



It doesn't have to be this way

Editor,

Millions of people in Eastern **Africa** are facing famine following some of the worst droughts experienced in the region in nearly 60 years.

The failure of seasonal rains in Northern **Kenya**, Ethiopia and Somalia in 2010 and 2011 is blamed for the current crisis. The East **African** famine risk is real, and needs an immediate humanitarian fix. But it doesn't have to be this way.

If we are ever going to break the cycle of famine in sub-Saharan **Africa** we must look at the root causes, and provide lasting remedies for the millions of at risk rural communities who hold the solution to famine in their hands.

Just 5% of cultivated land in **Africa** is irrigated, and little of this is being worked by small-scale farmers, whose land is frequently farmed at a fraction of its productive potential.

At **Self Help Africa** we believe a famine free **Africa** is attainable if we support the very people best placed to feed **Africa's** growing population - the small-scale farming communities who produce the food, yet have limited access to irrigation, and to farming support.

Organising farmers into cooperatives and producer groups, providing farmers with agricultural training and support, and by improving access to markets, we can help tens of millions of small scale producers to produce the crops that are necessary to avert the famines that continue to blight the continent, and are affecting Ethiopia, **Kenya** and Somalia today.

Some progress is being made with agricultural investment in some **African** countries - in Ghana the growth of agriculture has brought poverty levels down from 52% to 20% in 20 years - but a great deal more is needed.

Yours,
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