TRANSLATING WARNINGS INTO ACTION

Experiences from Uganda Red Cross Society on Ensuring Effective Message Delivery to Communities

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URCS Journey Working With Warnings and Forecasts

2013
URCS started working with forecasts since 2013, while piloting forecast-based action projects, with Funding from GRC

2018
IARP funded through NRLC, started supporting national wide engagements building on lessons from pilots, engaging wider communities

2020
Approval of Early Action protocol for floods based on Impact based forecast

2022
National DP Soft activations We are still learning

Scaling up and scaling down. National TWG, and decentralization of FbF to districts and subnational level through supporting DCPS. Under different consortium projects

1st Uganda AA Dialogue, 2022
Early Warning Information Ecosystem

The OPM, Department for Disaster Preparedness and Management established the NECOC. This is a 24 hour, 7-days a week central facility for early warning and the coordination of emergency and crisis response and recovery action. URCS is part of the NECOC.
How We Ensure the Message Reaches the Communities

EAP Alerts originate from the GloFAS, when its issues a forecast of at least 60% probability of a 5-year return period flood occurring in flood prone districts, which will be anticipated to affect more than 1,000hh. The EAP will be triggered with a lead time of 7 days and a FAR of not more than 0.5.

Alerts can originate from any source in the community (affected communities, partners, RCAT members, staff, government, etc.), but the relevant Branch Manager (BM) needs checks that it is true (through confirmation by at least one more credible source of information) before sending out an alert to the EPR Manager at HQ.

SOP Regulating Alert Flow Chart for FbF (Communication Protocols for EAP)

Alert flow under the EPR SOPs
How We Ensure the Message Reaches the Communities

- Door to Door
- Posters (IEC)
- Social media, like WhatsApp
- Community radios
How We Ensure the Message Reaches the Communities

Community radios
- Short lead times
- Sustainability by communities
- Communicating community risk
The flow and origin of information is not linear, despite having pre-defined protocols and procedures.

Technology and digital tools are increasingly making information flow more effective, i.e., through the WhatsApp platforms.

Taking actions based on warnings depends on the trust which decision-makers have in the information. This is not exactly the same as their skill level: even if a forecast is reliable, some may not trust it enough to act upon it.

To translate from warning to actions successfully, we need more than technical solutions for forecasting disasters and financial support. The effective and sustainable implementation of actions needs Mindset change: from response to preparedness across all levels.

We need to have sufficiently reliable forecast information which we can use to communicate with confidence. To enable us to alleviate those constraints within the requisite timeframe and distracts...
There is a mutual distrust between the tellers of scientific information and local knowledge, with neither side confident in forecasts of the other. Successful implementation of early actions is built on trust.