

Case Study Stakeholder Engagement in Anticipatory Action in Zambia and Uganda

Both the Response Preparedness II (RPII) and the Innovative Approaches to Response Preparedness (IARP) programmes have yielded great examples of Anticipatory Action over the course of the last four years. One area of Anticipatory Action in which both programmes have been specifically successful, is engagement with national stakeholders. The case study presented here is written with input from remote interviews conducted with some of the most relevant stakeholders around Anticipatory Action and Forecast-based Financing (FbF) for flood hazards in Zambia and Uganda. For Zambia we have interviewed staff from the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA), the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) and the Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS). For Uganda we have spoken to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Directorate of Water Resource Management (DWRM) and the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS).

Zambia

National Dialogue Platform (DP) on FbF
The national DP brought all relevant stakeholders together and ensured a common understanding on what FbF entails. The Technical Working Group, comprising of relevant government agencies and ZRCS, was established.

Technical Working Group meetings
The regular Technical Working Group meetings were used to share information and conduct joint planning and joint operations on FbF. This ensures that work is not duplicated and resources are combined to enhance response time (efficiency) and effective collaboration.

African Dialogue Platform in Maputo
During the African Dialogue Platform in Maputo all countries attending were asked to create action plans jointly with all relevant stakeholders in their respective countries.

Early Action Protocol (EAP) development process
The EAP development was a robust process in defining when and where to take early actions for floods. This process also defined who takes what actions.

Training in GloFAS
The GloFAS training was attended to by WARMA which resulted in them appreciating the FbF process and approach more, which contributed to the creation of ownership. The training was a result of a collaboration with the University of Reading in the UK.

Approval of EAP
The approval of the EAP offered a possibility for the ZRCS to be ready to implement early actions when risk of impacts is high, in collaboration with DMMU, ZMD, and other stakeholders.

Development of SOPs
In the SOPs the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved were defined.

Information sharing by WARMA and ZMD
Just before the rainy season ZMD shared information on forecast menu and WARMA shared information on water points and water levels, enabling ZRCS to communicate accurate information to affected communities.

EAP light activation and learning sessions after hazard season
After the rainy season, all stakeholders came together to discuss the work done, the challenges faced, the things that went very well, the things that could have gone better, and recommendations for the future.

Uganda

2015
FbF pilot in Amuria district
The FbF pilot in Amuria was a springboard for Early Actions thinking and the lessons from this pilot have been incorporated going forward.

2018
Establishment of Technical Working Group
Through the establishment of the Technical Working Group different members started to work on different elements of the EAP. This led to identification of the need to build capacity on GloFAS.

2019
African Dialogue Platform in Maputo
Attendance to the African Dialogue Platform in Maputo resulted in stakeholders appreciating the approach and understanding the details of FbF. The DP yielded the realization that FbF is not a small project led by the Red Cross, but a long-term approach to be adopted by all relevant stakeholders in Uganda.

Training in GloFAS
Attended by the MET office (UNMA) and DWRM, which resulted in them appreciating the FbF process and approach more, which contributed to the creation of ownership over FbF. The training was a result of the collaboration with the University of Reading in the UK.

2020
Developing trigger levels based on GloFAS
DWRM worked with scientists from Reading University on determining the trigger levels based on GloFAS.

EAP submitted end of 2020
The EAP for floods in Uganda is expected to be approved in 2021.

2021

What motivated the stakeholders to get involved?

The DMMU in the Zambian government was motivated to join the FbF journey because they see it as their core mandate to ensure Early Actions are taken as accurately as possible so that communities at risk are informed on time about the disasters that might happen.

Another government agency in Zambia, the WARMA, indicated that the cost-efficiency of FbF was the greatest motivator for them to embark on the FbF journey. Before FbF was introduced in Zambia there was no impact-based forecasting system in place. This resulted in high costs for the government to compensate affected families after the disaster happened. Also, because the Red Cross brought all actors around FbF to the table, the national hydro-meteorological services in both countries were able to coordinate better amongst each other.

The ZMD considered collaboration with partners a great benefit of FbF:

“We knew that this collaboration would strengthen our linkages with the DMMU and the WARMA, which would in turn improve our work. And collaborating with the Red Cross would allow us to better reach the most vulnerable communities.”

In Uganda, the DWRM had a similar motivation to join the FbF journey as DMMU in Zambia: they see it as their core mandate to provide forecast information to improve humanitarian aid to affected communities. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in Uganda was interested to collaborate with other actors working on the same topic to ensure strong partnerships.



What was the added value of FbF according to the stakeholders?

The DMMU in Zambia indicates that the added value of FbF lies in the real-time approach and the scientific evidence that FbF is bringing to the Early Warning mechanism, compared to assumptions and scenario-planning based on only historical data which was used before.

According to both the WARMA and the DMMU in Zambia and the DWRM in Uganda, FbF has brought technological advantages to the Early Warning mechanism. The dashboard developed by the Red Cross, through the 510 data initiative, allows for much more accurate forecasts leading to more effective actions. The forecasts are more accurate because of increased stakeholder collaboration: actors that used to work in silos are now entering and retrieving information on this shared platform. The dashboard offers a digital model to Anticipatory Action, forecasting for example which areas might be flooded and the effects this has on people, livestock, agricultural land, water points, and roads. The WARMA indicates that initially it was very difficult to get information from other organizations because of high levels of bureaucracy. But thanks to the FbF Technical Working Group it has become very easy to obtain information from other institutions working on Anticipatory Action.

The OPM in Uganda reflects that the most important reason for the success of FbF is that all stakeholders are now working towards one common goal. The representative of OPM mentions also that the role of the URCS was limited at the beginning and that they were not continuously involved in the Technical Working Group. She sees a missed opportunity for the URCS since they could have played a bigger role in bringing all relevant stakeholders around FbF together.

“Being able to work with another institution and accomplishing something towards a common goal: that is what it means to build a partnership.”

The DWRM in Uganda observed that FbF has led to more streamlined communication and clarification on roles and responsibilities with all stakeholders working on FbF.

In Uganda, the Red Cross Climate Centre (RCCC) took the lead in the Early Actions Protocol (EAP) development process to ensure all stakeholders took their responsibility in establishing the EAP. As expressed by the DWRM the questions of the RCCC served as the glue that kept all stakeholders together during the development process. When the National Dialogue Platform could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions, RCCC was the one to offer online trainings focusing on certain aspects of FbF to increase the stakeholder understanding of FbF methodologies.

According to the WARMA in Zambia cost-efficiency is a highly added value of FbF, since it is based on forecasting instead of reacting after the event, which often results in higher costs. Anticipatory Action enables all stakeholders involved in disaster management to prepare for the disaster, allowing them to take precautionary measures, which leads to a decrease in the eventual costs of the response.

The ZRCS emphasizes how much they appreciate that the government was willing to adapt their own systems and took the risk of investing in Anticipatory Action. Another added value according to the ZRCS is the coordination between various actors at national and district levels, instead of only at national level, since at district level they understand the community structures, making coordination more effective.



KMS

What could be the anticipated benefits of FbF to the communities at risk?

According to the DMMU in Zambia the FbF approach allows for actors with different expertise to come and work together, adding to each other's portfolios instead of working in an isolated manner. It is crucial to have all expertise on board to ensure the right information is spread at the right moment to the right people, and that the right information is used by the people at highest risk of potential disasters.

Although FbF is still a work in progress in Uganda, the OPM and the DWRM recognize its potential to contribute to saving lives and livelihoods. Especially when Cash Transfers are part of the Early Actions, as this allows people to decide for themselves how to use the cash to fulfill their needs. The URCS has engaged communities in defining the Early Actions, which ensures the building of ownership, trust, and willingness in the communities to also adhere to these Early Actions.

Another added value of FbF is that it contributes to understanding of, and communication on, uncertainties related to the use of the forecasts. This in turn contributes to the acceptance of acting in vain (e.g., when a flood is forecasted to have a certain impact, but eventually the flood is not happening or has a far lesser impact) and increases the trust that communities have in the Early Warnings.

Collaborating with the Red Cross in both countries has also led to increased trust of communities in disaster management authorities. This allows the stakeholders to reach the most vulnerable communities they were not able to reach before, for example due to lack of radio coverage in these areas. One dream for the future expressed by the DMMU in Zambia is to localize the FbF approach by transferring technological knowledge to the local level. This would ensure continuity of FbF, without continuous consultation with the technical developers of the system. Or as expressed by URCS:

“The key thing that makes the FbF approach work is ownership. It is not just a project, it is an inclusive approach with national scale potential.”

