Re-stocking vulnerable pastoral households with camels and goats helps increase their resilience

Introduction and objective

- Integrated camel management (ICM) program implemented since 2010 by VSF-Suisse in the Drylands of Kenya (Isiolo, Wajir and Marsabit)
- Aim: improving food and nutrition security, health, income, and resilience of pastoral households through **restocking vulnerable pastoral households (HH) with camels** (and sometimes goats) and **training in camel husbandry and milk hygiene**
- Evaluation conducted in 2021 to assess the impact of the project on pastoral HH

Methods

- Documentation review, household (HH) surveys, and key informant interviews (KII)
- 89 HH surveyed in 18 villages in Isiolo County
- Mobile application Kobo Collect used for data collection
- Due to the limited sample size, only descriptive statistics applied

Selected results

- ICM programme helped to increase and stabilise the income, health, food and nutritional security of poor pastoral households (Fig. 1)
- Primarily due to **increase of camel milk production** and trade in dry season and during droughts (Fig. 4)
- Households restocked with **both camels and goats** were more successful than households restocked only with camels, due to the complementary services provided by the two species (Fig. 3, Fig. 5)
- Participant women were more involved in decision-making about camel management, milk use and income than the control women (Fig. 2)
- Increased workload associated with camel rearing affect men more than women and children
- Participants were more resilient to droughts and climate change than the control group, particularly if they had been restocked with camels and goats for a long time (Fig. 5)
- Three main challenges encountered in camel keeping:

1. Less disease resistant than other livestock species and expensive drugs
2. Costly to maintain in the dry season (herding labour to move the camels to distant locations)
3. Slow reproducer and unable to mate without help

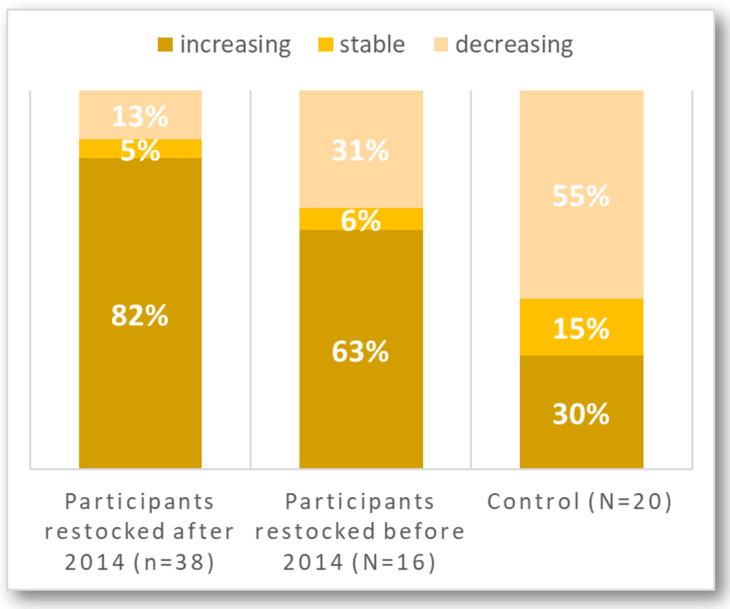

Fig.1: Evolution of camel milk income over the last years

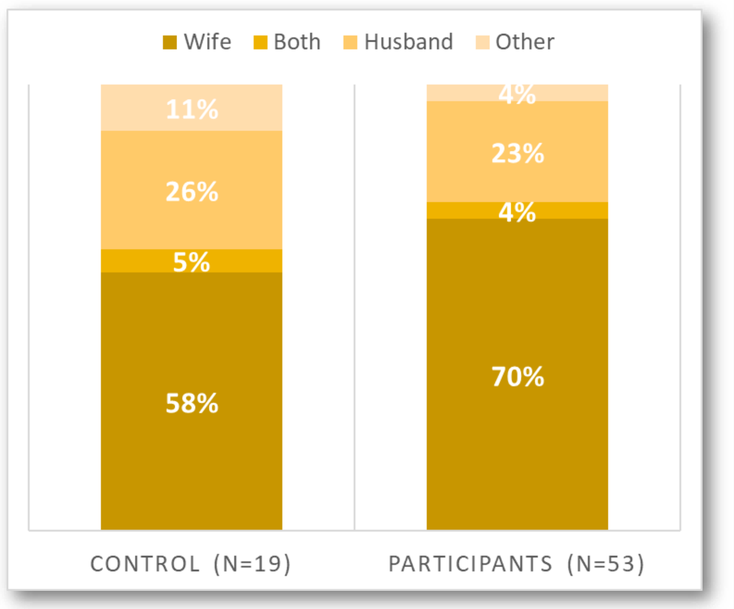

Fig.2: Control over milk income by gender

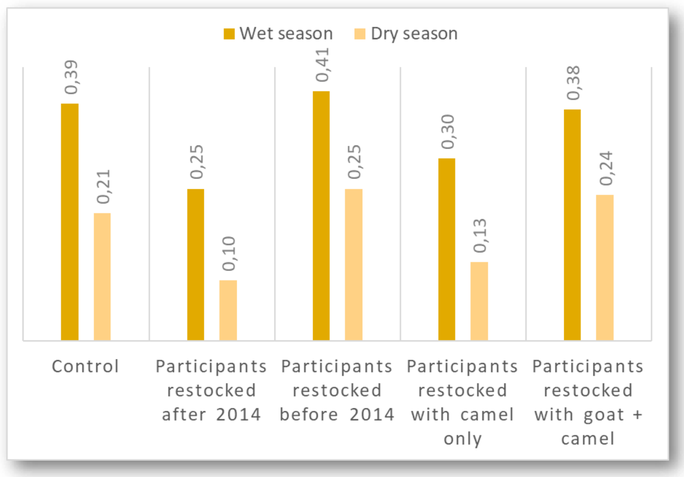

Fig.3: Average daily camel milk consumption by HH member (L)

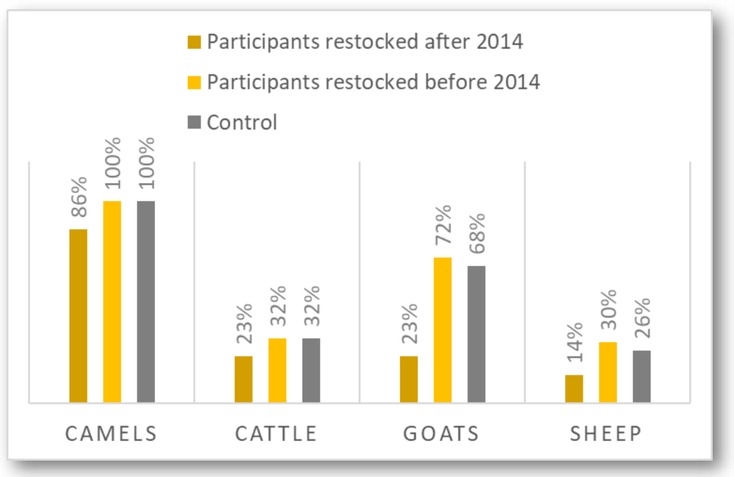

Fig.4: Livestock species that continue to produce milk during drought according to respondents (n=78)

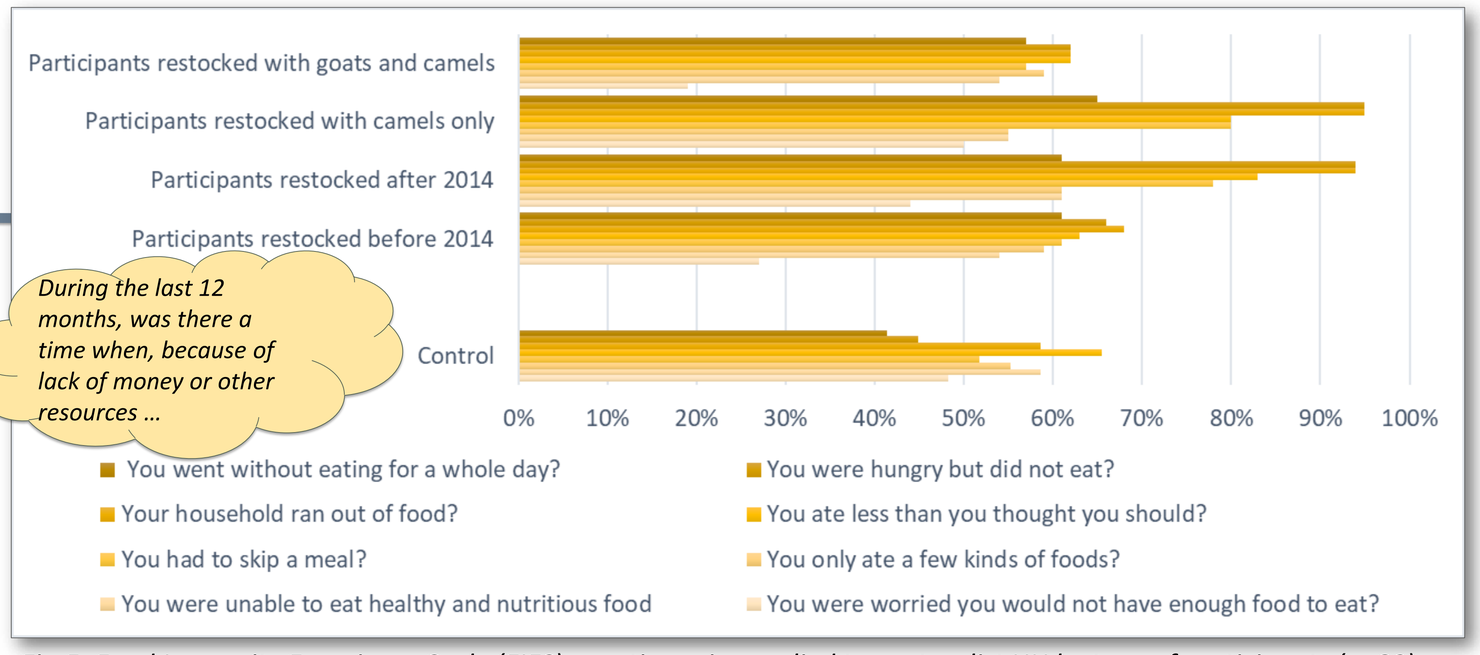

Fig.5: Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) questionnaire applied to pastoralist HH by type of participants (n=89)

Conclusions

Diversification into camel and goat keeping by restocking and training vulnerable households has proven to be an effective income diversification and climate change adaptation strategy.

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