

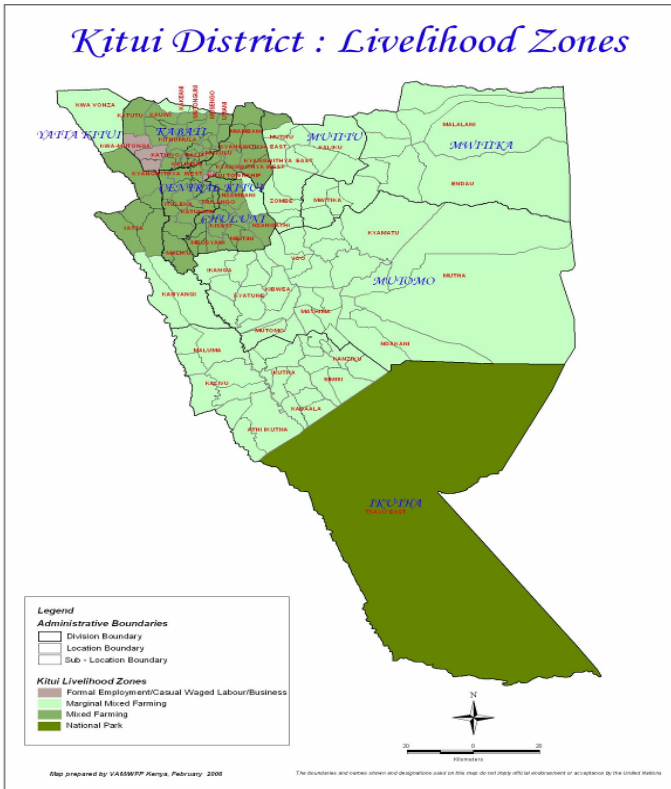


OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, AUGUST 2009

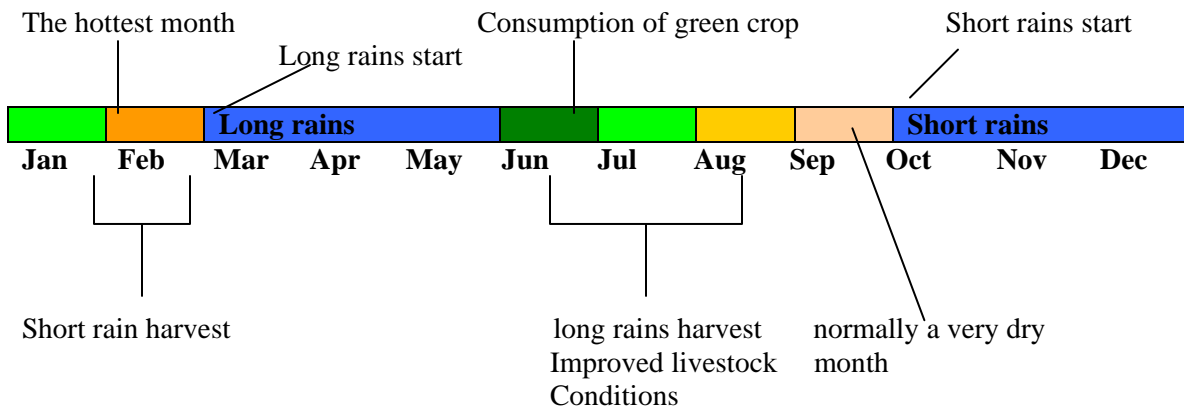
Kitui District

Warning stages



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Mixed farming	Alarm	Worsening
Marginal mixed farming	Alarm	Worsening
District	Alarm	Worsening

Seasonal Calendar



Situation overview

- No rains were recorded in the district during the month and the first half of August was hot while the second was chilly.
- The condition of pasture and natural vegetation worsened, with the situation being severe in Mutonguni and Yatta Divisions where farmers were purchasing fodder from the market to feed their remaining emaciated cattle and donkeys.
- The water situation in the district worsened. Communities relied on boreholes and traditional river wells to access water as earth pans dried up. The average return distances also increased, with communities in Kalinditi Village of Mutonguni division area walking up to 15 kilometers one way to watering points up from an average of 5 kilometers before the collapse of the Masinga- Kitui water supply scheme. The district average distance to access water was 6 Kms.
- The body condition of cattle worsened and drought-related deaths were reported in Yatta, Mutonguni and Mutitu divisions. The body condition of goats ranged from fair to good across the district. The price of cattle plummeted while that of goats remained within the previous months' ranges.
- The price of the main food crops went down, with beans retailing at Ksh60 while maize retailed at Ksh30 per kilo.
- The nutrition status of children below five years declined slightly, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 15 from 13 in July.
- The food security situation in the district is worsening.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Facilitate mass vaccination of livestock, increase the off-take window and stop using brokers to procure animals from farmers and distribution of relief hay.
- Train staff in health centres on identification of malnourished children and enhance supplementary feeding for the under fives and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Drilling of boreholes, water trucking to secondary and primary schools, repair and servicing of contingency boreholes and provision of supplementary fuel to boreholes.
- Increased coverage of the school feeding programme, fees waivers for the extremely needy secondary school children and consider providing relief food to the day mixed secondary schools.

Current interventions

Food aid

- Food for assets by UN-WFP and supplementary feeding programme.
- Food support to those infected with HIV by Liverpool VCT, Relief food distribution by the provincial administration, home grown school feeding programme and Food for Assets by German Agro Action in Ikutha.

Non-food interventions

- Water trucking in Mutomo and Kitui, excavation of earth dams, construction of sand dams and equipping of boreholes by Tanathi.
- Destocking and intensified disease surveillance.
- Capacity building on sorghum production and promotion of soil conservation.
- Supplementary feeding programme supervision and nutrition surveillance.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

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- The first half of the month of August was hot while the second remained cold.
- No rains were recorded in the district.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- The condition of natural vegetation and pastures worsened. In the mixed farming livelihood zone, pastures have completely been depleted in Mutonguni and Yatta divisions. In sections of Central and Chuluni divisions browse is available but it's inadequate.
- In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, along Thua River browse is available though the quantities are not enough. Elsewhere the pasture and browse situation ranges from fair to poor.
- Farmers in the mixed farming livelihood zone relied on fodder from the market to feed their cattle. The fodder was imported from Embu and Thika districts and in the gulleys at the hills of Kiongwe and Museve which are inaccessible by cattle.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- The water situation worsened and levels in Masinga Dam continued to decline, dashing hopes of reviving the main Masinga- Kitui Water Supply Scheme. In Mutomo the urban water supply failed and the town was relying on water trucking from Ikanga borehole- 20Kms away.
- The main sources of water were boreholes and traditional river wells. The distances to water sources varied from one area to the other with communities in Mutonguni and Mutha divisions walking as long as 10 kms one way in search of water.
- The price of water rose from Ksh 2 to Ksh5 per 20 litre jerrican.

The table shows the percentage source of water use by communities

Source	Traditional river wells	Pans/Dams	Shallow wells	Rock catchments	Boreholes	Natural rivers
July2009	57%	0%	8%	0%	27%	5%
August 2009	57%	0%	35%	0%	3%	5%

1.4 Implications on food security

- The depletion of pastures led to decline in body condition of livestock and hence productivity. Farmers continued losing their stocks to drought and the situation increased susceptibility to notifiable diseases due to diminished immunity.
- There was a decline in kidding and calving since animals lost weight and energy.
- Decline in milk productivity due to fatigue after walking long distances in search of pastures and water.
- The increase in the price of water was a challenge to farmers whose livelihood assets were severely eroded due to the protracted drought.

- Due to death of donkeys, household members in Mutonguni and Yatta resorted to fetching water on their backs and the distances. The distances to the water sources were long, leading to children skipping school to search of water.
- Risk of contamination and outbreak of water-borne diseases was high as livestock and people share the same water sources without sanitation and hygiene practices
- Due to decline in water levels salinity levels have increased.
- Concentration and movement to and from the water source has led to environmental degradation and dams disk silting up with the onset of rains.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock body conditions

- The body condition of cattle worsened. This trend is attributed to depletion of pastures and increased distances to access water.
- This situation is expected to persist since the available pasture is fast depleting due to competition.
- The most severely affected is the mixed farming livelihood where farmers are purchasing fodder from the markets to feed livestock.
- The body condition of shoats ranged from fair to good. This situation was attributed to the availability of browse in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone. Deaths of cattle were reported in Mutonguni, Mwitika, and Mutitu divisions
- The trend was not normal.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- During the reporting period no major disease out breaks were reported. Suspected cases of NCD (new castle disease) were reported in the Mutitu and Chuluni divisions.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Ordinarily farmers are supposed to be harvesting maize and pigeon peas crops but following the failure of the long rains the farms are bare. Isolated households in Central, Chuluni and Matinyani Divisions are harvesting cassava and sweet potatoes.
- Vegetables grown along the rivers were at various stages of growth but experienced water stress and most farmers have abandoned their plots.
- Mangoes were at flowering stage.

2.2.2 Crop pests and diseases

- No major disease outbreak was reported in the district.

2.3 Implications on food security

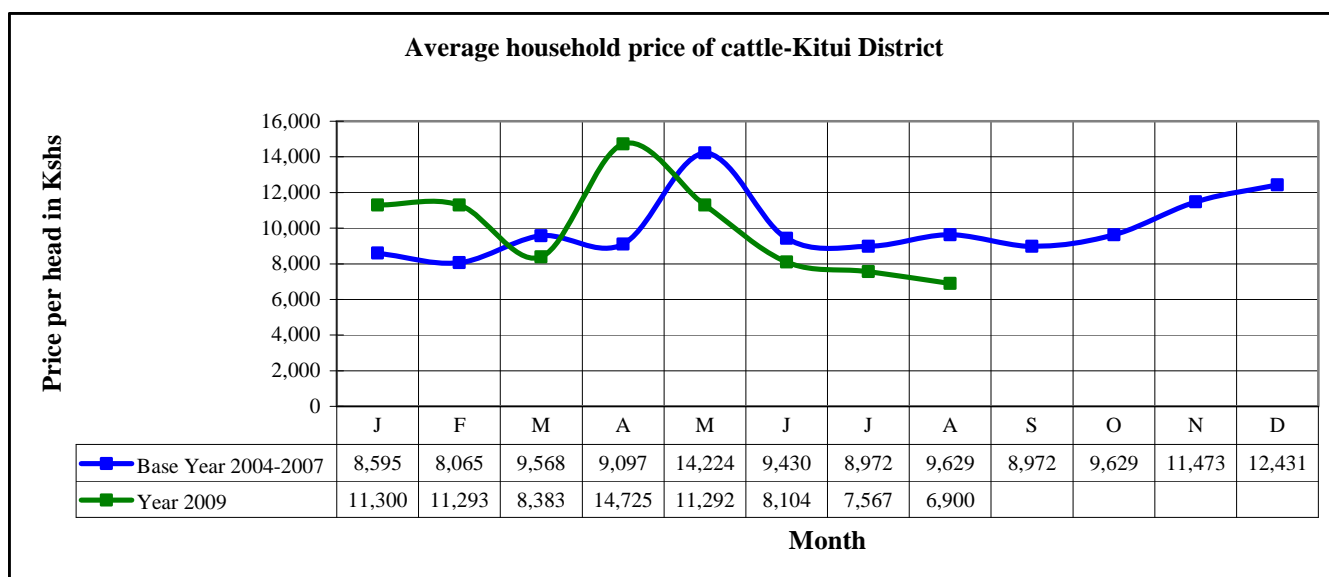
- The acreage to put under crop the next season will seriously be checked by lack draught farm power.
- Absence of crops in the field was an indication that farmers had no stocks at home and were solely relying on market supplies for food.
- The death of cattle eroded livelihood assets that farmers accumulated over a long time. They moved from being acute food insecure to chronically food insecure.

- Lack of food stocks at the household level was a clear indication that farmers will not have planting material the next rainy season.

3.0 Access to food

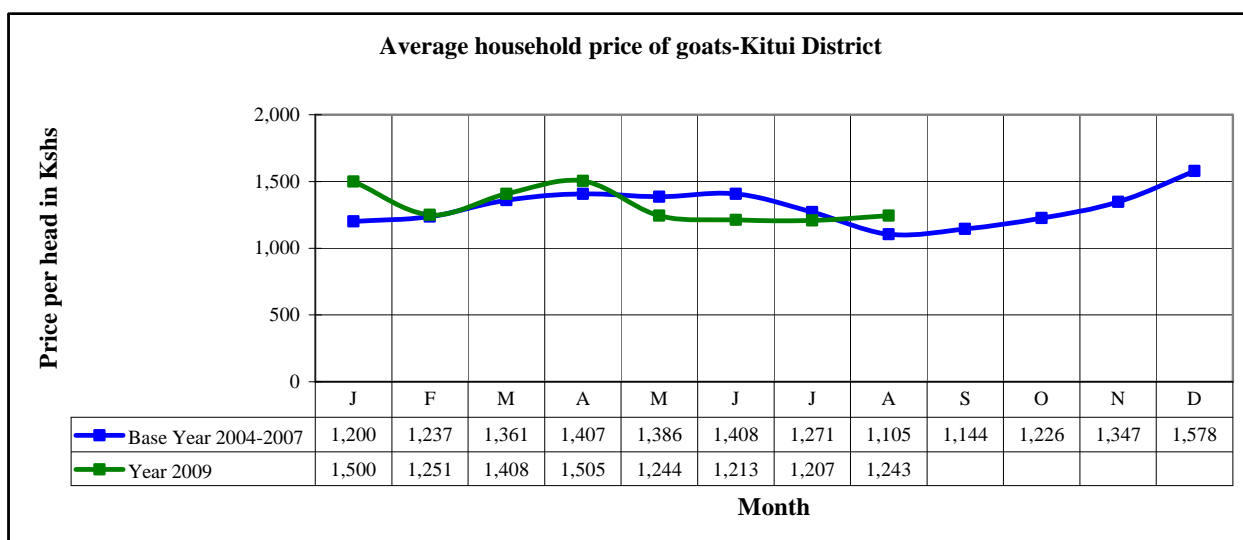
3.1 Livestock prices

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- The price of cattle continued to decline.
- This diminution in value was attributed to deterioration in the body condition of livestock due to depletion of pastures and lack of water.
- The supply of animals for sale in the market outstripped demand. Only brokers and butchers were buying cattle. Ordinary farmers who normally purchase for restocking were no longer doing so since they had no way of feeding them.
- Some cattle were so emaciated as such farmers were abandoning them on the way if they failed to get any offer for in the markets.
- The highest prices were reported in Ikutha Division at Ksh10,000 whereas the lowest were reflected in Central Division at Ksh4,583.
- The situation was not normal.

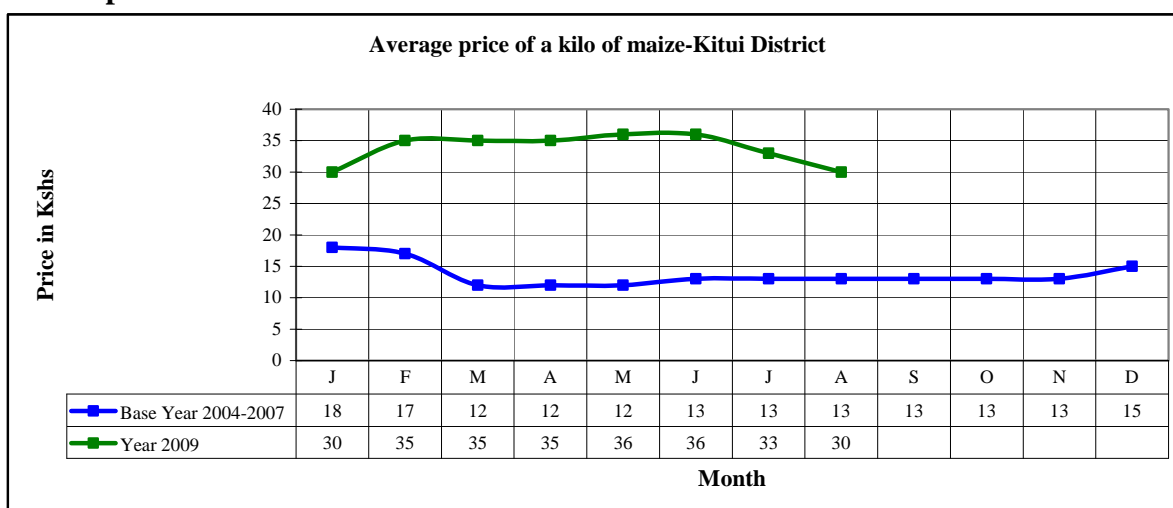
3.1.2 Goat prices



- The price of goats remained within the previous months' ranges. This stability was attributed to the prevailing good to fair body condition of goats, particularly in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.
- The highest prices were reported in Ikutha at Ksh 2,000 and the lowest in Mutitu Division at Ksh871. The trend was not normal.

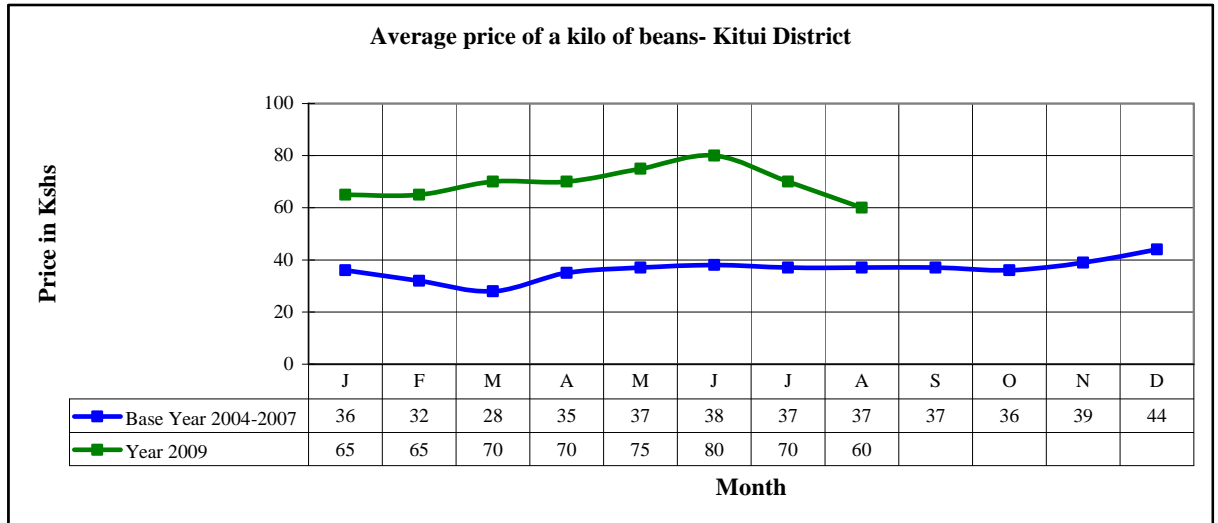
3.2 Food prices

3.2.1 Maize prices



- The price of maize dropped and the decline was attributed to increased supplies of maize from South Africa and the coastal region. The average price was Ksh30 per kilo, down from Ksh33 in July. The prices varied from one area to the other, with the highest being reported in Mutonguni at Ksh32 per kilo and the lowest in Ikutha Division at Ksh28.
- The absolute decline in price was a welcome gesture but communities were unable to take advantage of it since their purchasing power has severely been eroded.
- The trend was not normal.

3.2.2 Beans prices

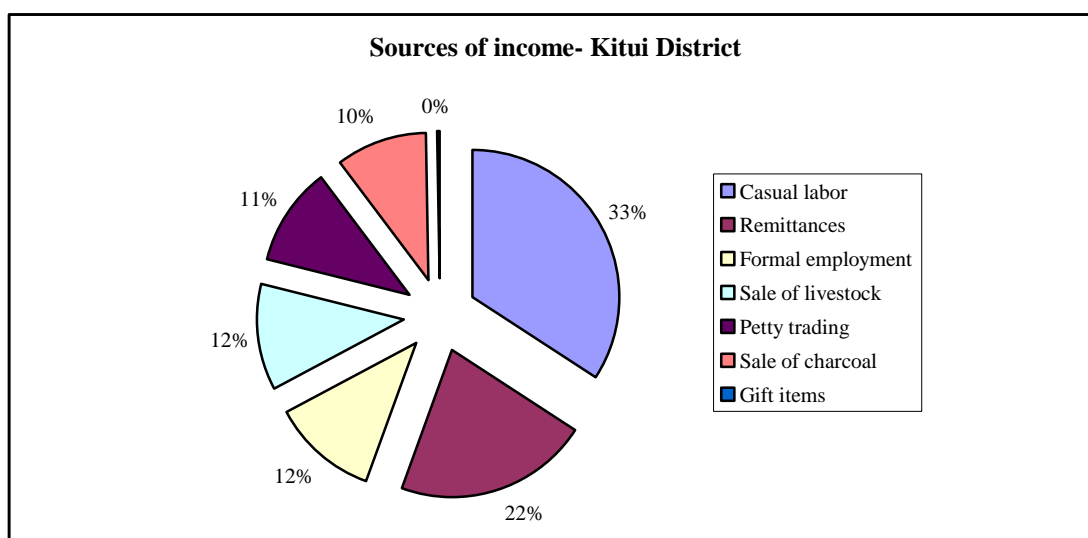


- The price of beans plummeted and the drop was attributed to the increased supply of a new variety (mixed variety of beans) of beans in the market. The average price was Ksh 60 per kilo, down from Ksh 70 in July.
- For pure varieties like *Mwitmania* and *Rosecoco* the prices were high. They ranged between Ksh65 and Ksh80 per kilo. The trend was not normal.

3.3 Implications on food security

- The continued decline in the price of the main food crop improved the terms of trade for our farmers. They were able to get more food with same amount of money as compared to the previous month.
- On the other hand, the decline in the price of cattle was an indication that farmers are going to incur losses as the drought ravages
- Unless the Government steps in to save the farmers a source livelihood stands to be lost to death of cattle.

3.4 Income sources



- The main sources of income in the district were casual labour, remittances and sale of livestock.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status

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- The nutrition status of children below 5 years declined during the month. The percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rose to 15 from 13 in July.
- This drop was attributed to lack of food at the household level. The purchasing power of the communities dropped. The decline in milk production, which is a main source of proteins, also contributed to this trend.
- The mothers were also not feeding adequately to be able to provide enough breast milk.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Food aid

- Food for assets by UN-WFP.
- Supplementary feeding programme.
- Food support to those infected with HIV by Liverpool VCT.
- Relief food distribution by the provincial administration.
- Home-grown school feeding programme.
- Food for Assets by German Agro Action in Ikutha.

5.2 Non-food interventions

- Water trucking in Mutomo and Kitui.
- Excavation of earth dams.
- Construction of sand dams.
- Equipping of boreholes by Tanathi
- Destocking.

- Intensified disease surveillance.
- Capacity building on sorghum production.
- Soil conservation promotion.
- Supplementary feeding programme supervision.
- Nutrition surveillance.

5.3 Coping strategies

- Reduction in the size of meals.
- Skipping meals.
- Eating non-preferred meals.
- Doing menial jobs.
- Borrowing food.
- Migration to urban areas by men.

6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Facilitate mass vaccination of livestock.
- Increase the off-take window and stop using brokers to procure animals from farmers.
- Distribution of relief hay.
- Train health centre staff on identification of malnourished children.
- Enhance supplementary feeding for the under fives and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Water trucking to secondary and primary schools.
- Repair and servicing of contingency boreholes.
- Provision of supplementary fuel to boreholes.
- Drilling of boreholes.
- Repair on institutional water tanks to trap rain water.
- Education sector.
- Increased coverage of the school feeding programme.
- Fees waivers for the extremely needy secondary school kids.
- Consider providing relief food to the day mixed secondary schools.