

EARLY WARNING EARLY ACTION

MECHANISMS FOR RAPID DECISION MAKING

Drought preparedness and response in the arid and semi-arid lands of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and in the East Africa Region

LED BY
 **International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Save the Children



OXFAM



ACRONYMS	IV
PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION: WHY EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION?	3
DROUGHT	3
EARLY ACTION MEANS 'DIFFERENT', NOT JUST 'EARLIER'	3
A REMINDER: NO REGRETS	4
PART 1: FROM EARLY WARNING TO EARLY ACTION	5
What Are The Components Of The System?	5
Early Warnings	5
Triggers For Action	5
Flexible Funding	5
Contingency Plans	5
A Platform For Dialogue And Decisions	6
An Enabling Environment	6
GENERATING AND COMMUNICATING THE EARLY WARNING	6
Being Realistic About Prediction	6
Analysing the Data and Communicating the Early Warning	7
Summary: The Characteristics of Effective Early Warning Systems	9
TRIGGERING EARLY ACTION	9
Early Warning Triggers For Action	9
Understanding 'Normal': Seasonality And Contextualisation	9
Setting A Threshold Which Acts As A Trigger For Action	10
Thresholds In A Simple System, And In A Seasonal System	11
Typical Indicators Used In Early Warning Systems	11
Four Levels Of Prediction	12
Cross-Sectoral Indicators: Health And Education	14
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)	14
Summary: The Characteristics Of Indicators And Triggers For Action	15
FLEXIBLE FUNDING FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY ACTION	16
Trends And Challenges	16
Funding For Early Action: Contingent Funding	16
Pre-Agreements	17
Flexible Funding: Crisis Modifiers	18
Summary: The Characteristics Of Flexible Funding	19
PLANNING FOR EARLY ACTION	19
No Regrets And Good Enough Programming	19
Local And Contextual Plans - Alignment And Capacity	20
Response Analysis, Predictive Outcome Analysis	20

Surge Models In Humanitarian And Development Programming	21
Expanding Social Protection	23
Summary: The Characteristics of Contingency Plans for Early Action	25
THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	25
Coherence, Integration And Alignment	25
A Platform At The National Level	25
Platforms At The Local Level	26
A Legal Base And Mandate	26
Transparency And Trust	26
Capacity Analysis	27
The Evidence Base	27
Summary: The Characteristics of a Truly Enabling Environment	27
PART 2: THE STATE OF EARLY WARNING-EARLY ACTION SYSTEMS	30
EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AT REGIONAL LEVEL	30
Regional Actors And Coordination Mechanisms	30
Preparedness For Early Action Amongst Regional Actors	32
EARLY WARNING – EARLY ACTION IN ETHIOPIA	34
The National Early Warning System	34
The Seasonal Food Security Assessment	34
A National Platform For Early Action	34
Surge Models In Ethiopia	35
Examples Of Early Action From Ethiopia	35
EARLY WARNING – EARLY ACTION IN KENYA	37
The National Early Warning System	37
A National Platform For Early Action	38
Surge Models In Kenya	38
Examples Of Early Action In Kenya: Hunger Safety Net Programme	38
EARLY WARNING – EARLY ACTION IN UGANDA	40
The National Early Warning System	40
A National Platform For Early Action	42
Surge Models In Uganda	42
PART 3: THE WAY FORWARD	43
ANNEX 1: THE WAY FORWARD – THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT	47
At The Regional Level	47
At The National & Sub-National Level	47
For Implementing Organisations	47
For Donors	48
For Research	48
ANNEX 2: EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION: A PROGRESS REPORT	49

This operational research work has been conducted by Ben Mountfield.

ACRONYMS

ALP	Adaptation Learning Programme
ARC	Africa Risk Capacity
ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AU	African Union
CAPRO	WFP's Capabilities Partnership Programme
DEWS	Drought Early Warning Systems
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DFID CHASE-OT	Department for International Development Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department - Operational Team
DRMFSS	Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector, under the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture
DRRAP	ECHO-funded Drought Risk Reduction Action Plan
EAC	East Africa Community
ECHO	European Commission - Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection
ENSO	El-Nino Southern Oscillations
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Package
EW EA	Early Warning Early Action
EWRD	Early Warning and Response Directorate (of the DRMFSS)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FSNWG	Food Security and Nutrition Working Group
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
HARITA	Horn of Africa Risk Transfer for Adaptation
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HSNP	Hunger Safety Nets Programme
ICPAC	IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre
ICPALD	IGAD Centre for Pastoral and Livestock Development
IDDRSI	IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFRC FACT	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Field Assessment Coordination Teams
IFRC HeOps	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Head of Emergency Operations
IGAD	Inter Governmental Agency on Development
INEE	Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KRCS	Kenya Red Cross Society
LEAP Index	Livelihoods, Early Assessment and Protection Index
LEGS	Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MoWE	Department of Meteorology and Ministry of Water and Environments (Government of Uganda)
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority (Government of Kenya)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister (Government of Uganda)
PSNP	Productive Safety Nets Programme
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (WFP)
SHARE	Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
URCS	Uganda Red Cross Society
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

PREFACE

The crisis in the Horn of Africa and the declaration of famine conditions in parts of Somalia in 2011 provided renewed impetus to break, once and for all, the cycle of food insecurity in the region. Governments as well as regional and international actors all called for transformative action to ensure that the next drought does not turn into another humanitarian crisis. One major impact has been the shift towards risk management, at policy and operational levels. This growing emphasis on recognizing and managing the risk of drought, rather than waiting for it to affect vulnerable communities, implies substantive change across the system.

Adopting the recommendations of this research the *IGAD Second Drought Resilience Summit in 2014* called for strengthening of early warning systems, flexible development funding and factoring in drought risk. It also called for the establishment of common triggers and protocols to escalate early warning to decision makers at national, regional and global level to mobilize early action; and finally, for institutionalization and investments into scalable social protection schemes.

Various developments are underway at the state level to support this process: devolution, strengthening the legal base, increasing ownership and sustainability of safety nets and early warning systems. Changes are also taking place within the donor community with more flexible and multi-year funding mechanisms in place together with a resurgence of contingency funding. Additionally, a number of donors are funding research pieces, piloting innovative approaches and supporting additional analysis. Safety net schemes have grown in scale and capacity. Insurance schemes are gaining ground. Humanitarian agencies have piloted new approaches to contingency planning, options analysis and responses. Surge models have been developed and are being tested. Academic research has strengthened the evidence base for effective programming, while the cost effectiveness and importance of a no regrets approach to early action is becoming widely understood.

Humanitarian and development partners alike have shown commitment to *doing things differently*, investing in research to better understand how to manage risks rather than crises. **But is this change enough to produce a substantially different outcome next time? And if not, what else needs to be done and how?**

The “*Early Warning Early Action in East Africa: mechanisms for rapid decision making*” research project led by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in partnership with Oxfam, Save the Children, FAO and WFP, seeks to answer these questions and to provide key components of an effective system to make the case for further investment. It builds on a number of initiatives, reports and documents. The operational research took the form of a literature review and interviews with a large number of stakeholders and practitioners in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia to take stock of progress, and to identify the characteristics of a well-functioning government-led Early Warning Early Action (EW EA) system. It was guided by a diverse Steering Committee, which included representatives of IGAD and national governments, donors, Red Cross Societies, UN agencies and NGOs.

Early action means ‘different’, not just ‘earlier’. The early actions being discussed here are not traditional humanitarian activities, although they need to be undertaken with a humanitarian sense of urgency. Indeed, any ‘humanitarian’ response to a slow-onset disaster is a late response. Early action is a paradigm shift for people and agencies which have grown accustomed to equating humanitarian action with crisis response. Communities which have adopted this paradigm shift appreciate the opportunity to make decisions about how to avoid recurrent extreme losses.

An early warning system produces an alert. This alert is specific to an area or a livelihood zone, and it provides advance notice: three months, perhaps as many as six. Within the focus area of the alert, there may already be development activities, projects supporting community resilience, and perhaps safety nets. As a result of the warning, there is time to make substantial adjustments as appropriate according to the context.

Early action activities can be implemented in a wide variety of sectors, depending on the projected scenarios, the livelihoods zone, and the context. Early action is closely linked to strengthening community resilience, and a multi-sectoral approach is more likely to be effective – and that in turn requires **coordination**.

This report looks at the **existing early warning and early actions systems** in each of the three countries, as well as at regional level, and presents a **model system**. It builds on many ideas and examples that came to light during the research process, and combines these into a single model. It considers both the components of the system, and the environment in which it operates. It is, of course, idealized, but it provides a benchmark against which progress can be measured, and some indications of the path ahead. Although there is a lot to be learnt from community level EW EA systems, due to the timeframes, this was not addressed within this research project. However this is planned for the coming months.



Birhanu, 13, helps his father Kinfu thresh the grains that they have been able to produce this year in their village in the Tigray region
Photo: Amerti Lemma/Save the Children

Finally, this research seeks to identify the most important areas for **further investment** to address substantial gaps. Some of these gaps are in 'hardware': proven appropriate responses in water and education; more substantial surge models; different funding arrangements. But some of them are 'software': agreements on appropriate indicators and triggers; increased coherence on key issues between development and humanitarian actors; and more effective national ownership and leadership. Additional work to increase confidence in the early warning systems and analysis is a critical precursor to be able to address most of the gaps.

To conclude, there is a strong commitment to work differently, to learn from experience and to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated. The importance of the agenda is not in debate: it is evidenced by the breadth of stakeholders who engaged with the research process through its steering committee, and by the findings from broad consultations. But this enthusiasm and willingness is not sufficient: the scale of most programming is too modest, the surge models is largely untested, the flexible funding schemes are insufficient, both the humanitarian architecture and contingency planning approaches are designed for traditional responses, and the coordination is too weak. So lots more need to be done.

We, IFRC, OXFAM, Save the Children, WFP and FAO, believe in partnership and are committed to work together on this issue supporting IGAD and national government planning and coordination platforms.

INTRODUCTION: WHY EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION?

DROUGHT

Drought is an inevitable consequence of the weather patterns in the Horn of Africa. It's a normal part of the context for people who live in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). Nonetheless, drought is a contributing factor in chronic malnutrition, underdevelopment, and poverty.

In many cases in the past drought has also brought awful consequences, especially in combination with other factors. When the rains have failed over consecutive seasons, where there are struggles over access to water or pasture, when the global price of staple foods peaks, and development efforts are inadequate, the human consequences to lives and livelihoods have included starvation, destitution and death. Drought is inevitable, but these consequences are avoidable.

Development in the ASALs has been slow and patchy. In a rapidly changing context, this has led to reducing resilience and higher vulnerability of these communities to drought. Typical response to warnings of deteriorating conditions – most recently in 2010/11 – has been through the vehicle of humanitarian aid. It has been well documented that such aid has often been late, inappropriate, and poorly targeted.

There is also the idea that the very need for humanitarian aid represents a failure of development processes in the ASALs; a failure of the broader aid community to respond appropriately to clear warnings received well in advance – a failure of vision, leadership and coordination.

The consequences of drought do not have to be inevitable. Development efforts may be spread thinly through the ASALs, but they can be prioritized, strengthened, refocused – and this can be done swiftly, on the basis of a credible and specific early warning, and they can be directed towards those at most risk. Safety nets can be broadened and deepened. Community capacities can be recognized and enhanced. Through national and local government leadership, at least some, maybe most of the negative impacts of drought can be mitigated. Research has shown that early efforts are far cheaper and more efficient than late humanitarian responses. For the people who live in the dry lands, they are also far more dignified.

The dry lands of the Horn of Africa are changing rapidly, as are the livelihoods, expectations and behaviours of their pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. These communities are, generally, quite well adapted to cope with a bad rainy season. It is not a crisis in itself. It takes several poor seasons, and a collection of other factors, to generate a crisis.

It's important to distinguish the crisis, when it comes, from chronic background vulnerability. Malnutrition levels in some communities are at levels that are at the same time very serious, and completely 'normal'. This is a development problem, and as such, the responsibility of the national governments and local authorities, with the support of their partners. The early warning system in the ASALs must provide the means to differentiate a heightened risk of short-term, acute crisis from this chronic baseline.

The ASALs are changing, in swift, varied and quite significant ways. A growing proportion of people are now living a settled – or partially settled – existence in towns, where services are increasingly available. For some, livelihoods are becoming more diverse, and families more fragmented, while others have dropped out of pastoralism altogether. As mobile phone access increases swiftly, so does access to information, market prices, and financial services. And underlying all this, the creeping but inexorable effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident.

EARLY ACTION MEANS 'DIFFERENT', NOT JUST 'EARLIER'

The actions being discussed in this report are not traditional humanitarian activities, although they need to be undertaken with a humanitarian sense of urgency. Indeed, it can reasonably be argued that any 'humanitarian' response to a slow-onset disaster is a late response – at least in those cases when early responses were absent or inadequate.

In the scenario proposed in this report, an early warning system produces an alert. This alert is specific to an area or a livelihood zone, and it provides advance notice: three months, perhaps as many as six. Within the focus area of the alert, there may already be development activities, projects supporting resilience, and perhaps safety nets. As a result of the warning, there is time to increase the level of inputs to these programmes, broaden their scope, bring in additional resources from elsewhere, front-load sensitive pipelines, call down contingencies, bring forward funding from next year, postpone or cancel activities that are no longer appropriate and reallocate funds pro-actively.

Early action activities can occur in a wide variety of sectors, depending on the projected scenarios, the livelihoods zone, and the context. They might include repairs to water sources, commercial de-stocking, provision of fodder, strengthened community education and mobilisation, reinforced surveillance, increased health provision, extension services and veterinary support, and food- and cash-based safety nets. Early action is closely linked to resilience, and a multi-sectoral approach is more likely to be effective – and that in turn requires coordination.

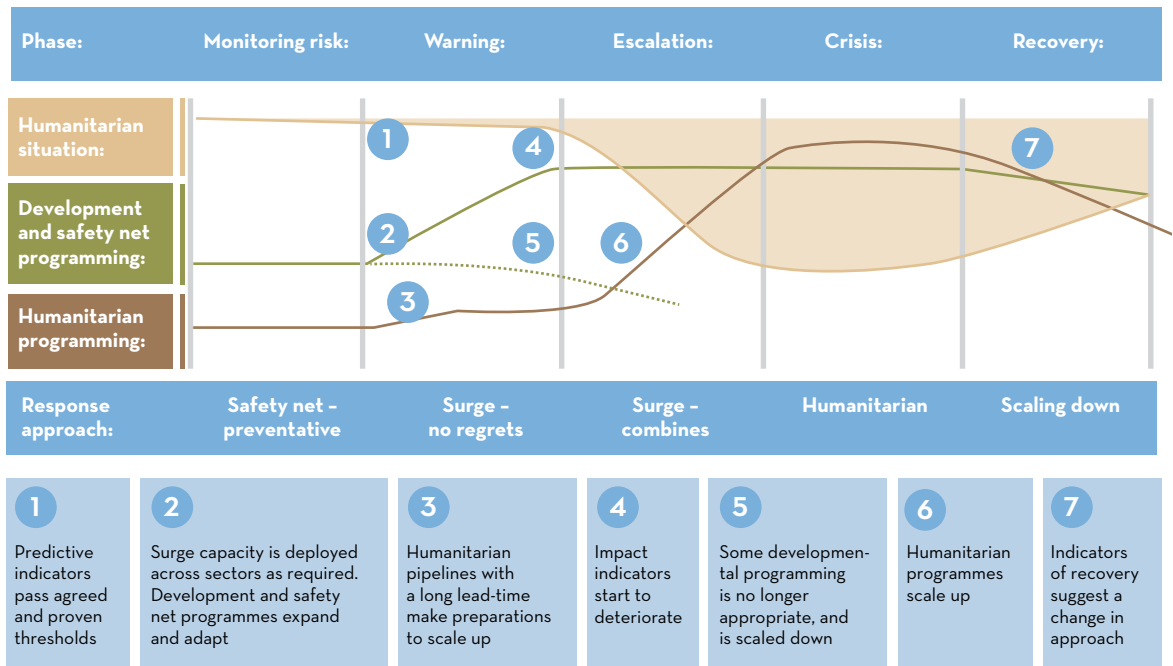


FIGURE 1: A PHASE DIAGRAM FOR EARLY WARNING AND EARLY ACTION

If the right hand side of this diagram represents traditional humanitarian aid, the left side shows the early action being described in this report: the pre-emptive scaling up of efforts in advance of a predicted crisis, on the basis of a substantive warning. The diagram is deliberately simplified: it does not attempt to illustrate seasonality, and it does not provide help on separating the acute situation illustrated, resulting from drought, from the longer-term, underlying, chronic situation, which is not illustrated. These issues are important, and they are tackled later in the report.

A REMINDER: NO REGRETS

In addition to being far better for the affected population, early protective, preventative action has been shown to be many times cheaper than the associated response to humanitarian crisis. Different models have produced different multipliers – from 2 times to ten times, or even more. Renowned research on the topic has been conducted by DFID (2012) in Ethiopia and Kenya.

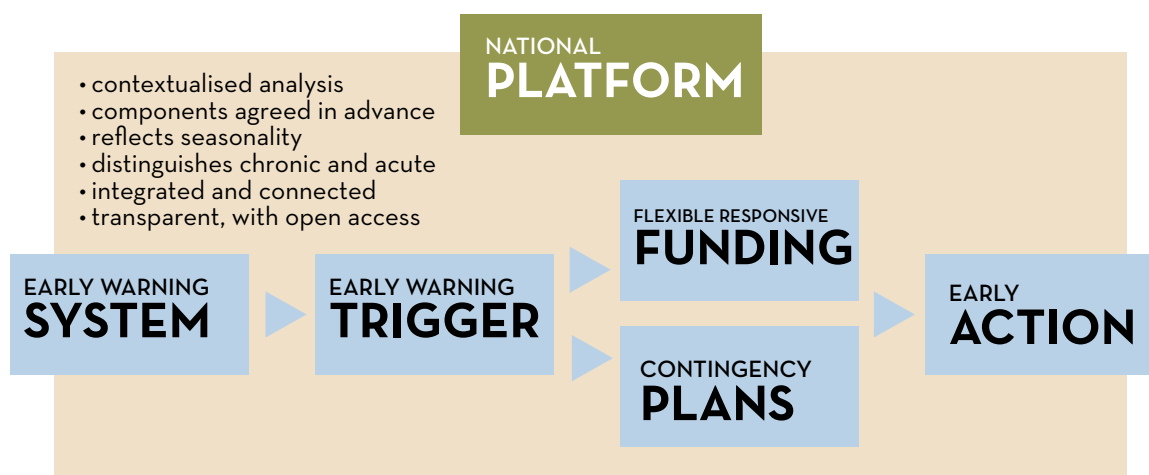
The implication of this financial bonus is that we can afford to get it wrong on occasion. Of course, the more accurate the forecasting becomes, the better – but when the indicators are suggesting that things are about to take a turn for the worse, action should be taken to mitigate the effects as quickly as possible. The laws of probability mean that on occasion the predictions will be wrong, and such actions will have been ‘unnecessary’.

Much of this action will have a net positive effect anyway: strengthening community resilience is no bad thing and it is the goal of many programmes in the ASALs. But there will be aspects of early action that have no net benefit in the short term, while incurring some costs. Increasing the flow of commodities in a pipeline may involve buying them at a premium, and incurring storage costs when the increased demand does not materialise. The ‘no regrets’ argument says: this is an acceptable cost. The value of the preparedness achieved makes the cost of an occasional false positive acceptable.

PART 1: FROM EARLY WARNING TO EARLY ACTION

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE SYSTEM?

This introductory section outlines the components that need to be in place to deliver appropriate early actions on the basis of a timely early warning. These are the components of a system led by national and/or local governments, where humanitarian and development partners come together to provide the necessary support capacity building. The components are:



EARLY WARNINGS

The first component of the system produces the warning itself. The early warning system includes three components: a process to monitor indicators, a contextualised analysis of their values and trends, and the means to communicate these findings. Such systems can be based on local observations and traditional knowledge, or a highly technical approach based on analysis of remote sensing data. National early warning systems often combine elements from both these approaches.

While some of the products of these mechanisms are seasonal, annual or biannual, the main focus of this report is on rolling analysis, generated on a monthly basis or even more frequently.

It's also worth making a distinction between a warning (which considers future risk) and a surveillance system (which provides a snapshot of the current situation).

TRIGGERS FOR ACTION

Trigger points are key changes in the indicators that make up the early warning system. For the system to work swiftly, these triggers for action need to be agreed in advance. Some triggers are simple changes in the value of an indicator, and others are more complex or nuanced.

FLEXIBLE FUNDING

Funding is required to implement the agreed actions. The mechanism by which this funding is released also needs to be agreed in advance, and tied to both the trigger and the action.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Contingency plans for early action are distinct from traditional planning for humanitarian response. They must be agreed in advance, include specific strategies to 'surge' or increase human resource capacities, and ideally be linked to programmes or activities that already operate at scale.

A PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE AND DECISIONS MAKING

The platform is the national forum where decision-makers from all the stakeholder groups agree on the appropriate early warning indicators, the thresholds for action, the process for contingency planning, the funding arrangements and the types of actions that would be appropriate at different phases in different contexts. This would normally build additional responsibilities into existing coordination architecture, rather than create new structures.

AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the following are also an essential part of the early warning, early action architecture:

- A legal base for the early warning system and the coordination framework
- National ownership of the platform, with the Early Action agenda formally included within its mandate
- Transparency and trust, developing from a shared vision, a strengthened evidence base and a common commitment to open communication

GENERATING AND COMMUNICATING THE EARLY WARNING

Early warning systems have traditionally been 'owned' by humanitarian actors. This was understandable in terms of response, but makes less sense in terms of resilience thinking. Increasingly, early warning capacity is owned by governments, formally linked to the coordination structure, and supported by a legal framework. Development partners are increasingly involved in funding these early warning systems, but are less involved in supporting the other components of the early action system.

An early warning system is only as good as its products – and then only if those products enjoy the confidence of the people who use them.

BEING REALISTIC ABOUT PREDICTION

There is strong evidence that early warning systems can and do provide sufficient warning for governments, development partners and humanitarian actors to take actions which can protect lives and livelihoods and strengthen resilience. But it is important to be realistic about prediction: what it can, and what it cannot achieve.

MEASURING PREDICTIVE CAPACITY AND CONFIDENCE

Measuring the predictive capacity of different early warning systems at different timescales would allow a comparison of different approaches and lead to improved accuracy overall. At the same time, it is important not to 'punish' existing systems for producing false positives – inaccurate predictions of drought – in the medium term, as this would discourage such warnings and undermine the system. As mentioned, the cost benefit of preventive action far outweighs the risk of getting it wrong – even getting it wrong several times over.

It should also be possible to measure people's confidence in the early warnings produced by the system, and the degree to which they are used to inform decision-making.

CONTEXTUALISING PREDICTION

Some formal early warning systems emphasize causal relationships, while others are statistical models driven by correlations in data.

Whatever the approach, the early warning outputs must always be contextualised. Since risk is a function of hazard, vulnerability and capacity, then seasonality, livelihoods patterns, coping strategies, and other variables have to be considered when turning the data into a prediction.

As noted in the introduction, many contextual aspects are in flux. The settlement and livelihoods patterns of people living in arid and semi-arid lands are changing rapidly. Market systems, communications and infrastructure are changing, as is the climate. Many practitioners believe that these changes are happening at a pace that exceeds our ability to understand and map them.

THE UNPREDICTABLE

However good the predictive capacity of an early warning system in terms of the eventual yield or production deficits, there are perhaps two areas in which they will not be able to predict accurate outcomes.

The first of these areas is in understanding the specific impact that the projected conditions will have at the household level, where people have different resources and capacities, different livelihoods and coping strategies, and where the context is changing rapidly: even if we could calculate impact at the household level, our old models may no longer apply.

The second area relates to the complexities of human interaction: it is not possible to predict with certainty how markets will react to variation in price, quality and availability, or changes to seasonal migration patterns, or how different groups will interact with each other; the potential for conflict over limited resources like water points and pasture.

Overall, then, we must be realistic in terms of our predictive capacity, monitor stressed environments closely, and be willing to adapt quickly. We should invest in research to better understand the impact of this rapid change on pastoralists, agro-pastoralists – and ex-pastoralists: those who have dropped out of pastoralism or transitioned to an urban lifestyle in the arid lands.

ADAPTATION LEARNING PROGRAMME: GARISSA

The Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) is a climate change adaptation programme implemented by CARE in Kenya, Ghana, Mozambique and Niger.

In Garissa, Kenya, ALP is implementing an innovative approach to community-based adaptation called Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP). PSP workshops bring together district government officials from key sector ministries, CSOs, researchers and community representatives.

Immediately after seasonal forecasts become available from the Kenya Meteorological Services (KMS), participants are brought together in a PSP workshop to access and discuss seasonal climate forecasts from community forecasters and KMS.

On the basis of this discussion, participants produce a set of impact scenarios for different livelihoods and use these to develop plans for climate-resilient livelihoods and disaster risk reduction. These are used to prepare 'advisories' which are shared with communities and other local service providers through an appropriate range of media.

ALP trained Natural Resource Managers from the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) in the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries on PSP. ASDSP is now working with KMS to conduct PSPs in all 47 counties across Kenya; this has been done for the March-May 2014 rainfall season. This is providing a possible avenue for institutionalization of PSP within government.

For more information, please contact: Ambani Maurine Kasuvu (CARE) akasuvu@careclimatechange.org

ANALYSING THE DATA AND COMMUNICATING THE EARLY WARNING

Alerts should be released immediately after the data is compiled and analysed; and include a measure of severity, and an indication of trend or direction. They should be specifically targeted in terms of geography and livelihood groups, and specific about the timeframe of the prediction and its level of confidence. They should directly reach the affected population through accessible media, as well as actors at all levels. And they should be technically and culturally appropriate to the target audience, especially the affected communities.

There is a welcome trend towards producing rolling early-warning notices: every ten days or every month, as a complement to the traditional annual or biannual crop forecasts. At the moment the humanitarian coordination and response architecture – at national and sub-national levels – is not well adapted to such frequent predictions, and will need to adapt.

As the national early warning systems become better established, governments are seeking to formalise warnings and restrict the number of institutions producing them, in some cases seeking to sign-off early warning bulletins before they are communicated. On the one hand, this brings a consistency to the early warning process and reduces the risk of alarmist outputs. On the other hand, there is a risk that the associated bureaucracy slows down the process, and a risk that transparency and ownership are lost if the process becomes over-centralised.

THE DEWS NETWORK IN UGANDA

The NGO ACTED led the development of a Drought Early Warning System (DEWS) based on 19 community vulnerability indicators, collected at the local level, and analysed by district officials alongside weather forecasts. It started as a pilot in 2008, and expanded to cover the whole of Karamoja in 2009. In a second phase, it is now being brought under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries and will feed into the broader early warning system coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister, although for practical purposes it is run by the local government structure.

The stated purpose of DEWS is to provide sufficient warning of the increased risk of drought to initiate the implementation of drought preparedness measures. The project produces monthly drought bulletins, disseminated from the local to the international level through website, emails, printed updates, and notice boards. Based on the findings from the analysis, the district official issues, when necessary, radio messages in English and local languages to the population. These messages guide the population on reducing risk of food shortages and losses in crop or animal production not only ahead of a drought but also in preparation of flash floods, quite common after a long dry spell, or animal disease outbreak. It also advises the population on what types of crops should be planted and when, in order to optimize food availability at household level, based on the weather forecast. DEWS alerts have been used to trigger numerous early actions at community level: post-harvest best practices, how to plant granaries to avoid food losses due to floods, planting vegetables during short rains out of the planting season to complement small food stocks, avoiding grazing areas where animals infected by a contagious disease have been identified, animal vaccination and proper use of food stock ahead of a drought etc. It has also triggered actions at local government level such as vaccination programmes after disease outbreaks, and increase of nutritional surveillance mechanisms. The long term plan is to have the DEWS fully managed and budgeted by the Government of Uganda by 2017.

For more information, please contact: Michael Mangano (ACTED), michael.mangano@acted.org

Early warning alerts and messages have a wide potential audience, and the specific audience needs to be taken into account when considering the language, complexity and medium of each communication. Cultural preferences, education levels, literacy and other factors need to be considered. Some information can be communicated through simple visual tools like 'traffic lights' or dashboards, although people should also have ready access to the more complete analysis should they so desire.



Weldu, 78, cultivates the field with his oxen in Mambere-Genet in Tigray region of Ethiopia.
Photo: Jiro Ose/Save the Children

SUMMARY: CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS ARE TRUSTED

The early warning is the bedrock of the system, the foundation on which all the other components are built. The information and analysis it provides must have the confidence of its users.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS ARE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

Early warning systems produce predictions, alerts, and warnings. They should be held accountable for the predictions they produce, and each system should be measured in terms of its predictive capacity. This will strengthen confidence, increase transparency, and provide opportunities for learning between countries.

The system should be transparent, with public access to the raw data and the post-analysis products.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS ARE NATIONALLY OWNED, INCLUSIVE, AND HAVE A CLEAR MANDATE

At the national level, early warning systems should be located within government structures and operate within a clear legal framework.

Early warning systems must operate at a range of levels from the community to the regional. These levels need to be integrated and communicate effectively. Each level of the system should ideally contribute to the overall analysis. Early warning systems should seek to preserve and include local and traditional perspectives and strengthen community ownership.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS PRODUCE APPROPRIATE PRODUCTS AND COMMUNICATE THEM EFFECTIVELY

The outputs of an early warning system must recognise the diversity of the audience and be appropriate to that audience. Outputs should be contextualised, granular and specific in terms of seasonality, livelihood zone and coping strategies, and community capacity. They should include clear explanations of degree or severity, of trend, of timing, and of the confidence associated with the prediction.

The choice of the language and the medium of the communication should be appropriate to the audience, as should the level of technical complexity. Where messages are simplified for a particular audience, access to the complete message should be readily available on demand.

The providers of early warning messages should be clear about what can be expected of them, in terms of the frequency of the messages, the level of detail, the timeliness and the means of communication.

TRIGGERING EARLY ACTION

EARLY WARNING TRIGGERS FOR ACTION

Quantitative indicators can have a wide range of values. A threshold or boundary in this range of values can serve as a trigger for action. Once the threshold is exceeded, predetermined decision rules activate a change in the planned activities.

With qualitative indicators, it is more challenging to set thresholds, but the same principle applies: a deviation from the normal pattern – of migration, for example – serves as an indication of change, and programme activities may need to change as a consequence.

UNDERSTANDING 'NORMAL': SEASONALITY AND CONTEXTUALISATION

CONTEXTUALISATION

Most early warning indicators vary according to the season, and they vary from one place to another. What is normal in one time and one place would be abnormal in another. This is common experience: the patterns of rainfall are different throughout the year and in different places, for example. However, it is also true of other indicators such as chronic malnutrition, food prices or school attendance.

While there are international standards for some of these indicators, in practice there can be huge variation in what is considered 'normal', as a result of different livelihood patterns, different cultural practices and different expectations. In the drylands many people live with poor access to water and high levels of chronic malnutrition as a norm – which is not to suggest that it is acceptable. In such places, development actors typically seek to provide a higher level of service provision.

Of course, this chronic situation can still become worse, and surveillance systems will detect the deterioration. Early warning systems, on the other hand, seek to predict the deterioration, by combining well-chosen indicators with a thorough understanding of the context. The threshold that tells us the right time to take action in such a chronic context will probably be higher than in other areas.

NORMAL IS A RANGE

What is considered to be 'normal' is not a fixed point or a single value, but a range of values. So indicators for rainfall (for example) need to be considered against a **range** of normal values: only if they fall above or below this range would that be considered abnormal. This range will fluctuate within a district or county, and from month to month.

However, 'normal' can also be very difficult to pin down, especially in a context of rapid change. It can be extremely helpful to have reference years to measure against - but they too can be hard to identify and describe.

SETTING A THRESHOLD WHICH ACTS AS A TRIGGER FOR ACTION

The same indicators can be used across a range of different contexts. But the threshold will need to be set separately in each context with care - and in most cases it will also vary throughout the year.

What is the appropriate point to set such a threshold? There are a number of possibilities:

Some thresholds can be set in a fairly practical manner. In the Kenyan surge model for community management of acute malnutrition, the selected indicator is demand: the daily caseload experienced by the clinic. Each clinic uses the same indicator, but each clinic and health centre sets its own threshold, at which they need additional support, based on their staffing and norms.

In practice it is quite rare for a single indicator, on its own, to be used to trigger actions: it is more common for several to be considered together, or for a compound indicator to be used.

INSURANCE AGAINST THE RISK OF DROUGHT

Insurance providers prefer to use very clear and objective indicators, which are agreed with their customers. So where they exist, insurance systems provide useful and pragmatic models.

At the continental level, the **Africa Risk Capacity** is an AU-led financial entity that shares the risk of severe drought between signatory countries through a continental risk pool. It uses satellite weather surveillance software (the *Africa RiskView*, developed by WFP) to estimate impact and to trigger readily available funds to African countries. Members of the ARC risk pool qualify for a payout when the rainfall deviation is sufficiently severe such that the estimated response costs cross a certain pre-defined threshold. Payouts will be made within 2-4 weeks of the end of the rainfall season.

At the community level, **Index-Based Livestock Insurance** does something very similar. It was launched in Marsabit, Kenya in 2010 and later extended to Isiolo County and to Oromiya Region of Ethiopia. Pastoralists can buy insurance at two levels before the rainy season starts, and will receive a payout if the index (the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index) passes a certain threshold. NDVI correlates strongly with forage availability, and is an objective indicator which is freely available and regularly updated.

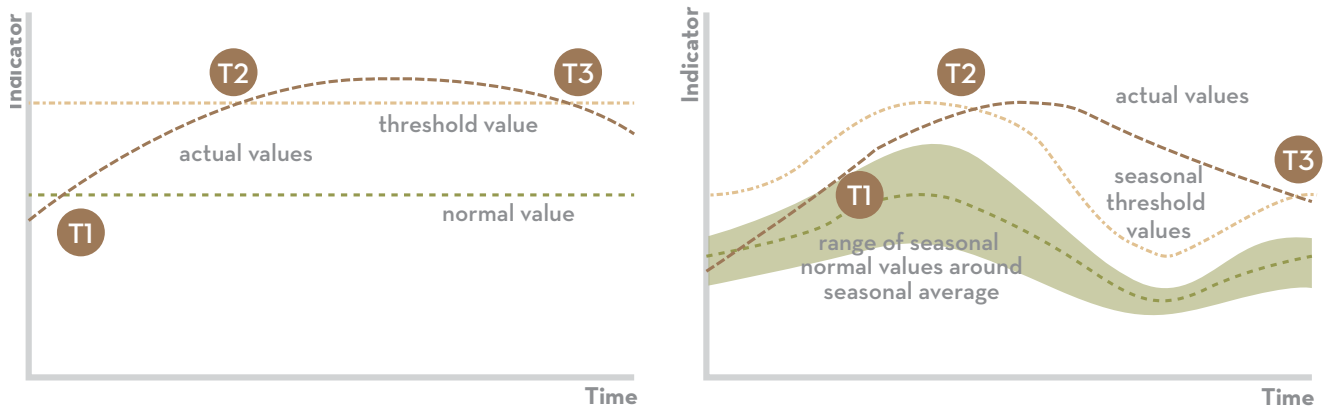
HARITA - Horn of Africa Risk Transfer for Adaptation - offers a similar weather-based insurance product to smallholder farmers in Tigray, Ethiopia, in which clients can choose to pay for the insurance through their labour. Again it uses an index, in this case a rainfall index, to calculate payouts, rather than actual losses. The HARITA model bundles insurance, access to credit and risk reduction activities into a single package, and reaches a group (the poorest of the productive poor) who were previously thought to be uninsurable.

The Harita model has been further developed and expanded through the **R4 Rural Resilience Initiative**, which unites the HARITA model with WFP's network of safety nets and cash-for-work programmes, in partnership with Oxfam and close coordination with local partners and government agencies.

THRESHOLDS IN A SIMPLE SYSTEM, AND IN A SEASONAL SYSTEM

In the diagrams below, three thresholds are identified for the value of an early warning indicator:

- T1** At this point, the value of the indicator passes the normal value, or out of the normal range. An alert may be issued, and some preparatory actions may be appropriate.
- T2** At this point, the value of the indicator passes the agreed threshold value. An alert should be issued, contingency funds released, and appropriate early actions should commence.
- T3** At this point, the value of the indicator drops back below the upper threshold. This may trigger a change in the nature of the activities. Note that the thresholds for a worsening situation may differ from those for an improving situation.



In the left-hand diagram, the system is simple. The indicator has a single normal value, rather than a range. It does not vary throughout the year.

The threshold level is also constant throughout the year.

In the right-hand diagram, the system is more realistic. The indicator has a range of normal values, and this range varies throughout the year.

The threshold level also varies as a consequence.

The same indicator, in two different locations, or for two different livelihood groups, may have different thresholds as well as values, each related to the normal range for that context.

TYPICAL INDICATORS USED IN EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Typical indicators used in various ways in the early warning systems of the three countries visited include:

- ENSO predictions
- Weather forecasts
- Pasture coverage
- Supply and distribution of agricultural inputs
- Supply of feed and water for livestock
- Milk production
- Emergence of conflicts
- Market prices and terms of trade
- Rainfall data
- Ploughed and cultivated land available
- Disease and pest outbreaks
- Livestock movements
- Nutritional status, MUAC
- Spread of human disease

DIFFERENT FORMS OF INDICATOR

There are perhaps three formats of indicators that act as triggers for action as the situation develops. These are (1) individual or discrete events, like an outbreak of disease; (2) a continuous range, like temperature or (3) in the form of a stepped scale, such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which provides a quick summary of the situation in a digestible and accessible format. These are often built up from an analysis of many other indicators.

EVENTS	CONTINUOUS SCALE	STEPPED SCALE
Sudden outbreak of disease	Short term weather forecasts	Actual yield
Dramatic change in security situation	Onset of rains	Water availability
Declaration of state of emergency	Quantity, distribution, duration of rains	Pasture coverage
		Milk production

Each of these types of indicators can be used as a **trigger for action**. In the case of an event, or a change of level in a stepped indicator, this is fairly straightforward. In the case of a continuous scale, we need to identify an appropriate threshold, or boundary. The trigger for action is the point at which the value of the indicator passes this threshold.

FOUR LEVELS OF PREDICTION

Some indicators seek to predict changes far in advance, while others lag behind the events that cause them. The following table groups indicators into four classes, according to this timeframe.

FORECAST	PREDICTIVE	PRODUCTIVE	CONSEQUENCE
ENSO Long range weather forecasts	Short term weather forecasts Onset of rains Quantity, distribution, duration of rains	Germination rate Water availability Pasture coverage Milk production	Actual yield MUAC Livestock status Disease outbreaks School attendance
Low levels of geographic specificity Moderate predictive accuracy Low-moderate confidence	Highly geographically specific High levels of predictive accuracy Often available remotely	Geographically specific Real time data Can take time to collect, process, report	Geographically specific Real time data
May provide 3-6 months warning, or more	May provide 2-4 months warning, or more	May provide 1-2 months warning, or more	Lagging indicators, too late to use as 'early' warning

Addis' family has lost their crops this year due to failing rains, so now they are selling their livestock to get money to buy grain.
Photo: Kathryn Rawe/Save the Children



CROSS-SECTORAL INDICATORS: HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Different technical sectors tend to follow different indicators. In the health sector, for example, there is a strong emphasis on nutritional and disease surveillance. However, drought causes impacts across sectoral boundaries, and the indicators that are most effective in predicting those consequences may 'belong to' a different sector.

This is important, because the emphasis in current programming is in livelihoods, food security and water, while there are few successful models in health and education. Education is recognised by all as a critical gap in the current response portfolio, which needs significant attention.

It's not clear why this is, although two factors may contribute to the problem. Education models for pastoralist communities do exist, but they are challenging to implement and they have not been very successful: none have yet been adapted to surge models. And education is always difficult to support through humanitarian channels.

Secondly, both health and education surveillance models tend to rely on consequence indicators, which are lagging and can indicate the consequences of drought, but are not valuable in prediction. To undertake effective early action, actors in these sectors will need to adopt cross-sectoral indicators and engage with broader early warning systems. That is to say, that for early action, it may be more appropriate to use a weather-based index or a compound of indicators to trigger early action in the health or education sectors, rather than to wait for changes in school attendance or an increase in clinic admissions. This requires increased co-ordination between actors in these sectors.

INTEGRATED FOOD SECURITY PHASE CLASSIFICATION (IPC)

The IPC is both an analytical framework and a process. It seeks to build technical consensus about the situation, classify the severity and cause, communicate these for action, and provide quality assurance. Its most familiar products are the maps, which include a brief narrative, and key conclusions.

IPC has brought a consistency and a common standard to discussions of the impact of drought, and a welcome degree of rigour. It is an agreed toolkit, which cuts across technical sectors, and brings together key actors in a dialogue to produce an agreed result. The IPC toolkit has recently been revised and the new tools are being piloted: they should improve the analytical separation of chronic food insecurity from short-term, acute events.

However, opinions are quite sharply divided in the value of IPC in terms of its predictive capacity, and particularly its value in terms of early warning. Some actors do not yet have confidence in these new tools, and they are not yet consistently applied across countries: the issue of providing fully contextualised analysis against an absolute scale remains a challenge.

Others argue that the process is slow paced and can be subjective, and while IPC provides both a snapshot and a projection, the projection is not the focus, can be slow in arriving, and arrives only once or twice a year – so does not provide the opportunity for timely, rolling analysis.

It is worth noting that the IPC 'steps' are already multi-sectoral thresholds for situation analysis. IPC was frequently quoted as one factor considered amongst several to determine when to change a course of action, but was not being used in isolation as a threshold for early action.

SUMMARY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF INDICATORS AND TRIGGERS FOR ACTION

THE INDICATORS TRACKED IN EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS SHOULD BE **OBJECTIVE, CONSISTENT, AND PREDICTIVE**

Selected indicators should produce consistent objective results, across the full range of likely contexts. They should be able to detect a deviation from the normal trend early enough to provide operational lead-time. They should show a strong correlation with the likely severity of the situation. Where possible, they can be linked to fairly recent reference years, which can be used in scenario modelling. They should produce outputs that differentiate at-risk geographic areas, at-risk livelihood zones, and provide enough detail to plan responses.

FEWER INDICATORS ARE BETTER

Individual indicators are unlikely to be sufficient to provide a clear warning on their own. Compound indicators, or a triangulation of various indicators, will provide higher degrees of confidence. Ideally, these should include a mixture of methodologies, and cut across sectoral boundaries. However, it is neither helpful nor necessary to try to measure everything. If a small group of indicators – in some cases just one – is sufficient to trigger specific action, so much the better.

WHERE POSSIBLE, INDICATORS SHOULD BE JOINTLY OWNED

The primary source for indicators and thresholds should be the products of the national early warning systems. If these systems do not enjoy the confidence of the development and humanitarian actors, then the reasons for this should be understood and addressed. Investment into parallel systems should be a last resort – and is itself an indicator that things are not well and that the system is not trusted. The national platforms, and the equivalent bodies at the operational level, should work with all stakeholders to build consensus behind a small group of key indicators. Operational partners can also support data collection where necessary. The results of monitoring these indicators should be immediately available in the public domain, even ahead of the contextualised analysis.

THE TRIGGERS FOR ACTION SHOULD BE CONTEXTUALISED

- between different livelihood groups in the same area;
- between different areas, for the same livelihood groups;
- with the seasonal calendar, based on the seasonal normal range;
- between groups of different culture and expectations;
- and be able to distinguish between the chronic background situation and an acute deviation from the norm.

TRIGGERS SHOULD BE JOINTLY OWNED AND AGREED IN ADVANCE

Where practical, all stakeholders need to feel ownership of, and responsibility for the agreed triggers for action. From a pragmatic perspective, this process could begin with consortia, or groups of actors all working in a single area or with the same community.

TRIGGERS SHOULD BE LINKED TO THE OTHER COMPONENTS

Triggers should be tied to specific actions (or agreed ‘menus’ of actions), and responsibilities and funding for these should also be agreed in advance.

FLEXIBLE FUNDING FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY ACTION

Creating flexible funding for early action presents a number of challenges. Should these approaches be considered under humanitarian or development streams? Donors are holding multiple contingency funds, raising questions on the best process for risk management and accountability. Donors are encouraging innovation; but also champion evidenced and proven approaches. And while they support the concepts of managing risk and no regrets programming, there is a worry that some agencies may point to a crisis on the basis of too little evidence, or without due reference to the chronic context.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Donors are responding to the changed circumstances and evaluations of previous responses with new models. There is an increase in the availability of multi-year funding, and growing evidence of and awareness of the need for more effective linkages between development and humanitarian branches of some donors. There is creative use of contingency funds, including approaches like the USAID crisis modifier in Ethiopia. Some donors, recognising that their own systems can be slow, have managed to predetermine thresholds and transfer effective decision-making to partners, accelerating response times; others have put in place fast-track procedures. Generally, there is more flexibility available within previously agreed programmes, as long as the dialogue between the partners remains open.

Many approaches emphasise sustainability. The large-scale safety nets for the very poor are mostly in a planned process of transition to national government co-funding and increasing ownership. At the community level, other efforts seek to build an understanding of market systems into responses, and encourage a degree of payment for, or contribution to service provision.

At the project level, some donors have suggested that they are waiting for agencies to step up to the plate and demonstrate innovation. At the same time, operational agencies can point to donors' stated preference for evidence-based, proven approaches. There is a real dilemma here, and it will only be solved through open dialogue and a degree of risk taking: the status quo will not allow early action programming to reach the scale it needs to reach to have a significant impact.

In common with other actors, donors still prefer to compare a number of different early warning products and add their own analysis to them – even in situations where they have directly supported the development of the national early warning system. This is understandable in terms of triangulation – but a quality early warning system already includes such triangulation. In terms of creating a system where a trigger point in an indicator sets in motion predetermined actions this needs to be harmonized.

This is a discussion that should not be limited to donors, humanitarian and development partners – transparency and an open discussion is required with the government, to ensure that funding is invested in complementary activities, supportive of government plans. National and local government need to be fully aware of available surge capacities once a response is triggered. Links with government budgets need to be made at local and national level.

FUNDING FOR EARLY ACTION: CONTINGENT FUNDING

The word 'contingent' means:

occurring or existing only if (certain circumstances) are the case; dependent on

In the past, contingency funds have sometimes been used as a loose slush fund to manage unforeseen challenges within a project, rather than to cope with or respond to very specific circumstances as implied by the definition above.

However, the kinds of contingent funds being discussed in this section of the report are highly specific, and illustrate a strategic and proactive approach to managing specific risks. These are funds that are contingent on specific events: Their release is triggered by a change in the environment, as measured using agreed indicators, with previously set thresholds for action.

When an agreed threshold is crossed, this triggers both the release of funding and the activation of contingency plans. Such funding needs to be agreed in advance, and should be **additional to** core programme support. The funding should be directly tied to the triggers, and associated with trigger-specific actions.

Like all humanitarian funding, it should be transparent and accountable, in terms of the decision-making processes and the movement of funds. Where possible, this process should be decentralised.

UGANDA RED CROSS IN KARAMOJA AND TESO

The German Red Cross is supporting a URCS project in 5 districts of Karamoja and Teso sub-regions that shows real promise, although it is in the preparatory phase at the moment.

- There are four groups of project activities in the main programme:
- Disaster risk reduction and early warning systems on a local level
- Agricultural production and access to water
- Management of natural resources
- URCS capacity building and building up of networks

The project includes a 'preparedness fund' in the order of €100,000, which is set aside for use once certain thresholds have been exceeded. The main targeted hazards for this fund are drought and flood. At this stage of the project, the team is working on the identification of indicators and the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to define how to use the preparedness funds. These funds will then be made available based on early warning information driven from the meteorological forecast. The intention is to agree, in advance and in consultation with the communities, on the types of activities that should be implemented and supported. It is anticipated that the lead-time provided by the early warning system would be quite short, so the activities under consideration are currently directed towards a more effective humanitarian response, but should earlier warnings be available this is would become an excellent model for early warning-early action in Uganda. Indeed, considering the planned project activities, there is also scope for early action like evacuation, stock piling for food and non-food items, awareness sessions, water storage, or also working with communities through mobilisation to promote timely de-stocking.

URCS is working in close partnership with the RC/RC Climate Centre, the National Meteorological Authority (NMA), and the Office of the Prime Minister. Part of the work includes supporting the NMA in digitalizing old paper based weather recordings, in order to improve historical models on which weather scientists base their analysis. This will assist in making the current forecasting more accurate and therefore reliable for the triggering of early action.

For more information, please contact: Mawanda Shaban, shaban2ug@yahoo.com

PRE-AGREEMENTS

A critical component of rapid flexible funding is the pre-agreement about when and how it will be used. The funds can be held by the donor and released once the conditions are met, or they can be transferred to the implementing partner or government in advance.

There are pros and cons associated with the contingency funds resting with the donor, centrally, or in the field, and these need to be considered on a case basis. The critical issue is to accelerate the sign-off process to approve the actions, and make sure that the funding is available as required.

In general, and by prior agreement, triggers can lead to the following kinds of decisions

- Funding decisions (for new activities)
- Modification of existing decisions, including changing budget lines and timelines
- Decisions to unlock contingency funds

FLEXIBLE FUNDING: CRISIS MODIFIERS

Crisis modifiers are a USAID model from Ethiopia, which were first developed in Rwanda in 1996-7 but evolved over time. They are not exclusively for early action as defined here, but support a range of flexible programming options that would include early action.

In the first iteration, they allowed a re-allocation of funds within a programme. But this presented several challenges, and in the second iteration, they became a project-specific contingency fund, triggered by a defined external risk, that allowed the implementing actor a degree of flexibility prior to a crisis, or access to additional funding on the basis of a brief concept note. Other donors have adopted similar approaches.

ECHO FUNDED LA NIÑA CONSORTIUM: OXFAM (LEAD), CONCERN, VSF-G, & ACTED.

This ECHO funded consortium's programme, has a risk facility – a pre-agreed emergency envelope of 300,000 Euros, which allows rapid responses to developing small emergencies. The decision of activating this envelope lies in the hand of the consortium partners and does not require ECHO's formal approval. The requesting organisation submits a 1 or 2 pages proposal to the consortium lead who shares it to all the decision making persons identified by each partner. Each partner has 24 hours to provide a written answer on the suitability of the action requested and the use of the emergency envelope for it. In order to allow a rapid decision process, if no answer has been given by a partner within 24 hours, its decision will not be considered. The lead makes the final decision based on the feedback provided by all partners.

It was triggered four times in 2013, for responses a range of situations as follows:

- Ramu – conflict (100,000 euros – ACTED)
- Isiolo – Livestock disease outbreak - PPR (9,000 euros - VSF-G)
- Moyale - lumpy-skin disease outbreak (10,000 euros – Concern)
- Wajir – conflict (53,000 euros – Oxfam)
- Moyale – Clan conflict (150,000 euros – Concern)

In February 2014, some early warning signs warned of a potential rain failure. As a result, the managers of ECHO-funded organisations and ECHO Technical Assistant met with DFID and their partners in country to review information sources available (including early warning bulletins, field rapid assessments, etc.). The review was very qualitative but allowed those key stakeholders to reach consensus on the priorities locations and priority sectors. Based on this joint analysis, project proposals were developed by each specific agency, reviewed by the same group and validated as needed by the Consortium Secretariat for ECHO approval.

Some key lessons were interesting to draw:

- this process allowed a swift and coordinated response of ECHO partners, but was also a catalyst for DFID partners' coordination
- the response eventually focused on emergency preparedness, as all stakeholders came to the conclusion that the situation was not yet qualified as an emergency but could evolve into an emergency should the long rains fail
- the process was participatory and qualitative, not based on specific triggers. Initially, it was intended that the consortium would define specific triggers to prompt the release of the funds, but this remains work in progress, given the diverse nature of the risks addressed.
- though it has not yet occurred, significant deterioration of food prices or food accessibility, as well as need for assessment, are among the factors which could potentially trigger the activation of these funds.

The consortium is still working on the following areas for improvement:

- Identification of triggers
- Mechanisms to reallocate the remaining emergency envelope funds (if any) to programme activities at the appropriate time, before the end of the project
- Find a balance between quality of the information provided for activation of funds versus rapidity of the decision
- More effective collaboration with the government

For more information, please contact: Daphne Callies, DCallies@oxfam.org.uk

SUMMARY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING

Funding for early action should be:

- agreed in advance and quick to release;
 - held as close to the operational level as appropriate: decentralised to the district or community; or delegated to the implementing partner;
 - linked to specific triggers, or where these cannot yet be agreed in advance, mobilised by swift and light processes on the basis of available evidence and shared analysis;
 - supplementary to core programme funding;
 - linked to specific activities, which themselves are contextualised rather than standardised;
 - tied to people and organisations that are already on the ground with demonstrated capacity, contextual understanding, and actual programmes on which to build;
 - transparent and accountable about what resources can be brought to the table in a pre-crisis phase in support of activities within the government plans, and about what surge capacities are there once the government has triggered a response, based on the mutually supported EW system and mutually agreed triggers;
 - linked to government budgets, at local and national level.
-

PLANNING FOR EARLY ACTION

Contingency planning in the humanitarian sector is couched in the language of response. The plans take the form: *if X happens, then we will respond by doing Y*. In the context of early action for drought, however, the plans must adopt the language of anticipation: *if we have a strong indication of X being likely, then we will do Z to offset the impact of X, before X happens*.

Early action contingency plans should be agreed in advance and be commonly owned – or at least be coherent with a larger plan that is commonly owned. Ideally they should allow for geographic flexibility, including the possibility of working outside the project area. They should include specific strategies to surge human resources, and where possible be linked to programmes or activities that already operate at scale. This presents an obvious challenge in locations or sectors where services are inadequate or effectively absent.

Two strategies can be considered for identifying appropriate early actions at the contingency planning stage:

- Predictive outcome analysis involves looking back at past years with a similar profile, and using these to model likely outcomes well in advance. This scenario mapping can then guide decision making about appropriate protection and mitigation measures.
- Response option analysis looks at a range of possible interventions to address a single identified problem, and compares against a number of factors to identify the most appropriate course of action.

There is a range of activities on which there is broad consensus, some of which enjoy a strong evidence base. The LEGS project provides excellent guidance, for example, on approaches to livestock-based programming. However, other activities are more contentious, and overall there is a shortage of evidence-based models, and a weakness in evaluation processes. Activities in both groups are briefly described in section 3.

NO REGRETS AND GOOD ENOUGH PROGRAMMING

What if the warning is wrong: if the rains come late, but they are adequate: if the impact is not as severe as anticipated, and all these preparations came to nothing? The short answer is: “That’s fine”. Cost effectiveness calculations vary in scale, but they all agree that preventive actions are far cheaper than responses – many times cheaper, in fact. The majority of these interventions have a net benefit anyway. Those that don’t will fall into the category of ‘**no regrets**’. We can afford some false positives as long as they do not undermine the confidence in the predictive capacity of the system.

In similar vein, ‘**good enough**’ programming approaches suggest that it is better to start early, on the basis of ‘good enough’ information, and monitor the situation as it develops, modifying the response as necessary, rather than spending much time designing a ‘perfect’ programme in an imperfect and rapidly changing world.

LOCAL AND CONTEXTUAL PLANS - ALIGNMENT AND CAPACITY

It is important that all contingency plans, from the community-level to the national, are aligned with national policy and government contingency plans. In part this can be achieved by rolling down the plans from the national level, through local authority structures, while making efforts to ensure that plans developed in a bottom-up manner are properly aligned. Involvement of local authority representatives in these processes should be sufficient to ensure this.

Processes and guidance for developing specific early action contingency plans have not been seen as part of this research, and it seems unlikely that such processes exist yet. This should become a priority for the national platforms to support, direct or lead.

Finally, it is worth noting that contingency planning processes should include an aspect of capacity analysis and be realistic about the real levels of service provision capacity available on the ground.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS, PREDICTIVE OUTCOME ANALYSIS

Response analysis - or response option analysis - is an area that has gained quite a lot of attention in humanitarian responses in recent years. Research suggests that there is no common approach, but there are some broad trends. The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) define response analysis as:

The analytical process by which the objectives and modality of programme response options ... are determined and potentially harmful impacts are minimised.

In February 2013 the FSNWG looked at the lack of early action in Somalia, and proposed an additional step in the response design process, between identifying the population of concern, and beginning the response option analysis. They called this process '**critical pathway analysis**'; it is, in effect, outlining the high level theory of change for the intervention.

Response option analysis needs to take place at the local level: it needs to reflect the local context and accommodate local expectations. It is a critical part of the contingency planning process.

From the perspective of early warning, it is probably worth separating the contingency planning into two components. In the first stage, prior to any warning being issued, broad plans can be made on the basis of scenarios, aligned with the reference situations, which might reflect a 'normal' year, a prediction of a second consecutive season of poor rains, and a more serious situation. Within each scenario, a menu of appropriate activities can be agreed to address the likely increases in needs per sector.

In the second stage, on the basis of the alert and a more specific warning, the most appropriate individual activities can be selected from the menu and the pre-agreed funding released. At this stage, coordination between actors at the national and operational levels is critical.



RESPONSE ANALYSIS LEADING TO CONTINGENCY PLAN: OXFAM, SAVE THE CHILDREN AND CONCERN WORLDWIDE

Through an ECHO funded capacity building grant Oxfam, Save the Children and Concern Worldwide have developed an improved response analysis and contingency planning process. This builds on lessons learned from previous response analysis reviews and evaluations by Tufts and the ODI. These highlight the need for response analysis as an ongoing process and improved decision making and causal/problem analysis. The process focuses on seasonal response planning on the basis of regular forecasts, to allow time for preparation and early action/ response, and is built on an understanding of the livelihoods and market contexts within intervention areas. The process has been implemented by the three agencies in 2013/14 in Mandera, Marsabit, and Turkana linked to both short and long rains forecasts. The resulting plan is highly contextualised, and very clear in terms of the logic and choices that led to the proposed activities.

The response planning process included seven steps aimed at building multi-stakeholder consensus on the nature of the problem and appropriate early actions/response: three strategic steps followed by four operational, as follows:

- **1. Develop detailed scenarios -> 2. Map livelihoods calendars -> 3. Determine strategic objectives -> 4. Select appropriate interventions -> 5. Identify agency priorities and partners -> 6. Map start-up timelines and decision points -> 7. Communicate to communities and partners**

The process has also generated some pertinent recommendations: that it should be hosted within long-term development programmes, with active involvement of humanitarian personnel, and that the development programme should include a 'crisis modifier' that enables early action to a forecast livelihood crisis. The need for on-going context monitoring and refinement alongside this process, as well as clear decision making points for actions ahead of crises have also been stressed. National and regional disseminating of the approach is underway as well as institutionalisation of it within respective agencies. Further developments include expanding the process to Ethiopia and Somalia and integration with government response and contingency planning processes.

For more information, please contact: Brian Kiswii b.kiswii@savethechildren.org.uk

SURGE MODELS IN HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

The concept of surge capacity is a familiar one in the humanitarian sector, but is less widely adopted within developmental circles. It is though a concept already being considered within many safety nets, and could equally be included in developmental programmes designed to build capacity in areas suffering from chronic problems and recurrent shocks. Surge models are also being explored in terms of provision of basic services, such as health services for treatment of malnutrition.

Surge models aim to maintain a service of quality in spite of high fluctuations in demand, by supporting the service provider when the demand goes beyond its capacity. This means considering both financial and human resource aspects, and may need to consider other forms of resources and pipelines in addition.

It is important to note that the surge model can function only in areas where minimum services are in place and where a variety of actors, able to provide the different additional resources required (staff, drugs, material etc.) is present and ready to coordinate in providing support and mobilizing resources ahead of a disaster.

Surge models for static populations - where service provision is typically stronger - are generally easier to create than for mobile populations. More emphasis needs to be placed on finding models of support to mobile communities in times of increased drought risk. There seems to be a considerable gap around developing surge capacity to support changes in demand for static and mobile veterinary services, both commercial and government. Opportunities therefore exist on both the supply and the demand side to close this gap and adapt responses to early action modalities.

Similarly, there is not much evidence of work in the water sector being connected to early warning systems or to early action planning. This is a surprise, considering that wide fluctuations in demand for borehole water between dry and wet seasons are a factor in borehole breakdowns, while access to water is a key factor on migration patterns. In the education sector, there is an even more substantial gap. This is recognised by several of the humanitarian donors, but they are institutionally constrained in their ability to react in this sector, especially pre-emptively. Several programs explore education provision to pastoralist children, e.g. camel libraries in Somali Region, Ethiopia, and extension services for adults e.g. Pastoral Field Schools. However, few examples of surge capacity, or education programming that can scale up in response to a defined trigger have been identified.

COPING WITH INCREASED DEMAND

There are, perhaps, four stages to coping with increased demand. At the simplest level, staff simply cope: they make do with existing resources, work longer hours, prioritise, and spread things more thinly. Then, once things get really bad, plans are changed: an appeal is launched and the nature and scale of activities is changed in response to increased demands.

Between these extremes are two proactive ways in which organisations can anticipate and manage changes in demand. These approaches require additional funding, which can be dealt with in ways described in the previous section: this section of the report only considers human resource management.

The first of these approaches is to consider ways in which resources can be re-allocated within the existing structure. For example, if certain parts of the organisation are experiencing peaks in demand, then people might be deployed from other parts – or other levels – of the organisation to help to meet these needs. This approach to surge capacity requires certain things to be in place:

- Staff must be willing to relocate on a temporary basis. This needs to be part of their contractual arrangement, and financial incentives may be required.
- The organisation must be sufficiently well resourced to allow this redistribution: there must be sufficient 'slack' in the system
- The increased demand must be localised and manageable, when compared to the reach of the whole organisation.

In some development models, it may also be possible to recruit additional trained staff such as nurses, health workers or teachers from those who are currently retired or unemployed. The pool of such staff may not be great, and it makes sense to take a proactive approach to this recruitment.

In the second approach, a strategic decision is made to ensure that sufficient additional capacity is available to manage peaks in demand. These people are additional to the staff running the core programmes, and may be recruited and managed in a range of different ways.

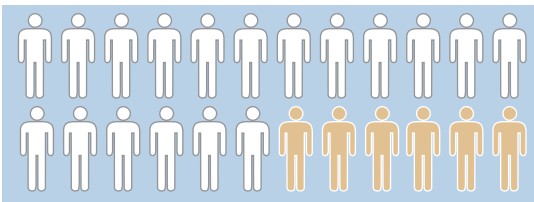
Humanitarian agencies, which face such situations on a regular basis, have evolved four broad models for managing such teams, although it should be recognised that not is perfect: each has drawbacks and each has significant financial implications.

FOUR MODELS OF HUMAN RESOURCE SURGE

Volunteer mobilisation

A number of volunteers are trained and can be use in rotation to provide additional capacity. Depending on the role and the skills required, a larger number of volunteers may be needed than staff.

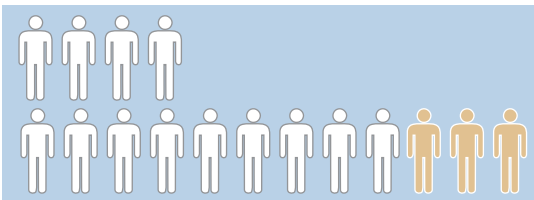
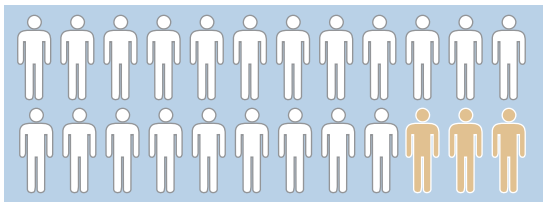
Examples: URCS and KRCS surge model for health and WASH



The big pool.

A large number of specialists is recruited and trained. At the moment they are needed, the majority will not be available, but if the pool is big enough, there will be sufficient who are available for surge.

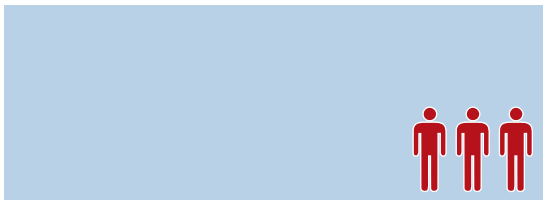
Examples: IFRC FACT and the DFID CHASE-OT Surge team.



Roster and retainer.

A significant number of specialists are trained, and they commit to be available for a period: perhaps 6 weeks per year. During this time they paid a retainer and they guarantee to be available for deployment if called.

Examples: IFRC FACT and the DFID CHASE-OT Retainer Programme



Full time specialists.

A small number of specialists held on the payroll full time, and available for deployment at all times.

Examples: Oxfam HSTs and IFRC HeOps

EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION

There is a growing trend towards safety net programming for the most vulnerable, with the transfer of resources typically in the form of food or cash. These are currently largely donor-funded, but there is an intention to move them within the budgets of the host governments.

Where social protection exists, then the opportunity to expand that protection may also exist. The PSNP in Ethiopia is such an expandable safety net; and the HSNP in Kenya offers similar opportunities, although they have not yet been activated. WFP's seasonal productive assets programme in Uganda can also be seen in a similar vein.

There are perhaps four ways in which safety net provision can be expanded or tweaked in response to an identified risk or an agreed threshold being crossed:

- Increase the level of protection (the amount, the ration) for the target population;
- Change the timing or modality of distributions to make them more appropriate to the identified hazard or risk;
- If the safety net already reaches the extremely vulnerable, pre-register the 'next-most-vulnerable' - the 'almost qualifying', and include them in the distribution once the threshold is exceeded;
- Expand the safety net to qualifying populations in other at-risk areas not currently covered.

Response option analysis for surge models within safety nets should actively consider all four of these approaches.



COMPARING SAFETY NET MODELS ACROSS THE THREE COUNTRIES

PROGRAMME	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	UGANDA
	Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)	Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)	Productive Safety Net within the WFP Country Programme
DESCRIPTION	WFP and GoE Food- and cash-based safety net, mostly conditional on labour inputs towards the creation of productive assets.	GoK, DFID and AUSAID supported unconditional cash transfer programme aimed at the poorest and food insecure.	WFP seasonal resource transfer (food/cash), conditional on labour inputs towards the creation of productive assets and household income support activities to diversify livelihoods
TARGET POPULATION	PSNP supports around 7m people in the ASALs of Ethiopia, although the total varies annually The risk financing mechanism could bring in another 1,5m people on a temporary basis and/or extend the support for 3 further months.	Operating 4 arid counties - phase I supported 69,000 households increasing to up to 400,000 households in phase II (2014). Implemented by NDMA, HSNP Secretariat, HelpAge, FSD/Equity Bank.	Support to 462,000 beneficiaries in the Karamoja region (ASAL of Uganda)
TRIGGER AND FLEXIBILITY	One of the inputs to trigger the Risk Financing Mechanism is the LEAP software, a weather-based monitoring system Risk financing component included for short-term expansion of the safety net to second-tier beneficiaries and duration beyond six months. Registration of two groups takes place - the intended beneficiaries, and the next-most-vulnerable tier.	Triggers under design (operational manual will be produced in first quarter 2014) Multi-year funding with the possibility to move money between years. Risk facility for short-term expansion under design. 370,000 households already registered and poverty ranked. All will receive bank accounts in preparedness for scale up, but only 100,000 will routinely receive payments	Multi-year DFID funding, with the provision of adaptive safety nets, linked to UN Joint Resilience Strategy Biannual Nutrition and Food Security assessment, Pre-Harvest and Harvest Assessment, EFSA is informing programme cycle. The timing of the transfer was brought forward, ahead of the conditional labour component, to strengthen its protective impact.

SUMMARY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EARLY ACTION

Planning for early action should:

- owned by the government;
- take place in advance of the warning;
- adopt a no regrets approach;
- align with national development plans;
- include a realistic strategy for human resources surge capacity;
- be specific about funding sources;
- be specific to the context and the target audience;
- include a comprehensive response option analysis;
- be flexible in terms of location, as far as possible;
- be realistic in terms of the capacity of the partner organisations;
- build on an existing skeleton or framework, wherever that exists, rather than creating a parallel structure;
- include a detailed risk analysis and seek to do no harm.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

What is meant by the phrase, 'enabling environment'? It is the sum of the external factors that will ensure the success – or otherwise – of the early action approach. Or, put another way, it may be that the absence of some of these factors has in the past contributed to the failure of early action, and to the late humanitarian responses in 2010-11 and in previous crises.

COHERENCE, INTEGRATION AND ALIGNMENT

Closer integration between climate change adaptation, resilience work and early warning systems is starting to emerge, and this trend is in the right direction – although there is still much to do.

However, quite a lot of work continues to develop within sectoral silos. Given the multi-sectoral impacts of severe drought, this is clearly counterproductive. More progressive projects are seeking to bridge artificial boundaries between sectors, while cross-border initiatives – important for pastoralist communities – have been developing for some time.

Gaps remain in effective coordination, information management, and leadership. Vertical integration from regional, through national, to sub-national, operational and community levels is also a challenge which affects all parts of the system, from communication of the early warning alerts, through the analysis of their implications, to the preparation of contingency plans.

There is also a substantial, and very uncomfortable, gap between humanitarians and development actors. This appears to be true both within each sector and within institutions: it is most evident within some donors, but also apparent within other stakeholders: governments and NGOs. Given the false preconceptions that permeate this whole area of work – for example, that contingency planning and response are the business of the humanitarians; that development funding is by nature inflexible – this is a dangerous divide, and it must be recognised if it is to be tackled.

Structural issues, silo working, and fundamental differences of perception can be addressed, but they require frequent, deliberate and directed coordination efforts (not just information sharing), infused with a commitment to flexibility and a willingness to compromise. This is a role – and a challenging one – for the national and local platforms

A PLATFORM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The national platform provides the forum for discussion, agreement and planning about the way forward. Such a platform already exists in each of the countries (indeed in some cases there may be several contenders). In most cases it currently serves to present and communicate the situation update, perhaps to discuss early warning in isolation, and support the IPC process. However, the mandate may be less clear around supporting the national early warning mechanism, identifying indicators, setting thresholds, advocating for flexible financing, discussing surge capacity and models, promoting a common approach to contingency planning and championing early action.

Participation at these meetings is generally good, with representatives of the key stakeholders all attending. However, those who attend may not always come with decision-making authority. The meetings are attracting the right institutions, but not the right people.

For key discussions relating to early warning-early action approaches, it is recommended to hold extra-ordinary meetings, to consider specialised external facilitation, and to specifically invite decision makers to attend. The convener of the platform, which should be a government entity, will need to demonstrate leadership – but also ensure inclusion – for this to happen effectively.

The platform can also advocate for the creation of a single repository for information on drought management, early warning, early action and resilience work, to improve the quality of access to information and learning and the flow of information between actors.

PLATFORMS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

There is a need for related platforms at each level of the administrative structure. Ideally, these will reach all the way down to the community. Platforms at each level can contribute early warning information, analysis and planning. Again, such forums already exist – it seems unlikely that they will need to be created.

Two-way communications between the levels are critical from the national platform upwards to the regional, and down to the community. Likewise, if community-level information and traditional drought warnings can be fed into the analysis at district and national levels, that would be so much the better.

Local level platforms will increase the sense of ownership of the warnings, the analysis and the plans, and should strengthen the sustainability of the system as a whole.

A LEGAL BASE AND MANDATE

The platforms need to exist within a legal framework. In some countries this is stronger than others. In Ethiopia, for example, the policy has been put into place, but the supporting legislation is still in the pipeline. In Uganda, the Office of the Prime Minister is coordinating the various early warning systems, but the individual components remain in ‘operational’ ministries like agriculture. In Kenya the administrative structures have just been reorganised as part of a national devolution process.

NDMA AND DEVOLUTION IN KENYA

Following the constitutional referendum in 2010, Kenya has restructured to have just two levels, national and county. 47 counties have been created, and many government responsibilities have been devolved to the county level.

The National Drought Management Agency (NDMA) is a statutory body created in 2011, replacing the previous Drought Management Directorate of the Arid Lands Resource Management Project. NDMA has recruited two staff each into 23 of these counties, which are identified as being at risk of drought. Each County is preparing an annual “County Integrated Development Plan” (CIDP), which outlines investment plans in both the humanitarian and development sectors. The Counties are assuming the primary role in leading emergency preparedness and response, and will also be in the lead with regard to early warning/early action. Several Counties are preparing their own Disaster Management policies and related contingency plans. Thresholds need to be further defined to delineate the point at which central Government will provide additional resources once a risk is triggered.

TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

Levels of trust within the humanitarian system are not what they might be. Relations between regional institutions, national governments, donors, international NGOs, local partners, local authorities, the media at various levels and the affected communities themselves are not always open and transparent.

National governments are felt to have sometimes downplayed the predicted scale of potential disasters, in order to sustain their reputations as food secure. Local authorities, on the other hand, are sometime felt to inflate the projections, in order to attract higher levels of resources. Likewise, the media and some international NGOs are sometimes felt to have inflated the seriousness of a situation, or to have presented chronic food insecurity as a sudden onset crisis.

The end users of each national early warning system must trust its outputs. If, for whatever reason, that trust is lacking, then parallel systems will tend to develop, and the coherence of the overall mechanism will be undermined.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Many of the surge models are designed to build on existing capacity or frameworks. There is always a tendency for organisations to ‘talk-up’ their own capacity, but for contingency plans to be effective and realistic, a pragmatic assessment of capacity is necessary. This area in particular requires a degree of openness and transparency that can be a challenge. Capacity base should lie within the government, through which development and humanitarian actors can provide additional support and capacity building.

THE EVIDENCE BASE

Work with pastoralists and agro-pastoralists generates lots of strong opinions and lots of good ideas. However, there is a relative shortage of properly researched evidence. As a result, it’s not always clear what qualifies as proven good practice, what is a good idea that is not yet supported by rigorous evidence, and what is merely wishful thinking.

There is some, though, and the best known and documented is probably the Milk Matters project, which has been thoroughly documented by Tufts University

MILK MATTERS

A study in 2009 by Tufts University in Ethiopia reported the positive impact of access to milk on child nutrition. It further reported, that according to the pastoralists,

“...the most effective way to improve availability and access to milk for young children is clear; that is through the maintenance of the health and nutritional status of their livestock. They identified broad areas for possible intervention, including animal health, fodder production and water supply that could help to maintain the supply of milk to children during the dry season and drought.”

In the second phase of this project, the impact of this approach was practically demonstrated through programmes in Shinile and Liben Zones of Ethiopia’s Somali Region. These measured the impact of supporting livestock in the dry season on the supply of milk, and on child nutrition. This was documented in a report in May 2012.

While the correlation is clear, this programme targeted pastoralist communities that were chronically food insecure. The challenge is now to replicate and expand this approach, based on an early warning trigger, in targeted areas that have been predicted to be at serious risk in a coming dry season. This would be a cross-sectoral response, since to ensure the supply of milk at the household level we must also ensure the health of the livestock through an extended dry season.

It is important to strengthen the overall evidence base for work in the ASALs, for the cost-effectiveness of early actions, and for the effectiveness of individual approaches. This means taking a transparent, learning approach to evaluation, and publishing findings even when those findings cast doubt on the appropriateness of the chosen approach.

SUMMARY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRULY ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The environment will

- put the affected communities at the heart of decision making;
- has national and local platforms led by government entities, supported by a legal base;
- support dialogue between actors with different perspectives and priorities;
- reward compromise;
- prioritise common goals over individual;
- value openness and transparency;
- emphasise evidence over opinion.

EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION

CONTEXT

The overall system must take into account the context: evolving livelihood patterns, climate change, seasonality, location and culture. It must be able to distinguish between the chronic baseline situation and acute changes resulting from drought.

NATIONAL PLATFORM BASED ON AN EXISTING COORDINATION MECHANISM

PRIOR AGREEMENT ON... JOINT OWNERSHIP OF...

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The early warning is the bedrock of the system, the foundation on which all the other components are built. The information and analysis it provides must have the confidence of its users.

Early warning systems should be held accountable for the predictions they produce, and each system should be measured in terms of its predictive capacity.

The system should be transparent, with public access to the raw data and the post-analysis products.

Early warning systems should be located within government structures and operate within a clear legal framework.

Early warning systems operate at a range of levels from the community to the regional, and these levels need to be integrated and communicated effectively. Each level of the system should ideally contribute to the overall analysis.

The outputs of an early warning system must recognise the diversity of the audience and be appropriate to that audience. Outputs should be contextualised, granular and specific in terms of seasonality, livelihood zone and coping strategies, and community capacity. They should include clear explanations of degree or severity, of trend, of timing, and of the confidence associated with the prediction.

The choice of the language and the medium of the communication should be appropriate to the audience, as should the level of technical complexity.

The providers of early warning messages should be clear about what can be expected of them, in terms of the frequency of the messages, the level of detail, the timeliness and the means of communication.

EARLY WARNING TRIGGERS

Selected indicators should produce consistent objective results across the full range of likely contexts. It is preferable to use a smaller number of high-value indicators.

The primary source for indicators and thresholds should be the products of the national early warning systems. The indicators should be in the public domain.

The triggers for action should be contextualised:

- between different livelihood groups in the same area;
- between different areas for the same livelihood groups;
- with the seasonal calendar, based on the seasonal normal range;
- between groups of different culture and expectations;
- and be able to distinguish between the chronic background and an acute deviation from the norm.

An inclusive, multisector, transparent national platform, hosted by government, with a legal base and a mandate to gain agreement on the key components of the early warning, early action system. The national platform will be linked with platforms at operational levels with thematic or sectoral working groups. The platform should lead on developing key processes such as road maps for contingency planning, as well as on key approaches and surge models. The platforms should be the one-stop-shop for early action.

- Funding for early action should be:
- agreed and quick to release;
 - held as close to the operational level as appropriate;
 - linked to specific triggers, or mobilised by light processes;
 - supplementary to the core budget;
 - linked to specific activities;
 - tied to people and organisations that are already on the ground;
 - transparent and accountable.

FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE FUNDING

INCLUDING CRISIS MODIFIERS AND OTHER MODELS

PREDICTIVE OUTCOME ANALYSIS

SURGE MODELS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NO REGRETS LOW COST ACTIVITIES, OFTEN WITH ASSOCIATED CO-BENEFITS

CONTINGENCY PLANS INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE OPTIONS AND THEORY OF CHANGE

EARLY ACTION

- Planning for early action should:
- take place in advance of the warning;
 - align with national development strategies;
 - include a realistic surge model;
 - be specific about funding;
 - be specific to the context and target group;
 - include options analysis;
 - be flexible in terms of location;
 - be realistic in terms of the capacity of partners;
 - build on an existing programme;
 - include a detailed risk analysis and do no harm.

Early action aims to protect livelihoods and strengthen resilience in places that have been specifically identified as being at risk of drought in the coming season. Early actions can be in any technical sector but will be specific to the local content. They will usually build on development of safety net programming, but can include humanitarian preparedness. An enabling environment for early action will have the following characteristics:

- put the affected communities at the heart of decision making
- support dialogue between actors with different perspectives and priorities
- reward compromise
- prioritise common goals over individual
- value openness and transparency
- emphasise evidence over opinion

PART 2: THE STATE OF EARLY WARNING-EARLY ACTION SYSTEMS

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AT REGIONAL LEVEL

As noted above, the role of early warning systems at the regional level is distinct from the country level role. At the country level, national ownership is an essential part of the enabling environment, and alignment with national development plans is an essential part of response design. The regional level early warning system is not directly tied to a response mechanism.

One of the challenges of national level early warning systems is that there can be a pressure from national governments to play down the severity of the situation, and present an image of national food security. When this happens, there is an opportunity for the regional food security early warning system to present an alternate projection. It is not clear to what degree this actually happens.

There is an interesting inverted parallel here at the national level: when politicians or the media talk up a local situation as a crisis which looks, from the national perspective, more like a bad season.

The regional system has components in Djibouti and Nairobi, and shares information with country level systems. In addition to the moderating role proposed above, it also plays a supportive role providing additional analysis, facilitates cross-border approaches, and supports the development of consensus.

REGIONAL ACTORS AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)

In the September 2011 Summit, Heads of State mandated IGAD to coordinate the implementation of drought resilience strategies: IGAD launched the **Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI)** and the **Regional Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Platform**, which meets in General Assembly once a year. The Platform brings together Member States, UN Agencies and Non-State Actors in order to improve coordination, coherence and alignment.

A **Regional Programming Framework Paper (RPP)** drawing from cross-border issues identified in the **Country Programming Papers (CPPs)** has been developed. The CPPs have been developed by FAO and ILRI on behalf of and in collaboration with the Member States and should reflect multi-stakeholders and multi-sectors priorities, strategies and institutional arrangements for drought resilience. CPPs cover the following thematic areas: 1. Natural Resource Management; 2. Market access and trade; 3. Livelihood support and basic social services; 4. Pastoral Disaster Risk Management; 5. Research and Knowledge Management and Technology Transfer; and 6. Conflict prevention, resolution and Peace building.

The **IGAD Second Drought Resilience Summit** took place on the 27th of March 2014, on “*Investing Differently to End Drought Emergencies in the IGAD Region*”, to take stock on the progress made since the Nairobi Summit on “Ending Drought Emergencies” in September 2011. A key outcome from the Summit was the strong commitment made to strengthen Early Warning and Early Action agenda and the risk management approach.

FEWS NET

The Famine Early Warning Network is a well-established provider of early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity. Created in 1985 by USAID after devastating famines in East and West Africa, it provides objective evidence-based analysis to help decision-makers and relief agencies plans for and respond to humanitarian crises through monthly reports and maps, which detail current and projected food insecurity using the IPC classifications.

Further information is available at <http://www.fews.net/>

FOOD SECURITY NUTRITION WORKING GROUP (FSNWG)

An important policy and programme harmonization fora at the regional level is the FSNWG, which covers some 13 countries in East and Central Africa. Its stated goal is to provide an up-to-date food security and nutrition situation analysis, in addition to offer a forum to build consensus on critical issues facing policy and intervention. The FSNWG food security and nutrition situation analysis built on data from country level is

particularly well received by partners and donors, as it provides an important overview and framework for prioritization across the region. This information is shared through its monthly meetings in Nairobi. The FSNWG also supports learning through the sharing of lesson learnt and report published on cross-border issues.

However, the FSNWG has shown to be weakly linked to country level processes and decision making. A review of the FSNWG role and responsibilities would be needed, particularly with respect to IGAD bodies, and the national early warning systems and platforms.

Further information is available at <http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/east-central-africa/fsnwg>

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR ACTION FOR DROUGHT RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

In April 2012, the **Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth** was launched with African governments and international partners to strengthen a shared commitment to build resilience in areas in the Horn of Africa. It brings together donors and international development partners to work with local leadership and regional bodies to change the way the international community does business and put resilience at the heart of development efforts in the Horn of Africa and Sahel. The Global Alliance was charged with articulating and institutionalizing a common vision of improved communication, coordination, and collaboration within and between its member organizations to increase aid effectiveness in drought-prone areas of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

REGIONAL LEVEL ADDED VALUE: JOINT PLANNING AND JOINT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Regional collaboration and coordination bring a particular added value to national level operations. Forms of collaboration at regional level amongst donors, governments and implementing partners are many, and two kinds are particular significant: those concerned with joint planning, such as the EU-sponsored initiative SHARE, and those concerned with research and learning, including Drylands Learning and Capacity-building Initiative - DLCI (former Regional Learning and Advocacy Programme - REGLAP).

The European Union's '**Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience**' (SHARE) initiative was born out of the 2011 Horn of Africa food crisis. SHARE is a joint humanitarian-development approach to improve the ability of people, communities and countries to face persistent and acute emergencies. With a package of **more than €270 million**, SHARE initially aims to boost resilience in the Eastern HoA countries: **Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia** by addressing recovery from drought, building on emergency interventions; strengthening the livelihood opportunities of agro-pastoral communities; improving public services and boosting the response to crises.

DLCI (former REGLAP) describes itself as 'an independent resource and facilitation organization registered in Kenya but operating throughout the Horn of Africa.' Its mission is 'to promote evidence based policy and practice amongst dryland stakeholders.' DLCI has published reports and documents and facilitated a range of round-table discussions in conjunction with the IAWG, FSNWG, UNDP, NDMA (Kenya), and so on.

REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUPS

At regional level, different working groups bring together stakeholders on focus areas of particular importance.

The **Inter-Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness (IAWG)** provides a forum for regional organisations - NGOs, the International Federation of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies - to enhance information exchange and regional coordination in order to respond to emergencies in a timely and cost efficient manner. The IAWG was established following discussions during the OCHA Regional Contingency Planning exercise in June 2002. The IAWGs advocates for effective integration of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation into humanitarian and relief interventions, and to foster collaboration between humanitarian partners for inclusive and responsive humanitarian policies and systems. The increased collaboration between partner organisations, fostered by the IAWG, recognises that the efforts of individual organisations can and should complement each other in emergency response for the greater benefit of affected communities.

The **Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE)** is an open network that serves the unique purpose of reaching out to education practitioners working in emergencies and crises around the world. The network is led by a steering group composed of UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, the International Refugee Committee, Refugee Education Trust, CARE USA, Save the Children Alliance, the World Bank and then Norwegian Refugee Council. In late 2013, it was proposed that for an East Africa regional working group to be created under its banner, with a staff member from the INEE secretariat based in Nairobi. The preliminary meeting identified a number of areas of potential focus for the working group, which included pastoralist education, and it would cover preparedness and risk reduction as well as response in the acute phase.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EARLY ACTION AMONGST REGIONAL ACTORS

WFP - THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PACKAGE AND ENHANCED OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

As a result of the Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Contingency Planning that was carried out and endorsed by the Executive Board in October 2009, WFP rolled out the **Emergency Preparedness and Response Package (EPRP)** which is a practical and action-oriented tool that replaces Contingency Planning and guides WFP Country Offices in establishing adequate preparedness and response capacity for emergencies for all WFP Country Offices from 2012 onwards. It is a three-part process that includes (i) the analysis of contextual risks which could have an impact on WFP's internal and external environment; (ii) a set of very practical preparedness and response actions checklists that combine key elements of contingency planning, pandemic planning and business continuity planning to arrive at a holistic approach towards emergency preparedness and response at the field level; and (iii) a guide to WFP Regional Bureaus on maintaining a minimum level of preparedness in countries where WFP is not present (oversight countries). To ensure WFP's readiness to respond to emerging and continuing crises world over, the EPRP as an operational requirement within WFP guides the Country Offices in progressively matching emergency response capabilities to risks. It is also applicable for Area and Sub-Offices, and can be easily tailored to their varying structure and functions. In addition, the EPRP incorporates the aspects of partnership and capabilities of relevant partners in the mitigation actions to ensure a comprehensive preparedness and response to humanitarian challenges looming on the horizon. Additionally, WFP has put in place the Capabilities Partnership Programme (CAPRO), which provides core principles to guide WFP's engagement with leading national institutions responsible for emergency preparedness and response - primarily national disaster management authorities (NDMAs) - applying a whole-of-society approach where possible. Under CAPRO, WFP country offices strengthen the capacities of national disaster management actors, in line with WFP's mandate and recognized areas of expertise.

Other internal adjustments pursued by WFP to enhance operational effectiveness include tools to utilize existing resources in advance of donor contributions to allow for faster procurement and food delivery, in order to more promptly respond to immediate needs. These mechanisms include the **Immediate Response Account (IRA)**, a lifesaving mechanism supporting WFP's emergency response capacity and the Forward Purchase Facility (FPF) which enables WFP to purchase food in advance of confirmed donor contributions.

The FPF is a special account which allows WFP to buy food according to regional trends and position it in strategic locations before it is needed by projects, so is ready when needs arise and contributions are made. Thanks to this, WFP is better prepared and more responsive to early warnings, and able to enhance early action. The FPF accelerates food deliveries— in East Africa its use has reduced the average lead time from the confirmation of contribution to the delivery of food to beneficiaries from 108 days to 19 days. It also enables procurement of food in developing countries at the right time during the harvesting season thereby reducing costs. It supports emergency responses with strategically located food inventories that are rapidly accessible to respond to immediate needs. Thanks to the FPF, costs also have seen a reduction through economies of scale. Since its inception, the approved level of the FPF has steadily increased as the geographical coverage of operations has expanded. In 2013 alone, total FPF purchases reached 471,000 mt. WFP has now embedded the process in its supply chains and risk management systems.

Yohanes opens an irrigation channel to his tomato field in Mambere-Genet in Tigray region of Ethiopia.
Photo: Jiro Ose/Save the Children



DESINVENTAR - DISASTER INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (WWW.DESINVENTAR.NET)

Until the mid-1990's, systematic information about the occurrence of disasters of small and medium impact and disaggregated data about the effects of large scale disasters was not available in most countries in the world. From 1994, the creation of a common conceptual and methodological framework was begun in Latin America by groups of researchers, academics, and institutional actors linked to the Network of Social Studies in the Prevention of Disasters in Latin America (Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina). These groups conceptualised a system of acquisition, collection, retrieval, query and analysis of information about disasters of small, medium and greater impact, based on pre-existing official data, academic records, newspaper sources and institutional reports in nine countries in Latin America. This effort was then picked up by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNISDR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) who sponsored the implementation of similar systems in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. The developed conceptualisation, methodology and software tool is called Disaster Inventory System - DesInventar - to which Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia subscribed. This is a tool that helps to analyse the disaster trends and their impacts in a systematic manner. With increased understanding of the disaster trends and their impacts, better prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures can be planned to reduce the impact of disasters on the communities.

The development of DesInventar, with its conception that makes visible disasters from a local scale (town or equivalent), facilitates dialogue for risk management between actors, institutions, sectors, provincial and national governments.

EARLY WARNING - EARLY ACTION IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia has an impressive capacity to respond to drought with traditional food aid, and in recent years has taken some strides to replace its response model with a risk management approach.

THE NATIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

The early warning system in Ethiopia is coordinated by Early Warning and Response Directorate (EWRD) of the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS), which falls under the Ministry of Agriculture. There is a well-defined coordination structure in Ethiopia that includes a wide range of humanitarian actors. The federal EWS structure includes a central EWS coordination unit and a EWS Committee which contains representatives from the DRMFSS, other Ministries and NGOs. Early warning information is disseminated on a monthly basis in Amharic and English.

The humanitarian architecture in Ethiopia is complex, as befits the size of the country, its federal nature, and the multi-hazard nature of the context. It includes a number of thematic task forces and sectoral working groups, which are duplicated at the state level and below. Early warning legislation only exists at national level and thus in practice there is not a standard implementation of the federal structure at regional, zonal and woreda levels.

LEAP INDEX: (LIVELIHOODS, EARLY ASSESSMENT AND PROTECTION INDEX)

The LEAP Index, developed in 2008 by the Government of Ethiopia in collaboration with WFP, is a computer software system that converts agro-meteorological data into crop or rangeland estimates. These provide a transparent and verifiable way to trigger contingent funds to enable an early response. In particular, they are used to quantify the financial resources needed to scale up the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in case of a major drought – see below, under surge models. At present data collection under LEAP is only in relation to food security.

THE SEASONAL FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT

The multi-agency seasonal food security assessment remains a central plank of the overall mechanism, albeit one that remains focused on food-based humanitarian response. The findings of this assessment are processed to separate chronic food insecurity from short-term acute conditions, prior to publication. The resultant report, produced in January or February, details the food and non-food requirements needs and a request for support from donors. This process is quite contentious within the humanitarian community in Ethiopia; for example, in February 2011 the figures were amongst the lowest in recent years, which reportedly undermined efforts to implement a roadmap for interventions, though these were subsequently revised in July 2011.

The system uses a range of inputs and baseline materials, including:

- A woreda-level risk profile that covers over 200 woredas;
- HEA baselines for over 150 livelihood zones;
- Weekly (telephone) and written monthly monitoring reports at the woreda level;
- Reports from the LEAP software, which combines satellite and ground-based data into crop or rangeland production estimates;
- Weather forecasts from National Meteorological Agency.

The process by which this report is produced, and subsequent decisions made by government, donors and implementing agencies, has not always been sufficiently swift to allow food aid to reach the most affected people on time.

A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR EARLY ACTION

The natural home for a national platform on early warning early action in Ethiopia is the Disaster Risk Management Technical Working Group, which is led by DRMFSS. This meets monthly and brings together an appropriate group of stakeholders. A number of Task Forces report to this group, including agriculture and livestock, health and nutrition, water, and food. Task forces are made up of representatives from government, UN agencies, NGOs and donors.

THRESHOLDS FOR ACTION

With the partial exception of the LEAP software, formal thresholds have not been set for responses, either early, protective responses, or traditional food distributions. Rather, the humanitarian actors gather in a Task Force and jointly agree on the appropriate measures once the forecasts and data have been collected and documented.

SURGE MODELS IN ETHIOPIA

By far the largest surge model in Ethiopia is contained within the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The PSNP can be considered to have transferred around 7 million people from repeated annual humanitarian food aid to a predictable safety net programme. Around 85% of the participants participate in public works, in exchange for a monthly food ration or its cash equivalent. The PSNP does not cover the whole country, but it does cover much of the areas at highest risk of drought.

The PSNP has a built-in contingency fund of 20%, which is designed to protect the programme against global changes in cereal prices, local inflation, and variable wage rates. In addition to this contingency, there is a Risk Financing Mechanism (RFM) held at the federal level, which is designed to allow the caseload to increase through unconditional transfers to around another 1.5 million people.

Alternatively, food and cash assistance can be extended for an additional 3 months under the RFM during periods when food insecure people are affected by unpredicted shocks. This flexibility can be quickly targeted to areas identified as being under additional drought stress.

In practice, however, the RFM has only been triggered once, in 2011, and the funds were probably released too late to have much protective impact on the drought-affected population. Since this time there has not been a need to invoke the RFM, and it will be interesting to evaluate how the mechanism performs when it is called upon.

EXAMPLES OF EARLY ACTION FROM ETHIOPIA

Save the Children, CARE, Mercy Corps, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), have used the crisis modifier (see page 25) in the USAID funded PLI II project (Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative Phase II). In addition ECHO have also funded crisis modifiers. Using these in the USAID PLI II project and the ECHO PILLAR IV project (Preparedness Improves Livelihoods and Resilience Phase IV), organisations were able to respond quickly and efficiently in the following ways:

- Emergency livestock health interventions
- Livestock supplementary feeding
- Water infrastructure rehabilitation
- Livestock diversification
- Commercial destocking using market approaches
- Slaughter destocking

Within the PLI programmes the crisis modifier mechanisms have been funded by OFDA since 2009. Activation of the crisis modifier requires the relevant consortium member, on receiving early warning indicators in their operational area, to convene a meeting of a Crisis Response Committee, composed of other consortium members. This committee will then approve the request for funds in conjunction with the EWS Technical Working Group composed of government and community partners in addition. After approval this is then submitted through a process to USAID/OFDA facilitating fast authorisation and release of funds for specific livelihoods protection and early action activities. Evaluation has shown how the use of the crisis modifier has helped to protect development gains and has stabilised both household incomes while reducing unsustainable asset sales and losses. These have also proven the cost effectiveness of early action activities and linking development and emergency interventions.

COMMERCIAL DESTOCKING: PROGRAMMES REVIEWED BY TUFTS AGAINST LEGS STANDARDS

In 2011, Mercy Corps and International Rescue Committee provided loans to encourage an increase in livestock purchases, to individual traders and livestock marketing cooperatives respectively, in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. This is acknowledged to be a challenging environment to work, with poor infrastructure and high levels of political instability. Both the cooperatives and the individual traders reported profits from the enterprise, and the pastoralists were under no compulsion to sell, and received a fair though depressed price, reflecting the drought-stressed nature of the animals.

Lessons were documented both for the implementing agencies and for LEGS (the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards). It may be that earlier destocking would have provided pastoralists with the chance to retain a higher proportion of the value of their herd, although people may have been reluctant to sell at an earlier stage.



Abadit , 46, feeds her hybrid cows in Freweini in Tigray region of Ethiopia.
Photo: Jiro Ose/Save the Children

EARLY WARNING - EARLY ACTION IN KENYA

THE NATIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

At the national level, the early warning system is contained within the National Drought Management Agency (NDMA), with a process of devolution to the county level underway since March 2013.

The early warning system combines data collection from the community level with remote imaging data, and compares these against longer-term trends and norms. A large number of indicators are tracked and predictions are produced at the county level on a monthly basis. These are readily available through the NDMA website.

TESTING THE PREDICTIVE CAPACITY OF THE NEW SYSTEM

Although the new NDMA methodology is yet untested as a predictive tool in a drought situation, when the approach is rolled backwards over past data it produces some impressive results, as the diagram below indicates. Data is from Turkana, and has been simplified for clarity.

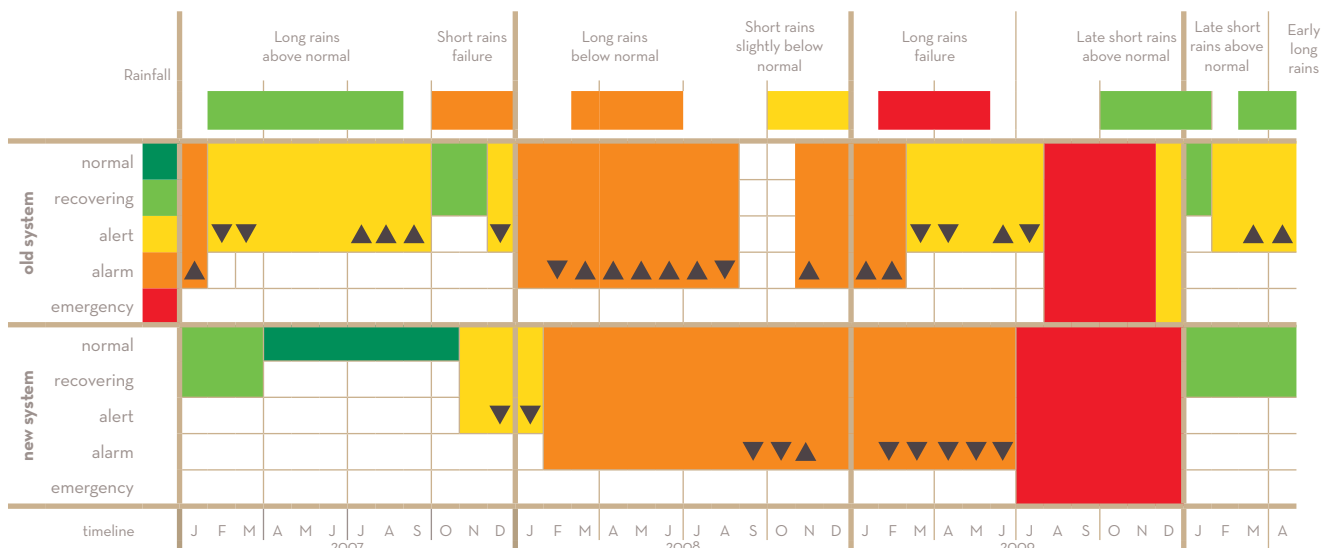
In this instance, the old system appears to be producing inconsistent results over time, while the results of the new system seem much more intuitively correct. While both systems would have generated an accurate early warning in January or February of 2008, the old system did not have the confidence of the donors or the implementing agencies. The concept of 'no regrets' programming was not widely accepted at the time.

In the event, humanitarian responses typically started in May 2009, and escalated after the appeal was launched in July.

DEVOLUTION

As noted above, the process of devolution in Kenya includes the NDMA and the early warning system. The NDMA has appointed two officers in each county. The system is new, and it is not clear if this will provide sufficient capacity at the county level, or indeed how the county-level contingency planning process will take place at this level. It would be a missed opportunity if, for example, the contingency planning focused on traditional responses to the consequences of drought, rather than early actions to reduce those consequences and protect livelihoods.

A number of partners, including WFP, are working with NDMA to strengthen their capacity in a wide range of technical sectors.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: WFP KENYA

WFP Kenya, through its Country Programme (2014-2018), will partner with county-level structures (including the County Steering Groups, the NDMA and sector groups) to strengthen their preparedness and response capacities to address short and long-term hunger.

Technical assistance will be provided in a range of areas to build capacity according to identified needs. These will include risk analysis; disaster risk reduction; contingency planning and stakeholder mapping, with an emphasis on gender-sensitive response planning; food and nutrition security and market assessments, and the integration of key recommendations into county development plans; and strengthened early warning systems.

Other challenges have been identified within the early warning system in Kenya. Insecurity has been found to be a major contributing factor in turning a drought into a disaster. Early warnings in the past have not consistently resulted in early action. Early warning messages will need to be translated to local languages to gain acceptance at the community level in order to be used as a basis for local planning and operations.

A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR EARLY ACTION

The Kenya Food Security Steering Group is the most likely and appropriate platform for a national discussion on early action, given its role domestically and its participants.

County level platforms in drought-affected districts are in the process of creation, through the devolved NDMA staff at county level.

SURGE MODELS IN KENYA

With funding from ECHO, Concern has developed a pilot surge model, in the health sector. For example, using ECHO funding, Concern have piloted a very clear surge model in Marsabit County for community-based management of acute malnutrition. The process considers existing capacities and trends, and can respond by quickly increasing staffing levels to meet increased demand. Thresholds are set locally at the level of the health facility, considering the capacity of the health centre and the usual trend of caseload.

While the surge model would allow overall resources to be directed towards the areas with the greatest needs, either from other health structures or from the referral centre, it is not clear that it would be sufficient to cope with a situation of increased needs covering the whole programme area. Since it uses a 'lagging' indicator, it may not be able to predict a more widespread increase in demand, and could perhaps be complemented by an additional mechanism.

However, it does provide a good example of contextualised triggers and associated response.

For more information, please refer to: "Meeting peaks in demand for nutrition services through government health systems : a description of Concern Kenya's surge model for community-based management of acute malnutrition" by Concern or contact: Yacob Yishak (Concern) yacob.yishak@concern.net

Kenya Red Cross surge model is presented on page 46 under the Uganda section together with the surge model of Uganda Red Cross.

EXAMPLES OF EARLY ACTION IN KENYA: HUNGER SAFETY NET PROGRAMME

The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) is an unconditional cash transfer programme that provides a safety net for the chronically poor in the four counties of Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera and Wajir by making regular, predictable cash transfers every two months to vulnerable households. It has surge capacity built in, with the capacity to scale up the transfers during drought emergencies.

Funding for the pilot programme was provided by DFID and AusAid, and the programme was operated under the Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands. Implementation is delivered through contracted service partners including Care Kenya, Oxfam GB, World Vision, Helpage International, Save the Children, FSD Kenya and Equity Bank. Evaluations have shown that the programme is having a significant impact on increasing consumption expenditure and reducing extreme poverty even in the face of severe droughts. In addition there is also some evidence to show that these transfers reduce negative coping strategies by beneficiaries in the case of drought and food price increases.

The value of transfer has been increased during the Phase 1 cycle and in addition there has been a doubling of the transfer payment in July/August 2011 to support households in coping with drought.

In its second phase from 2013-17, the HSNP will grow to 400,000 beneficiaries. The HSNP is also now a core part of Kenya's National Safety Net Programme, approved in July 2013 providing a framework for principal cash transfer programmes in Kenya. A principal objective of Phase 2 is also to improve the flexibility of the model to include more people in difficult times and increase the modalities of payment. Part of this will also include an improvement in the wealth ranking process to enable a quicker process for scaling up.

SAVE THE CHILDREN EVIDENCE ON CASH TRANSFERS FOR EDUCATION IN GARISSA, KENYA

Evaluation of the HSNP has shown that there is no direct evidence to show that it has had significant impact on education enrolment or attendance rates, or on education expenditure by households. However, since December 2012 Save the Children in partnership with DFID has been piloting a cash transfer scheme for Education in Garissa, Northern Kenya. This distributes monthly conditional and unconditional cash transfers to 3,000 poor households with children of school-going age in Garissa County. Conditionality is based on at least one child from the household regularly attending school. The immediate goal of the programme is to reduce financial barriers to accessing primary education. However, an additional goal is to provide evidence for the effectiveness of integration of "education subsidies" within social safety net and cash transfer programming. Though the levels of cash transfers received are pre-agreed there are mechanisms in-built to review the appropriateness of transfer levels in the face of or during times of crisis such as drought.

Although still in pilot phase initial results had shown that the project has had a positive impact on enrolment consistently as compared to control groups. Save the Children is currently exploring opportunities to scale up the pilot to additional counties in Kenya.

For more information contact: Karen Poore, Karen.poore@savethechildren.org.

A group of students at a primary school in Kenya.
Photo: Colin Crowley/Save the Children



EARLY WARNING – EARLY ACTION IN UGANDA

The scale of the drought problem is less in Uganda than in the other focus countries. The main area of attention is the Karamoja sub-region, with other parts of the northern and eastern region also facing drought. Flood and landslides are affecting mostly the south eastern region and the western districts of the country. Conflict is also an important hazard which reduces the capacity of the population to cope with the above mentioned natural hazards.

Over the last few years there have been substantial changes in pastoralist communities, with a tendency to settle, due to various constraints, and a focus given to diversifying livelihoods in a view to increase resilience. At the same time, the security situation has generally improved. WFP has moved from providing emergency food aid on a protracted basis, to other longer-term approaches aimed at building the resilience of communities, including safety nets.

That said, the food security situation in northeast Uganda remains chronically poor, despite the absence of an acute crisis in 2010/11: for example, GAM rates in most districts of Karamoja are currently above 10%, and are close to 15% in two districts. After series of drought events in the period 2006-2009 where the population didn't have time to recover fully between 2 disasters, the whole sub-region remains in a very fragile state, at risk of falling back into a crisis state should a hazard affect the livestock or the crop production.

THE NATIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

There is not, yet, a national early warning system in Uganda. There are a number of different pieces and projects, some of them specific to a single hazard like drought or flood, often specific to a single area, while some elements cover the whole country. In general, due to the limited resources available at national level, there is less emphasis on a country wide approach than in the other two countries visited, and more emphasis on locally developed systems; although the district level resources remain limited.

There is a process underway to bring better coordination of assessments and early warning systems, and to generate a single set of alerts. There is an acknowledged need for stronger linkages, and representatives of various line ministries are being brought together into the National Emergency Coordination and Operation Centre (known as NECOC), under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). There is a plan to include analysis of remote sensing data in the coming years. OPM plans to release an update every ten days with a 3-month horizon, with the first update due in early 2014.

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION OF EWS: OPM AND MAAIF

The Drought EWS (DEWS) in Uganda is in a period of change, and roles and responsibilities are in transition.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) leads the national process that feeds into the production of the national monthly food security update and into IPC analysis, with support from WFP, FAO and INGOs, and these reports are updated several times a year.

The DEWS, has been developed in full coordination with government representatives from national and local level, CBOs, UN agencies, INGOs and projects like FEWSNET, CEWARN, and embedded within the existing administrative governmental structure at local level. Its overall management is gradually being brought within the national government system and will probably be housed by MAAIF, as this is an 'operational' ministry with the strongest EW unit.

Meanwhile the mandate of the OPM is to coordinate the various existing EWS and to release frequent updates and warnings at national level, as well as decide when to activate the hazard specific national contingency plans. It seeks to bring representatives from each relevant ministry under one roof through various for a like NECOC, the national DRR platform or the EW sub-group of the DRR platform.

For more information, please contact: Solomon Elungat (OPM), elungats@yahoo.com or Michael Mangano (ACTED), Michael.mangano@acted.org

A woman whistles to call the wind as she separates grains from chaff near the town of Kotido, Karamoja Region Uganda.
Photo: Victor Lacken/ IFRC



At the moment, humanitarian actors are picking information from the following surveillance and predictive elements.

THE DEPARTMENT OF METEOROLOGY AND MINISTRY OF WATER ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Meteorology is under the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) (though it is in the process of becoming an autonomous agency). It produces seasonal weather forecasts, based on regional forecasts by ICPAC (IGAD). The main limitations of these products are that they are too broad in scale (by region), insufficiently accurate and not well adapted for the purpose of early warning. For example, while they do predict the total rainfall amount to be received over a season, the expected onset and offset of the rainy seasons, they do not predict the rainfall pattern in terms of rainfall distribution over the season which is crucial for the purpose of early warning.

In addition, MoWE undertakes hydrology monitoring.

OTHER SURVEILLANCE AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The Ministry of Health leads on nutrition surveillance. Nutritional surveillance is one of several components that feed into the seasonal assessment, which in turn feeds into the IPC report for Uganda.

In May and December there is a Food and Nutrition Security Assessment, supported by WFP/UNICEF, which informs programming decisions of many stakeholders. Moreover, FAO leads early mid-season crop production assessment to help predict qualitatively and quantitatively the harvest to come and make decisions accordingly.

M TRAC

UNICEF has a number of innovative projects that use SMS mobile phone technology. These variously allow regular data collection, seek people's opinions on issues of importance, and allow surveillance. These projects are not currently linked to the EW system.

These projects demonstrate the potential for data collection and two-way communication through mobile phones, and could also be used to improve targeting of interventions once an alert has been issued.

A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR EARLY ACTION

The most likely home for the national platform is the National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform, although there are also Karamoja-specific coordination mechanisms that could be considered.

WFP, FAO and UNICEF have a common strategy for resilience building in Karamoja. In parallel, government projects for resilience and development in Karamoja, such as the Second Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, are run through as special projects through OPM, rather than through the local authorities, under the guidance of two ministers.

SURGE MODELS IN UGANDA

There is little evidence of surge models in place at this time, although some projects offer potential:

UGANDA RED CROSS (URC) AND KENYA RED CROSS (KRC)

Uganda Red Cross - like Kenya Red Cross - have a programme that provides surge capacity into the health and water sectors.

The RC surge model is a volunteer based approach, initially funded by ECHO and supported by other donors like Norwegian Red Cross. URCS and KRCS have started implementing this approach in Karamoja and Turkana sub-regions, applied to the water and health sectors (having it fully efficient is still a work in progress). It is built on community-based programming, which itself acts as a complement to local authority service provision. The caseload is a mixture of chronic and acute, with an intention to provide surge capacity on the basis of a warning, although it is not yet embedded in a formalised system. KRCS and URCS are still working with the local government authorities in defining thresholds to serve as a trigger for such surge.

Using their network of trained volunteers based in the communities, those Red Cross societies provide support to the local government and to the population when drought alerts are issued by their respective Departments of Meteorology. They offer extra screening services in the communities with early detection and referral of malnutrition cases (and avoid moderate cases to fall into severe cases), support to the health care workers in terms of managing the case load when administering treatment at the health unit, support to the communities in timely fixing of broken boreholes and avoid additional breakdown in times of water shortage where the pressure on the remaining water points is high. They are in the process of supporting the local government in mobilizing additional resources from partners working in the region (ex: drugs and therapeutic food for malnourished children, spare parts for broken boreholes - though the latter are not easily available in remote places) to complement the support required for an efficient model.

As the water model relies on an external supply of spare parts, the RC contribution is the skilled volunteers. This is intended to bring sustainability through partnership with the authorities, but it has become a constraint in some locations.

In Kenya, the county level contingency plans formally recognise this RC surge capacity.

WFP FLEXIBILITY

WFP have a range of programmes under their PRRO and their country programme, which could be described variously as safety net and resilience building. WFP have demonstrated flexibility in the past responding to changes in the environment by tweaking existing programming rather than creating new projects - for instance, the timing of the seasonal resource transfer within the Productive Safety Net in the Country Programme was brought forward, ahead of the conditional labour component, to strengthen its protective impact.

PART 3: THE WAY FORWARD

This report highlights the characteristics of a well-functioning Early Warning Early Action (EW EA) system and the most important areas for **further investment** to address substantial gaps.

This report provides concrete recommendations to governments, implementing partners and academic institutions on the way forward, as well as for bridging the gap between humanitarian and development actors. This requires moving beyond placing labels on organizations for **synchrony, collaboration and strong coordination** in support of IGAD and governments strategies.

We, IFRC, OXFAM, Save the Children, WFP and FAO are calling for a serious shift in mind-set and for all concerned to work together to bring about **long-term and sustainable change** in the lives of vulnerable people. The way we invest must continue to change at a faster path and at scale.

We look forward to taking this journey together with our key partners and stakeholders as we strongly believe in partnership to do more and better and we commit to be held accountable on our progress. Therefore, in addition to the detailed recommendations provided in *Annex 3*, **we are committed to actively support the following:**

→ DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVIDENCE BASE AND IMPROVE THE ANALYSIS

The national level early warning systems are moving in the right direction, but they are not yet all producing consistent warnings, and where they are, these warnings are not yet being used with confidence. Moving towards common situation analysis and standardized EW systems within national governments will improve harmonization of action taken. There is a need to work closely with meteorological services to ensure weather forecasts are packaged in a way the practitioners can take action upon it. They need to be coherent, and user-oriented. A strengthened evidence base and ability to quantify the predictive capacity of different approaches will increase confidence in the system overall, and identify more successful approaches. This report has also presented a variety of successful early warning and early action initiatives. These successes need to be built on, replicated, and scaled up as well as institutionalised within government and organisational processes. Additionally gathering and disseminating the evidence base on, “taking the risk of working with risk” even in the event a hazard does not happen, is of benefit for all parties (donors, implementers and communities).

→ DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOLS AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

In the absence of confidence in the national early warning systems, agencies triangulate using a wide range of tools, but there is little agreement over the selection of appropriate **indicators**. In particular, there is a missed opportunity in using predictive cross-sector indicators, especially in sectors like health and nutrition where surveillance indicators lag behind events. Likewise, there is very little use of formal **thresholds** to provide triggers for early action. For action to be triggered, clear and accountable decision making structures, roles and responsibilities for EWEA at all levels should be in place. This calls for common triggers and protocols to be in place, in order to escalate early warning to decision makers at the local, national, regional and global level to mobilize early action..

As information is available and trusted, the responsibility of acting lies in the system of interconnected relations between and within agencies. Clear processes for triggering, escalating, recording and justifying decisions, whether they are to respond or not, should be formalized within organizations and align with government processes. Between organizations, contingency planning and early action triggers at local level should be harmonized and consolidated, based on working examples of this in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. This includes agreement on indicators or a way to select indicators for action.

However, the role of implementing agencies and donors is merely in support of a response. The main leadership and coordination duties lie with the national and/or local government. To build this capacity, and ensure that coordination is as effective as possible, it is critical to advocate for both development and humanitarian actors to submit annual workplans and budgets to government authorities at the national and local level, so that government is in a better position to plan investments in early warning and early action, as well as EPRPs.

➔ IMPLEMENTATION OF A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH, INCLUDING FUNDING TO IMPROVE ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION

Early action means taking steps before disaster has struck – before damages are done, malnutrition has increased and mortality rates have sky rocketed. Early action implies working with risks. Advocacy must take place for wider acceptance to work with risk level and not only damages. This implies not only the full involvement and commitment of implementing agencies, but also the collaboration and coordination of governments and donors alike. Agencies should actively advocate for making preparedness funds available based on agreed “acceptable” probability levels of risk. Clear co-ordination of early action funding / flexible risk financing under local government and alignment with ongoing development programming is needed. Work should also be undertaken with communities, local government and national government to pilot the use of funds for preparedness mechanisms considering both rapid and slow onset disasters. Additional exploration of new mechanisms with development and humanitarian partners and the private sector also has great potentials.

➔ STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PLATFORMS

Ultimately, national government should be the leader and coordinator of response. Agencies, working closely in partnerships, should strive to build their capacity, and support their effort to integrate EW/EA into their annual development plans and budgets.

➔ STRENGTHENING OF INTERNAL CAPACITY FOR SYNERGIES BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Resilience work tends to be cross-sectoral by its nature, while much of the pilot work around early action is still undertaken vertically. Yet the integrated nature of the problems resulting from drought – access to food, water, services and markets, infrastructure, insecurity and so on – requires integrated solutions. Operational agencies should work to bring early action and resilience programming into a common framework where each can learn from the other. Contingency planning, for example, can be housed within development projects, and supported by technical expertise from the humanitarian side.

➔ STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH EARLY WARNING AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Early Action needs to be built at various levels that act in synergies to provide the needed response. At community level, contingency planning efforts may choose to wait for national guidance to be prepared, or build something that will work in the interim until such guidance is available.

At the district (or equivalent) level, work can begin on identifying appropriate reference years and describing the trajectory that they imply for different wealth and livelihood groups. Approaches to community- or district-level contingency plans can be piloted in coordination with the development of national guidance.

Support to the participation of vulnerable populations in decision-making and political processes, decentralized government, and national legislation to establish famine prevention measures and responsibilities in law may help increase government accountability to vulnerable populations. Those with the greatest capacity to avert crisis are, at best, only weakly accountable to those at risk.

Community level engagement can provide invaluable insight and inputs into national level guidance. Although lots would have been learnt from the community level EW EA systems, due to the timeframe and capacity available, this research project couldn't address that level but that will be addressed in the coming months.

→ STRENGTHENING OF INFORMATION SHARING, DISSEMINATION AND LEARNING FORUMS

Successes, as well as failures, should be shared amongst regions and amongst partners. Information sharing, dissemination and learning forums should be regularly organized on best practices identified and on steps to incorporate into development programming. Additionally, continuous support to peer to peer learning between organizations, governments and countries should be in place to encourage the adoption of best practices and lessons learnt.

→ ANALYSIS OF LINKAGES BETWEEN EARLY ACTION, RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Work is underway to better understand climate change adaptation, and to measure and strengthen resilience. The links between these approaches and early action work are clear, but they have not been explicitly explored. It is already evident that CCA projects, which are designed to mitigate long-term changes, can include added components that allow communities to respond to changes in a shorter timeframe also.

→ ANALYSIS CONFLICT VARIANTS IN EARLY WARNING AND SURGE MODELS

The role of insecurity is not sufficiently widely recognised as a contributing factor to drought impact. There is an opportunity to explore in more detail how measures of insecurity could be used as a trigger for additional support, and what needs to be considered in deploying surge capacity in these contexts. It is also critical to strengthen linkages between early action and conflict prevention and mitigation. This is an important issue to access populations in need as well as to safeguard the gains that have been made in resilience building.

→ MAXIMISE THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Innovation and technology changes mean that firms are making commercial decisions to invest in previously unprofitable areas. This should lead to a growing role for the private sector in preparedness and response.

These commitments are in line with efforts at national, regional and global level, and they cannot be realized without the leadership and similar commitments from governments. They align with priorities as highlighted in the Communique coming out of the *IGAD Second Drought Resilience Summit in 2014*. It is the responsibility of the whole community to stand by these commitments, and translate them into transformative action on the ground to ensure that the next drought does not turn into another humanitarian crisis.



Yelfign, 58, holds out a handful of grains mixed with sand that she managed to recover after her village was destroyed by floods on July 10th, Kobo Woreda, North Wollo zone, Amhara region, Ethiopia.
Photo: Caroline Trutmann/Save the Children

ANNEX 1: THE WAY FORWARD – THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

The IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) should be the focal point for all work around drought early warning, mitigation and early action in the Horn of Africa. IDDRSI should undertake a comparative analysis of predictive capacity of country level drought early warning systems.

The Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) should review its own Terms of Reference, to ensure that they are fully appropriate from a risk management perspective, that links with IGAD are formalised, and to ensure its independence from national governments while continuing to provide technical support and complementary analysis.

AT THE NATIONAL & SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

National governments should **strengthen the existing national platforms** as the coordinating body for early warning and early action. Concurrently, resources should be committed towards an inclusive early warning system and develop a common framework for operational contingency planning for early drought warning. **National safety net surge models** should also be reviewed to ensure maximum flexibility within.

At sub-national level, support should be provided for community engagement with early warning and to strengthen community level contingency planning.

FOR IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS

Create opportunities to pilot models for innovation: There is no shortage of pockets of drought in the Horn: almost every season throws up isolated areas that are suffering worse than normal conditions. There are manifold opportunities to pilot approaches and test ideas.

Strengthen internal capacity for synergies between humanitarian and development programmes: Resilience work tends to be cross-sectoral by its nature, while much of the pilot work around early action is still undertaken vertically. Yet the integrated nature of the problems resulting from drought – access to food, water, services and markets, infrastructure, insecurity and so on – requires integrated solutions. Operational agencies should work to bring early action and resilience programming into a common framework where each can learn from the other. Contingency planning for example, can be housed within development projects and supported by technical expertise from the humanitarian side. **Strengthen monitoring aspects of existing programmes:** Operational agencies should seek to strengthen monitoring frameworks within existing programmes to reinforce surveillance and data collection and to feed into – and increase community level ownership of – early warning systems.

Develop the evidence base and improve the analysis: Being able to quantify the predictive capacity of different approaches will increase confidence in the system overall, and should help to identify more successful approaches.

Further develop volunteer-based surge models: Red Cross Societies and other organisations working at community level should explore ways of expanding surge models based on volunteers: through building surge capacity into existing community-based programming, or developing a national or district level surge capacity to be deployed into a hotspot on the basis of an early warning trigger.

Advocate on behalf of communities: All agencies working alongside local authorities and with communities should work to ensure that their concerns and issues are effectively heard at national and regional level.

Explore linkages between early action, resilience and climate change adaptation (CCA): The links between these approaches are clear but they have not been explicitly explored. CCA projects, which are designed to mitigate long-term changes, can include added components that allow communities to respond to changes in a shorter timeframe.

Explore conflict variants in early warning and surge models: The role of insecurity is not sufficiently widely recognised as a contributing factor to drought impact. There is an opportunity to explore in more detail how measures of insecurity could be used as a trigger for additional support, and what needs to be considered in deploying surge capacity in these contexts.

FOR DONORS

Donors should seek to strengthen the **internal coherence between development and humanitarian funding streams**. They should seek opportunities whereby trusted partners or consortia can gain access to funding that is both **flexible and predictable**, by using the whole funding system for mutual advantage. Where structural constraints exist, **creative, flexible and pragmatic solutions** should be sought, avoiding duplicate reporting requirements. Additionally, donors should seek to **influence other donors** through existing relationships and forums. They also have the opportunity to **suggest, encourage and support partnerships** between research institutions and operational actors.

FOR RESEARCH

Investment in research can come from any quarter: governments, donors and implementing partners. Linkages with universities and research institutions have really paid dividends in providing a **robust evidence base** for a number of interventions and this approach should be broadened.

ANNEX 2: EARLY WARNING, EARLY ACTION: A PROGRESS REPORT

The following table provides a one-page summary of the current situation against a selected group of the characteristics identified in section one.

The broad approach of the authorities	The national authorities have shifted from response to a risk management approach in all cases.
Legal base for the early warning mechanism	Reasonably good, though not all countries are at the same level. Has not always kept up with the change to a risk management approach.
Humanitarian architecture -	The structure of the humanitarian architecture has not been adapted to the new risk management approach, and remains largely focused on response. Decision makers rarely attend the regular meetings.
Early warning systems	All are strengthening and moving towards risk management approach. All use mixed methods and adopt a livelihoods approach. Internally coordinated to various degrees. Overall, Kenya is probably furthest ahead.
Frequency of early warning products	This varies depending on the agency and context. Uganda is aiming for ten day reporting from early 2014. Kenya already provides monthly updates.
Contextualisation of products	Contextualised products are available to various degrees, though only Kenya has them readily available on the website
Utilisation of seasonal assessment products	These remain a key plank for humanitarian response planning, but are less useful for early action as they are not rolling, and they tend to suffer a significant delay between data collection and publication
Utilisation of early warning products	There is no evidence that humanitarian actors are really using the rolling governmental early warning products except as complementary to other analysis. It is not clear if this is a problem of access and/or frequency, the relevance of the materials presented, or an issue of confidence in the quality of the information and prediction.
Local platforms	This varies depending on the context, but they are not consistently in place or mandated.
Regional platform	The regional platform is strong and meets monthly, but may seek to review its TOR to strengthen its role. Links to IGAD exist but could be strengthened.
Funding models	A healthy range of funding models exists, but they do not appear to be applied at scale. It is unknown, for example, what proportion of development / resilience programmes have a crisis modifier or equivalent.
Contingency plans	Some models exist, but it is not clear to what degree they are in place, or meet the criteria set out in section 1.
Surge models for government service provision	Only one model has been found, the Concern model for surge in the nutrition sector, in Kenya.
Surge models for other development programming	No evidence that these are widespread, in development or in resilience programming, although there are some models being developed.
Surge models for safety nets	Safety nets in each country have surge capacity built in, although it is largely untested at this time.
Enabling environment	Levels of transparency and trust are not sufficient to support effective, coordinated action. The sense of a common responsibility for planning and action is not well developed.
Evidence base for early action programming	With a few exceptions, the formal evidence base is weak, although there are many examples of programming that could form the basis of good practice.

Contact Information

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
East Africa and Indian Ocean Regional Representation office | Woodlands Road | PO BOX 41275 - 00100 | Nairobi | Kenya
Tel: +254 20 2835 000 | Fax: +254 20 271 2777
Email: regional.eastafrica@ifrc.org

Saving lives, changing minds Find out more on www.ifrc.org

Cover: Teka GebreMichael, 67, and his son Kahsay, nine,
stand in the family's fruit and vegetable garden their village in Tigray region.
Photo by Amerti Lemma/Save the Children



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Save the Children

OXFAM

