infoasaid/Save the Children Pilot Communications Project:

A Learning Review

22 – 30 October 2012

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Acronyms

ALDEF	Arid Lands Development Focus
BSFP	Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme
CHW	Community Health Worker
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ERP	Emergency Response Personnel
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
FM	Field Monitor
GFD	General Food Distribution
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning
MoH	Ministry of Health
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ()
RC	Relief Committee
SC	Save the Children
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Programme
VSF	Veterinaires Sans Frontieres
WASDA	Wajir South Development Association
WASH	Water, Hygiene and Sanitation
WUA	Water User Association
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

"We are illiterate and we realize that information is a powerful tool. Though we are still illiterate now, I can say we are far better than before because of the radio programme." (Male livestock trader, Lafaley)

"We really benefited as a community (from these phones). You cannot imagine how such a small thing has helped us. You know, we are marginalized as we do not have a chief or a councillor. SC is now our saviour." (Women's group, Meygag)

In 2011, the Horn of Africa suffered a severe drought and famine following two consecutive seasons of significantly below-average rainfall. In Kenya, the Long Rains Season Assessment conducted by the Government's Food Security Steering Group estimated that 3.75 million people required food and non-food assistance in August 2011. Wajir County was one of the worst hit by the drought.

Save the Children (SC) provides direct or indirect humanitarian assistance to an estimated 199,471 people in Wajir East and 93,667 in Wajir South. The programme aims for the improvement of and access to health facilities, the protection and improvement of the nutritional status of beneficiaries, and improved food security and livelihoods of beneficiaries through community management structures and social protection.

The organization faces numerous challenges in disseminating and receiving information: the areas of operation are vast, the road infrastructure is poor, numerous security alerts limit travel, mobile network coverage is spotty, and the population is largely illiterate and mobile.

In December 2011, infoasaid and SC launched an innovative communications project utilizing mass communication platforms - mobile phones, FrontlineSMS software, and community radio - whose overall goal was to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance delivered by SC in Wajir. This goal would be realized by:

- Providing communities with critical, timely, and practical information that could help them in their daily lives;
- Increasing engagement between SC and drought-affected communities.

Underlying the project's design was a shared belief that communication is an aid-deliverable in its own right. By providing communities with vital information, and enabling them to seek information in turn, submit feedback, and interact with humanitarian organizations, communication can help communities become greater participants in their own recovery process.

"These are people you are working with, beneficiaries that you are serving, who you are accountable to. They are your constituents. When you are doing this service you are someone in power with a resource or information. Accountability demands that you use this power responsibly, and that means opening a two way channel of feedback, putting mechanisms in place so that you can respond to the beneficiaries. This is about building relationships and making your programmes more efficient. It's really a big thing. It's an important issue." (SC staff, Wajir)

The following document presents the findings of an infoasaid learning review conducted between 22 and 30 October 2012 which examined the implementation and results of an eight-month pilot communications project implemented in Wajir County. The learning review seeks primarily to contribute to the sector's understanding of whether/how communicating with crisis-affected communities affects the quality of humanitarian assistance. The review looks at the successes and challenges of the implementation process in order to provide useful information for humanitarians interested in establishing similar communications projects. Lastly, it is hoped that the findings will enhance learning and support SC to sustain its communication with the drought-affected population of Wajir County.

2. Country context and SC programmes

Kenya has a population of approximately 40 million and a GDP per capita of US$775 (World Bank, 2010). The 2011 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Kenya among the "low human development" countries of the world, placing it 143rd out of 187 countries.

Wajir County, located in North Eastern Province, covers a vast area of land - 56,000 km²- and has a population of approximately 662,000 (KNBS, 2009). It is one of Kenya's least-developed regions with basic services like health and education deemed very poor. The population is predominantly of Somali ethnicity. County poverty data based on the Kenya Integrated Household Baseline Survey (KIHBS) of 2005/06 estimated that 84% of the population lived under the poverty line. Wajir town is the largest urban town in Wajir County.

Wajir County was one of the worst hit areas of the 2011 drought. The population, which relies on a nomadic lifestyle with predominantly pastoral and agro-pastoral households, saw its ability to purchase food dramatically decline as pastures were decimated and water sources dried up (Merlin Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis 2011). In August 2011, a Long Rains Season Assessment conducted by the Kenyan Government's Food Security Steering Group classified Wajir County as being in the Emergency Phase (IPC Phase 4), in which households experience significant food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition or are able to meet minimum food needs only by engaging in irreversible coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood assets or diverting expenses from essential non-food items. Nutrition surveys conducted in November 2011 revealed that Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates in Wajir East were approximately 30% and considered "critical" (Save the Children Nutritional Anthropometric and Mortality survey, 2011)

Save the Children has been present in Wajir South (office in Habaswein) and Wajir East (office in Wajir town) since 2009. The organization provides direct or indirect assistance to

approximately 293,000 people (an estimated 44% of the entire population of Wajir County). The organization has a multi-sector approach with interventions in nutrition, health, education, protection, food security and livelihoods (FSL), and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH).

- **Health** interventions aim to build capacity and strengthen health systems for maternal and child health. SC supports 21 and 14 health facilities in Wajir East and Wajir South respectively, and mobile clinics in 28 and 31 outreach sites correspondingly. Services provided include vaccinations, ante-natal care and treatment for diseases such as acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and malaria. Teams of Community Health Workers (CHWs) visit all sites to promote skilled birth attendants, child immunisation and hygiene promotion.

- **Nutrition** is closely linked with the health programme and uses the same 21 and 14 health facilities in Wajir East and Wajir South respectively, and mobile clinics in 28 and 31 outreach sites correspondingly. SC supports the Ministry of Health's Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition programme by transporting therapeutic foods to distribution points and training staff. Seven mobile teams, each one comprising of one nurse and three outreach workers, visit the remote sites once a month. Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) for children under three years of age started in August 2011 and was expanded to children under five years old soon afterwards. SC distributes BSFP rations monthly at 47 and 53 sites in Wajir East and South respectively. The food distribution teams included a nurse, a Community Health Worker based on-site, crowd controllers, registrars, screeners and off-loaders.

- **FSL**: SC undertakes general food distribution in partnership with two local NGOs; WASDA and ALDEF. In addition, the organization is piloting a new voucher system with World Food Programme (WFP). Instead of receiving food aid, beneficiaries are given vouchers which can be exchanged for products such as fresh meat with designated traders. The vouchers can be exchanged for food at any time in a given 30 day period. Nine field monitors (FMs) (three from SC, three from ALDEF and three for WASDA) act as a bridge to the community, handling information dissemination and complaints. SC also implements programmes in animal health, using Veterinaires Sans Frontieres (VSF) Belgium as its implementing partner.

- **WASH**: The main sources of water for a majority of the population are unprotected wells, private and public dams. SC undertakes water trucking to schools and health facilities, rehabilitates water supplies, distributes water purification tablets, soap and buckets, and conducts extensive hygiene promotion campaigns.

- **Education**: SC has received funding to mitigate the impacts of drought on attainment of education for school dropouts and out of school children in Wajir East and South. The organisation seeks to increase access to education for nomadic pastoralists' children, improve the school learning environment, and explore alternative education programmes for out of school children.

- **Child protection**: SC aims to protect children from abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence, arising as a result of the drought emergency and longer-standing harmful traditional practices and attitudes towards child protection. The organization aims to create local capacity to respond to child protection concerns and also to increase awareness of children's rights through child participation.

3. The infoasaid/SC Wajir Pilot Communications Project

In October 2011, a team from infoasaid visited SC's emergency programmes in Wajir South and Wajir East to understand the organization's communication challenges and objectives. They held discussions with SC programme staff in these locations including the Area Managers and visited three different field sites to assess the potential for helping to improve SC's two-way communication with drought-affected populations in Wajir East and Wajir South. In two villages in Wajir East, discussions were held with village elders around information needs and access.

The interviews conducted with SC staff and discussions with community members in the sites visited revealed numerous communication challenges:

- During the *Emergency Phase* Save the Children primarily communicated with drought-affected populations via Community Health Workers, Arid Land Development Focus (ALDEF) Field Monitors, Community Mobilisers, and Water User Association members who used faced-to-face meetings to disseminate information and listen to feedback. However, due to poor road conditions and security incidents, it was nearly impossible to ensure timely and systematic dissemination of information. Visits to outreach sites to distribute food and provide health services took place on a monthly basis;
- No channel existed through which Save the Children could systematically receive urgent information on the humanitarian situation;
- Existing feedback mechanisms did not seem effective, often requiring resources and time from community members. For example, there was only one complaint box and it was located in the office in Wajir town which could only be utilized by literate people;
- Community members generally lacked access to critical information to help them improve their wellbeing, especially women, very few of whom owned radios or mobile phones.

Based on the findings of the infoasaid scoping trip, the team developed a proposal for a pilot communications project to be implemented in Wajir South and Wajir East. The project proposal had two principal objectives:

Improve engagement with communities as a means of improving the delivery of SC's humanitarian assistance

1) To improve the effectiveness of SC's humanitarian assistance in Wajir County through systematic, fast, and reliable communication between the organization and drought-affected communities.

Provide information as a form of aid

2) To provide communities with vital information that could improve their wellbeing and livelihoods.

Interventions

To realize the overall objectives outlined above, infoasaid proposed **three** interventions:

1. The use of **mobile telephony, coupled with FrontlineSMS software**, to improve the effectiveness of two-way communication between SC and recipients of food aid, health services, and water services.

2. The **sponsorship of a weekly interactive radio programme** on the local community radio. Expert speakers would be invited to discuss key issues related to services provided by SC in Wajir.

3. The **sponsorship of a weekly livestock bulletin broadcast** on the local community radio. Prices for livestock would be aired for the main markets of Habaswein and Wajir.

During an infoasaid training session for the communications project (held in Limuru in December 2011), SC staff were interviewed and articulated the following expected outcomes of the pilot project:

Improve engagement with communities as a means of improving the delivery of SC's humanitarian assistance

- SC has an increased understanding of communities' needs and concerns.
- The relationship between SC and drought-affected communities is significantly improved.
- Lives are saved through improved health referrals due to timely and reliable communication between SC and CHWs.
- Attendance at food distributions is improved as information is disseminated faster from RC members to community members.
- Communities better understand SC's services and participation rates increase (e.g. immunization campaigns).

Provide information as a form of aid

- Community members, especially women, have increased access to critical information which can help them to improve their wellbeing.
- Pastoralists listen to livestock bulletins and can better decide whether or not to sell their animals. This may increase household income.

The initial project proposal drafted by infoasaid in October 2011 was slightly revised during the infoasaid training (December 2012). The ultimate proposal comprised the following activities, which are described in further detail in **section 5.1** on Implementation:

1. Recruitment of Communication Officers responsible for rolling out the communications pilot in Wajir South and Wajir East.
2. Sponsorship of a weekly interactive radio programme on Wajir Community Radio targeting all members of the community but with a special emphasis on health issues related to women and children under five years old.
3. Distribution of recordable radios to 46 women's listening groups.
4. Distribution of 250 mobile phones and solar chargers to CHW, relief committee representatives, and water management associations.
5. Implementation of FrontlineSMS hubs in Wajir East and Wajir South.
6. Sponsorship of price bulletins from weekly livestock markets in Wajir East and Wajir South broadcast on Wajir Community Radio.

4. Scope and objectives of learning review

4.1 Rationale

The infoasaid/SC pilot communication project is novel in its approach to delivering communication as a form of humanitarian assistance. It is also innovative in its use of broadcast media and mobile technology solutions in a protracted drought setting. Although recent years have seen an increase in the use of mobile and radio communication in humanitarian settings (IRCS, 2010; Nelson, 2011; Wall, 2011; IFRC, 2011; BBC Media Action, 2012), there is limited information on the strengths and weaknesses of these technologies in different contexts. This learning review, which is the third of its kind in Kenya, contributes to this growing body of evidence.

4.2 Purpose

The learning review's purpose is first and foremost to contribute to the sector's understanding of whether/how communicating with crisis-affected populations influences the quality of humanitarian assistance. It is important to note that this review does not constitute an external evaluation of SC, infoasaid, or of the communications project they sought to implement. It should be noted that the review was conducted by infoasaid research staff and can therefore be considered a self-review.

Two overarching questions guided the learning review:

- What did each infoasaid response seek to do? What actually happened? What worked well, what didn't work well, and why?
- How, if at all, did the communications project influence the overall humanitarian response of SC in Wajir?

The first question focuses on the **implementation process**, providing an overview of what each intervention sought to achieve and what actually happened. By looking at what happened and why, the learning review seeks to promote learning regarding how aid agencies share information with, and listen to, those affected by a crisis.

The second question considers the **overall results** of the communications project, specifically looking at its impact on SC's humanitarian assistance in Wajir. The learning review seeks to understand, to the extent possible, the effect of the communications pilot project on the overall quality of SC's humanitarian aid in Wajir.

Using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluation humanitarian action as a framework, it attempts to summarise answers to the following questions from the perspective of SC staff, community representatives, and members of communities of Wajir County:

1. **Relevance/Appropriateness:**
   - *To what extent did the stated objectives correctly address the information problems and needs of the target groups?*
   - *To what extent has the communications project enabled SC to better align its activities with the needs and priorities of the target group?*
2. **Coverage:**
   - *To what extent has the communications project enhanced SC's ability to reach population groups in need?*
3. **Effectiveness:**
   - *To what extent has the communications project influenced the achievement of the organization's programme objectives?*
4. **Efficiency:**
   - *To what extent has the communications project influenced the time and cost-efficiency of SC's programmes?*
5. **Impact:**
   - *What are the wider effects of the project, intended and unintended, on the target community? What real difference has the project made to community members?*

4.3 Methodology

In order to determine the value of the project for the affected community, the guiding philosophy of the learning review was to listen to the perspective of numerous stakeholders involved in SC's humanitarian assistance, including the organization's staff, local partner NGOs, community representatives and the communities themselves.

The method for this learning review consisted of:

- A review of any literature on humanitarian response activities, including any programme reports or monitoring reports;
- Focus group discussions with:
  - members of the RCs,
  - mother to mother support groups, and
  - livestock traders.
- Key informant interviews with:
  - CHWs,
  - ALDEF Field Monitors,
  - Wajir Community Radio staff,
  - a representative of the Kenya Livestock Marketing Council, and
  - SC staff in Wajir and Nairobi.

The sampling frame included staff who had participated in the pilot communications project including the Wajir Acting Area Manager, Wajir Communications Officer, the Wajir MEAL Coordinator, and Managers, Officers and Coordinators in SC's health, nutrition, food security and livelihoods and WASH programmes.

The sampling frame for the CHWs, RCs, and community members was based on the geographic and semi-rural/rural spread of SC's programme, and the travelling distance to and from Wajir town.

In total, seven villages were visited: Barwaqo, Bula Kom, Dasheeg, Kajaja 1, Lafaley, Meygag, and Waqberi. Three focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with women-only participants and two with men-only. FGDs with RCs consisted of both men and women respondents.

4.4 Research Limitations

The learning review was limited by a number of significant factors:

- The fieldwork is not in any way representative of all the communities participating in SC's programmes. First, the research team chose to focus its efforts on Wajir East where the three components of the communications project had been implemented. In Wajir South, FrontlineSMS had been barely used due to implementation delays and staff turn-over. Second, due to security constraints in Wajir, the research team

was limited to visiting sites that could be reached within a day's drive from Wajir town. Of the sites visited, the furthest village, Kajaja 1, was 45 km from Wajir. Only one of those sites did not have network coverage. Mobile coverage is a serious problem in Wajir since findings from the research indicate that approximately 50% of RCs who received a phone and solar charger are not within range of a mobile network.

- infoasaid relied on SC to select and mobilise focus group participants. It is therefore possible that the selection of participants was biased towards those with knowledge about or a favourable attitude towards the project. Participants might have felt uncomfortable criticising the project.

- The review took place after several components of the pilot project had ended. As such, the research team was asking participants to remember radio programmes or radio bulletins that had not aired for several months. Although this did not seem to pose a problem in this environment with relatively few media options, it is important to bear in mind when reading the findings.

- As a result of high staff turn-over in SC's Nairobi and Wajir office, there were many communication challenges regarding the infoasaid project. One such challenge was the implementation of a monitoring system which was expected to be designed in Nairobi but which was not realized. Hence, while some data from the radio programme and FrontlineSMS interventions were captured by the Wajir office, the lack of a robust M&E system limited the amount of data that could be analysed by the infoasaid team.

- Lastly, for each communications project that infoasaid pilots with a partner organization, an attempt is made to conduct a baseline study with community representatives. Findings from this research inform the project's implementation and also form the basis for measuring change during the communications project. However, the security situation in Wajir at the time of project implementation in December 2011 made it impossible to travel to the area to meet with community representatives. Consequently, the only "baseline" data obtained at that time was collected through interviews with SC staff who were attending an infoasaid training in Limuru in December 2011.

5. Findings

5.1 Implementation

As outlined above, the communications project design involved six key activities:

1. Recruitment of Communication Officers responsible for rolling out the communications pilot in Habaswein and Wajir.
2. Sponsorship of a weekly interactive radio programme on Wajir Community Radio targeting all members of the community but with a special emphasis on health issues related to women and children under five years old.
3. Distribution of recordable radios to 46 women's listening groups.
4. Distribution of 250 mobile phones and solar chargers to CHWs, RC representatives, and Water User Associations (WUAs).
5. Implementation of FrontlineSMS hubs in Wajir East and Wajir South.
6. Sponsorship of price bulletins from weekly livestock markets in Wajir East and Wajir South broadcast on Wajir Community Radio.

Before considering the results of these activities, this chapter briefly examines their implementation, looking specifically at *what was planned, what actually happened, what worked well and what did not[1]*. The section also briefly touches on two additional aspects of project implementation namely coordination between the Wajir and Nairobi office, and sustainability.

5.1.1 Recruitment of Communication Officers responsible for rolling out the pilot in Wajir East and Wajir South

Given the extent of SC's projects in Wajir County, and the various components of the communications project, infoasaid's project proposal highlighted the importance of recruiting dedicated staff to implement and manage the following activities:

- Operate the FrontlineSMS communications hub and ensure that all messages passing through the hub are passed on to the appropriate people in a timely manner;

- Manage incoming voice calls from CHWs and RCs members and ensure that matters raised in these calls receive a timely and appropriate response;

- Draft and disseminate clear concise SMS messages in the most relevant language (English, Kiswahili or Somali) to field staff and focal points in rural communities. The content of these messages would be decided in close consultation with the Area Manager, Programme Managers and Sector Specialists;

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[1] Some components of the pilot communications project continue, specifically the use of Frontline SMS and mobile phones, but other components such as the radio programme and market price bulletins ended by August 2012.

- Coordinate closely with Wajir Community Radio to plan sponsored programmes, arrange appropriate studio guests for these programmes and ensure that studio guests arrive at the radio station in time for each broadcast or recording session;

- Script key messages from SC in Somali for broadcast on the radio as directed by the Area Manager, Programme Managers and Sector Specialists;
- Work closely with SC's outreach workers and community mobilisers[2] to improve the aid agency's two-way communication with the local population through all available channels.

SC managed to recruit two skilled Communication Officers with the relevant expertise and experience in time for the infoasaid training in December 2011. Each quickly mastered the basic operations of FrontlineSMS, the development of key messages, and their role in collecting, analysing and responding to feedback received from community members.

With the training completed in December 2011, and all equipment procured shortly afterwards, the Communication Officers expected to begin implementing the project in January 2012. However, due to a number of reasons, including high staff turnover in the Nairobi and Wajir offices, and a winding down of the emergency phase, several key aspects of the pilot were delayed in implementation. These included the interactive radio show and the livestock bulletins. In addition, the Communication Officer in Habaswein resigned and was not replaced until approximately two months later. Meanwhile, the Communications Officer in Wajir had started to forget some of the FrontlineSMS skills learned during the training. In August 2012, an infoasaid staff member provided a refresher training course for the two Communications Officers from Wajir and Habaswein. **When the infoasaid learning review was conducted in October 2012, only the Wajir office had implemented the communications project as originally developed in the infoasaid project proposal.**

5.1.2 The sponsorship of a radio programme on Wajir Community Radio

The sponsorship by SC of a weekly, interactive radio programme on Wajir Community Radio was intended to provide information on key humanitarian issues affecting drought-affected communities related to maternal and child health, nutrition, food security and livelihoods, WASH, and child protection. The show was also expected to increase two-way communication between SC and drought-affected communities by providing a platform for listening to questions, concerns and feedback from community members via a phone-in segment.

Wajir Community Radio was identified through the infoasaid information needs and access assessment as a very popular radio station in Wajir County. It commands a large and loyal audience, broadcasting almost entirely in Somali, the local language. Its coverage area was not easy to determine but appears to cover a radius of 50-150 km from Wajir town.

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[2] Community mobilisers were present in Wajir during the Emergency Response Programme. They left in early 2012 as the programme concluded.

The radio programme was implemented with a three month delay, and only broadcast 14 of the 26 shows initially recommended in the infoasaid proposal. Even though the show was only on the air for a little over three months, it was praised by all stakeholders as an extremely successful initiative which provided isolated communities with critical information on key issues affecting their lives.

"For some of the women, this was the first opportunity they have ever had to access this kind of information – informative health programmes on breastfeeding, hygiene promotion, and so on. Now they can assemble around a radio, listen to a programme in their language, someone speaking in Somali, explaining several cultural myths. It was eye-opening for them." (SC staff, Wajir)

The Somali name of the sponsored radio discussion programme translates into English as "Your awareness time." It was on air for three months from early-April until late-June 2012.

The sponsored programme was broadcast every Wednesday at 7.30 pm. This is a prime time spot when many local people switch over to Wajir Community Radio after listening to the evening broadcast of the BBC Somali Service and the 7.00 pm evening news on KBC in Swahili. This may have enabled many male members of the community to listen in but several women complained that the timing was difficult for them since they were either preparing dinner or putting children to bed. Further probing however, revealed that there was perhaps no time during the day when a woman was free to listen to the show. As several male respondents remarked "*women have less idle time than us*".

The programme consisted of a studio discussion on the theme of the day between the presenter and an invited guest, followed by a phone-in segment. Each edition of the discussion programme focussed on a specific topic chosen by the programme managers of SC's main programmes in Wajir County; health, nutrition, livelihoods and food security, child protection, WASH, and education (see Annex 1 for a list of programmes).

The programme had a contracted duration of 45 minutes, but was sometimes extended for up to 55 minutes if there was intense interest in the topic of the day from listeners phoning in with questions. In general, the guest speaker would be interviewed for 20-30 minutes allowing for 15-25 minutes of interactive discussion to follow, with calls coming in from the general public and receiving a direct response.

SC was able to secure a Somali-speaking expert for all except one of the 14 programmes broadcasted. For that programme, SC could only secure a Swahili speaking expert on adding value to agricultural products. The radio station provided simultaneous translations into Somali. About 70% of the expert interviewees were drawn from government line ministries and the rest from SC's own staff. Experts who were not part of SC's staff were given a facilitation fee of 2,000Ksh for participating in the programme and had their transportation to and from the radio studio paid by SC.

The most popular programmes, judging from the quality and quantity of listeners' questions were those dealing with health issues. The SC Communications Officer highlighted three programmes in particular that raised especially strong interest from both male and female listeners in the phone-in section of the show: breastfeeding practices (Somali mothers traditionally only feed new-born babies water for the first three days of their life); information about a measles outbreak in Wajir County; and hygiene promotion techniques.

The Communication Officer estimates there were 11-15 calls per radio show but according to comments heard during the research, the number of callers may have been higher if the radio station had had more than one operating phone line. Several community members, mostly men and a couple of women, noted they had tried to contact the station but were unable to get through because the line was engaged. This was echoed by staff working at the radio station who say they are frequently accosted by community members who complain they tried calling the station but were unable to get through.

5.1.3 The distribution of recordable radios to 43 women's groups

The infoasaid scoping trip revealed that women in Wajir generally have little access to mass communication tools. Very few own mobile phones and for those who live in households with a radio, it is often the men who will decide which programme to listen to. To improve women's access to information, SC decided to distribute recordable radios to women's groups which were formed as part of SC's health and nutrition programmes in Wajir (called mother-to-mother support groups).

Radios, along with an initial supply of batteries and cassettes, were distributed to 22 groups in Wajir East and 21 groups in Wajir South. The groups were formed on the basis of mother-to-mother breastfeeding discussion groups, which have been in existence since 2009. The average size of each group was between 20 to 30 women. The custodian of the radio in each group was expected to record the weekly discussion programme and play it back to the group at a daytime meeting later in the week.

The women interviewed were generally happy with the recordable radios. A few remarked that since they did not have the time to listen to the SC radio programme in the evening at home, they appreciated being able to listen with other women during the day at a more convenient time.

A monitoring trip from SC in July 2012 noted that women in the mother-to-mother support groups had organized the listening times of the recorded programme according to the rhythms of daily life in each village.

"Groups have unique strategies of following up the broadcasts. In Sitawario and Meygag, they have a structured meeting time where prayers and cultural rituals take place. The radio custodian made use of this gathering as a radio listening lesson. In Kajaja 1, the radio is taken to different corners of the village and the kiosks along the road for mass listening and in Dasheeg women converge and listen to the radio as they wait for the Matatu from Wajir that ferries daily supplies to the village. In Lafaley, they have frequent community actions with barazas and village clean up where both men and women volunteer." (SC staff, Wajir)

The most often heard complaint regarding the radios was the number purchased and distributed. Several women interviewed, as well as the radio presenter, felt that too few radios had been distributed given the large number of women's groups in Wajir. A few monitoring trips by the SC Communications Officer also noted that women had problems obtaining new batteries to keep the radios functioning and enough cassettes to record more programmes.

5.1.4 The distribution of 250 mobile phones and solar chargers to CHWs, RC representatives, and WUAs

Infoasaid procured 250 Nokia 1280 mobile phones and Tough Stuff solar chargers to improve two-way communication between community representatives and SC. Mobile phones, solar chargers, and Safaricom SIM cards were distributed to three sets of groups: CHWs, RCs, and water user association representatives. In Wajir East, the distribution was as follows: CHWs involved in the Safe Motherhood programme (62), RCs (53), WUA representatives (seven) SC mother-to-mother trainer (one), SC Health Officer (one), SC Child Protection Officer (one), and the SC Communications Officer (one). From what infoasaid learned during the LR, a similar distribution pattern of 113 phones was replicated in the Habaswein office.

infoasaid relied on SC to distribute the communications equipment. When designating staff responsible for this process, the organization aimed to identify individuals who were literate and trusted members of the community. An effort was also made to ensure women were well represented in the distribution process but the data reveals a bias towards male community representatives: only ten of the 52 RCs who received a handset are women, and only 17 of the 62 CHWs are women (accounting for less than 25% of the total handsets distributed). In the WUAs, all seven handsets were distributed to male focal points. This bias may be explained by the lack of female representatives in these roles and the fact that literacy rates tend to be higher among males than females.

In all of the sites visited except one, members of the community perceived the handset to be a "working" phone which was for the benefit of the community. Nevertheless, the research team did come across one village where the distribution of the mobile phone and solar charger did not seem to benefit the community at large and women in particular. Members expressed their frustration to the infoasaid research team, noting that the current custodian of the mobile and solar charger only used the "*phone for his own business*".

Although community members and SC staff believed that the mobile phones had increased the flow and timeliness of information between the organization and drought-affected communities, there were a few important challenges which reduced the effectiveness of this intervention:

- **The mobile network coverage in Wajir proved to be smaller than SC originally estimated**. For example, the WASH program initially targeted 15 WUAs to receive mobile phones and solar chargers but in the end only seven received the equipment since the others were located in areas with no network coverage. The phones were given to one person in the WUA committee, usually the individual responsible for collecting usage fees or for operating and maintaining WASH equipment. Surprisingly, the same mapping process does not seem to have taken place with RCs. **Consequently, of the 52 RCs who received mobile phones, 27 do not have direct access to a mobile network**. RCs explained that in such areas they would walk to a nearby village or climb trees or hills to find a network signal. The details of

how well this functioned could not be confirmed by the research team since of all the sites visited; only one was not within a mobile network range.

- For those 25 RCs who did have regular access to a mobile network, five could not initially connect using the Safaricom SIM card (two could only connect to the Airtel network and three to the Orange network). While the RCs located within the Airtel network eventually received new SIM cards which enabled them to communicate with SC and ALDEF, the RCs within the Orange network have not been able to use the mobile phones since Orange in Kenya operates on the CDMA standard (Safaricom and Airtel operate on the GSM standard). To have them participate in the communications project would require new SIM cards as well as new CDMA handsets.

- **While the Nokia phones have generally worked well, the solar charger kits are less reliable and this has had negative implications on the communications project**. In every focus group discussion and interview, participants complained that their solar charger was faulty. In some cases, the charger had never worked while in others, the charging capacity had declined over time.

  The solar chargers were a critical component of the communications project for two reasons: they would help charge the phones in villages with little access to electricity, and they would enable focal points to generate income, by charging the phones of community members, to pay for airtime.

  Due to limited electricity outlets, most of the RCs and CHWs interviewed had to find other channels for charging their phones.

"Normally there is a public bus which comes in the village to transport milk vendors to Wajir town. We give the mobile phones to the driver who helps us charge them in Wajir and he returns the phones to us in the evening or the following morning." (CHW, Dasheeg)

  CHWs also complained that the phones were becoming a drain on their limited income since many members of the community turned to them for help but SC had not provided any credit to use the phones. The problem is further compounded by the fact that many CHWs and RCs are not comfortable with texting information (which would be less expensive than a voice call). Although many have some degree of literacy, writing text messages is not prevalent within Somali mobile phone culture. **Consequently, while CHWs believed the mobile phones were very useful, several worried about their ability to pay for helping community members.** Interestingly, these comments were less common among RCs, perhaps because the frequency and complexity of issues to be communicated from RCs to SC is less than for CHWs.

"We would like to request that SC think of how we can be given credit. You know, we have the phone and everybody in the community knows this so they come to us and ask for help. We have to help them but we are all alone and using our own money which is hard to do." (CHW, Wajir town)

"We need credit to call and assist the community members. It is difficult to get credit but we cannot rely on SMS. It is better to call to make sure you have gotten through." (CHW, Dasheeg)

On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that the intended benefits of the solar chargers in ensuring that the SC phones were always switched-on and that they would be able to generate some income to make the phone calls, were not realised.

5.1.5   Implementation of FrontlineSMS hubs in Wajir East and Wajir South

Coupled with the distribution of mobile phones and solar chargers, was the implementation of a FrontlineSMS information hub in the Wajir East and Wajir South SC offices. The software would enable SC to send out bulk SMS messages – including programme updates, security information, community mobilisation messages, etc. - at the click of a button to defined contact groups (FrontlineSMS can be used for both closed user groups and open communication systems that are available to the wider public). Furthermore, incoming SMS messages from contacts could be received by the hub which would allow the Communication Officer to analyse the information coming in. **Ultimately, the hub was expected to improve the speed and regularity of two-way communication between SC and drought-affected communities via SMS.**

At the time of the learning review in October 2012, the hub in Habaswein was running using free, open source FrontlineSMS software, which was downloaded onto a Communications Officer computer and then connected to a mobile phone line through a Safaricom modem stick[3]. However, due to operational issues, the use of the hub was slow to get going and the first messages were sent out in early March 2012. Furthermore, t**he FrontlineSMS hub has experienced some technical problems which reduces its effectiveness**. In particular, it often fails to receive or send messages which appeared to become stuck on the SIM card of the computer modem. According to the Communications Officer in Wajir, this occurs on a daily basis. Transmission blockages can only be resolved by deleting blocked messages from the mobile partner software used to link the SIM card on the modem stick to the FrontlineSMS computer and then rebooting the computer.

Despite these challenges, the Communication Officer in Wajir was able to use FrontlineSMS fairly regularly to communicate with CHWs and with SC staff. He estimates that he sent an average of 12 different messages per week, with information related to community meetings, the radio show, reporting deadlines, security incidents, 'Action' days like World Malaria Day, polio vaccinations etc., and logistical information regarding when and where to receive salaries. Four monitoring reports from the month of May 2012 reveal the Communications Officer received between eight and 21 messages from SC staff and CHWs. Most of those messages were requests for assistance related to SC's programmes, questions regarding aid delivered, and appreciation for the radio show.

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[3] Safaricom offered an attractive package that allowed subscribers to send an unlimited number of SMS messages for a fixed fee of only 10 KSh per day

The Communication Officer also used FrontlineSMS to regularly communicate internal messages to SC staff. Several staff interviewed said they valued FrontlineSMS as a tool for circulating security-related information. They noted the importance of receiving texts rather than emails which are not always accessible.

While FrontlineSMS hubs were supposed to run in both the Habaswein and Wajir offices, this was never actually implemented in Habaswein. This is because the first Communications Officer recruited to run the project from Habaswein resigned as the project was being launched and his replacement was only recruited a couple of months later.

5.1.6 Sponsorship of price bulletins from weekly livestock markets in Wajir East and Wajir South on Wajir Community Radio

It is estimated that 70% of the population in Wajir County depends on livestock for their livelihood. Nevertheless, one of the main findings of the infoasaid information needs assessment (October 2011) was the lack of information regarding livestock prices from the County's largest markets. Pastoralists had to rely on information from traders to determine whether, when and what to sell, without any knowledge of whether or not they were receiving a fair price. The pastoralists sometimes endured a long journey with their animals to Habaswein or Wajir markets, only to learn that buying prices were low. At that point, they might still be forced to sell because the animals were too weak to make the return trip home or they might stay several days in Wajir town, incurring expenses as they waited for the buying prices to rise. **For pastoralists, such a lack of information substantially increases the risk that they will undersell their products.**

Following a similar Oxfam initiative a few months earlier to increase access to livestock pricing information, SC launched a weekly information pricing bulletin for Wajir and Habaswein markets. infoasaid suggested using Wajir Community Radio to broadcast the pricing bulletins. **The objective was to help drought-distressed pastoralists achieve better prices for animals that they sell – thereby boosting cash household income for the pastoralists. In addition, SC could provide information alongside the market prices to help improve the health of the herds and therefore the human population that depends on them.**

Information for the weekly pricing broadcasts flowed from the Kenya Livestock Marketing Council (KLMC) Market Monitors, to the SC Communication Officers in Wajir South and Wajir East who then forwarded the information to Wajir Community Radio staff. To facilitate the communication of information from the Habaswein KLMC market monitor to the SC communications officer, SC provided him Ksh 1000 airtime per month.

The broadcast of twice-weekly price bulletins for camel, cattle, goat and sheep prices began in May 2012 and continued until mid-August 2012. The main livestock market in Wajir South is held in Habaswein on Saturday with the report from this market broadcast live on Saturday night and repeated on Sunday morning. The main livestock market in Wajir East is held in Wajir town on Monday with the market report broadcast live on Monday night and repeated on Tuesday morning. Both reports used the format recommended by infoasaid during the

training in December 2012. Overall, the project's implementation was fairly smooth and considered a success by numerous stakeholders

5.1.7 Coordination

Interviews with SC staff in Wajir revealed important communication and coordination challenges with the SC office in Nairobi related to the infoasaid project. **These problems had direct implications for the launch of the pilot communications project, its monitoring, and its sustainability.**

Many of the challenges encountered can be attributed to high staff turnover in the Nairobi and Wajir offices as the Emergency Response came to an end. **The infoasaid/SC communications project was initially pioneered by Emergency Response Personnel (ERP). When this programme concluded, the communications project continued but was in essence "orphaned"**. This left staff in Wajir without the necessary guidelines, reporting frameworks, or budget codes to implement the pilot communications project. Questions raised by the newly hired Communication Officer in Wajir to the office in Nairobi were generally left unanswered for several weeks, leading to a long gap between the training and actual implementation. This was compounded by the fact that the Communication Officer was new to SC and so was unfamiliar with internal processes and procedures.

Infoasaid conversations during the course of the project with ever-changing SC staff in Nairobi revealed limited understanding and engagement with all the different aspects of the communications pilot, from project design to monitoring and evaluation. Offers to provide support in developing indicators for monitoring and evaluation were not taken up and attempts by infoasaid to check on progress were rarely responded to.

"Initially, the infoasaid project came under ERP. We had one ERP personnel stationed here in the office and the other in Habaswein. When the ERPs left, the Communication Officer was left like an orphan. He had to report to the new area manager just as he had reported to the former area manager. The new area manager had no idea of the programme he had inherited and as such, the project was placed under MEAL. We tried to forge ahead despite challenges, one of which was funding. The initial funds allocated to the infoasaid project were exhausted before we could complete everything." (SC staff, Wajir)

"Every new project should have a proposal. By the time the project is starting up during the grant start-up, the documents in place should include the proposal, the M&E plan or the log-frame. However, in case the M&E plan is missing but there is the log frame then then the M&E department could work to give you an M&E matrix using the framework. All these things were missing....there was no one in the department who was responsible for this. A detailed implementation plan was missing." (SC staff, Wajir)

For infoasaid, a key lesson learned from this project has been the need to actively support a project's implementation at the regional office from beginning to end. infoasaid initially tried to support the ERP team in Nairobi to design an M&E Framework for the project but rapidly became discouraged by the lack of progress and high staff turn-over. Perhaps if the infoasaid team had established regular contact with the Communication

Officer in Wajir instead, some of the frustrations and delays experienced could have been reduced.

In the end, the fact that the communications project was implemented with a fair degree of success, albeit only for three months, is attributed to the tenacity and skill of the Communication Officer in Wajir. He advocated for the need to pay attention to primary stakeholder feedback which he believed would improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of their programmes. Once the project started to show results, he was joined by Programme Officers who witnessed the benefits of increased engagement with community members.

5.1.8   Sustainability

SC staff in Wajir and partner NGOs repeatedly expressed their desire to see the use of mobile phones, FrontlineSMS technology and the radio broadcasts continue. All of those interviewed spoke about the impact the communications project had made on their work and the lives of the community (see sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 on Effectiveness and Impact).

"People called into the radio show and they expressed their needs. They might say SC is doing so much about health and education but we don't have water. We learned so much about the communities." (SC staff, Wajir)

Despite this enthusiasm, and initial evidence of results, the project has not been sustained except for the mobile phones which are still used by RCs and CHWs to communicate with SC staff. No aspect of the project has been factored into SC's programmes for the financial year 2012/13. To ensure communication with affected-communities becomes an integral part of SC's work in Wajir would require that every new proposal have a section on communication, similar to the way MEAL is integrated. This would include resources for activities such as radio broadcasts as well as for the salary of a dedicated Communications Officer.

"The objectives were achieved but more could have been done. It is not good to come up with a project and then for it to disappear. We need to have a clear way forward. What happens after an emergency? Should this project have sustainability? This is meant to prop-up the implementation of all our activities and to continue." (SC staff, Wajir)

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Relevance/Appropriateness

> 5.2.1.1   To what extent did the communications project correctly address the problems and real communication needs of the target groups?

infoasaid recommends that any communications project begin with an information needs and access assessment whose findings will provide the foundation for developing a sound communication plan based on the expressed information needs of the target population. In Wajir, this assessment, undertaken in October 2012 during the initial scoping trip, was rushed due to security and time constraints. Consequently, the sample was very small and the depth of information was limited. This flaw would have been remedied during the baseline survey that infoasaid undertakes prior to the implementation of a communication project; however, as noted earlier, the baseline survey could not go forward in December 2012 due to heightened security concerns which severely constrained travel to the region.

In the end, the Programme Managers of SC designed the radio shows and livestock bulletins based on their understanding of the community's information needs. While this approach can sometimes lead to information which is of little interest to listeners, the focus group participants asserted that the show and bulletins were highly relevant to the information needs of drought-affected communities in Wajir.

5.2.1.1.1   The radio programme

The weekly interactive radio show on Wajir Community Radio was praised by community members and SC staff alike for its educational approach. Several comments indicate that listeners revered the show as they might a school teacher.

"The radio presenters are like the teachers we never met. We respect them because they teach us good lessons." (Women's group, Barwaqo)

"We are all illiterate. The radio program is helpful because we become educated when listening to it." (Women's group, Meygag)

"The radio show was our teacher. If a student missed their lesson then that means they become idle. We are deaf now." (RC member, Lafaley)

"The radio programme educated the community the same way the Islamic schools in every village educate our children. We request that Save start it again and that everyone in the country can have the opportunity to listen to the programme." (RC member, Bula Kom)

Although the radio programme had stopped more than three months prior to the infoasaid research, none of the respondents had difficulty recalling the shows they had listened to. All the programmes were considered relevant to their needs but those which were mentioned most often by respondents were related to health and nutrition issues.

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When asked if they had used any of the information presented on the show, many community members readily described how they had changed their habits related to hand-washing, breastfeeding, and the clearing of refuse. The show which appears to have had the biggest effect on listeners concerned the issue of exclusive breastfeeding which is traditionally not practiced in Somali society with new-borns generally given water or animal milk during their first three days of life, leading to high rates of diarrhoea and other health problems.

"The radio programme educated us on a number of issues for example animal market prices, and importance of breastfeeding." (Women's group, Kajaja 1)

"All of us sitting here are illiterate. It helped us become educated…. It changed the way I looked at my health and my children's health a lot. If you compare the level of environmental cleanliness today and the months before, then you will see the difference." (Women's group, Meygag)

"Among the things I recall from the programme, is the promotion of breastfeeding for the first six months, how to wash and dry your baby, how to protect them. We have learnt the difference between breast milk and milk from animals. We have learnt that breastfeeding is the healthiest thing to do. We have learnt a lot and we appreciate it." (Women's group, Dasheeg)

"I used this information. For example, I now regularly keep my children under a treated net and this helps me because I rarely take my children to the hospital because of malaria. This programme was so helpful." (RC, Wajir)

"The local communities benefitted most from the programmes because it cleared the doubt people had on various issues such as measles, whooping cough, WASH programmes, diarrhoea and breastfeeding. These are some of the issues we've discussed. And actually, it would not be wrong to say that everybody in society, who listened to the programmes, has become, one way or another his own doctor." (Wajir Community Radio staff)

Female listeners stated that they shared the information learned from the radio show with other community members. One respondent specifically noted that the programme had supported the mother-to-mother groups and helped women learn from one another.

"What we have learnt (from the radio), we pass to other women in the bush. We tell them how to hold a baby, how to breastfeed, what is harmful to babies. We advise them to go to the hospital when the contractions start and all those things…we go right into the bush to pass this on." (Women's group, Bula Kom)

"The radio acted as an eye-opener in the society. For example, when we meet as a group and listened together to the topics discussed, as a mother-to-mother support group, we became friendlier with each other and shared ideas and learned from one another, unlike before." (Women's group, Barwaqo)

Although community members clearly valued the educational aspect of the radio programme, the interactive call-in feature was also extremely popular among communities. Listeners appreciated being able to communicate directly with the expert

guest, receiving an instant response to their questions, sharing their personal stories with the rest of the community, and also publicly thanking SC for the radio show.

"When the radio shows were running, several callers, before even making a comment on the topic under discussion, or raising a question and the expert guest to answer, several of them would start by thanking Save the Children for giving them this opportunity to express their questions, express their feelings and share their stories with anyone who was listening. Several of them would thank Save for such an initiative, it is something we have not known before, we really appreciate it, it has educated us, it is an informative programme so this feedback that was coming to the radio, everyone was listening to." (SC staff, Wajir)

5.2.1.1.2   The livestock price bulletins

While health issues were often dominant in people's minds when discussing the radio programme, community members also spoke enthusiastically about the bi-weekly market price bulletins on Wajir Community Radio, describing them as important and useful. They often recounted stories of how community members listened to the bulletins before going to the market to decide when and which animals to sell.

"We no longer have to guess the price we can get at the market. I am in Kajaja 1 which is far away but I know exactly how much I can get for my animals and can even predict the money I can get if I take my goats to the market today." (Livestock trader, Kajaja 1)

"The pastoralists benefitted the most from this show. We depend on the animals as our only source of living." (Livestock trader, Kajaja 1)

"You know, everyone was listening to this show. If someone is in Mansa, 50 km from here, they can know the price and decide which animal to sell." (RC member, Wajir town)

"It's very important to keep in touch with the (livestock) prices…..There was a time where I was about to go to the market to sell some goats and then I heard the livestock bulletin and realised I could get a good price for my sheep. So the livestock I was planning to take to the market was not the best choice. Instead I took my sheep and then I got a good price". (Livestock trader, Lafaley)

Comments from a few livestock traders suggest they felt empowered by the pricing information to bargain or bypass the offers of middlemen.

"Before, we used to come to the market tired and the middlemen would just take over and sell the animals. Now, people know the market price and can just tell the middlemen to stay away." (Livestock trader, Lafaley)

"Nobody believes the middlemen now. If they had the power, they would want to prohibit the airing of the pricing bulletins because it spoils the market for them." (Livestock trader, Lafaley)

When asked if the market bulletins could be improved, should they be resumed in the future, **respondents asked for more information on almost everything related to livestock trading**; they wanted more detailed information related to the quality of the animals for sale, pricing information from other major markets in the area such as Garissa, and also information on how to recognise and treat animal diseases.

5.2.1.2   To what extent has the communications project enabled the humanitarian organisation to better align its activities with the needs and priorities of the target group?

One of the major communication challenges encountered by SC in Wajir was the lack of timely and systematic feedback from the communities it serves. There was a concern that complaint mechanism, and feedback mechanisms in general, were underutilised and inadequate and that monthly or quarterly community meetings were often overtaken by problems that should have been addressed much earlier. Therefore, one of the objectives of the communications project was an increase in community feedback via the radio programme and the mobile phones.

"The complaint forms have not been effective. Only two complaints have come but when we are in the field, we hear a lot of complaints. Capturing these issues on a piece of paper is a challenge for all of us." (SC staff, Wajir)

Discussions with SC staff suggest that the interaction with communities afforded by the radio improved SC's understanding of communities' needs and priorities and most importantly, prompted it to adjust its activities accordingly.

"The radio programme helped Save the Children understand the needs of the people better because we had a team from Save with us when we were doing the programmes. We had others monitoring the programmes from their various stations and some of the people responding to callers. For example, we had stress calls coming in the middle of the programmes – there's this strange disease which was found in some children in certain areas. We were getting information even before the government got it, because people were reporting directly to the station what was happening." (Wajir Community Radio staff)

"From the radio, we learn a lot. We cannot learn everything through this office. But through the radio, we can learn things about the community." (SC staff, Wajir)

SC staff put in place a system to capture, analyse and respond to community feedback following each radio programme. Programme Officers responsible for the topic discussed on a specific evening were tasked with listening to the programme, taking notes of callers' questions and comments, discussing issues that often appeared with colleagues, and responding either on air, in community meetings or directly contacting the caller. SC staff also shared information with other stakeholders.

"Every time SC staff went to the studio, we would get a report. And for questions that were coming up frequently, we developed a frequently asked Q&A. For those questions hard to respond to, we would find a response to it, and we would relay back the information, either through the next talk show or we would call the person." (SC staff, Wajir)

"My colleague was listening to the questions raised during the show. We looked at the content of the questions and also the areas where they were calling from. This was very useful for us. We also found, as a plus, that involving the Government of Kenya staff as one of the speakers was very useful. We got a chance to sit with the government and see how

we can respond. For example, the government took up one of the issues raised in the programme regarding water purification." (SC staff, Wajir)

"In some of the radio shows, they told us our staff are doing x, y, and z. We were able then to follow up, do supervision, and see if things are true or not. As a result, there were some improvements in terms of people using our services." (SC staff, Wajir)

These findings indicate that on the whole, the radio programme was considered a successful channel for feedback and that to a certain extent, SC staff listened, verified and responded to what was heard. The WASH programme, for example, described a radio show where callers repeatedly complained of the lack of sanitation in specific schools. Programme staff realized the seriousness of the situation and a decision was made to move forward the construction of latrines in 12 schools.

The mobiles distributed to CHWs, RCs and WUA members also improved SC's engagement with drought-affected populations but as noted by one staff member, the extent to which this happened varied within programmes. One WASH staff member for example, remarked that the phones were mostly used for information dissemination rather than community feedback. In the health sector, however, CHWs became key focal points for the community when they wanted to relay questions, make complaints or provide suggestions to SC.

"It is now easier to receive questions or complaints. The community has learned to use the CHWs that received mobile phones to reach the office. We realized this when our nutrition programme was stopped in April. The community was told that there would be a one month break. There were many queries coming through the CHWs during this time. They were either texting or calling the office to find out when the nutrition programme is starting again. And of course, we also heard some people complaining through phone calls on the radio." (SC staff, Wajir)

The above examples of feedback, and responses to feedback, are very encouraging, even more so given the limited resources and support that the Wajir office had when implementing this communications project.

5.2.2 Coverage

5.2.2.1 To what extent has the communications project enhanced SC's ability to reach population groups in need?

SC staff and community representatives generally felt that the radio programme had helped reach more people with critical information, especially related to health, and that the mobile phones, coupled with FrontlineSMS, had improved the medical referral system.

The radio programme was praised by all SC staff for supporting their community sensitization efforts regarding critical health, nutrition and livelihood issues. **They felt the radio show reached a larger section of the population than community mobilisers whose face-to-face meetings were limited due to vast distances between villages, poor road infrastructure, and security concerns.** A few SC staff remarked that

individuals had called the radio programme, asking if they were eligible for aid from SC, suggesting that the radio was reaching communities who were not benefiting directly from SC services.

"Mass communication was really a plus for us. Face-to-face meetings could not reach people we didn't speak with. Also, using the local language on the radio was very good as people felt it was their radio." (SC staff, Wajir)

"Radio is one way of reaching a wider population instead of door-to-door. It could go a long way in our sensitization efforts." (SC staff, Wajir)

"If these messages are explained on the radio by public health officials, in a language people can understand, in very simple way, the buy-in is greater. This was a big change for Save the Children." (SC staff, Wajir)

Several stakeholders remarked that the radio programme was able to reach a large number of people in absolute terms, and also broach subjects that were considered "sensitive" in Somali culture. Through the use of medical personnel and experts from the government, issues such as exclusive breastfeeding and the increasing number of infanticide cases in Wajir County were discussed on the radio show.

While the show was mainly targeted at women, the topics were of interest to both sexes as indicated by comments from male respondents in the focus group discussions. In fact, comments from the focus group discussions suggest that perhaps more men than women were listening to the radio programme. The main reason provided by communities for this was that women have "little idle time", as they were in the kitchen cooking or tending to children when the programme was on. Nevertheless, many women indicated that they overheard parts of the programme or listened to it at a more convenient time during the day within a women's listening group.

Given this information, it is not surprising that most of the callers into the programme were men. For two radio shows for which SC has monitoring data broken down by gender, 18 of the 26 calls received by the radio show were from men. Reasons provided for this included that more men than women listened to the show live, that most households have one phone and men tend to own the phones and that men usually provide the credit for the phones, and therefore control the use of the phones.

Overall, the radio programme enabled SC to reach a greater number of people with critical information for their wellbeing, and also complemented the work of community outreach workers by reinforcing key messages relevant to health, nutrition, WASH, and livelihoods.

"Mass media, combined with one-on-one discussions, are a good combination and has led to changes in behaviour. The radio programme has helped to reinforce our interpersonal communication." (SC staff, Wajir)

Similarly, the weekly pricing bulletins were expected to support SCs ability to "speak with" population groups in need. By broadcasting the information on a local community radio, the project was attempting to reach the greatest number of people possible, not only to recipients of SC humanitarian assistance. According to conversations with SC staff, Wajir Community Radio staff, and community members, the station has a three kilowatt

transmitter, mounted on a 70 metre mast that can transmit an FM signal within a 150 km radius of Wajir. A few interviewees argued the transmission radius was closer to 50 km. To understand the exact number of people reached by Wajir community radio, and the SC programme in particular, would have required an audience radio survey.

5.2.3 Efficiency

5.2.3.1 To what extent has the communications project influenced the time- and cost-efficiency of SC's programme?

Prior to the launch of the pilot communications project, SC staff and outreach workers mostly communicated with drought-affected communities through face-to-face meetings. This required considerable resources and time. **One of the underlying assumptions of the project was that field trips would be reduced since mobile phones and FrontlineSMS could be used to deliver routine information to CHWs and RCs**. This would in turn save the SC office time and money.

It was not possible for the infoasaid research to determine with quantitative data if this assumption has been realized. As noted earlier, the project was not fully integrated into SC's work stream and monitoring activities were limited. It appears that no one was responsible for monitoring and analysing the cost implications of the communications project on individual programmes.

That being said, comments from SC's staff indicate that Programme Officers have reduced the number of trips taken to inform community members of routine matters. According to a WASH Programme Officer, his staff have saved approximately two field trips per month, with an estimated saving of £210. ALDEF field monitors also estimated they were saving a few trips per month since they now use the phones to disseminate information to RCs regarding monthly food distributions. They also noted that they were saving a lot of time travelling, enabling them to focus on other activities.

"The phone has really helped with communication. We can reach people in areas that you can't reach by road, or any other means of communication. It is possible that you can disseminate information by phone to over 30 sites a day – just from the office.".." (ALDEF FM)

However, as noted earlier, only an estimated 50% of the RCs who received a mobile phone have direct access to a network. Although those who are not in a coverage area will often walk to a nearby village or climb to a high location to find a mobile signal, an ALDEF FM remarked that they continue to travel to these sites to ensure that the required information is passed along. Also, ALDEF FMs maintain regular monitoring visits to a selection of sites which cannot be done remotely. As such, the cost and time saved by ALDEF FM is probably small.

5.2.4 Effectiveness

5.2.4.1 To what extent has the communications project influenced the achievement of the organization's programme objectives?

The communications project was initially designed to support and enhance SC's humanitarian assistance in health & nutrition and food security & livelihoods. During the December 2011 training, SC staff suggested expanding the project to include WASH interventions. To answer the question above, the learning review looked at the goals articulated for each of these programmes and interviewed staff, partner organizations, outreach workers and community members to understand whether or not the communications project had influenced the achievement of those goals.

5.2.4.1.1 Health and nutrition

SC provides both humanitarian and longer term development assistance in Wajir County linked to the organizational goals of ensuring that all children have access to quality basic services – health, education, protection and, social welfare. Within its health and nutrition programmes, the organization receives substantial funding for "Safe Motherhood" projects aimed at reducing maternal, neonatal and under five year old morbidity and mortality in line with the Government of Kenya health sector performance targets. The activities undertaken to achieve this goal include the following: "to identify & develop mechanisms to ensure prompt referral meant to provide critical health information to these target groups" and to "develop & implement specific awareness & advocacy campaigns". **CHWs and SC staff stated that the mobile phones and radio programme were both instrumental in supporting these activities, and hence contributing to the overall goal of reducing maternal, neonatal and under five year old morbidity and mortality.**

All of the respondents felt that the mobile phones had improved SC's medical referral system, perhaps even saving the lives of mothers in labour and of children under five years old who were gravely ill. They explained that prior to the communications project, the majority of CHWs did not own phones and had to travel to the nearest health facility, which could be several kilometres away, to request assistance, wasting valuable time. In some cases, if the medical emergency occurred at night, or during a moment of heightened insecurity in Wajir, the CHW was unable to reach the health facility. The distribution of mobile phones to CHWs had changed this scenario since CHWs are now able to call for assistance immediately (assuming the phones are charged and the CHW has credit). In all of the sites visited, community members could recount stories of a child or pregnant mother quickly receiving medical assistance following a phone call by the CHW to SC or the Ministry of Health (MoH).

"There is the example of Gunana which is almost 100 kilometres from Wajir; it is one of our sites. I was happy with infoasaid when I received a call from that site, saying a mother had failed to deliver and she has been in labour for three days, and asking if they could get a vehicle. In the next 30 minutes the vehicle was out and the lives of the mother and her baby were saved." (SC staff, Wajir)

"There was a CHW in Wajir West. He called a line supervisor and we sent a vehicle within the hour. In the past, he would have had to walk to a health facility to make the call, which is several kilometres away. This would have taken three or four hours." (SC staff, Wajir)

"There was a time when two mothers had severe labour pain in a nearby village and the husband came to us for help. We immediately called someone at the MoH and they sent a car and the mothers delivered safely." (CHW, Dasheeg)

"One time a boy was bitten by a snake and I called the health person at SC to help us and he sent a vehicle and within a short time, the vehicle brought the boy to Wajir district hospital." (CHW, Lafaley)

"These phones have made a big change. I remember a child who had severe pneumonia here in Lafaley and I called for help. Immediately the MoH sent a vehicle to take the child to Wajir for treatment. This was very fast and the child got well later." (CHW, Lafaley)

"(With the phones), they were to communicate shortage of supplies, drugs, and referral cases, unlike before, when they were waiting for someone to visit. A vehicle passed once in a week or once after two weeks and they were just communicating information after a death had occurred…..Once they were given the phones they were able to communicate by phone and we were able to respond." (SC staff, Wajir)

One SC staff highlighted that the training CHWs received alongside the distribution of mobile phones was a key factor in achieving an improved referral system. The fact that the mobile handset is understood by both SC staff and CHWs to be an 'official' community phone to be used for sharing information (and as such a more formal communication channel compared to CHW's member's personal phones) has made a difference to the speed with which CHWs notify the SC office.

"(The CHWs) were trained and learned that they were the key focal points for this community. They were told that one of the most important things is information sharing. …. It was an eye-opening thing for the community. Information sharing was always difficult before this communications project. ……Even for those CHWs who had a phone before this communications project, the fact they were told that now they are responsible for this community and contacting the office, means they are now using the phone. Before, they were not doing this. They were sitting under a tree and waiting for a car to come to pass on the information." (SC staff, Wajir)

The research also came across an interesting example of SC staff using the mobile phones and FrontlineSMS to improve the training of CHWs for the Safe Motherhood programme. When a staff member wanted to train CHWs on what medical practices to follow with a new-born, she first used FrontlineSMS to text all CHWs asking them how they handled the umbilical cord. The answers she received enabled her to cater her training to the knowledge and existing practices of the CHWs, making her training more effective.

While the mobile phones were used to request assistance during medical emergencies for mothers or children under five years old, the radio show reinforced key health messages promoted by SC staff and CHWs. Nearly all of the stakeholders remarked that having experts speak on specific topics, in the local language, lent credibility to the issues they regularly discussed through community meetings.

"A mother was telling us that even if she had heard about breastfeeding through barazas, getting the information from a medical person on the radio, scientifically explaining the benefits of breastfeeding convinced her to change her ways." (Wajir community radio staff)

"It was difficult for the community to do what we advised in terms of immunisation and health education. But since doctors came on the live radio show and talked about these issues, it became much easier. It changed people's perceptions." (CHW, Dasheeg)

A total of four health and nutrition shows were aired on Wajir Community Radio. Community members easily recalled the shows, recounted what they had learned, and described examples of behaviour change around them. Many SC staff also commented on the perceived impact of the radio shows to change behaviour. **One show which was mentioned by all stakeholders as having had an impact on the health of new-borns was the one dedicated to exclusive breastfeeding, a practice which is not prevalent in Somali society**.

"Exclusive breastfeeding or early initiation of breastfeeding in this community was something next to impossible. When a mother delivers, in Somali settings, the grandmother used to take the child for some days and hence the mother could not breastfeed). But now after constant health education on the radio programmes, after frequent repetition of the programmes on exclusive breastfeeding, that is changing. On Tuesday, I was with visitors at one of our sites and a mother just came up and said after she was given this number of messages through the community radio on this exclusive breastfeeding, she initiated the second child in the first 30 minutes. The health of her first and second children are not comparable now. We were happy with this example because it shows that communities are practically proving the benefits of breastfeeding." (SC staff, Wajir)

Several SC staff explained that the radio show had stimulated two-way communication between communities and the organization, enabling SC to better understand and respond to the concerns of beneficiaries regarding health issues.

"After infoasaid had given radios, mothers were able to listen to the local programme on nutrition and health and their benefits. That has provoked the interest of the mothers by coming up with questions for SC. I heard them on the radio. So by just bringing more questions, we answer, we respond to them, we give them feedback. This has really eased our work." (SC staff, Wajir)

5.2.4.1.2   Food security and livelihoods

In partnership with the local NGO, ALDEF, SC undertakes monthly general food distributions (GFDs) whose objective is to meet the immediate food needs of targeted beneficiaries. Each identified household receives food aid (60% in voucher form and 40% as food) on a monthly basis but the content of the food rations changes depending on what is available. Hence, entitlements need to be communicated to RCs and community leaders in advance of distribution to manage expectations. Prior to the communications project, this was usually done through FMs who travelled to numerous distribution points to disseminate the information via face-to-face meetings. This was a labour intensive process which was often hindered by impassable roads or security incidents. If RCs had any questions or

problems about the GFDs, they usually waited for the arrival of the next field monitor or sometimes travelled to the ALDEF office in Wajir.

Community members, RCs, and ALDEF FMs unequivocally felt that the food distributions had improved since the introduction of mobile phones. RCs who are within mobile network coverage typically receive an SMS message or phone call from an ALDEF FM about an upcoming food distribution one to two days prior to the truck's arrival. They will also receive information about the type of food that will be provided, as well as the ratios allocated per beneficiary. This enables the RCs to mobilise the community in time for the truck's arrival, making the off-loading operations faster and smoother.

"Food distributions are now timely because the field monitors will inform us prior to the time when they are coming. For example, we will know one day earlier and we will inform the community the same day. Then the food will come while everybody is ready unlike before where people use to crowd around." (RC member, Waqberi)

"Before, we would go to the field, we would tell the RC the food has arrived, and probably wait for two days in the field. You sit there for two days waiting for people to come because of the nature of their lives, they are highly mobile, they move from place to place, mobilisation for them to reach the information where the food is being distributed takes a long time. So before you even leave Wajir, you tell the RC the food is going to be distributed so by the time you go there, everybody is ready. That is how it (the mobile phone) has made things easier." (ALDEF FM)

In addition to receiving timely information about food distributions, RCs prized the chance to speak directly to ALDEF FMs to ask for advice, assistance, or make a complaint. Several comments suggested RCs feel empowered by this communication tool to regularly communicate with ALDEF FMs, leading to improved relations with the NGO who now perceive them as "colleagues" (see Section 5.2.5 on Impact).

"There was a day the food arrived on time but the Food Monitor from ALDEF who was supposed to oversee the distribution of the food was not around. So I called the office to confirm from the Field Supervisor whether there is anybody coming from the organization. The Monitor and the Supervisor were together by then and immediately the Food Monitor came and we started distributing the food to the families. Imagine if there was no means to communicate with such people!" (RC member, Waqberi)

"For example if the food is late, we call and ask, what has happened to it. If the field monitor is late, we can always get hold of him. If the Field Monitor is busy, sometimes we suggest that we hand out the food. If someone steals some of the food, we can also contact the police." (RC member, Bula Kom)

"In September 2012, we had a site in West Wajir with 4,600 beneficiaries. We called the RCs and told them what to expect. When the trucks arrived, there were bags missing. They called us immediately and we responded by sending the missing six bags." (ALDEF FM)

According to FMs, since routine questions or problems can now be addressed by mobile phone, RCs and community members are less present in the ALDEF office.

"ALDEF field monitors told me that before RCs had phones, many of them were crowding the ALDEF office with questions. The beneficiaries would come and ask many questions. They told me that now, this crowding has drastically reduced. They now get information via phone. They don't need to travel to get the information they want." (SC staff, Wajir)

Whilst food aid remains the principal tool for meeting basic food needs in a protracted drought, humanitarian organizations are increasingly looking to implement a range of livelihoods programmes to also support longer-term recovery. **By providing livestock pricing information from the region's major market, the infoasaid project aimed to support SC's livelihood interventions to boost household income and overall resilience.** As noted earlier, because drought-affected communities had little information regarding livestock market prices, they often relied on middlemen to buy their animals, without any knowledge of whether or not they were receiving a fair price. At other times, pastoralists were obliged to sell their animals even if buying prices were low, because the health of their animals prevented them from making the return journey home. For pastoralists, such a lack of information substantially increases the risk they will undersell their products.

Findings indicate that the objective of providing communities with access to livestock pricing information to facilitate decisions regarding what, where, and when to sell, has to a great extent, been achieved.

"Listeners say that it's easy to know the price of goat, camel, and cow. They can now plan. Otherwise, they just guess. If they listen to the program, if the price of a camel is high, then, they will take it to the market. They will now decide on when to market, and when not to market. It means for the communities, if they sell the animal at a better price, it is good for them. The pastoralists sell, it is important for them to get a high price. That money goes to the family, for food, for school fees." (ALDEF FM)

"The (pricing) information is useful because these are pastoralist communities who have little information about markets. This helps them make decisions. They decide when to sell their livestock and where to sell it, and also which animals to sell." (SC staff, Wajir)

"By listening to this information, people can plan. People are saving time and making more profits. When we ask the community which radio programme made them happiest, they say the livestock bulletin." (SC staff, Wajir)

5.2.4.1.3   WASH[4]

The overall goal of SC's WASH programme is to improve water and sanitation systems and promote safe hygiene practices in selected sites. SC activities include the construction of

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[4] Due to security and time constraints, infoasaid was not able to conduct a focus group with members of the WUAs. An assessment of the communications project's impact, consequently, is based solely on comments made by SC staff.

latrines and boreholes, increased access and storage of water to schools and health facilities, improved sanitation facilities in schools and health facilities, emergency water trucking, and hygiene promotion.

According to SC staff involved in WASH interventions, the communications project, specifically the radio show, supported the programme's objective by increasing the promotion of hygiene practices and enabling SC staff to better understand the WASH needs of the community. One SC Manager described the radio as "*one of the best options to get information out".* He remarked that two WASH programmes aired during the time of the communications project - on good sanitation practices and water treatment, and on household water treatment and storage. SC utilised the shows to educate communities about an on-going water purification programme. The WASH Programme Officer stated that they had received less questions and complaints following that programme than during a previous purification campaign which did not include a communication element.

"Mass communication via the radio show was a plus. Face to face meetings could not reach people we didn't speak with. Also, using local language on the radio was really good." (SC staff, Wajir)

"The timing of the programme was appropriate because we were distributing water purifiers. So we took advantage of the radio programme to educate people. This time, we received fewer complaints from people. Last time, people were mishandling the purifiers. It was a very nice impact of the programme." (SC staff, Wajir)

Only seven of the 15 water user associations received mobile phones since there is little mobile coverage in most of the areas where they operate. SC staff interviewed for the learning review considered the mobile phones as useful tools for improving response time to requests and for disseminating information to mobilise communities. The mobile phones were considered less useful for obtaining feedback from communities since most WASH focal points used the phones to communicate specific infrastructure problems with water technicians rather than general issues with SC staff.

5.2.5   Impact

> 5.2.5.1   What are the wider effects of the project, intended and unintended, on the target community? What real difference has the project made to community members?

- Improved relations

During the infoasaid training in December 2011, SC staff expected the communications project to **improve relations** between the organization and drought-affected communities in Wajir**. Nine months after, interviews with a range of stakeholders indicate that this expected outcome has been realized. Several factors may explain this:**

- **SC is appreciated by community members for facilitating assistance during medical emergencies through the provision of mobile phones for CHWs.**

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"Community members now have the experience of several cases being resolved by a Community Health Worker making a call, and the agency responding. They now think that a lot of their issues have been saved by Save the Children; a number of emergencies, so there's a very good relationship now with Save." (SC staff, Wajir)

- **SC was thanked for providing the community with valuable information for their wellbeing through the weekly radio show**.

"I remember a WASH technician saying that people said "I heard you speaking on the radio" and people felt we were addressing their issues. It brought out a better image of Save staff. I think it has made the relationship better." (SC staff, Wajir)

- **Community members value receiving timely and regular information about the aid provided by SC.**

"The community has benefited the most from this communications project. Unlike before, community members now know when there are health services, such as polio vaccination. They know that health vaccinators from the MoH are coming to the village. Before, we didn't even know what they were doing in the village. But now, we know that next week or next month, such and such a service will be provided." (Women's group, Barwaqo)

- **Community representatives feel empowered to seek information.**

"The community knows we are the ones who were given a phone. So if they have a question about supplementary feedings, or outpatient therapeutic programme, they know that we can contact SC for them. We are their eyes and ears." (CHW, Lafaley)

"It is about openness. When food comes, and people are expecting rice and they see wheat, they are suspicious. Now, some of them call us and say we expected this and why did we get this. The Supervisor explains that this month we only received this from WFP and every village has gotten this. Some RCs will then even cross-check with other communities in Wajir." (SC staff, Wajir)

- **The CHWs and RCs assert that the mobile phones have improved their working relations with both community members and SC and ALDEF. Their status has increased as they now have the communication tools to fulfil their roles as key liaison figures.**

"As CHWs we are not educated and the community used to think we were misleading them. But now that we have been given phones and we keep in close contact with SC and the MoH for medical referrals, community members trust us. They consider us to be like any other health staff member. They know that through the CHWs, they can contact SC." (CHW, Dasheeg)

"The communication has improved the relationship since now we are friendly with ALDEF field monitors. Before, ALDEF just treated us like representatives. Now, we are colleagues working in the same situation." (RC, Wajir)

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"The relationship between the community and institution has improved. Before the programme, we had to go there and deliver our message. And if they had an issue with us, they had to travel here. Now, the exchange of messages is easier and we are becoming more casual. There is a working relationship. They don't see us as big people sitting in an office and them as beneficiaries. They won't hide things from us. It has improved how they perceive us." (ALDEF FM)

It is interesting to note that ALDEF FMs could notice a difference in the working relationship with RCs who had a phone and regular access to a mobile network, and those who did not.

"The groups with no network will only come to us when there is an important issue. Others with a network constantly call. We have a cordial relationship. We are friendlier with RCs and communities who have access to a mobile network." (ALDEF FM)

- *One SC staff noted that increased engagement with community members had altered the relational dynamics with beneficiaries and SC, placing the latter on a more equal footing with the organization.*

"If information is shared, opinions taken and implemented, it puts them in a horizontal level, the same footing, instead of top down only – you giving out information to the villagers. 'Please do this that day, do this do this', because there's no two-way (communication), you're not receiving any feedback from them. So it is only one-way, unilateral decision, unilateral voice, unilateral opinion. That's top down. When you have information exchanged, there's a lot of feedback shared, you know how people feel and how you're supposed to serve them this way, it puts them on a horizontal level." (SC staff, Wajir)

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that relations between drought-affected communities and SC has improved, due to greater communication, enabling greater transparency and accountability.

"The relationship is now much stronger. Participation is so important. If this community is more empowered in communicating, if the aid agency is more open to people making requests, asking questions, then the relationship is stronger. The organisation can say I made your request for treatment for water and this is what I heard. The community feels their voice is heard and Save is more accountable to its beneficiaries." (SC staff, Wajir)

- Greater awareness among SC staff of communication as a tool to support the humanitarian aid they provide.

Several SC staff commented on their increased interest in mass communication tools to improve humanitarian aid. **They discussed the perceived benefits of increasing two-way communication with beneficiaries and suggested that all programmes include a communications component in the future**.

"The FrontlineSMS hub and the radio show are both really relevant….one of the very important changes is the flow of information. Before, we did not have a communication person in this office. Especially mass communication was a real challenge. It's excellent to have someone here who was in charge of sending out SMSs, that element of mass communication was very useful." (SC staff, Wajir)

"Save the Children is now more aware of radio as a means of communication. WASH and nutrition have done radio programmes. Everyone has learned that radio is a powerful communication tool." (SC staff, Wajir)

"I have a recommendation: such communication be integrated into the system of other programmes. Let all of the programmes own this. Don't let it be stand alone. Every programme should have a component of communication. Even when they are writing funding proposals, this should be included." (SC staff, Wajir)

6. Conclusions

6.1 Achievements

- The implementation of the pilot communications project was for the most part successful due to a few "champions", notably the Communications Officer in Wajir East who was a dedicated and enthusiastic backer of the project.
- Findings indicate that both radio programme, mobile phones, and to a lesser extent, FrontlineSMS, increased communities' access to critical information, engagement between SC and beneficiaries, and the effectiveness of SC programmes in health, nutrition, food security, and WASH.
- The interactive radio programme was highly valued by community members and SC staff for its educational programming. Numerous stakeholders described behavioral changes which they thought could be partly attributed to information disseminated on the radio show.
- In terms of coverage, the radio programme enabled SC to reach non-beneficiaries, as well as beneficiaries who were spread across Wajir County's vast area. Comments from community members suggest that both men and women listened to the programme although several women interviewed remarked they had little time to listen to the radio in the evening. For those participating in mother-to-mother support groups, they would record the programme and listen as a group during the day at a more convenient time.
- SC staff implemented a system to capture, analyse and respond to comments/questions heard on the radio programme. Consequently, the radio programme enabled SC to better align its programmes and activities with communities' needs and priorities.
- According to numerous stakeholders, the weekly livestock bulletins on Wajir Community Radio had a large following. It provided pastoralists with information which enabled them to make informed choices about their main source of income. Comments from community members suggest pastoralists used the information primarily to decide which animals to bring to the market.
- The mobile phones facilitated greater communication between community representatives and SC, facilitating the delivery of health, food security, and WASH services. For many stakeholders, the greatest impact was improved medical referrals which enabled CHWs to call for medical assistance for women in labor, or children under five years old.
- The mobile phones were also instrumental in making food distributions more effective since RCs received information about distribution schedules one or two days in

advance, providing them with the necessary lead time to prepare and mobilize the community.

- FrontlineSMS was mostly used by the Communications Officer to send operational messages for internal purposes and security updates. SC staff valued receiving information via text rather than email which they could not always access.
- The communications project appears to have enhanced relations between drought-affected communities and SC, by improving the provision of aid delivered. CHWs and RCs remarked they now had the communication tools to fulfill their roles as key focal points to improving their community's lives and wellbeing.
- The pilot project has generated interest among SC staff in Wajir for scaling-up communication activities for all SC programmes. SC staff highlighted the benefits of the communications project and expressed their wish the project continue.

6.2 Challenges

- The project's implementation faced numerous challenges, due partly to high staff-over in the Wajir and Nairobi offices as the ERP response was winding down. The communications project was effectively "orphaned" for several months, leaving the newly recruited Communication Officer in Wajir with little guidance related to implementation activities, monitoring frameworks, or resources.
- All three components of the communications - the radio show, the livestock bulletins, and the FrontlineSMS hub - were functional for approximately three months, of the six months originally envisaged by the infoasaid project proposal. Furthermore, only one office in Wajir, of the two originally envisioned, implemented the pilot communications project as it was developed in the infoasaid project proposal.
- The expected benefits of the solar charger kits in ensuring that the community phones always had battery power and airtime were not realised due to technical problems. As a result, several CHWs and a few RCs complained that the communications project was a drain on their income. Further investigation is required to ascertain whether the problems encountered with the Tough Stuff equipment are mainly due to unreliable hardware that has a short working life or to poor use and maintenance. A similar problem was resolved in another pilot project following extensive communications with the manufacturer which led to a field visit to ascertain the problem and the shipment of new parts. FrontlineSMS encountered several technical glitches which lessened the effectiveness of this intervention.
- There was a lack of systematic monitoring of the project's various components.
- The sustainability of the project is in question. No aspect of the communications project has been factored into SC's future programming post 2012. At the time of the learning review, the radio show and livestock bulletins were no longer broadcasting due to a lack of funds. Furthermore, the only person with extensive experience in implementing the project, the Communications Officer in Wajir, left the organisation in November 2012.

7. Recommendations

In the short-term:

1. Collect all solar chargers from the field. Facilitate a visit by ToughStuff to Wajir to investigate the faulty solar chargers. If the problem is found to be related to ToughStuff not providing 'grid chargers' at the outset, as was the case in another pilot communications project, request the company to supply 'grid chargers' and then fully charge all solar chargers from the mains before redistributing to the community focal points. If SC would prefer to change suppliers and product, then infoasaid recommends the [Barefoot Firefly charger](http://barefootpower.com/barefoot-products/firefly/firefly-fast-phone-charge) (http://barefootpower.com/barefoot-products/firefly/firefly-fast-phone-charge) which is currently being piloted in Somalia with positive results.

2. Download FrontlineSMS on a stand-alone computer and ensure at least two members of staff are trained on how to use it. SC staff can learn the basics of FrontlineSMS from the website (http://www.frontlinesms.com/user-resources/), or participate in monthly drop-in sessions in Nairobi. For more information, visit: http://www.frontlinesms.com/user-resources/user-support-drop-in-sessions/

3. Analyse financial data, where possible to understand the cost effectiveness implications of the communications project on SC's operations. Has the communications project reduced travel costs as initially expected? If so, use this as an argument to lobby internally for integration of communication with affected populations across SC's programmes.

4. Share the infoasaid learning review with all relevant staff in Wajir and Nairobi. Brainstorm internally to decide which aspects of the project should be continued, changed or closed.

5. If any part of the project is to be resumed, ensure that the member of staff taking on the additional roles has the required support (financial and HR) to fulfil their responsibilities and that this has the full backing of senior managers in both Nairobi and Wajir. In the long term, infoasaid recommends a position is created to take on this role full time.

In the longer-term

6. Carry out closer monitoring of technology-related services to ensure bugs/issues are addressed as early on as possible. This will help to avoid users disheartened by poorly functioning equipment.

7. Conduct an in-depth information needs and access assessment to further inform a communications plan to improve engagement with drought-affected populations.

8. Conduct an audience survey to obtain detailed information regarding the reach of Wajir Community Radio. Use this information to enrich the analysis of the value of the radio programme and provide useful data to include in grant proposals.

9. Include communication with affected populations in all future programmes and funding proposals. This could be done in the same way that MEAL is integrated into proposals, with each programme sector contributing funds for communication activities and for a member of staff.

10. Allow MEAL staff to provide input to donor proposals at the design stage so that a section within SC is responsible for ensuring that communication with affected populations is included.

11. Ensure the communication section in proposals has both process indicators (to enable the monitoring of implementation) and results indicators (to enable a before and after comparison) at the outset of the project. Where necessary, conduct a baseline study before project implementation begins.

12. Capture learning to develop a strong evidence base for lobbying within SC and with donors to include funding for communications projects in all proposals.

Annex 1: Radio Shows

INFOASAID COMMUNICATION PROJECT

WAJIR COMMUNITY RADIO SCHEDULE /TIMETABLE

DATE	RADIO PROGRAMME	AREA OFFICE	CORDINATOR/PERSON IN CHARGE	KEY MESSAGES	GUESTS
3/4	COMMUNITY SENSTISATION	WAJIR SOUTH & EAST	Area Managers-Wajir East & Habaswein	Save the Children Programmes INFOASAID brief	TIMON CHORO-SCUK (WE) AND ABDI OMAR-SCUK (WS)
11/4	WASH	WAJIR SOUTH	ALBERT GISORE AND STYVERS KIRIMI	Household Water treatment and Storage	MOHAMED ABDILLE and ISSA GARAD-Public Health Specialist
18/4	HEALTH	WAJIR EAST	LYNN SHEILA MAKUNGU	Infant and Young Child Feeding	Shukri Mohamed {SCUK, W.E} Public Health Officer
25/4	CHILD PROTECTION	WAJIR SOUTH	JAMES KEBASSO	Child Labour	James Kebaso { SCUK} Suleiman Hajj – Youth Leader.
2/5	EDUCATION	WAJIR EAST	ABDULLAHI HERSI	Islam and Education	Sheikh Abdiwahab Sheikh Abdirahman
9/5	FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS	WAJIR SOUTH	REHEMA BASHIR	Value Addition to Livestock products.	Njeru Ngare and Wario Boru from the ministry of Livestock
16/5	NUTRITION	WAJIR EAST	ABDILLE ADAN	Malezi Bora, IYCF	Mohamud Dahiye and Sabdow Hassan. Ministry of medical services
23/5	WASH	WAJIR EAST	ABDULLAHI AHMED AND STYVERS KIRIMI	Good Sanitation Practices and Water treatment	Shukri Abdullahi and Adow Mohamed. Both Public Health experts.
30/5	HEALTH	WAJIR SOUTH	OMAR AHMED KABOCHO	Measles and Dyhoreal diseases	Mohamud Dahiye , MCH and Hassan Abbas-

					IMCI
6/6	EDUCATION	WAJIR EAST	ABDULLAHI HERSI Dekow Hassan	Special needs education Focus on, the disabled, deaf and blind.	Kheira Kassim and Shindes Mohamed. M.O.E's Special needs specialist.
13/6	CHILD PROTECTION	WAJIR SOUTH	JAMES KEBASIO	Addressing rising incidences of abandoned new born.	James Kebasio-SC, Cllr Sophia and Fatuma Mire. Local gender and child rights activists.
20/6	NUTRITION	WAJIR EAST	ADAN ABDILLE	Vitamin A Supplement	Hassan Irobe-Nutritionist MOH
27/6	FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS	WAJIR EAST	ANTONY NDERITU and REHEMA BASHIR	Natural Resource Conservation and Management	Daud Guliye-DLPO Wajir west & Abdi Musa-DMO, Wajir

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Annex 2: Sample of semi-structured interview guides

infoasaid

Focus group with members of the RCs: discussion guide

Welcome.

We are here today because Save the Children staff are interested in hearing your views about how they can better communicate with you and provide you with the information you need; as well as hear your thoughts, questions and feedback about the work they do.

Specifically, over the last 7 months, Save the Children has been carrying out some activities intended to improve its communication with the people of Wajir. For example, it started an interactive radio programme called "Sikira Kusikiro" (Listen and be Heard) on Anguo FM; and it gave mobile phones and solar chargers to members of Project Committees so that they can send SMS messages to Save the Children on behalf of the communities here, and receive messages in return.

With that in mind, I would like to ask you a few questions about how you and members of your communities communicate with Save the Children, as well as about the food and/or cash assistance programmes that you are involved in.

Please feel free to speak openly. Your responses will help Save the Children understand how to improve its services. Please note that your participation in this conversation is voluntary and will have no impact on the aid provided by Save the Children. All of the information collected today will remain anonymous. If you have heard and understood this, can you please let me know by nodding your head.

I.   Background

1.   Background information (Age? Languages ? Married? Children? Name of area where you live?)

2.   From your perspective, how serious is the food insecurity in Wajir at the moment? Is it better, worse or the same as seven months ago?

II.   Access to information about food/cash distributions

3.   How do you/members of your community find out about food distributions?
     MODERATOR: Probe: from a friend; face-to-face meeting; by telephone; by SMS message; through an RC member; on the radio etc

4.   Do you usually hear about food distributions in time to prepare the community members?

5. If members of your community have a suggestion or a question about a food distribution or any other Aldef or SAVE THE CHILDREN project, how would they communicate this to Aldef or SAVE THE CHILDREN?
MODERATOR: probe - verbally in person, verbally by telephone, community help desk; visit to office; by SMS message, through RCs; complaints boxes, call-in radio shows etc.?

III. Effect of Frontline SMS, mobile phones and solar chargers on two-way communication

Six months ago, SAVE THE CHILDREN gave a mobile phone and solar charger to the RC so that it could communicate better with field monitors and facilitate communication between communities and Aldef.

6. Who is responsible for using the mobile phone and charger?
MODERATOR: probe – is it one person, or several? Does it rotate?

7. What does the RC use the phone for?
MODERATOR: probe –communicating with Food Monitors, Field Office staff, community members, other RCs? What do they communicate about? (probe for concrete examples of information exchange)

8. Has the RC ever used the phone to pass on a message from a community member to Aldef? *MODERATOR: probe for concrete examples. What happened after? Did SAVE THE CHILDREN respond to the message? Was any action taken as a result?*

9. How frequently do you communicate with Aldef Food Monitors?
MODERATOR: probe - Daily, Weekly, Monthly? How does this compare with the frequency 6 months ago, before RCs were given mobile phones and chargers?

10. Does the RC member who received the phone use their own credit to make calls and send SMS messages?

11. Is the solar charger used to generate income?
MODERATOR: probe - if yes, how does this work? How much income is generated? What do you do with the income?

12. How has your day-to-day work changed since members of the RC were given a phone and solar charger?
MODERATOR: probe for examples

13. Have the mobile phones had any effect on communication between Aldef and the communities?
MODERATOR: probe - has it improved, worsened or stayed the same? If improved, how? Are Community members really using the system to voice their concerns and questions or is most of the communication coming from RCs?

14. Do you feel that when you make a request that Aldef now responds faster, slower, or the same as before? *MODERATOR: probe - is that different from before the RCs were given phones?*

IV. Effect of the radio programme on two-way

15. For a few months, Save the Children sponsored a radio programme called X. Have you ever listened to this programme on Wajir community radio?
MODERATOR: count number of participants that say yes/no. If some participants say YES continue, if everyone says NO skip to next section.

16. What comes to mind when you think about the program?

17. What do you like most about the programme?

18. What do you like least about the programme?

19. Can you recall any topics discussed on the programme?
MODERATOR: list all of the topics mentioned.

20. Were these topics interesting and relevant to you?

21. Has anyone in the group ever used the information received via the programme in their day-today work or leisure time?
MODERATOR: probe for specific examples.

22. Did you ever call the radio programme? Do you know of anyone who did?
MODERATOR: if no one has called the radio programme, why not?

23. Should the radio programme restart? Why or why not?

V. Livestock pricing information

24. Livestock prices are also broadcast on Wajir community radio. Has anyone here ever listened to this pricing information? *Moderator: If yes, please continue. If not, skip to conclusion.*

25. Was this information useful to you or someone in your family? To whom?

25. How did you/they use this information? Moderator: please ask for specific information.

26. Could this information be improved? How?

VI. Conclusion

27. Do you feel that the relationship between your community and Aldef or Save the Children has changed as a result of the communications project we have discussed today? *MODERATOR: Probe for examples:*

Are people more aware of what Save the Children is doing in the community?
Are people better able to complain or ask a question about food distributions?
Are people more able to influence what Save the Children is doing?
IS Save the Children more responsive to the communities' needs?

28. Who do you think benefits most from this communication project? (the project includes the radio programme, the livestock pricing information, and the mobile phones/solar chargers)

That is all we wanted to discuss today. Thank you very much for your time. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping SAVE THE CHILDREN improve the way it communicates and delivers assistance to you and other members of your community.

29. Do any of you have any questions about what we discussed today?
MODERATOR: Give everyone the opportunity to ask questions. If questions are related to project specific programme issues, please refer them to the appropriate staff person who can speak to them after the FGD is finished.

infoasaid

<u>Focus group with women: discussion guide</u>

Welcome.

We are here today because Save the Children staff are interested in hearing your views about how they can better communicate with you and provide you with the information you need; as well as hear your thoughts, questions and feedback about the work they do.

Specifically, over the last few months, Save the Children has been carrying out some activities intended to improve its communication with the people of Wajir. For example, it started an interactive radio programme on Wajir community radio; it distributed radios, and provided mobile phones and solar chargers to community health workers, village relief committee representatives, and water management associations.

With that in mind, I would like to ask you a few questions about how you and members of your communities communicate with Save the Children, as well as about assistance that you receive.

Please feel free to speak openly. Your responses will help Save the Children understand how to improve its services. Please note that your participation in this conversation is voluntary and will have no impact on the aid provided by Save the Children. All of the information collected today will remain anonymous. If you have heard and understood this, can you please let me know by nodding your head.

VII.   Background

Background information (Age? Languages? Married? Children? Name of area where you live?)

VIII.   Access to information about Save the Children services

1. Can you please tell me which Save the Children services do you use? (*access to health clinics, food distributions, other?*)

2. Please tell me how you/members of your community find out about Save the children services?
   MODERATOR: probe - from a friend; face-to-face meeting; by telephone; by SMS message; through a Project Committee member; on the radio etc.

3. Do you face any challenges in accessing information about Save the children services?
   MODERATOR: probe - do you usually hear about food distributions on time? Is the information accurate?

4. If you have a suggestion or a question about a food distribution or any other Save the Children project, how do you currently communicate this to Save the Children?
MODERATOR: probe - verbally in person, verbally by telephone, community help desk; visit to office; by SMS message, through Village relief committees; complaints boxes, call-in radio shows etc.? List all methods on a flipchart.

IX. Effect of Frontline SMS, mobile phones and solar chargers on two-way communication and delivery of food assistance

Save the Children gave a mobile phone and solar charger to Village relief committees so that they could communicate better with field monitors and Save the Children and facilitate communication between communities here and Save the Children.

5. Did you know before today that Village relief committees and health workers were given mobile phones and solar chargers?
MODERATOR: If some members says YES, continue, if everyone says NO, skip to next section.

6. What have you heard about this project?
MODERATOR: probe - Do you know which member of your Project committee has a mobile phone and solar charger? Do you know why they have it? What do they use it for?

7. In your opinion, has the act of giving Village relief committees mobile phones and solar chargers made any difference to the way that you communicate with Save the Children? (if yes, move to Q 14. If no, skip to Q 15.)
MODERATOR: Probe for examples:
   - *Compared with 6 months ago, is the amount of information you receive from Save the Children about food distributions or health services greater, smaller or about the same?*
   - *Compared with 6 months ago, is the information you receive about food distributions or health services more timely? Accurate? Any examples?*
   - *Compared with 6 months ago, do you feel that Communication with Save the Children is easier, more difficult or about the same?*

8. In your opinion, have the changes in communication that you have just mentioned made any difference to the delivery of food and health services by Save the Children?
MODERATOR: Probe for examples: Are people more aware of what Save the Children is doing in the community? Are people better prepared to receive food or cash distributions as a result of better communication? Are people better able to complain or ask a question about food or cash programmes? Has Save the Children made any changes to the assistance it provides because of better communication?

9. Who do you think benefits most from health workers and village relief committees having a phone and solar charger? (*probe: community, men or women, VRCs, Why have they benefited most? What has changed?)*

10. Have you ever asked a village relief committee member or health worker to relay a message to Save the Chidren via the telephone? (*if yes, can you provide a specific example*)

X.   Effect of the radio programme on two-way communication

11. For a few months, Save the Children sponsored a radio programme called <mark>X</mark>. Have you ever listened to this programme on Wajir community radio?
MODERATOR: count number of participants that say yes/no. If some participants say YES continue, if everyone says NO skip to next section.

12. How did you listen to this programme? In your house? As part of a listening group?
MODERATOR: probe for specific details. If listening in the house, who decides what radio programme to listen to? If part of a listening group, was the programme followed by discussions?

13. For those who said they listened to the radio programme, how often did you listen?

14. What comes to mind when you think about the program?

15. What do you like most about the programme?

16. What do you like least about the programme?

17. Can you recall any topics discussed on the programme?
MODERATOR: list all of the topics mentioned.

18. Has anyone in the group ever used the information received via the programme in their day-today work or leisure time?
MODERATOR: probe for specific examples.

19. Did you ever call the radio programme? Do you know of anyone who did?
MODERATOR: if no one has called the radio programme, why not? If someone called, please tell us what you called about.

20. Do you think this radio programme was useful for you? Why or why not?

21. Should the radio programme be started again? Why or why not?

XI.   Livestock pricing information

22. Livestock prices are also broadcast on Wajir community radio. Has anyone here ever listened to this pricing information? *Moderator: If yes, please continue. If not, skip to conclusion.*

23. Was this information useful to you or someone in your family? To who?

24. How did you/they use this information? Moderator: please ask for specific information.

25. Could this information be improved? How?

XII.   Conclusion

26. Do you feel that the relationship between your community and Save the Children has changed as a result of the communications project we have discussed today? *MODERATOR: Probe for examples: Are people more aware of what Save the Children is doing in the community?*
Are people better able to complain or ask a question about food or cash programmes?
Are people more able to influence what Save the Children is doing?
IS Save the Children more responsive to the communities' needs?

That is all we wanted to discuss today. Thank you very much for your time. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping Save the Children improve the way it communicates and delivers assistance to you and other members of your community.

Do any of you have any questions about what we discussed today?
MODERATOR: Give everyone the opportunity to ask questions. If questions are related to project specific programme issues, please refer them to the appropriate staff person who can speak to them after the FGD is finished.

infoasaid

Save the Children Staff. Discussion guide

Welcome.

As you may be aware, a pilot project was started by Save the Children Kenya (SC) six months ago, in partnership with infoasaid, which aimed to improve communication between SC and the drought-affected communities of Wajir. I would like to interview you because SC is now interested in learning about the results of this project. I should emphasise that I am not here to evaluate SC but rather to learn about the project, in particular the process (what has worked well, what has not worked well and why) and the results (what effect has the project had on the delivery of SC's services).

I would like to ask you about your role in the project and your views on both the implementation process and the results or wider effects. Please feel free to speak openly.

Please note that your participation in this interview is purely voluntary. Nothing you say will be attributed to you directly or indirectly without your explicit permission. The notes on this interview will not be shared outside the evaluation team.

XIII. Background

1. Name/Job Title/Organisation/ how long worked for SC/how long worked in Wajir?

2. Role – what you do in your job, and in the project?

XIV. Access to information about food distributions

3. How does SC share information about its services to communities? (probe - face-to-face meetings; by telephone or SMS to Relief Committees (RCs); on the radio etc.?

4. Do you face any challenges in sharing information about SC services with communities? (probe – in your opinion, do communities usually receive information about health services on time?)

5. If communities have questions, suggestions or a complaint about a programme, how do they currently communicate this to SC? (probe - verbally in person, verbally by telephone, community help desk; visit to office; by SMS message, through RCs; complaints boxes, call-in radio shows etc.?

XV. Effect of Frontline SMS, mobile phones and solar chargers on two-way communication

About six months ago, Save the Children gave a mobile phone and solar charger to RCs so that they could communicate better with field monitors and facilitate communication between communities here, and Save the Children.

CHW received these mobile phones, as well as village relief committees.

6. From what you know, have the solar panels and handsets have functioned well?

7. Do you know if this this equipment has changed the work of community health workers? How? (any concrete examples?)

8. From what you have heard from Aldef, how has this changed the work of food monitors? How? (any concrete examples?)

9. Has this communications project had any kind of impact on your work or the work of colleagues? (please provide specific examples)

10. Do you think that this has made a difference to communication between the SC Office and the communities it serves? (probe: has it improved, worsened or stayed the same? is information more frequent? Faster? Is the information different? More complaints? Questions?)

11. What effect has this had on SC's relationship with communities? Is it different now compared to before the project began? (probe: is it better, worse, about the same? Why?)

12. How could this part of the communication project be improved?

XVI. Effect of radio programme on two-way communication

As part of the pilot communications project, Save the Children sponsored a weekly interactive radio programme on Wajir community radio addressing key issues affecting the community and followed by a Q and A session with listeners calling the programme and sending SMS messages.

13. Have you ever listened to the programme?

14. What do you think of it?

15. In your opinion has the radio programme improved communication between SC and the community? If yes/no – why/how?

16. In your opinion is the radio programme well known/popular among the communities you work with?

17. Do you know which programmes were the most popular?

18. Do you know what kind of callers called the show? (men? Women? Young? Old? Mothers? Farmers? Traders? Etc)

19. Have you come across any examples of community members using the information they learned on the radio programme? (probe for examples)

20. Do you think the programme helped SC to better understand the needs of the target communities? If yes, how? If no, why not? (probe for specific examples).

21. In your opinion, should the radio programme start again? Why or why not?

XVII. Livestock pricing information

22. Livestock prices are also broadcast on Wajir community radio. Do you know of anyone who has listened to this pricing information?

23. Do you think information is useful?

24. How do listeners use this information?

25. Who do you think benefits most from this information? (traders? the whole community? Men? Women? Young people? Etc.)

26. Could this information be improved? How?

XVIII. Conclusion

27. What, in your opinion, has been the most significant change of this communications project?

28. What have been the most significant challenges?

29. What would you do differently if we could start all over again?

30. Has this project lived up to your expectations? Why or why not?

31. Are there any questions or issues about the communication project that we have not covered?

That is all we wanted to discuss today. Thank you very much for your time.