Managing the challenges of Prosopis: A Regional Call for Action

The expansion of Prosopis Juliflora has been a serious problem in the countries of the Horn of Africa. The species crosses borders and affects the entire ecosystem and environment of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in countries like Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. Prosopis was introduced to the Sudan to stop the expansion of desert sand but no preliminary long-term impact study was made. Prosopis seed pods were used to feed animals which meant the seeds were distributed through dung. It has replaced palatable and nutritious indigenous vegetation. The bushes grow in very dry areas, removing what water there is. It can completely over power local vegetation - and even roads and railways. In Sudan physical eradication methods have not worked and in Somalia the spread of Prosopis is a nationwide issue.

With the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Ethiopian Government at both Federal and regional level, University College, London and the Ethiopian Agro-Pastoralist Development Association, PENHA held a regional workshop in Addis Ababa in November 2014. The Keynote Speech was given by H.E.Gebregziyabher Gebreyohanes, State Minister for the Livestock Resource Development (Continued on page 2)
Social Protection in Ethiopia

PENHA has been committed to the cause of pastoralism in Ethiopia since its inception and, despite occasional problems, it has continued to work there directly and with partners.

Its latest project is a research project in partnership with Adigrat University in Ethiopia and with University College, London with support from Sursa University and is being funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). The research is supported by the Afar Regional government.

The two years project aims to address two critical questions:
- What type of social protection practices are available in the Afar Region and how are they applied to different population groups?
- What has been the impact of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) on poverty reduction (income) and risk minimisation?

The findings will be shared in the Afar Region both at the local level with policy makers as well as with local research institutions and colleges. An international conference, to take place in Ethiopia, will also be organised on the theme: Social protection for inclusive development in pastoralist areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. Progress will be reported regularly through the PENHA website.

Women’s Groups in Sudan

The Pastoralist Environment Association in Kassala State (PEAKS) was founded in 2008 by the pastoralists themselves and since then it has carried out various projects working closely with PENHA and several other similar bodies. It has been responsible with PENHA for implementing the Prosopis project in Eastern Sudan.

That project, with support from IFAD, mobilised pastoralist communities in the use of Prosopis for animal feed. The case study below shows how PEAKS successfully engaged the communities in general and the women in particular in integrating the animal feed project of IFAD with other economic activities.

The training and the choppers provided improved the production of animal feed based on Prosopis. This contributed to an increase in milk and beef production. The women producer groups have become involved in local economic activity. In mid 2014, PEAKS encouraged the women producer groups to use the locally available water for cultivating green animal feed and producing vegetable products such as green fodder or vegetables like Ockra and rocket. This has contributed toward an increase in food supplies to the village and to the boosting of the confidence of local women. Engaging with women and increasing the inclusiveness of the project was achieved through PEAKS relationship with the men and their family members. PEAKS persuaded men of the importance of women's active engagement in the local development process.

Managing Prosopis

Continued from front page

Sector, Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia. The meeting ended with a declaration on the Management and Utilisation of Prosopis, which called for regional action. All conference papers are available on the PENHA website.

Based on its previous research in Eastern Sudan, (supported by the Dutch Oxfam NOVIB), PENHA has developed an approach using Prosopis as a potential and under-utilised resource and not just as an environmental menace. The pods are crushed and with other additions are a very nutritious animal feed. The wood of the bushes can be used for producing charcoal (and thus sparing acacia trees) or for Furniture.

With support from IFAD, PENHA is working on the use of Prosopis in Eastern Sudan, near to Kassala, and in Somaliland, near to Hargeisa. It brought an expert from Khartoum to Somaliland to share experience from Sudan, and in both cases, the local groups with which PENHA is working, enthusiastically took part in the training and are using Prosopis both as an animal feed and in other ways. The entrepreneurial instincts of the pastoralists in both countries are making use of Prosopis as a raw material for animal feeds and the wood for making a wide range of Goods.

Thanks are due to the staff of IFAD for their dedicated support to PENHA in Eastern Sudan and Somaliland.
Supporting Co-operatives in Somaliland

Across the continent of Africa farmers’ groups are an important route to making agriculture more effective and productive. This is particularly important in the Horn of Africa where there is very limited land which is cultivatable. These farmers’ groups tend to be male dominated - though women play an important role in agriculture. In agro-pastoral households, women often have the main responsibility for crops as well as for sheep and goats. Many of them have formed their own all women groups.

PENHA has provided training and equipment for both these groups in different parts of Somaliland. They have been trained in the basics of group management, including record keeping, voting rights and dispute resolution. Equipment and training has been provided for specific activities, including beekeeping, water harvesting and environmental management.

The involvement of women in these groups mean that they gain a greater participation in local development and in the decision making for their communities. They also get an independent income which they use for the benefit of their family and the education of their children.

PENHA Uganda: Advancing Pastoralism locally and globally

PENHA Uganda is active in both grass roots development activities and lobbying and taking part in discussions on the future of pastoralism and the development of indigenous livestock in Uganda.

With support from Trade Aid, Rotary Club of Grantham Kesteven, UK, two boxes of teaching material were distributed to Kaku Primary School in Kiruhura district and four boxes of tailoring machines and materials to Kanyaruru Women Tailors’ Association in Kiruhura and Ntutsi Twekembe Women’s Group in Sembabule.

Miss Harbinson’s Trust donated 300 British Pounds for the PENHA Uganda Ntutsi Twekembe Women’s group which was used to purchase an over lock sewing machine. With support from Open Gate and Eva Reckitt Trust, 20 cross bred goats were distributed to 5 women’s groups from Kiruhura, Lwengo and Ssembabule districts.

PENHA Uganda is an active member of COPACSO, a coalition organisation and acts as its Treasurer. A representative of PENHA Uganda (Elizabeth Katushabe) was invited to six international meetings in Belgium, the Netherlands, India, Germany and the HQ of the Food and Agricultural Organisation in Rome, Italy. These meetings covered a wide range of topics, including the economics of indigenous livestock breeds. She also took part, along with a PENHA representative from Somaliland, in two meetings of the African Union in Kampala on how to make operational the AU’s policy framework on pastoralism. She also wrote articles and gave radio interviews on the importance of biodiversity in livestock development.
Celebrating PENHA's 25th Anniversary

PENHA celebrated the date of its foundation in Addis Ababa on Saturday 29th. November 2014, when it reflected on the challenges it has faced, and discussed its future direction in the region and globally.

This will be followed this year (2015) with two events in London. There will be an international conference at the beginning of October with a series of presentations of issues reflecting on the last 25 years of PENHA's work and how this has affected pastoralists on the ground, the policy of governments of the Horn of Africa, and the way in which PENHA itself has developed. This will take place on Friday 2nd. October at the Overseas Development Institute.

This will be followed a week later by a celebration of PENHA in music, story telling, images and traditional food.

For more information about these events look at PENHA's website. To register your interest, contact tesfaldet@penhanetwork.org or Call 07932767610.