

2016

Lessons from Past Emergencies

FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION DROUGHT EMERGENCY RESPONSE
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LESSONS FROM PAST EMERGENCIES

For the Southern Africa Region Drought Emergency Response

About the Recommendations Package

WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response Support Division (OSE) has gathered lessons from earlier emergencies and developed a set of recommendations applicable to the context of the Southern Africa region drought emergency. The below summary offers information on potential challenges and practices that have been proved useful in past emergency responses. A comprehensive database of recommendations gathered from Lessons Learned Exercises can be found on the OPweb: <http://opweb.wfp.org/llearned/>.

Emergency management

- Improve liaisons between the RB, CO, and HQ on regularizing the OTF schedule to facilitate better organization and turnout.^[Nepal 2015]
- Prepare Notes for the Record of Strategic Task Force meetings for future reference.^[Syria 2014]

External coordination

- During the Horn of Africa emergency response, the Global Food Security Cluster was directly involved in assessing coordination requirements and formulating solutions. This approach to reinforcing existing government coordination mechanisms may be considered a good practice to be replicated in future emergencies.^[Horn of Africa 2012]
- If government-led sector groups already exist, ensure that cluster activation builds on these existing coordination mechanisms. Ensure also that governments are fully involved in decisions to activate a cluster.^[Sahel 2012]
- Consider ways to improve the food security matrix as a means to encourage partner collaboration.^[Sahel 2010]
- Ensure that WFP has the capacity to handle the significant information management aspects of civil-military coordination.^[Haiti 2010]
- Engage in and commit to interagency efforts in Accountability to Affected Populations.^[Nepal 2015]

Deploying and retaining the right staff

Pre-deployment

- Administrative notes, including a checklist of pre-departure tasks to be completed, should be sent out by HR to the releasing unit at HQ or the RB, so it is certain that all staff receive it. It should also include material on staff integration, such as: cultural differences, information on how national staff may be experiencing the emergency differently, and best practices for staff integration.^[Nepal 2015]
- A country's gender profile should be included in the pre-deployment briefing package.^[Nepal 2015]

Deployment

- Use the Emergency Response Roster to ensure rapid identification and deployment of staff with the necessary skill-sets and competencies (emergency experience, language etc.) for deployment in corporate responses.^{[Haiti 2010][Sahel 2012]}
- Ensure HR capacity to identify and deploy regional national staff.^[Haiti 2010]
- Place greater emphasis on ensuring a handover-period for staff arriving and departing.^{[Haiti 2010][Syria 2014]}
- Augment Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Reporting staff at CO level as part of planning for expanded operations.^[Sahel 2010]
- Ensure the early deployment of a nutritionist to support CO and field-based nutrition personnel.^[South Sudan 2012]
- Consider ensuring early deployment of a Logistics Cluster (LC) person to focus on coordination with the humanitarian agencies.^[Sahel 2010]
- Deploy a Communications Officer immediately to the country to manage mass communications and work with the media. The operation must allow for an increase in staff, or at least staff rotation to avoid burnout. This should be a national/local language speaker staff present in senior management, programme and logistics meetings.^{[Haiti 2010][Syria 2014]}
- Plan deployment of a senior staff including HR, OIM, donor relations, procurement, admin and security.^{[Haiti 2010][Philippines 2014][Syria 2014]}
- Ensure that deployment planning includes provisions for continuity of individuals serving as cluster coordinators, as well as dedicated reporting, information management and GIS personnel.^[Haiti 2010]

Crafting inclusive and dynamic programmes

- Ensure that WFP Programme staff are aware of nutrition and HIV imperatives in emergencies.^[South Sudan 2012]
- Use the mobile app for registrations for SCOPE.^[Nepal 2015]
- Hold regular discussions and share food security analysis with FEWSNET/key stakeholders prior to and throughout emergencies. In cases of disagreement at country level, revert to VAM RB and HQ units.^[Sahel 2010]
- Harmonize tools and methods for assessments, including pre-identification of common “red flag” indicators to be regularly monitored/shared/used by all partners.^[Sahel 2010]
- Explore ways to increase quality of beneficiary cards to avoid easy duplication.^[Sahel 2010]
- For Supplementary Feeding Programmes (SFP) seek ways to ensure more complete and timely reception of reports, and analyse data rapidly to establish data on the impact.^[Sahel 2010]

Cash-Based Transfers

- Where food markets are functioning sufficiently, consider cash transfers for targeted populations if VAM, other in-depth assessments and market analysis deem this strategy to be appropriate.^{[Sahel 2012][Philippines 2014]}

In-kind Delivery

- Consider activating Forward Purchasing Mechanisms and prepositioning at earlier stages of the emergency to ensure that food is stockpiled for when operations may need to be quickly scaled up.^[Sahel 2010]
- Ensure that the approach for pre-positioning is appropriate, especially for areas that are difficult to reach.^[Sahel 2010]
- Ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and UNICEF on the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition is clearly understood at CO level through discussions at management level. In case of any issues, RB and HQ should intervene to ensure agreement with UNICEF and respect for one another's mandates.^[Sahel 2010]
- Discuss with government and partners opportunities to develop national or regional storage capacities as well as a functional and credible cereal strategic reserve.^[Sahel 2010]

Involving affected populations

- When setting up Users Committees, include a representation of both men and women, and the elderly, people with disabilities, and minority communities to enable them to be in decision-making, leadership, planning and implementation roles that affect their lives.^[Nepal 2015]
- Use food distribution sessions to inform beneficiaries about other activities included in the response operation.^[Sahel 2012]
- Account for local factors (e.g., literacy, access to radios) and include questions in In-depth Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSAs) to assist in identifying most effective communication modalities.^[Haiti 2010]
- Implement beneficiary feedback and complaints mechanisms along with the guidelines/SOPs/at the onset of an emergency based on an analysis of the most appropriate mechanism, and conduct sensitization with the beneficiaries to ensure it is being used.^[Nepal 2015]
- Ensure the toll-free hotline number availability to beneficiaries, whether it is on the back of a bankcard or through other means.^[Nepal 2015]

Establishing communication and mobilizing resources

Liaising with media, partners and donors

- COs should be consulted in the design of online fundraising campaigns to ensure consideration of cultural and other sensitivities.^[Nepal 2015]
- Ensure sufficient consultation with government while balancing neutrality and efficacy.^[Haiti 2010]
- Define a coordinated response strategy in close consultation with donors and partners in the early stages of an emergency to help ensure early buy-in by donors and other stakeholders.^{[Sahel 2012][Sahel 2010]}
- Handover notes from DROs should include contributions in the pipeline, proposals being prepared or under consideration etc.^[Nepal 2015]
- Improve the strategic coordination between public and private partnerships, and Communications in regards to visibility by showcasing our partnerships.^[Philippines 2014]
- Heads of Sub-Office should be entrusted to talk with local media with support from the communications unit at the CO.^[Nepal 2015]
- Executive director visits can be used to raise the profile of an emergency, to mobilize resources for the response and to project a positive image of the organization.^[Sahel 2010]

- Use emergency operations as an opportunity to raise awareness for longer-term activities or invisible emergencies.^[Sahel 2010]
- Ensuring that field-based Public information officers have clear instructions about minimum video, imagery and information requirements and priorities within the first 48 hours, including donor visibility.^[Haiti 2010]
- Prioritize social media and resource it appropriately in an emergency.^[Syria 2014]
- Consider ensuring that field staff are briefed on the utility of field-level engagements with donors, balancing donor liaison with priority operational tasks.^{[Haiti 2010].}

Boosting internal information flows

- The OIM team, Communications team, and EC should have daily morning briefs to determine daily messaging to ensure that external situation reports align with other external communication.^{[Philippines 2014] [Nepal 2015]}
- Clear processes for the timely clearing of reporting products should be developed and upheld during an emergency operation.^[Nepal 2015]
- Continue to include Gender and Protection (along with other cross cutting areas) in the daily operational update agenda.^{[Nepal 2015] [Syria 2014]}

Facilitating Logistics, Procurement and Administration

Facilitating financial and administrative processes

- Utilisation of and transition from cash payments in remote area operations should be well planned; this should include the process of granting advances to suppliers.^[Nepal 2015]
- Ensure supporting offices are ready to provide temporary support to WINGS II and other corporate processes during periods of interrupted connectivity.^[Haiti 2010]
- Review mechanisms for coordinating consolidated shipments including standby partners' equipment to avoid customs delays.^{[Sahel 2012] [Haiti 2010]}
- Administration's initial focus should be on staff wellness and wellbeing functions to ensure responders have adequate accommodation, sanitation, food, and water and office space.^[Philippines 2014]

Setting up a functioning supply-chain

- For large emergencies requiring high commodity volumes, enter into long-term commodity purchase contracts from selected origins.^[Syria 2014]
- Identify possible alternatives to food commodities in advance, in case of regional pipeline breaks.^[Sahel 2012]
- Consider ways to quantify the upstream pipeline for partner organizations.^[Sahel 2010]
- Define benchmark lead times for food procurement within the region (processing lead times, transport lead times, etc.).^[Sahel 2010]
- Explore ways for COs to better assess the bagging capacity of the parastatal entities from which they are purchasing so that processing lead time can be estimated more accurately.^[Sahel 2010]

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