

BRCiS Consortium
Experiential Learning Partner, Somalia
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Summary Report

Background to the approach

The approach by the Centre for Humanitarian Change (CHC) to adult learning is based on an experiential learning model in which the partners are facilitated to learn from their own experience in programmes. A facilitative rather than prescriptive approach is utilized by creating space for the learners and end- users to take the lead in the learning processes. The process facilitates communications between those with implementation experience as well as those that will use the lessons learnt to develop future implementation strategies. It seeks to create a “safe” environment for those involved to openly share perspectives, challenge each other in a non-judgmental way and empower all stakeholders to realize that they are an integral part of the process of change and adaptive programming.

During the 2016 and 2017 emergency drought response there was a dramatic scale up in programme capacity by the BRCiS consortium. During this time partners were required to expand into new regions, target new locations and new household beneficiaries. Targeting locations and households to receive emergency support occurred in a short amount of time. Furthermore, contracting of support services and processes for delivery of essential life-saving resources happened quickly to ensure the timeliness of the response.

The facilitative learning process aimed to get a better understand how the mechanisms for efficient scale up of programmes and targeting new locations and beneficiaries has been carried out and how the mechanisms used to ensure accountability of all stakeholders is upheld. This is essential to enable equal access to assistance for all vulnerable households in drought affected communities. With this understanding of what worked and what didn't the learning process also identified next steps in developing better systems to target in an accountable way in future IRF programmes.

Introduction

During the inception phase of the work (CHC) consulted with the BRCiS Consortium Management Unit (CMU) and the BRCiS Technical Working Group (TWG) members to identify three key learning themes of interest to the BRCiS partners. The themes identified were:

1. **Learning theme 1:** Provision of safe water to beneficiaries in the emergency drought response and role of water trucking
2. **Learning theme 2:** Community accountability mechanisms utilised by partners that promote community engagement in IRF programmes
3. **Learning theme 3:** Targeting of beneficiaries for unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) in the emergency drought response

Methods

Initial discussions and key informant interviews (KII) were held with relevant programme staff of the TWG BRCiS partners to better understand the challenges that they faced relating to the respective learning theme. The information was collated and it was observed that many of these challenges were similar between partners but often with different approaches to solutions. For Learning Theme 3 a standardised data collection tool relating to scale up of the cash transfer programmes during the IRF rounds 2016 – 2017 was also used.

Initial meetings were held with the WASH, Cash and Resilience TWG's respectively to provide a summary of these KII discussions, receive feedback and determine sub themes that would be tackled during the learning events with field staff. In these initial TWG meetings introductory

sessions were also held to introduce the facilitative learning process to TWG members and demonstrate the importance of the reflective learning process.

Three one-day learning events were held in Mogadishu, facilitated by 3 CHC staff. Field, Coordination and TWG staff were included in the meetings. The methods used in the learning event included plenary discussion, break out groups and participatory methods including role plays. The format of the events included: an overview of the experiential learning process, discuss and develop the sub theme of interest and identify the specific challenges to be overcome in future IRF programmes, identify what is currently being done to overcome these challenges and identify solutions to outstanding challenges faced. Following on from each of the learning events, a second TWG meeting was held in Nairobi to develop actionable points moving forward.

Learning event 1

PLANNING AND INTEGRATION OF WATER TRUCKING IN OTHER WASH ACTIVITIES

To assess the water needs of locations and plan WASH activities in the emergency drought response, the majority of partners continue to use utilise the interagency assessment tool. This information was used to plan locations that would receive water trucking but participants of the learning event determined that this tool does not provide specific enough information about water related needs of communities. The assessment is often done ahead of IRF funding release and therefore is not timely, that the assessment is done as a one off and therefore is of limited use. However, it was also acknowledged that the tool is cost effective and prevents responder fatigue. As a result of the identified benefits and limitations of using the Inter-Agency Assessment Tool the attendees agreed that it was important that future assessments collect more specific data on WASH and water needs and the existing capacity of communities. This process should be iterative and added to by the existing detailed knowledge of partners field staff .

Action Points

The following components were prioritised for an integrated plan for effective WASH and water trucking activities in the IRF:

- I. Develop extensive and adaptive mapping including:
 - a. Risk analysis for the area: frequency of water shortages within the area and its communities,
 - b. Determine appropriate routes & distances to villages from permanent or strategic water points
 - c. Analyse rainfall patterns & projections
- II. Identify early warning indicators and trigger thresholds that indicate water trucking is required
- III. Mapping of existing water resources, risk mapping of areas for prioritising need was identified as the priority need ahead of the 2018 dry season.

A number of steps for immediate action were agreed :

1. Identify existing efforts by the local government, WASH cluster & individual partners to map rural water resources and IDP water resources
2. Collate risk mapping resources

3. Identify gaps in existing data and determine methods for collecting outstanding information

OVERCOMING PRICE HIKES DURING THE EMERGENCY DROUGHT RESPONSE

Price hiking during water trucking activities was attributed to the limited supply and increasing demand for water in drought affected areas and also to inflation of trucking and water costs as a result of INGO involvement in the procurement process. In many locations the non- formal local authorities or community members organise water trucking themselves, where necessary, with the assistance of diaspora or community resources. Water and trucking prices are known to be procured at a lower rate by private stakeholders than NGO's. However, equitable access to resources and prioritisation of the most vulnerable households is often not taken into account in these private initiatives and therefore the NGO response is still needed.

The largest inflation in prices were described in Puntland region where water prices were estimated to have risen from: 90 – 120 USD/ truck in 2016 to 300 USD / truck in some areas in 2017. The effect of this inflation in trucking and water costs was a reduced cost efficiency of programmes and a resulting decrease in the number of beneficiaries that could be served.

Action points

BRCiS + partners have used a variety of strategies to tackle this issue. Some included regional government responses: In Eyl Region, PASWEN have responded to increasing prices of water trucking activities by imposing a flat rate of USD100/ barrel (200litres) transported. However, whilst government leadership was a very much a positive step partners reported that there had been a number of negative effects. For example water trucking companies withdraw from the tender process with NGO's as the prices were non-competitive. Another effect was that trucking agencies tried to decrease their own costs by obtaining water from alternative sources, closer to the target locations, reportedly resulting in transporting unsafe water to beneficiaries.

Therefore the participants found that solutions to reduce the cost of water trucking in future IRF programmes must involve planning, preparedness and participation of the community in the tender process. Community voucher systems were being piloted by a number of agencies as a means for the community to negotiate the price with the water trucking vendor and have increased leverage to lower the price or to determine more equitable targeting/sharing within the community.

Further suggestions included the need to encourage local community water vendors to apply for the tender process and under-cut the larger companies from further away, prequalification of water vendor companies to prevent tenders being awarded based on low cost but to vendors unable to carry out the process.

Finally there were suggestions of initiating Public Private partnerships with the local government (Puntland) or local authorities (MP) to utilise government controls or local authorities to truck water at a subsidised rate.

ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER: HOUSEHOLD VOUCHER APPROACH

Household vouchers in the water trucking process were used by some partners to ensure access to water for the most vulnerable households, selected by both field staff and local authorities (formal and informal). The process of ensuring the most vulnerable households had access to water was based on a number of assumptions (that were highlighted during

the discussion): The community are able to choose the most vulnerable and marginalized households and that sharing of water between households does not occur post distribution.

Action points

The following research questions were identified that are needed to better understand the cost benefit of household voucher systems in distribution of water:

- 1.) How does intra-household sharing of water delivered through household vouchers happen? How and when is sharing happening in communities and which households are included in the sharing process and how does context affect sharing?
- 2.) What is the cost of the household voucher system; time, costs and logistics. How does the cost of household vouchers compare to the cost of community voucher systems?
- 3.) Which approach household vouchers vs community vouchers provides a more cost efficient accountability to donors and to communities, particularly marginalized households. How does context affect this cost benefit analysis?

Learning event 2 & 3

Learning Event 2 and 3 were run together and there were a number of cross cutting issues between a. the learning themes of incorporation of community accountability into programming and b. targeting beneficiaries in cash transfer programmes in the IRF.

Stakeholder mapping and social network analysis during the learning events demonstrated that field staff perceive local leaders and authorities (formal and non-formal) to be integral to accountability to community members in the targeting process. Often, during the drought response period, locations are targeted where community based committees (CBC's) have not been established and local and traditional leaders are the main focal point for field staff to operate through. Mechanisms currently used by NGO's to ensure accountability are found to heavily focus on the vertical linkages between donor, NGO stakeholders (managerial and field level) and beneficiaries. These mechanisms include: Spot checks of activities, post distribution monitoring (PDM), third party monitoring (TPM), establishing a selection criteria for identifying the most vulnerable households within a community, hotline call centres for complaints mechanisms and methods to ensure transparency through direct communications with community members e.g. SMS, baraza.

Methods to promote accountability between local governance mechanisms and beneficiaries include establishing community action plans, joint MoU's between the NGO and authorities and transparency of information through barraza's and transparent beneficiary lists that are available to the communities. However, during the drought response, time may be prohibitive in ensuring all these mechanisms are in place and used. Ensuring accountability of community stakeholders (formal and non-formal local authorities (LA's) and CBC's) to community members was emphasised as integral to preventing marginalisation and mitigating corruption. In the case of targeting of households in the cash transfer programmes in the IRF; the process of beneficiary selection is largely dependent on the discretion of the LA's and therefore their approach to power and accountability.

During targeting of beneficiaries for cash transfer programmes challenges are faced during the scale up of programmes into new locations and in targeting new households: Mechanisms and factors influencing targeting of new locations in geographical scale up varied between organisations. Within locations there are frequently more households that meet the selection criteria for vulnerability than can be targeted. As a result it is often a negotiated process by

local authorities, at times including NGOs staff and at other times not, to formulate a beneficiary list. Partners work to ensure a verifiable process through measures including defining selection criteria and verification of beneficiary lists. These mechanisms are partially effective as they raise the profile of the local authorities to act with integrity to ensure the most vulnerable are served. However, there remains some ambiguity in these negotiation processes, particularly with respect to marginalization and potential corruption. Whilst the mechanisms used to ensure accountability, are effective at raising the profile of equitable access and promoting messaging around humanitarian principles, localization and marginalization, further actions are needed for improved accountability of local stakeholders to beneficiaries.

Action Points

These actions are focussed around three main strategies:

I. Formal recognition of local authorities

This was particularly advocated for in IDP contexts where gate keepers manipulate NGOs access to beneficiaries for financial and power purposes. The formalisation process can include establishing clear roles for all stakeholders and the relationship between them. NGOs are requested to develop MoU's to establish transparency of agreements with LA's and to ensure that all communication is consistent.

II. Develop processes and planning ahead of the IRF

These relationships can then be extended and developed through working with the LA's ahead of the IRF and drought response to develop appropriate preparedness plans:

- a. **Risk mapping:** Work with LA's it was proposed that organisations formalise their process of selecting locations in areas during the IRF. Partners proposed mapping the locations within the regions of operations and carryout risk mapping of location including their vulnerability to certain shocks. Early warning indicators and thresholds to initiate response should also be determined alongside the LA's.
- b. **Develop selection processes:** Within the same period prior to the drought, working with LA's, it was proposed that pre-agreed vulnerability criteria should be determined with the LA's in each location.

III. Build in / advocate for a contingency budget for rapid scale up

Limitations on time between IRF funds release and start of programmes was repeatedly mentioned as a challenge for the partners and the pressure of reduced time to carry out activities resulted in an increased risk of poor targeting processes. Therefore it was proposed that adaptive programming and an adaptive modifier approach to scale up of activities should be advocated for and resources for this.

NEXT STAGES

Immediate actions moving ahead are to initiate the development of a methodology for planning and preparedness. The BRCiS CMU in Mogadishu will meet with field staff to determine which indicators would need to be included and the risks that may be involved in this process including raising the expectations of drought prone communities.

A second action point agreed by the TWG was to initiating discussions with local authorities within their operational areas. These discussions would be for the LA's to receive a summary of the stakeholder mapping process and to discuss the perspective of their own position of accountability to communities and ways that their role could be formalized. Initial

meetings may require further facilitation by the CMU or by CHC and mapping the progression and impact of these actions will be needed to assess if there are changes to targeting processes in the future.

Conclusion

The facilitative learning experience created increased awareness and transparency between NGO actors of the challenges faced by field staff in implementing IRF programmes during the emergency drought response. Increasing the awareness of staff members was of value in the analysis of challenges faced and development of solutions. The challenges identified, compromised the accountability of stakeholders to beneficiary communities and increased the risk of corruption and exclusion of marginalized groups.

There are processes in place by the NGO to mitigate these risks that are partially effective but, there are limitations that inhibit the effectiveness of these mechanisms during periods of stress such as reduced amount of time available to ensure processes are transparent during the drought response.

The solutions developed by the attendees in all learning events rely on increased planning and preparedness by field teams in non-drought periods and strengthening the relationships with local authorities so as to raise their profile and accountability. To implement these actions and improve future responses will require resources (economic and logistical). There are also risks that will need to be overcome that include raising the expectation of communities to receive assistance. However, these changes are essential to minimize the harm caused during future IRF programmes through corruption and exclusion.