

## Case Study: Drought Early Warning Early Action: Using Cash Assistance

Location: Kenya

October 2019



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**“EARLY ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF DROUGHT ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES”**

## Preamble:

The case study focused on how Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) utilized drought early warning from Kenya Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) and National Drought Management Authority, (NDMA) to implement early actions to reduce food insecurity-related morbidities and mortalities and negative coping strategies. The early actions included pre-registration of vulnerable households in drought prone areas and multi-purpose cash transfers to drought affected population in selected counties in Kenya. The pre-registration was done in anticipation that KRCS drought Appeal would raise resources to support 25,000 households with cash transfers for at least four months during the peak period of drought.

## What happened? Drought Early Warning:

The Kenya Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) January 2019 outlook for February to May 2019 indicated that most parts of the country would experience stressed levels of food security (IPC 2) due to depressed October-December 2018 short rains. This mirrored the National Drought Management Authority's, (NDMA) drought early warning bulletins for January 2019, which indicated that 13 counties (*Garissa, Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Tana River, Isiolo, Wajir, Kitui, Tharaka Nithi, Manderu, West Pokot, Meru (North) and Kilifi*) were affected by drought and were at Alert Phase of drought (IPC 2) with many of them trending towards a worsening situation.

## Drought Early Action:

**Financing:** KRCS held media briefing in March 2019 to raise awareness on appeal towards funding the drought early action. This was met by social media backlash since the government had denied any deaths linked directly to drought and alleged cases of lack of accountability on funds raised from the public in the past. This led to low response to the drought appeal. British Red Cross supported KRCS bilaterally with funds to carry out cash transfer readiness activities towards multi-purpose cash transfer to the communities affected by drought from March to July 2019. The case study will focus on the Pre-registration of beneficiaries; Community Engagement and Accountability and Cash Transfers to drought affected houses.

**Development of Targeting Criteria:** A weighted inclusion and exclusion criteria was developed to guide the targeting process and the weighted scores co-verified with field staff and volunteers. As a result of these, the weighted inclusion criteria laid emphasis on Child headed Households with no source of support; Poor and vulnerable Household head with Disability and Poor and vulnerable elderly people aged over 60 years. The field staffs and volunteers in the 8 target counties were sensitized on community mobilization and community based targeting approach immediately after the County Steering Groups allocated sites (wards) for the project intervention.

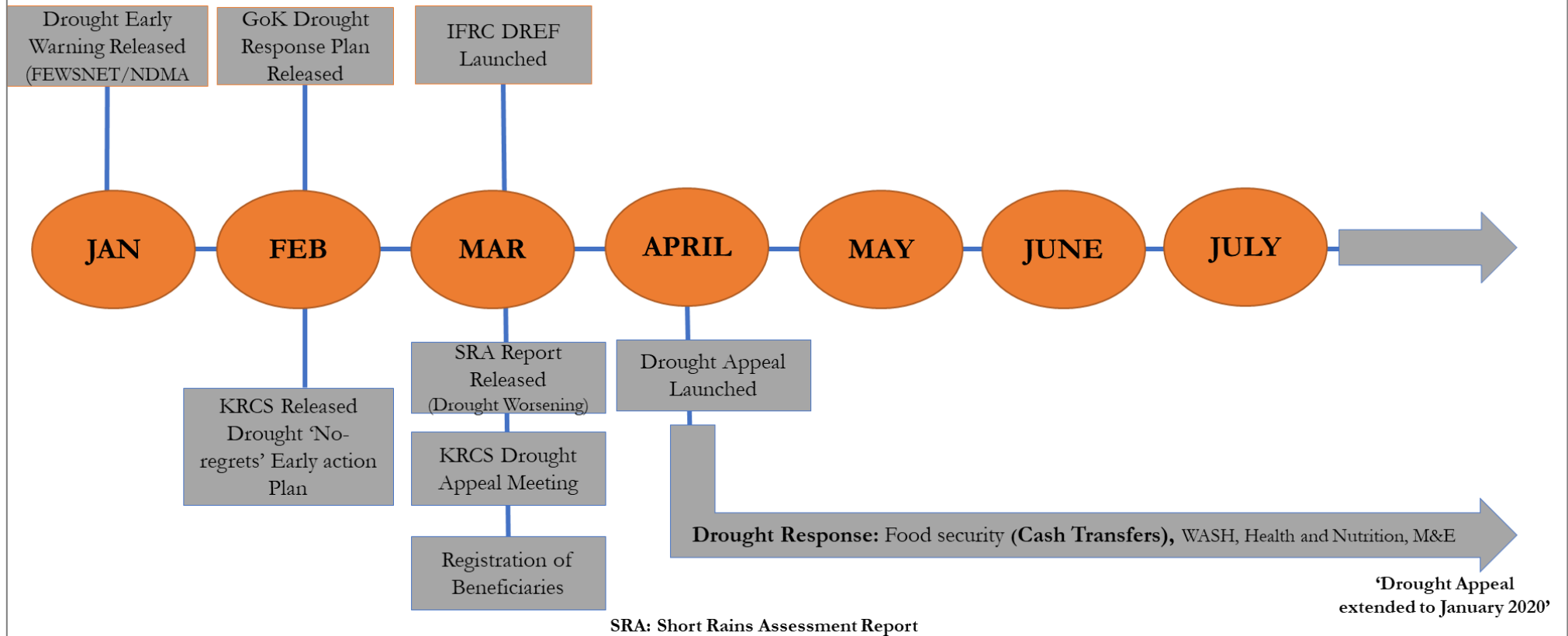
## Targeting and Registration:

Community based targeting approach increased community participation and ownership of the response. The allocation of targets was based on the severity of drought in various counties with those having many affected households being allocated more numbers. Beneficiary registration was done through RedRose (RR) Collect. The RR application was installed on mobile phones and used by volunteers to register Household heads that met the set inclusion criteria. The project initially anticipated to target 25,000 households in the premise that the drought appeal would raise funds to support them with monthly cash transfers; however, the registration exercise was adjusted after preliminary indications that the appeal would not raise the anticipated amount of funds. This was done to avoid raising community expectations upon registering vulnerable households without sufficient funds to support cash transfers. As such a total of **12,200 Households** were registered;

Approximately 2 percent (269) beneficiaries were registered through alternates/proxies as they didn't own SIM cards. Alternate commitment forms were used and witnessed by local area leaders where the proxies committed to submit cash to the principal beneficiary once cash is transferred.

S/No	County	Target
1	Garissa	1,500
2	Isiolo	1,000
3	Marsabit	2,000
4	Mandera	1,500
5	Samburu	1,000
6	Tana River	1,000
7	Turkana	2,200
8	Wajir	2,000
		12,200

# Drought Response Plan Summary - 2019



SRA: Short Rains Assessment Report



## Unconditional Cash Transfers:



Through funding from DREF, BRC, Tullow oil, Netherlands RC, and Danish Red Cross, all the **12,200-households** received **two monthly transfers** of Ksh. 3,049. The transfer value included transaction (withdrawal) charges. Cash was transferred through Mpesa (mobile Money transfer). The Community would walk/travel to the encashment points (Mpesa agents' shops) to withdraw their cash.

## Community Engagement and Accountability:



### Toll Free-Line:

The toll-free Number (0800720577) was distributed to the community through **5,000 stickers** that were placed in strategic places in the villages. A total of **51 complaints and feedback** were received through the toll-free line and responded to fully within the required time of three days (72 hours). The cases mainly revolved delayed cash transfer and request to be included in the program.

### Community Review Meeting:



Community review meetings were held to sensitize community on the project i.e. pre-registration exercise as well addressing community complaints that revolved review of beneficiary data especially phone number; mainly for household heads that had missed their cash transfers. A total of **1,476 cases** of incorrect phone and personal data was corrected during the meetings.

### Radio Spots



The radio spots were run in local dialect in two counties (Wajir and Tana River). The Purpose was to increase community and stakeholders' awareness on the drought response by KRCS. The message was designed to include details about drought response, community targeting, Complaints and feedback channels. A total of **158 spots** were run in the two counties.

## Drought Emergency Response Outcome



A total of **12,200 Households** received lifesaving unconditional transfer; this translates to **73,200 beneficiaries**;

The unconditional cash transfers (UCT) improved the beneficiaries **purchasing power** and access to food and other basic household needs.

The UCT **cushioned the most vulnerable** communities from the effects of drought and tendency of resorting to negative coping mechanisms.

Some beneficiaries reported that being enrolled in the cash transfer project increased their **credit worthiness**; as such they could get food commodities on credit from vendors and pay once the cash is transferred.

## Main Factors of Success:



- **Access to drought Early warning information** from KFSSG, NDMA and Kenya Meteorological Department supported initiation of drought early actions.
- British Red Cross **availed resources** to support pre-registration of beneficiaries in eight Counties. The pre-registration would set ground in readiness for unconditional cash transfers.
- **Engagement with County Steering Groups** which are chaired by National Drought Management Authority supported the allocation of project target sites (Wards) focusing mainly on the worst drought affected areas where no other partner was implementing similar interventions to avoid duplication.
- Since the cash transfers were based in anticipatory that the appeal would raise enough resources, **community engagement and accountability activities** necessitated active engagement with the community to manage their expectations.
- **Pre-registration** of beneficiaries provided a **resource mobilization avenue** for KRCS from other partners. This facilitated **timely cash transfer** to target beneficiaries.
- **KRCS good reputation** within the community ensured that the right people were targeted and there was support for the response from the local administrators.

## Main Constraints and Challenges:



- **Volatile security** in some areas like Mandera due to threats from militia groups, Turkana banditry attacks and Samburu and Marsabit ethnic conflicts affected access to these counties. KRCS worked with local security agencies to assess the situation before going for field activities.
- **Low response to drought appeal** to raise funds that could support cash transfers to registered beneficiaries; this affected the overall target of the drought response which resulted to halving this target from 25,000HHs to 12,200HHs.
- **High expectation** from the community: KRCS Engaged the community through various channels including radio spots, community meetings to ensure they had the right information regarding the response.
- **Frozen or inactive MPESA** accounts hampered timely transfer of unconditional cash to the drought affected communities. KRCS worked closely with Safaricom agents to activate the frozen lines and Mpesa accounts.
- **Limited flow of information** to the community on delay regarding disbursement, frequency of cash disbursements demoralized the beneficiaries especially after expectations had been raised.



## Lessons Identified



**Pre-registration** of beneficiaries is vital in supporting timely humanitarian assistance to disaster affected population.

The overall target for the drought response was 25,000HHs affected by drought. The targeting process was halted halfway reducing the target Households to 12,200 households due to missed fundraising (appeal) target. This means there was a likelihood that some more deserving people could have been left out. There is need to embark on targeting and registration process with **assurance on availability of resources** to cover the intended cash transfers. This would necessitate effectiveness of the emergency response.

Due to the design of the project that pegged cash transfers to the success of the appeal, it was necessary to **actively engage the community** to manage their expectations. Therefore, there is need to **allocate sufficient resources for CEA** activities and subsequently implement the same as expected. To avert crisis caused through social media backlash, **accountability measures through transparent communication** with communities and donors (public) should be strengthened.

There should be **meaningful engagement with county teams** when developing project proposals and budgets to ensure the actual picture on the ground is reflected in the project documents. This would facilitate effective implementation of the project.

Stakeholders (Government, other humanitarian partners and some donors) equally did not support the idea of early actions to drought based on the early warnings. The argument was based on the argument that there was still no humanitarian crisis and as such they did not see the need to support KRCS call to action. This led to poor resource mobilization towards drought early response actions. **Effective Coordination with other stakeholders** (including the National and County governments) is crucial in an emergency response to get buy-in and support that would ultimately result to timely lifesaving humanitarian support to the affected population.

### Next Steps and Recommendations:

With the introduction of the shock responsive pillar in the social protection policy, humanitarian organizations should plug their assistance into the **existing social safety net systems**. This would mean timely disbursement of live-saving humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in the community.

Humanitarian organizations should **pre-position resources (cash) in a crisis modifier** to facilitate easy access to resources that would facilitate early response to emergencies.

**Mapping and utilization of the most effective communication channels** across all target locations to be applied as part of community engagement and accountability approaches.

**Strengthening effective coordination** with other actors and **active involvement of government agencies** in the emergency response to support sustained response efforts.

The **Anticipatory Humanitarian assistance systems** should be developed with support from the government with defined actions linked to defined emergency threshold to necessitate sustainability and ownership of the emergency response efforts across board.

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