

# Risk Analysis for Resilience Programming in Protracted Crises

## Discussion Notes

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*REAL's Resilience in Protracted Crises Discussion Series*

## Speakers

- Jessica Anderson, USAID
- Olga Petryniak, Mercy Corps
- Jim Arbogast, Mercy Corps
- Onesphore Bangenza, Mercy Corps DRC
- Fagueye Sonko, Mercy Corps DRC
- Taylor Garret, USAID BHA

## Moderated Discussion Notes

### Onesphore Bangenza, Mercy Corps DRC

*Q1: How have your teams capitalized on the Congo Humanitarian Analysis Team (HAT) analysis? Where did you find value in using the information?*

**A1:** The Congo HAT analysis has different products. Two of these products in particular, the political bulletin and analysis note, can be used in the development of the project proposal, especially in the context analysis component. The same products are used in the indicator monitoring plan under the heading of data sources for some indicators as sources of verifications.

During the implementation of the project, there is also a HAT product on early warning that provides information on the movement of people and the security situation. Once the information is shared, program teams can adjust their activities if the alert is about population movement or the security situation in the intervention areas. If the alert is a security alert and is ongoing, then the work plan should be revised accordingly. For the other programs that do rapid response then, they prepare the interventions in function after having done a needs assessment in the host areas of the displaced populations.

LEVER developed a Community Perception Tracker (CPT) to detect and respond to rumors on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and COVID-19. Perceptions, questions, and feedback were collected by field staff from community stakeholders, including Community Action Cells (CAC) members and participants on other community meetings on a weekly basis, and rumors were then shared with the LEVER partners to inform the design of community outreach activities. The information was categorized by health zone and common concerns emerged, such as questions on the origins and prevention of EVD and COVID-19, vaccination and treatment of EVD, the coordination of the COVID-19 response, and the location of health facilities. LEVER partners used the information to develop tailored messaging in local languages to systematically address the perceptions within the community that might hamper EVD response efforts.

In mid-March [2020], with the arrival of COVID-19 in the DRC, the LEVER program expanded its efforts on controlling disinformation to other Mercy Corps programs, collaborated further with other response actors, such as other NGOs, to analyze rumors, and develop rapid radio and community messaging to respond to disinformation. The response to the rumors was quite active throughout the program.

These rumors and feedback were useful in forming the basis of community dialogues in these health zones as well as developing short videos that were aired on television (only in Butembo as part of a small initiative) and radio programs throughout the program catchment area. In addition, they were used to convey messages based on data which demystified the rumors and placed them on billboards in designated points where they were clearly visible to a wider audience.

*Q2: As a program leader coordinating activity for multiple programs in Beni, a dynamic zone with both humanitarian and development programming, how do you foresee your teams in the future using crisis analysis to better coordinate their work?*

**A2:** The security analysis for each office is enhanced by reports and analytics from Mercy Corps' Congo HAT. The team conducts continual analysis to understand conflict and crisis dynamics in Eastern DRC, studying power structures, customary and administrative authority, rumors, community behavior, messaging, conflict, and crisis patterns.

Partnership for the Development of Eastern Congo (P-DEC) will use tailored Congo HAT analysis for operational planning and program adaptation and share this information regularly through different channels to allow actors to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach, improve community acceptance, and avoid exacerbating existing tensions.

Emergency programs will always benefit from the early warning product. These alerts allow us to know where there are population movements, which allows us to launch assessments and plan a response.

We will propose that after the intervention, the Congo HAT team continue to monitor the trend to know if the displaced people have returned to their villages of origin in order to plan a reintegration response, seeing that often when people move they lose their property or they find demolished structures. We propose to set up a mechanism to monitor rumors and community perceptions in the displaced areas. We hope to work with the program team and the Congo HAT team to share information on an ongoing basis. This includes Mercy Corps P-DEC program teams and other consortium partners. We also plan to ensure that there is no overlap with teams conducting conflict sensitivity analysis with the Congo HAT team, and above all ensure harmonization.

### Fagueye Sonko, Mercy Corps DRC

*Q3: What factors helped your team determine the types of analysis that would be most important for acting on emerging conflict risks?*

**A3:** First, an experienced local team. In DRC, conflict has lasted a long time. The HAT is Congolese and understands the signs of crisis. Over time, they have built a strong team and network of informants in the field.

Second, the crisis analytics tools. We have to follow the crisis bay-by-day. Having data helps the team identify trends.

Third, technology for data collection. Larger, macro data helps to define trends. Programs and responses can also be adapted based on the analytics from this larger data.

Fourth, program needs. Our analysis is guided by program needs, their areas of intervention, and type of intervention.

*Q4: What advice do you have for teams looking to stand up a crisis analysis unit that informs coordinated programming across the humanitarian/development/peace nexus?*

**A4:** Recruit a team with multidisciplinary skills and experience in humanitarian action, development, and peace. Then, work to build institutional memory. Strengthen your team's presence in discussions and decision making. Know the actors. Store data and strengthen your institutional memory; the triple nexus takes place over several years. Identify different actors, their roles, and the gaps in analysis to better position your teams and help to liaise between them.

### Taylor Garrett, USAID BHA

*Q5: What is the current thinking within the USAID mission around investing in analytics to support collective impact through resilience-building responses? What do you think is needed to scale this work?*

**A5:** In the DRC, there is no shortage of analytics or data. FEWS NET, REACH, third party monitoring, DTM, OCHA, Crisis Analytics, etc. The utility of this work is in how it accompanies target populations. Mercy Corps' Crisis Analytics helps give a larger scope of vision and tell a story. BHA has not fully explored its potential in resilience programming, but would like to in the future.

### Olga Petryniak, Mercy Corps; Jim Arborgast, Mercy Corps

*Q6: What learning have team members working on resilience globally taken away from this learning? How have you shifted what you do, or how you work?*

**A6:** We are still in the early stages of digesting and disseminating the information. It is critical to look at how to move crisis analytics out of the humanitarian realm and into development, resilience, and peace. MC is looking to move crisis analytics away from purely humanitarian teams and into country-specific analytical teams. This also involves identifying the most important indicators, including displacement, rumor and perception tracking, and other dimensions of crisis contexts. Mercy Corps is exploring how to apply this shock modeling in the livestock sector and mobility in East Africa. As an agency, we are moving away from this idea of "assessment, program, evaluation." Analytical models suggest that we should be applying context monitoring across the board in order to build resilience and programming in the medium and long terms to understand the "what" and "how" to meaningfully shape program interventions.

## Question and Answer Session

*Q7: How tailored is the CA methodology? Could it be modified towards IDPs and IDP camps?*

**A7:**

**Jim:** Yes it can be tailored to specific programmatic needs. One of the advantages of this CA model is its flexibility. This leads to challenges in standardization. What the team in Syria is doing is not the same

as what the team in Yemen is doing. It is a matter of identifying what we need to know and how to answer those questions.

**Olga:** We need to be real clear in the use of data and how it links to programmatic decisions. The relationship between the CA team and the programs team is critical to ensure that the data is used effectively.

*Q8: What are the risks for affected populations? What would be the suggested mitigation measures?*

**A8:**

**Fagueye:** International organizations are the only ones to receive the analysis. It is understood that this information should only be used for humanitarian programming and decisions.

**Jim:** Generally speaking, when we set up a new CA team, there is a full risk assessment that is conducted. The exposure of communities to analytical work is part of this risk assessment. We consider a number of mitigation measures from the start, including the way we profile the team, the way we share products (without MC branding or on MC platforms).

**Onesphore:** Within the consortium, we have to have a data sharing agreement in place before sharing any information.

*Q9: What does CA look like in an organizational system, especially alongside MEL? Would CA draw on an existing initial analysis?*

**A9:**

**Jim:** The connection between CA and MEL was not obvious in the beginning. We had to build this relationship over the years, especially around the use of data. At a global level, we have been discussing how country offices can better use the work done by CA teams. We are currently in discussions with the MEL team on a pilot under the PETA project on how to use MEL data to track scenarios.

**Fagueye:** In regard to data protection, MEL data may only be collected for a certain project, so it can be complicated to use this same data for CA. As a supplement to MEL, CA gives advice on follow-up assessments for a project throughout their program.

**Olga:** MEL looks at things we want to know in advance, whereas CA looks at what we need to know in the face of evolving situations. CA is the MEL of contexts in conflict of the future. It may be time to rethink MEL.

*Q10: Are there USG barriers to sharing CA predictors more broadly? How can we overcome those barriers (bureaucratic, legal)?*

**A10:**

**Taylor:** There is information from various sources that comes into BHA daily about conflict or attacks in progress. This information is usually caveated with a specific purpose. It could be applicable in some resilience programming, but nothing else. It's important to define the purpose and audience. It is critical not to repurpose this information without speaking with the partner.

**Jim:** Mercy Corps is usually the one asking for products to not be shared more widely. Mercy Corps is here to deliver programs; analysis is not a core activity. We have to manage this balance between sharing analysis and protecting staff.

*Q11: For the CA in DRC, did you use information obtained from your staff, and/or the staff of other organizations?*

**All: Fagueye:** We use sources from everywhere: our staff and the staff of other organizations. That allows us to layer information with different specialties and levels.

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The Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award is a consortium-led effort funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. It was established to respond to growing demand among USAID Missions, host governments, implementing organizations, and other key stakeholders for rigorous, yet practical, monitoring, evaluation, strategic analysis, and capacity building support. Led by Save the Children, REAL draws on the expertise of its partners: Food for the Hungry, Mercy Corps, and TANGO International.