



Save the Children®

DISPLACED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

Save the Children's Response to Climate and Weather-Related Events

Prepared for a Special Donor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every second, one person is displaced by the devastating effects of climate change, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR).

The earth's climate is fluctuating at an accelerated rate. It is exceeding the predictions of scientists, and resulting in more frequent and intense weather events, rising sea levels and other environmental changes such as droughts, heat waves, violent storms and floods. The effects of climate and weather-related events have already resulted in mass displacement: between 2008 and 2015, 203.2 million people were displaced from their

homes to search for safety and resources like food, water and basic protection. Many have been displaced within their own countries, while others have had to cross international borders to seek refuge.

Such displacement has been heavily concentrated in developing countries, which tend to have populations whose livelihoods rely on agriculture. Because of this, they are also the hardest-hit by changes in the environment, and intense weather events like rainfall, droughts and floods. Communities with fewer resources have a harder time dealing with the effects of extreme weather, and often, such events exacerbate existing issues related to socioeconomics, food insecurity and the scarcity of natural resources. Even more troubling is the fact that stretched resources are often the underlying cause of conflict. As frustration grows amid a group of people, violence, instability and hostility may result in further suffering among the community.

In these situations, children are extremely vulnerable, as their evolving development makes them less able than adults to cope with displacement. To respond to such challenging circumstances, Save the Children is implementing extensive programming to help displaced children. Such work is possible only through the generosity of our partners, as we cannot help children and families survive, recover and rebuild on our own.

We are greatly appreciative of your past support for Save the Children's response to the conflict in Syria, along with your compassionate concern for those displaced as a result of climate change and disasters. In this proposal, you will find information on climate change, climate refugees, and Save the Children's response to such devastating circumstances. Thank you for your time and your trust in our organization.



Photo: Stuart Slat/Save the Children

Neima,* age 2, lives in a displaced persons camp in the Somali region of Ethiopia. The drought caused 90 percent of her family's livestock to die – leaving them with just 17 undernourished animals. Save the Children provided Neima's mother with livestock feed to rebuild the family's livelihood.

Cover photo: Amal,* age 11, and her family live in a temporary settlement in Somaliland. They used to own many livestock, but lost most of them during the recent droughts in the region.

* indicates a child's name has been changed for their protection

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled over the past decade, a number that is expected to keep rising. There has been an increase in smaller disasters such as storms and floods, which can have dramatic and long-term effects on children and families. Examples can be seen in dry regions such as North Africa, East Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, where climate change is aggravating already dwindling amounts of water; further decreasing the quantity and quality of the resource; and forcing many to travel far distances to seek safe, clean water for themselves, their children and their livestock.



Photo: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

Dinh, 11, is forced to collect drinking water from a nearby Vietnam river after droughts decreased the supply of clean, safe water. The water in Dinh's bottle is from a shallow source, making it muddy and unsafe to drink.

Regardless of whether a crisis has a slow or sudden onset, developing countries often do not have the capacity to cope with environmental shocks. Internal and cross-border displacement caused by alterations in a natural environment can be complex and multifaceted. There may be a lack of political will for a country to help its own people, or there may be a lack of political will from the international community to help the country respond to and recover from extreme weather events.

As a result, children in these situations often adopt negative coping mechanisms that place them at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect. People of all ages may also be affected by disaster-related psychiatric trauma, including anxiety, depression, aggression and chronic psychological distress that often accompanies both short and long-term displacements.

Additionally, after a natural disaster strikes, children are more likely than adults to die because of malnutrition, injuries or disease, and they are at an increased risk of separation from their families. In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that at least 175 million children are affected by climate change-related disasters each year, placing them at risk for concerns relating to protection, health, nutrition and education, among other pressing issues. Three examples of such impacts are detailed below.

Climate Change and Education

Climate change poses a risk to children's education: if a natural disaster hits, children are often taken out of school to secure paid work and help their families. Children – especially girls – who drop out of school during times of crisis are extremely unlikely to return. If students stay in school, hunger and dehydration can make it nearly impossible for them to

concentrate. And particularly in the event of a drought, teachers and education staff may be forced to leave the area to secure resources for their own families, leading to the inevitable closure of schools and triggering further displacement as families attempt to find educational opportunities for their children.

Climate Change and Health

Children are more susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change: the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 85 percent of the global disease burden due to climate change occurs in children under age 5. Children are more likely

to contract diarrhea, malaria and other illnesses brought about by conditions related to poor air quality, contaminated water and extreme heat. Additionally, drought and flooding can dismantle sanitation systems, resulting in contaminated drinking water and outbreaks of diseases like cholera. As resources dwindle, health infrastructure inevitably cracks, breaks and falls apart – forcing families to trek for miles to find a hospital, health care center or clinic to treat themselves or their children.

Climate Change and Nutrition

A number of studies have illustrated the effect of climate change on children's undernourishment. In developing countries, livelihoods often depend on rain-based agriculture; when a drought or flood occurs, crops may fail and families may not be able to feed their children and buy basic resources. Extreme weather conditions damage land, and heat strain or heat stroke may limit agricultural work and construction. Such events lead to higher rates of malnutrition and stunting among children, as flooding, drought and disaster can impose long-term harm on a region's food supply. Not having enough food has dire consequences: aside from increasing the likelihood of premature death, it also places children at a greater risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and infection.

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSE

Save the Children is the world's leading child-focused humanitarian organization. We have nearly 100 years' experience responding to children and their families during and after crises, and we have been a major aid provider in all major displacement crises since our agency's inception. Each year, more children are placed in dire need of humanitarian aid – and to address the increasing rate of natural disasters and severe weather events, Save the Children works to address the causes of displacement while also alleviating the suffering of those affected.



Photo: Kyle DeGraw/Save the Children

The severe drought in East Africa has forced many families, including this young girl from Ethiopia, to leave home to search for food and water. Save the Children provided safe, clean drinking water to her community, among other services.

Save the Children earned our 14th consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator last year, the highest standing the rating organization awards. We are exceptional among aid agencies because we provide comprehensive emergency preparedness, relief and recovery programs that are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of children and their families undergoing climate-related events – a facet of emergency response that is often overlooked by other humanitarian organizations. We understand that children are not just “little adults,” and our response programming reflects the need to look closely at what girls and boys require to recover and rebuild.



A Save the Children child protection officer visits Rebecca,* a refugee from South Sudan, at her grandmother's home. Rebecca was separated from her family when violence hit her village two years ago. The ongoing conflict in South Sudan has been aggravated by climate change over the recent years, creating further hostility as families struggle to secure basic essentials. Save the Children reunified Rebecca with her family and helped her to recover from her traumatic experiences.

Our thought leaders at headquarters work hand-in-hand with our teams on the ground to mitigate the effects of climate change. We are actively responding to a number of weather-related crises at the moment, many of which have displaced affected populations from their homes. Recent examples include Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, severe flooding in Vietnam, heavy rains and rising sea levels in Thailand, and flooding in Louisiana and West Virginia in the United States. Additionally, we are responding to a number of drought crises in East Africa, Southern Africa and Asia. While climate conditions may have been the catalyst for the droughts in such areas, political decisions made by affected governments and ongoing conflict have worsened the consequences of drought and water scarcity.

Below, you will find examples of related programming in Ethiopia and Somalia, where drought is forcing countless families to leave their homes. In both countries, we are helping those displaced survive and re-establish their lives as they cope with the impact of water scarcity, food insecurity and displacement caused by climate change.

The Crisis in Ethiopia

In late 2015, East Africa was plunged into its worst drought in 50 years. Triggered by the strongest El Nino weather event on record, droughts parched the northern regions of affected countries while flooding damaged crops in the south. With over 80 percent of the population in Ethiopia dependent on rain-fed agriculture for food and income, the drought left 10.2 million Ethiopians food insecure. Farmers, herders and their families have become fully reliant on food assistance, while countless pastoralist families have been forced to move into informal settlements with acute water and food shortages. To find water, many families

are forced to walk more than 12 hours, often pulling their children out of school to help – or migrating to a new area entirely. Displaced children rarely return to school, as they are often unable to re-enroll in the new areas they have moved to due to lack of services or classroom overcrowding. As a result, 4 million children were unable to access learning opportunities as of mid-2016.

Ethiopia also hosts the largest refugee population in Africa: currently, there are more than 733,000 registered in the country, 57 percent of whom are children.

The drought has had adverse consequences for the refugee population, and competition for resources, including food, water and health services, is exacerbating an already complex humanitarian situation. This crisis has threatened to undermine decades of progress in Ethiopia, as hard-won gains in food security, health and education could have been entirely lost without an immediate intervention.



Photo: Stuart Sta/Save the Children

Fatuma* feeds her 18-month-old son, Adnan,* in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Before the drought, Fatuma had seven cows and 25 goats. All but six animals have died.

Save the Children's Response

In response to this crisis, Save the Children has been working in 60 of the worst-affected districts in Ethiopia, helping to mitigate the effects of the drought and to alleviate the resulting food crisis. We implemented a seed distribution operation to ensure the best possible harvest for farmers, helping to reduce the urgent dependency many families had on food aid, and prevent dangerous migration to new areas. We provided animal feed and treated sick livestock, making sure breeding animals survived and produced milk. We also provided cash-for-work programs, food vouchers and unconditional cash distributions for families to rebuild their livelihoods once they have left their homes. We distributed water treatment chemicals and filters at the household level and have supported the rehabilitation and construction of water points in camps for displaced people. Additionally, we provided water to communities, schools and health centers, and distributed hygiene information and materials to displaced people living in informal settlement camps.

Over the summer, 75 percent of all schools did not have water for safe drinking and sanitation. Hungry, dehydrated students struggled to concentrate and there were many reports of students fainting while in class. And students and teachers alike were embarking on dangerous journeys to find water and food in new areas. In response, Save the Children led a multi-sector response targeting over 200 schools in Ethiopia with food and water supplements, among other services. As a result of our education programming, attendance rates increased in all target schools and almost doubled in some schools.

In addition to our immediate life-saving work, we are invested in building the resilience of communities in drought-prone areas through programs that mitigate the effects of drought, enabling families to cope better and recover faster. We're directly supporting the *Productive Safety Net* program, which reaches over 12 million chronically food insecure people through asset protection mechanisms that build their ability to cope with future shocks.

The Crisis in Somalia

Decades of civil war had already made Somalia one of the hardest places to be a child – and the drought and subsequent food crisis exacerbated this situation even further. Communities have experienced a massive loss in livestock as they have struggled to feed their families, sparking a cycle of loss, poverty and malnutrition when they cannot feed their animals. Livestock is a major resource for pastoralist communities of Somalia; they do not only hold the key to productive pastoralist livelihoods, but they provide families with milk, meat and agricultural help. The drought has forced families to sell off their few remaining livestock to purchase essential items.



Dahir,* 6 months old, is treated at Save the Children's stabilization center for severely malnourished children in Somaliland.

In order to secure food, water and health services in areas less affected by the drought, tens of thousands of families have left their homes. In Somaliland, the situation is particularly dire, and recently there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to find basic resources. The influx of people has caused overpopulation in areas where water is still available, depleting the only remaining sources of water at an alarming rate. In addition, the flow of migrants – now estimated at 1.1 million internally displaced people in Somalia alone – has intensified hostile conflict situations in a number of host communities. An estimated 60 percent of those displaced due to ongoing fighting have already been displaced due to drought once before.

Flash floods in different areas of Somalia have also increased the risk of waterborne disease, and incidences of diarrhea, cholera and other illnesses continue to be reported. The risk of communicable disease outbreaks is steadily increasing. More than 20,000 students are estimated to be out of school due to drought, displacement and conflict alike. And as intense food security continues to affect more and more people, countless girls and boys are placed at risk of stunting, malnutrition and starvation.

Save the Children's Response

Save the Children's drought response began in January 2016 in Somaliland and March 2016 in Puntland. We have helped thousands of children and adults access health and nutrition services, trucked water into numerous affected communities, and rehabilitated boreholes, water points and other water systems, among a number of other activities. In response to the growing concerns of internally displaced persons facing secondary displacement as a result of conflict, Save the Children is implementing another integrated health, nutrition, education and child protection project in five camps for displaced people.

We are providing thousands of extremely vulnerable families with cash grants, allowing them to decide their own purchases according to their needs. We deliver food assistance and voucher services, helping families in camps secure food for their children their livestock. Additionally, we provide essential household supplies and shelter kits, and help families to secure appropriate covering and structural materials to meet their basic needs with dignity.

We also have mobile health teams active on the ground, which have been instrumental in aiding displaced children and families in remote, hard-to-reach locations. We are continuously providing medical supplies and are actively treating those suffering from pneumonia, diarrhea and malnutrition, among other health issues. Over the summer, Save the Children responded to two outbreaks of cholera by undertaking rapid situation assessments and providing health services at a local hospital. We also set up a cholera treatment center to provide case management to those affected. We rehabilitated toilets, held trainings on cholera prevention and conducted hygiene promotion campaigns in camps for internally displaced persons and host communities. We also screened thousands of children for malnutrition and treated girls and boys through nutritional rehabilitation centers.

Additionally, Save the Children is conducting hygiene promotion sessions and leading sanitation campaigns, which are helping to spread information about health and nutrition practices and halt the spread of preventable diseases in camps. By training community members about health and hygiene, we are making such work sustainable and long-lasting. In order to halt the spread of waterborne disease, we have also constructed latrines in camps for internally displaced people. We rehabilitated and upgraded villages' water systems, and also provided emergency water trucking.



Shaban,* age 13, studies his school books, provided by Save the Children, outside his home with his family in an internally displaced person camp in Somaliland.

Photos: Cain Crowley/Save the Children

Conclusion

The world is nearly five times as dangerous and disaster-prone as it was in the 1970s. In light of this stark reality, Save the Children must not only maintain, but strengthen our capacity to deal with climate-related crises around the globe – something we cannot do alone. If you are interested in helping to support our work for climate refugees, your gift can be directed toward Save the Children programming in Ethiopia or Somalia, or, to our humanitarian team, who will use your generous contribution to help climate refugees across the globe as severe weather events occur.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. When dealing with a crisis as large and overarching as climate change, likeminded partners like you are absolutely critical to our ability to make progress for affected children.

For more information, please contact:

Ann Marie Miles
Senior Director, Individual Philanthropy
475-999-3125 • amiles@savechildren.org

