

See USAID Office of Food for Peace Occasional Paper 5 – “Trigger Indicators and Early Warning and Response Systems in Multi-Year Title II Assistance Programs”

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## INSURING SUSTAINABILITY

Making a Community-Based Early Warning System a success is a two-way street involving shared responsibilities and mutual respect.



To ensure sustainability at the community level, local community members must be involved in the CEWS at every stage.

Insuring Sustainability

## INSURING APPROPRIATE LINKAGES WITH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Linking the Community to the Outside

In a Community-Based Early Warning System, community members participate consistently to identify priorities and collect monitoring information. It is equally critical for program staff to have a clear path for communicating this information beyond the local areas. Building effective collaborative relationships with regional political leaders, government offices that deal with health, education, and agriculture, and national disaster preparedness offices is an important responsibility for program managers.

- Schedule regular meetings between program staff and government or FEWSNET staff who work on monitoring and emergency response.
- Find out what information FEWS and other higher level EWS need from the community.
- Share data obtained from CEWS activities.
- Prepare quarterly summary bulletins to distribute to other NGOs and government offices.
- Since cell phones are increasingly prevalent in rural areas, consider using text messaging as a means of relaying information efficiently.

## LINKING THE OUTSIDE TO THE COMMUNITY

Many people in the NGO community have the advantage of greater technical knowledge, higher levels of education, and more resources available than the average person in the communities they serve. They can use their talents to help communities achieve their own goals of development by mobilizing the critical resources to support community-designed mitigation activities. In this way, we improve the quality of life for Title II program beneficiaries, and empower people to realize their goals for providing a better life for their children and their futures.



Linking the Outside to the Community



## Understanding and Implementing Community-Based Early Warning Systems in the Context of Title II Programming

Part 2 of 2



## STEP 5 – COLLECTING AND USING THE INFORMATION

### What do we do with this information?

After the questionnaires are completed, the results should be discussed with the NGO staff who can then review and analyze this information to create a summary each month and compare it with the previous month.

As the data come in, it is important to decide what constitutes an indication that a shock, or increase in the problem is occurring. Discussions with community representatives and staff should identify what percentage of yes or no answers indicates an emergency.

For example, if food insecurity and drought are the target problems, in a normal month everyone would answer “no” to the question, “Did you eat any of the seed you were saving for planting?” In a month where the problem was just beginning, we might expect two out of ten people to say “yes” to this question, and in an emergency, we might see five out of ten answering “yes.” Identifying the threshold numbers for normal, concern, and emergency designations for each of the target problems’ responses is an important discussion to have while the survey is first designed. Pilot testing to validate the survey and determine the accuracy of threshold numbers is also important.

Step 5 - Collecting and Using the Information

## STEP 6 – DEVELOPING LOCAL MITIGATION PLANS

### Developing Mitigation Strategies

The overall goal of the early warning approach is to learn about the specific vulnerabilities that present to individual communities, and then to identify strategies to reduce these challenges.

The following are examples of mitigation actions communities can undertake:

**Frequent malaria** – increase community awareness of need to clear mosquito breeding areas and to use bed nets.

**Isolation from a hospital** – identify people who own bicycles who could serve as bicycle taxis in cases of emergency.

**Crop diseases** – learn about importance of burning diseased crop residue to prevent the spread of this disease to the next season’s planting.



## INCREASING RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Building Community Strength and Program Sustainability

Each of the communities participating in a CEWS process becomes more aware of their problems and more equipped to address these challenges. Community volunteers work in good faith to represent their communities in identifying problems and solutions and in the efforts to monitor conditions in their communities. Local people learn that some of their challenges can be helped through their own efforts.

Yet despite the best efforts of individuals, some problems will be difficult to change without assistance from outside the local communities. Program staff should use Title II resources to provide modest support for the mitigation programs that the communities identify.

Increasing Resilience and Sustainability

Using the examples noted, program support for the three targeted problems might include:

**Frequent malaria** – provide a supply of long lasting insecticide treated mosquito nets for children and pregnant women.

**Isolation from the hospital** – provide one bicycle per community as a communal resource to be used as a taxi or bicycle ambulance, and provide training and basic supplies to traditional birth attendants and community health workers.

**Crop diseases** – provide technical assistance on integrated pest management strategies and backpack sprayers owned and managed by the community.