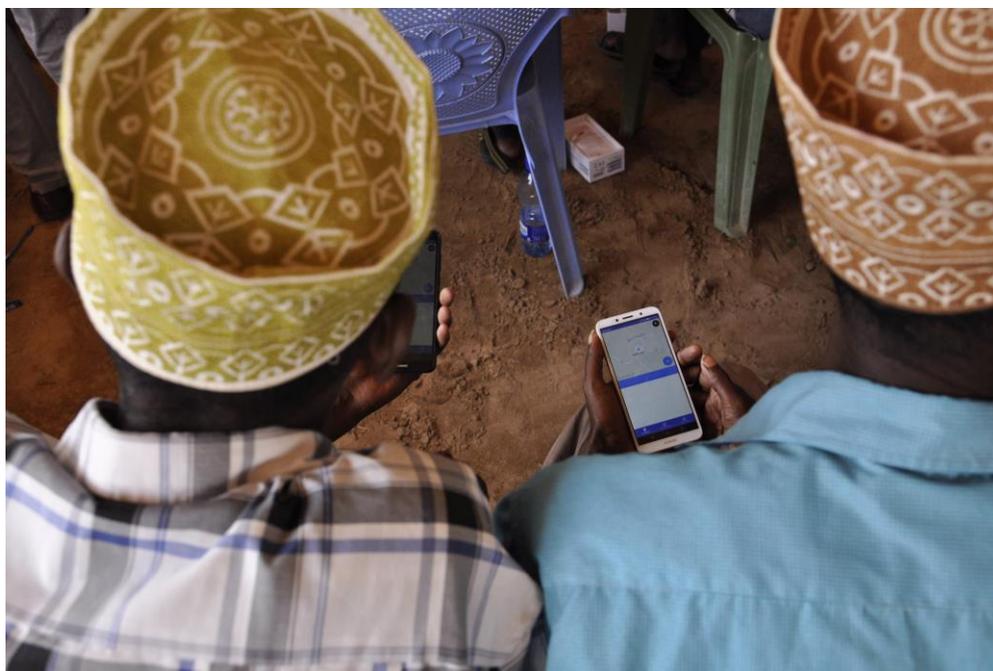
HEAL for Food Security

One Health framework in Kenya helps restoring food security, protect population against further disease burden from zoonotic infections, and support social and economic recovery. Groups of vulnerable mothers are trained on the health risks related to food storage and preparation and the value of kitchen gardening in the village of Kipsing, Isiolo County.



Traditional Knowledge

One Health approach under the framework of HEAL project combines traditional knowledge and innovation technologies to prevent the community exposure to natural disasters. Traditional healers interpret intestines, Marsabit County, Kenya.



HEAL: Enhancing Community Preparedness to Respond

Community health promoters are trained on mobile data collection to enhance community preparedness and response to events that might be of threat to their health and the health of their animals in Kenya.





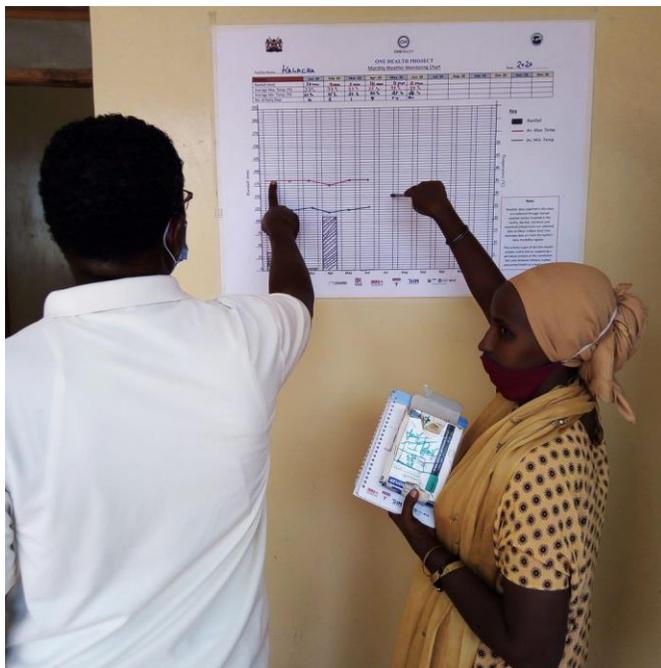
HEAL's Intervention to Enhance Livestock Production

In pastoral communities, livestock production represents the main source of livelihood. Improving animal health contributes to make livestock production higher and safer and people healthier.



HEAL's Community Based Approach

Heal projects adopts a community-based approach bringing together different sectors to foster the health and resilience of pastoral communities in northern Kenya in collaboration with the private sector and the academia. The pictures shows Heal team accompanied by a representative from the academia and the private sector to share information with community members.



HEAL Engages in Analyzing Rainfall and Temperature to Track Occurrence of Disease

Climate change can affect the intensity and frequency of precipitation with considerable consequences on human, animal and environmental health. Heal staff analyze rainfall and temperature chart with the facility nurse at the dispensary of Gas. The diseases recorded in patients were found strictly connected to the precipitation and temperatures registered in the previous months.



Community Members Practicing the Lessons they Gained on OH Education

Improper carcass disposal can have significant impacts on environmental, human and animal health, due to the contamination of soil, groundwater and water ways. Community members supported by Governmental officers from the veterinary department in disposing camel bodies affected by rabies.



HEAL: Improving Access to Animal Health Service

Pastoralists in the arid and semi-arid lands of the Horn of Africa lack access to livestock health inputs and services. HEAL's One Health units were piloted in Kenya providing a positive impact on animal health provision and service demand. The picture shows a veterinary officer providing treatment to a sick camel in Marsabit County, Kenya, during One Health Units service provision.



HEAL Engages Community Elders in Promoting OH Services

Community leaders and elders are valued for their guidance to the young generations in practical and spiritual aspects of life, society and culture, playing a key role in decision-making processes. A veterinary officer from North Horr Sub-County involves community elders from El Beso, Kenya, in community discussions.





HEAL: Equipping the Local Community to Collect Meteorological Data

Because weather and climate affect the health and well-being of humans, animals, and the ecosystem, meteorologists and climate scientists bring fundamental knowledge, skills, and experiences that can improve the health situation. To this end, community data collectors are trained in weather data recording by experts from academia.



HEAL: Enhancing OH Capacity in the Grassroots

To successfully detect, respond to, and prevent zoonotic outbreaks and emerging threats, data, tools, expertise and information should be shared across sectors. To this end, training was provided to Community Health Volunteers and Community Disease Reporters. The picture shows group activity of trainees during the training on One Health Approach in Marsabit County, Kenya.



School Clubs: HEAL's Ambassadors

One Health School clubs are community ambassadors relaying One Health concepts to other pupils, teachers and the community at large. School pupils are involved in tree planting activity in Dukana Primary School, Marsabit County, Kenya.





HEAL: Reaching Women through its Sensitization Sessions

Community awareness creation through sensitization and spread of messages related to animal and human health and their interrelation in the surrounding environment lies at the core of One Health approach. The picture shows community sensitization session during a women meeting in Isiolo County, Kenya.



HEAL: Employing Bottom-Up Approach through MSIPs

The Multi-Stakeholder Innovation Platforms (MSIPs) are a key feature in Heal project to ensure a bottom-up participatory approach at all stages of project implementation. MSIPs are also forum that provide space for learning and promote change. The picture shows MSIP meeting in Awarsitu community, Isiolo County, Kenya.



HEAL: Facilitating Practice Based COHU Meetings

The HEAL project has initiated the County One Health Unit (COHU) both in Isiolo and Marsabit Counties to cascade national policies at County level, strengthening prevention, surveillance, response and control of priority zoonotic diseases. The picture shows group activity during a quarterly COHU meeting in Marsabit town, Kenya.





Resource Efficiency: On Top of HEAL's Response Mechanism

Across a multi-ministry response to a threat, One Health approach can result in improved resource efficiency, with resultant cost-savings. One Health response on Rift Valley Fever launched by Isiolo County COHU, Kenya.



HEAL: Reaching the Unreached

Mobile pastoralists are one of the last populations to be reached by health services and are frequently missed by health education campaigns. Pastoralist-specific delivery strategies, such as combinations of mobile and 'temporary fixed' services informed by transhumance patterns, together with culturally acceptable messages are demonstrated to be effective in behavior change. Community health promoters provide education sessions to pastoral women through pictorials in the outposts of El Beso village, Marsabit County, Kenya.



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