

Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) Support to the Africa Hunger Crisis



Figure 1: Review Team posing with community wash committee representatives in Somalia.

DREF Operational Review

Emergency Appeal n° MGR60001

March - July 2023

FINAL

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Executive Summary

Amidst intense global humanitarian needs and competing demands, Sub-Saharan Africa is facing one of the most alarming food crises in decades, with a staggering 735 million people suffering from food insecurity as of July 2023 (of which 150 million people are in IPC 3 and above) and urgently requiring humanitarian assistance. Hunger, one of humanity's most undignified sufferings, is imposing severe repercussions on African communities, leaving them vulnerable to multiple shocks that compromise their lives, livelihoods, and prospects. This crisis is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including insecurity, armed conflict, extreme weather events, climate variability, and negative macroeconomic conditions, making it distinct in both magnitude and geographic scope. Consequently, addressing the systemic failures underpinning food insecurity in Africa necessitates an exceptional mobilization effort and collaboration among concerned institutions and states.

With the deteriorating situation, National Societies have been mobilising efforts to mitigate and relieve the effects of these multi-layered crises, through what is now the Africa Hunger Crisis Emergency Appeal operation, since 2021, with critical hunger being the main driver to engage fast response. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) through the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) tool was able to initiate these interventions either as a grant or a loan to kickstart their Emergency Appeals (EA).

This DREF Review aims to assess the support provided by the DREF - either as grants or as loans - towards the operational and strategic goals of the regional response to the Africa Hunger crisis¹, focusing on 6 countries which were selected based on severity of the crisis (ref.: Terms of Reference), which includes Angola, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Somalia. There were plans to conduct additional secondary data for supplementary eight countries, however, due to limited resources, the focus shifted towards the prioritised six countries. Aside from the primary analysis towards the Hunger Crisis operations, this review also includes developing actionable recommendations to inform the strategic and operational directions of the DREF, as the mechanisms adapts to the current context of evolving crises and disasters, especially in the context of a slow-onset situation.

Specifically, this DREF Operational Review assesses:

1. The relevance of current DREF operational parameters in alignment with the evolving levels of severity and characteristics of the crisis in different contexts, and the related Regional Operational Strategy and plans at country level.
2. The efficiency and impact of DREF support to meet the acute needs of the targeted population, while keeping Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies at the centre of the response as trusted knowledge sources for advocacy, humanitarian diplomacy, and fundraising.

¹ ICRC uses the term Food Insecurity crisis.

3. Current challenges and opportunities within the DREF as a funding mechanism in the process of adaptation towards constantly evolving emergencies, such as slow onset situations related to food insecurity and protracted crisis.

This DREF Review analyses the contribution of the DREF to the current Africa Hunger Crisis response, focused on the goals presented above, targeting actions in the indicated six countries chosen through robust selection criteria² ranging from National Society capacities, differences in humanitarian context and DREF operational parameters in each country-specific operation.

All components of this DREF Review also followed three cross-cutting considerations through the process:

- The contribution of DREF support to achieve a unified regional approach based on solid Membership Coordination, leading to achievement such as the Nairobi Statement, the high-level commitment achieved for the EA.
- Adherence to the principles of the Agenda for Renewal in terms of positioning Operating National Societies at the centre of the response, supported by agile IFRC Secretariat services, reduced bureaucracy, and greater decentralization towards country level action.
- Conducting an Internal Operational Review of the Emergency Appeal to provide National Societies and the Secretariat with necessary analysis to continue highlighting the profile of the Hunger Crisis in Africa as a key pan-African initiative.

Through the DREF Operational Review, it was found that some sustainable and durable solutions were less prioritised in the response, that there were gaps in PMER as well as the much-needed Surge deployments, that financial monitoring of utilization of funds was neglected, and that administrative delays in decision making both at IFRC and National Society levels reduced potential for fundraising in an already highly competitive context. These findings have uncovered the need for innovative approaches, considering green responses, sanitation/waste management, livelihoods, and DRR parameters but also that there is need for better promotion of the new DREF modality for slow onset crises so as to allow better structured DREF operations for drought/food insecurity.

In addition, the DREF Review highlighted the relevance of DREF for large scale multi-country response operations, which beyond providing kick-starting funds helped to ensure a regional coordination structure for the operation was set-up as well as operational continuity by not automating the reimbursement of the loans for NSs which had reached threshold. A good balance is however needed to ensure that repeated similar instances do not exhaust the Fund, thereby limiting access to National Societies for small-to-medium scale disasters. On the integration of PGI and CEA, while relevant trainings were carried out for implementing teams in reviewed countries, there is limited evidence on how these training efforts were operationalised/translated into action, and in line with the minimum standards.

² Annex 2

Hence, the DREF Review Team has articulated a few key recommendations including (i) to integrate longer-term planning from onset of response when addressing slow-onset crises; (ii) clarify linkages between the emergency plan of action and existing long-term strategies; (iii) enhance coordination at country level to support sustainability of actions; (iv) strengthen performance monitoring by establishing and maintaining proper PMER systems at NS and Delegation levels; (v) ensuring timely surge deployment; (vi) extend livelihood assistance (including income-generating activities) to vulnerable groups such as the IDPs; (vii) develop clear criteria for using DREF for slow onset and protracted crises; (viii) Develop and promote clear guidance on possible triggers for slow onset/protracted crises operations; (ix) improve dissemination of the new DREF modality on use of DREF funds for drought/food insecurity crises, and (x) extending the operational timeframe of the Africa Hunger Crisis Appeal (MGR60001) beyond 31 December 2023, amongst others. The recommendations are organised based on their relevance for operation coordination teams, DREF Team and programme support services.

Moreover, being an underfunded EA, resource mobilization efforts are crucial and should focus on communication campaigns, media engagement, highlighting innovative solutions, and building partnerships (including at local level) to attract funding and enhance the effectiveness of the operations. This can also be built through fostering stronger regional coordination and collaboration among stakeholders to enhance visibility and fundraising efforts.

This Operational Review Report goes in depth into the cross-cutting findings of the primary and secondary data collected from all focus countries and concludes with recommendations which will require close follow up at varied levels of the IFRC Network to ensure the issues are addressed. Annexed are also Country-Specific reports that dive deeper into each country context, as well as analyses on the relevance of using DREF for food crises and how PGI and CEA approaches were integrated to this large-scale response.

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Abbreviations / Acronyms

Abbv.	Description	Abbv.	Description
ARO	Africa Regional Office	IT	Information Technology
AU	Africa Union	KPI	Key Performance Indicator
BFRC / CRBF	Burkinabe (Burkina Faso) Red Cross Society	KRCS	Korean Red Cross Society
BRC	British Red Cross Society	LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
CAR	Central African Republic	MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
CEA	Community, Engagement and Accountability	MOHADM	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund (UN)	MUAC	Measuring the brachial perimeter
CONASUR	Conseil National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation [Eng : National Emergency Response and Rehabilitation Council]	NADFOR	National Disaster Preparedness and Food Reserve Authority
CORESUR	Conseil régional secours d'urgence [Eng: Regional Emergency Council]	NB	Nota Bene
CP	Civil Protection	NDRT	National Disaster Response Team
CRC	Community Resilience Committee	NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CVD	Village Development Council	NHQ	National Headquarters (National Society)
CVM	Community-based Volunteers Management	NIP	National Implementation Plan
DJRC / DRCS	Djibouti Red Crescent Society	NS / SN	National Society
DOP	Development Operation Plan	NSD	National Society Development
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund	OCHA / UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	ODK	Open Data Kit (a mobile data collection platform)
EA	Emergency Appeal	PAM / WFP	Programme Alimentaire Mondial [Eng: World Food Programme]
EAP	Early Action Protocol	PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	PER	Preparedness for Effective Response
ENA	Emergency Needs Assessment	PGI	Protection, Gender and Inclusion
EPoA	Emergency Plan of Action	PMEAL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
ERF	Emergency Response Framework	PMER	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	PNS	Partner / Participating National Society
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods	PPP / ECHO PPP	Programmatic Partnership (ECHO)
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit	PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

FSP	Financial Service Provider	PWD	Person With Disabilities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent
GO	Go Platform	RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
HADMA	Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management Agency Puntland	RM	Resource Mobilization
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership	RO	Regional Office
HDCC	Health, Disaster, Climate and Crisis department (IFRC)	SAME / FSL	Sécurité alimentaire et moyens d'existence [Food Security and Livelihoods)
HH	Households	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
HQ	Headquarters	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
HR	Human Resources	SRCS	Somali Red Crescent Society
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan (UN)	UN	United Nations
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
IFRC / FICR	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	UP	Unified Planning (IFRC)
IGA	Income Generating Activities	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
IM	Information Management	WFP	World Food Programme
IOM	International Organization for Migration	WHO	World Health Organisation
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification		

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing one of the most alarming food crises in decades with about 150 million³ people suffering from acute food insecurity and requires urgent humanitarian assistance. Driven by a complex interplay of insecurity and armed conflict, extreme weather events, climate variability, and negative macroeconomic conditions, this crisis is distinct in its magnitude and geographic scope.

Starting on 16 April 2021, an [Information Bulletin](#) on Food Insecurity and Hunger was published by the IFRC Africa Regional Office, advocating for an intervention to ensure that the situation of over 100 million people, who were then facing IPC 3+ levels of food insecurity, would not deteriorate. This was especially so as the lean period was approaching between the months of June and August 2021.

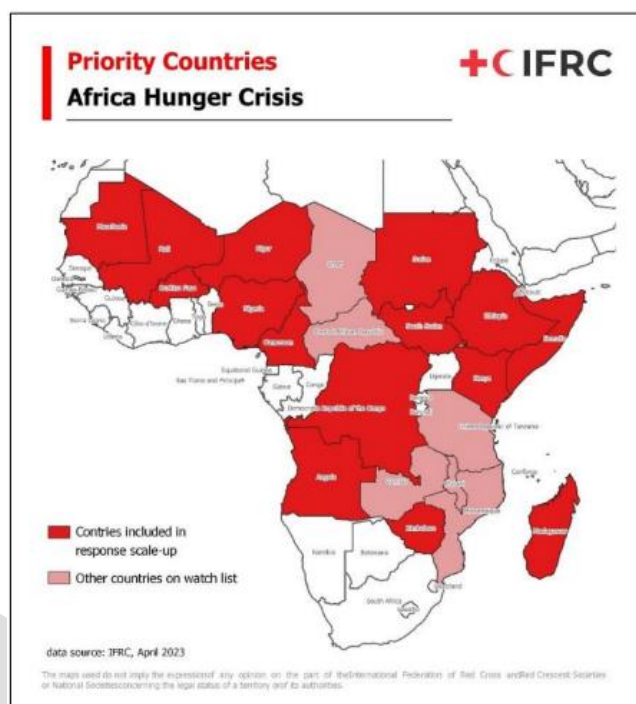


Figure 2: Overview of countries covered by the Africa Hunger Crisis Appeal @IFRC

The above situation required an exceptional mobilization and a massive effort by all concerned institutions and states to address the drivers of food insecurity in Africa. Given the urgency, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) embarked on an ambitious Pan-African initiative aimed at assisting, by 2030, up to 181 million of Sub-Saharan Africa's food insecure people in leading safe, healthy and dignified lives, free of hunger and poverty and with opportunities to thrive. This initiative was in line with the inter-agency regional efforts to eradicate hunger in Africa and sought to forge strategic alliances with key players. The IFRC also sought, through this Initiative, to lay down a framework to ensure acute needs of the most vulnerable and affected communities across Africa could be addressed with the purpose of contributing to long-term food security ensured across the continent. Based on this and in a bid to match words to actions, the Regional Office launched a [Call for Action](#) on 02 September 2021 to support a response against the Hunger Crisis and to serve as a basis for a Federation-wide intervention.

Keen to the needs of its member National Societies, IFRC Africa had already started from 13 May 2021, supporting eight National Societies to access the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) either as a grant or as a loan, to launch a response, in Somalia ([MDRSO011](#)), South Sudan ([MDRSS010](#)), Nigeria ([MDRNG032](#)), Kenya ([MDRKE049](#)), Ethiopia ([MDRET026](#)), Zambia ([MDRZM014](#)) Zimbabwe ([MDRZW016](#)) and Angola [MDRAO007](#).

With the deteriorating situation, consultations continued at regional and global levels on the need to pool efforts and address the Hunger Crisis in Africa through a Federation-wide approach. This would also help provide joint technical and operational coordination from the Secretariat. More strategically, a harmonized approach would hopefully draw the much-needed attention of international partners and donors to the crisis through lifting the voices of the people in need in Africa, amidst post-Covid 19 and war-ridden Ukraine era, two major crises which have undoubtedly impacted the world, leading to donor fatigue.

In the meantime, through 2022, nine (9) additional operations were launched, mainly through the DREF mechanism but also directly as Appeals with DREF loans, supporting operational start up by the National Societies of Tanzania ([MDRTZ030](#)), Ethiopia ([MDRET027](#)), Cape Verde ([MDRCV003](#)), Niger ([MDRNE026](#)), Burkina Faso ([MDRBF017](#)), Mali

³ Integrated Phase Classification, 2022

([MDRML016](#)), Djibouti ([MDRDJ005](#)), Mauritania ([MDRMR013](#)) and The Democratic Republic of Congo ([MDRCD037](#)). The primary purpose of these operations was to enable the National Societies to:

- i) conduct primary assessments of affected areas to collect data from the affected communities themselves;
- ii) with support from these communities, determine the best response approaches for their specific country contexts;
- iii) where necessary, provide immediate relief while collecting data to prevent further deterioration of the situation for affected families.

On 06 October 2022, the consultations on a joint operation to address the issue came to fruition, with the launch of the Africa Hunger Crisis Emergency Appeal ([MGR60001](#)) for CHF 205 million, to ensure improved food and nutrition security of 7.6M vulnerable people in rural and urban areas, thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger in Africa by 2030. Most of the already open operations (DREF and Appeal) were then regrouped under this single operation, with an additional few included as seen in *Figure 2* below:

Appeal Code :	MGR60001	Start Date :	13-May-2021
Appeal Name :	Africa - Hunger Crisis	End Date :	31-Dec-2023
Geographical Code :	AFR Africa	Appeal Type :	Disaster Response
Organisational Structure :	S1KEKE1022 Programs and Operations	Status :	Closed
Reporting group :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Appeal List						
Code	Name	Managed By	Operational Area	Status	Start Date	End Date
MDRSO011	Somalia - Hunger Crisis				13-May-2021	31-Dec-2023
MDRSS010	South Sudan - Hunger Crisis				13-Jun-2021	31-Dec-2023
MDRNG032	Nigeria - Hunger Crisis				28-Jun-2021	31-Dec-2023
MDRKE049	Kenya - Hunger Crisis				12-Aug-2021	31-Dec-2023
MDRAO007	Angola - Hunger Crisis				18-Dec-2021	31-Dec-2023
MDRET027	Ethiopia - Hunger Crisis				27-Feb-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRNE026	Niger - Hunger Crisis				21-Apr-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRBF017	Burkina Faso - Hunger Crisis				26-May-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRML016	Mali - Hunger Crisis				27-Jun-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRCD037	DR Congo - Hunger Crisis				07-Jul-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRSD032	Sudan - Hunger Crisis				06-Oct-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRCM031	Cameroon - Hunger Crisis				06-Oct-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRMG019	Madagascar - Hunger Crisis				06-Oct-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDR64008	IFRC Coordination - Hunger Crisis				06-Oct-2022	31-Dec-2023
MDRZW019	Zimbabwe - Hunger Crisis				06-Oct-2022	31-Dec-2023

Figure 3: Snapshot of countries included in the Hunger Crisis Appeal at the time it was launched, on 06 October 2022 @IFRC

As seen above, through this Appeal, a total of 14 African National Societies scaled-up their response towards the Hunger Crisis operation, including Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Zimbabwe. The start date of the Appeal was set on 13 May 2021, which is when the first operation incorporated into the Appeal was launched for Somalia Red Crescent Society and its latest end date is set for 31 December 2023. In September 2023, the sixth month update for the Appeal was published, updating the Federation wide ask of the Appeal to CHF 215 million, revising the number of targeted people to 7.7 million as well as increasing the number of countries covered by the operation to a total of 16 through inclusion of Djibouti and Mauritania.

Overall, as of Q3 2023, the DREF has allocated an overall **CHF 10,157,530⁴ in grants and loans** (starting from 13 May 2021 and regardless of loan repayment status or operation being active or not) to African National Societies in a bid to respond to the hunger crisis on the continent. Of the above, the DREF Operations (grants) which either ended or

⁴ Note that Zimbabwe Red Cross received both a grant (MDRZW016) and a loan (MDRZW019), while Nigerian Red Cross received two loan allocations amounting to a total CHF 700,000 - an initial loan of CHF 500,000, for which it reimbursed CHF 200,000 but at the launch of the Regional Appeal, it was again allocated a loan of CHF 200,000.

continued out of the Emergency Appeal but within the framework of the Pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative 2030 were allocated an overall CHF 1,632,337.

It should be noted that as of release of this DREF Operational Review report, the entirety of the DREF loan to this Emergency Appeal stands at CHF 8,525,193 (05 October 2023), of which CHF 1,076,462 has been repaid to the Fund as seen in the table below.

DREF Contribution to Africa Hunger Crisis Appeal (MGR60001) as of 05 October 2023								
Allocation Year	Code	Name	Start Date	End Date	Appeal Funding Ask	DREF grant	DREF Loan	DREF loan reimbursed
2021	MDRSO011	Somalia - Hunger Crisis	13-May-21	31-Dec-23	24,000,000		451,800	-
	MDRSS010	South Sudan - Hunger Crisis	13-Jun-21	31-Dec-23	16,000,000		750,000	-
	MDRNG032	Nigeria - Hunger Crisis	28-Jun-21	31-Dec-23	27,000,000		700,000	200,000
	MDRKE049	Kenya - Hunger Crisis	12-Aug-21	31-Dec-23	25,000,000		369,354	369,354
	MDRZW016	Zimbabwe - Food Insecurity	10-Nov-21	31-May-22		271,785	-	-
	MDRZM014	Zambia - Food Insecurity	11-Nov-21	31-Mar-22		251,556	-	-
	MDRAO007	Angola - Hunger Crisis	18-Dec-21	31-Dec-23	10,000,000		750,000	-
2022	MDRTZ030	Tanzania Food Insecurity	28-Jan-22	31-Jul-22		466,010	-	-
	MDRET027	Ethiopia - Hunger Crisis	27-Feb-22	31-Dec-23	12,500,000		507,108	507,108
	MDRCV003	Cape Verde - Drought	16-Apr-22	31-Dec-22		327,188	-	-
	MDRNE026	Niger - Hunger Crisis	21-Apr-22	31-Dec-23	10,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRBF017	Burkina Faso - Hunger Crisis	26-May-22	31-Dec-23	18,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRML016	Mali - Hunger Crisis	27-Jun-22	31-Dec-23	8,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRDJ005	Djibouti - Hunger Crisis	29-Jun-22	31-Dec-23			496,931	-
	MDRMR013	Mauritania	05-Jul-22	31-Dec-22	2,000,000	315,798	-	-
	MDRCD037	DR Congo - Hunger Crisis	07-Jul-22	31-Dec-23	16,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRSD032	Sudan - Hunger Crisis	06-Oct-22	31-Dec-23	12,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRCM031	Cameroon - Hunger Crisis	06-Oct-22	31-Dec-23	10,000,000		500,000	-
	MDRMG019	Madagascar - Hunger Crisis	06-Oct-22	31-Dec-23	5,500,000		500,000	-
	MDRZW019	Zimbabwe - Hunger Crisis	06-Oct-22	31-Dec-23	14,000,000		500,000	-
	MDR64008	IFRC Coordination - Hunger Crisis	06-Oct-22	31-Dec-23	5,000,000		500,000	-
						215,000,000	1,632,337	8,525,193

Figure 4: Summary of DREF contributions to the Africa Hunger Crisis (grants and loans)

1.2 Objectives & Deliverables

This DREF Operational Review assesses:

- The **relevance** of current DREF operational parameters **in alignment** with the evolving levels of severity and characteristics of the crisis in different contexts, and the related Regional Operational Strategy and plans at country level.
- The **efficiency** and **impact** of DREF support to meet the acute needs of the targeted population, while keeping Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies at the centre of the response as trusted knowledge sources for advocacy, humanitarian diplomacy and fundraising.
- Current **challenges** and **opportunities** within the DREF as a funding mechanism in the process of adaptation towards constantly evolving emergencies, such as slow onset situations related to food insecurity and protracted crisis.

Intended as a quality assurance and lessons learned exercise (not a full evaluation), the review set out to:

- Assess how the operations have contributed to supporting African National Societies meet the acute needs of the targeted population, as well as to foster resilience beyond the operational timeframes.
- Assess the relevance of the DREF as a funding tool for slow onset and protracted crises, considering DREF Evolution and propose adjustments in line with ensuring sustainability of the tool.
- Assess if and how using the DREF as a loan to the Regional Appeal, contributed to support the Regional Operational Strategy while allowing country-tailored responses.

- Assess how the DREF funding effectively supported echoing the voices of the affected communities and if relating response strategies are aligned to the community needs.
- Assess how the DREF funded operations contributed to meeting the goal of supporting timely resource mobilization through clear and timely communications.
- Assess if allocated amounts per country is aligned with the severity of the crisis in country at the time the allocations were approved.
- Assess the effectiveness and impact so far into the response of the DREF supported operations, given that DREF funds are meant to kick-start the Appeal response.

This review has below three main deliverables (including this report), which are presented as a package for operational learning both for IFRC and National Societies operational teams as well as the DREF team including its Advisory Group.

1. The **DREF Operational Review report** summarizing the findings and recommendations on the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of DREF allocations on these Food Crisis responses (this report).
2. A **paper analysing the added value of using the DREF** towards the development of the Africa Hunger Crisis strategy and the decisions made to allocate from DREF in slow onset drought of food security related situations. (Refer to Annex 2 – Analysis of DREF Relevance for AHC Operation).
3. A **paper highlighting the levels of integration of CEA, as well as PGI** approaches in echoing the voices of the affected communities. (Refer to Annex 3 – Analysis of PGI and CEA Integration to AHC Response Strategies).

1.2. Methodology

Conducted as a quality assurance and lessons learned exercise, this review exercise was conducted in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the [DREF Operational Review Framework](#), which in turn is aligned to [IFRC Framework for Evaluation](#) and IFRC Ethics and Legality standards.

Based on this, the methodology which was adopted for this DREF Operational Review includes:

1. **Prioritisation of Countries:** 14 countries were initially planned to be reviewed - eight (8) were to be reviewed and referred to via secondary data to provide a more holistic context and six (6) were planned to be reviewed more in-depth, including planned field visits for primary data collection. However, due to limitations of resources, only the main six (6) countries were reviewed. The six (6) main countries are Angola, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Somalia. Out of the six (6) main countries, there were security challenges faced in Burkina Faso where the reviewer was able to visit the IFRC country office but unable to go further into implementation areas. Similarly in Somalia, the planned visit to Puntland was cancelled due to security constraints. In Madagascar, implementation of the operation was still at the assessment stage during the DREF operational review and logistics arrangements for Review field visit was not confirmed in a timely manner with the Delegation. These situations led to an adaptation of primary data collection toward phone calls and virtual communications.
2. **Review of documents and secondary data:** This was done to have a full grasp of the process leading to and the rationale for the allocations, as well as the impact on operations on the ground. The documents consulted were sorted in key areas for the focus countries to ease the process. Documentation collection was done by the Africa Regional Office, involving country team and analysed for the overall EA and the six focus countries is according to the table below. Note that not all documents were available for all 6 countries. The full list of documents reviewed is available in Annex 6.




3. **Secondary Data Brief and Debrief:** A secondary data debrief session amongst the team and with the Regional Office and Hunger Crisis regional and country coordination team was organised prior to travel to share learnings, hence contributing to more robust field visits.

4. **Primary data collection and field visits:** To facilitate access to the implementation teams and ensure accuracy in collection of information, the Review Team members conducted field visits to the targeted countries. For each of the visited countries, the Review Team members engaged with the below stakeholders for each operation location at various capacities, either during the field visits or online. The primary focus was on interviewees within the RCRC Movement as seen in Annex 7 which provides insights on the role types which were interviewed during the field missions.
 - National Societies programmes coordinators, disaster management directors/officers, food security and livelihood focal points and other relevant sectoral leads at branch level and NHQ.
 - National Society technical volunteers.
 - IFRC Country Cluster Delegations Heads of Delegations, Disaster Management Coordinators, food security, CVA, WASH and health focal points.
 - IFRC Africa Region Head of HDCC, Lead Operations Manager, Zero Hunger Coordinator, Operations Coordinators, CVA Coordinator, Strategic Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator, CEA Senior Advisor and any other relevant sectoral leads.
 - IFRC Africa/Delegations Communication, Logistics and Finance Teams.
 - Surge personnel deployed to support planning, implementation, monitoring, resource mobilization and management of operations, including the Operation Manager of the Africa Hunger Crisis.
 - Targeted community leaders – with due considerations to gender and inclusion.
 - Local government partners.
 - NGOs and UN agencies present in the countries of implementation, which are responding to the food crisis.
 - Red Cross partners supporting the response.

5. **Focus Group Discussions (using standardised tools from the DREF Review Toolbox) with:**
 - Affected community members.
 - Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers involved in the interventions.
 - Community groups (women, youth, disabled, etc.).

6. Presentation of Findings

Conducted based on above-mentioned methodology, analysis of the overall DREF Operational Review findings are presented following below key areas including Relevance and Appropriateness, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Coherence as well as Sustainability and Connectedness, while attempting to provide answers to the relating questions under each one of them (see table below). These elements are mainly highlighted when presenting the general findings and those linked to the programmes sectors. Beyond the support of the DREF allocations provided to the hunger crisis operation, the team also highlighted key findings pertaining to programmes support services and cross-cutting issues.

 Relevance & Appropriateness	 Efficiency	 Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Did the situation require a DREF allocation? ❖ Would it have been more relevant for operations started as grants to remain as such? ❖ Are the interventions appropriate and in line with the needs of the affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Were the initial grants allocated for assessment utilized to conduct assessment and enhance their exposure and coordination? ❖ Where relevant, were the DREF loans utilized within first three months of the operation to collect data, ensure coordination, and echo the voices of affected communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Were the emergency needs highlighted in the emergency phase of the operation addressed through the DREF loans/grants? ❖ Were the interventions in line with international standards (SPHERE)?




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Was the emergency phase of these operations coordinated and implemented in an efficient manner? ❖ Were the allocations adequate to achieve the set objectives? ❖ Could costs have been reduced, or an alternative approach used to achieve these results? 	
 Impact	 Coherence	 Sustainability & Connectedness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Did the DREF allocations contribute to support the National Society in developing a longer-term strategy on how to address the challenges faced by the people/communities most affected by the hunger/food insecurity crisis? ❖ What criteria were used to identify these communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Did the DREF allocation support implementation of the emergency action plans and the strategies and policies chosen by the stakeholders in this emergency response? ❖ Was the operation complementary to the activities of other actors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How did the DREF funding contribute to enhance visibility of the initial response? ❖ How did the DREF allocations support fundraising for the emergency appeals both at national and international levels? ❖ Are the results sustainable, particularly in terms of the lessons learned during these interventions? ❖ How can these lessons be integrated into future unified plans to support fundraising?

Table 2: Key considerations during review and relating questions

In addition to above analysis, several annexes are attached to this report, linked with the key deliverables set for this DREF Operational Review namely:

- **Annex 1:** Country-specific reports on the focus countries which provides details of findings and recommendations per country reviewed (Angola, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Madagascar, Nigeria and Somalia).
- **Annex 2:** A paper on DREF Relevance for the development of the overall Africa Hunger Crisis strategy and the decisions made to allocate from DREF funds in slow onset drought or food security related situations.
- **Annex 3:** A paper on the Integration of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), as well as Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) approaches in echoing the voices of the affected communities for the Africa Hunger Crisis Regional Appeal.

Moreover, a few annexes provide details of the review methodology and process, such as:

- **Annex 4:** Rationale for Selection of Countries
- **Annex 5:** Countries on Hunger Crisis Watch List
- **Annex 6:** List of reviewed documents
- **Annex 7:** Key informants

1.3. Limitations and Challenges

Below table summarizes the key limitations and challenges encountered during this DREF Operational review.

General	Timeline	Security
<p>1 This review is conducted for the DREF, however, due to the set up and procedure of the DREF when it is developed with or after an EA, it is difficult to distinguish and isolate an analysis or review just for the DREF. This is in reference to operations that developed as or escalated to EAs.</p> <p>2 This review is conducted while operations are ongoing due to the need to inform the planning and response after the EA. Because of this, there are different rates and level of implementation which led to a more individualistic approach of analysis and documentation done per country.</p> <p>3 Factors such as limited budget, time, and resources limited the number and duration of field visits. This restricted the primary data collection whereby the team could only gather a small sample of information based on the visited localities, affected, and targeted communities, volunteers, NS/IFRC personnel, and partners.</p>	<p>1. Delayed recruitment of Review Team members.</p> <p>2. Different levels of capacity from Review Team members due to other existing commitments (not engaged purely for the review).</p> <p>3. Difficulties and challenges in file collection for secondary data review.</p> <p>4. Challenges in file sharing outside of the IFRC to non-IFRC review members.</p> <p>5. Lack of timing allocated in the initial plan for orientation, set up, and planning.</p> <p>6. Eid al-Fitri was within the duration of the review timeline which delayed field visits.</p>	<p>1. Limitation on certain field visits due to the security situation (e.g. Puntland – Somalia, Burkina Faso, etc...). In Somalia, there was a plan for the reviewer to go to Puntland, but due to increased armed violence e.g., near the airport in Puntland, the physical visit, dialogue/interviews had to be cancelled. Likewise, the current insecurity in affected areas of Burkina Faso did not allow a field visit to implementation areas, so the reviewer stayed in Ouagadougou.</p>

Chapter 2: KEY FINDINGS

2.1 General

In review of all six (6) countries, the general finding is that the DREF allocations and activities funded highlighted the relevance & appropriateness of the intervention, as well as innovation⁵ in the way the strategic direction adopted to ensure continuity of the operations from DREF-funded operation to larger scale interventions through the launched Appeal as seen below.

Key Review Area	Analysis
 <p data-bbox="279 555 464 622">Relevance & Appropriatenes</p>	<p data-bbox="539 555 1469 757">The general finding is that the DREF operations and activities were relevant and appropriate in providing tangible immediate relief to some of the most vulnerable populations affected by the hunger crisis. Indeed, the escalation of the hunger crisis observed through an increase in number of people that fall into the IPC3+ categories along with validation by country-level actors, partners, and government, warranted the intervention of immediate relief activities, in this case, funded by the DREF.</p> <p data-bbox="539 797 1469 1077">Nonetheless, there are constraints with addressing a slow-onset crisis as the DREF mechanism is designed and focused on immediate relief as opposed to longer-term recovery, durability of interventions and sustainability. DREF has since updated its funding ceilings and timeframe conditions, through the DREF Evolution launched in September 2022, allowing for higher allocations and longer operational timeframes. However, the magnitude of the hunger crisis is large and will extend far beyond the capacities of the current intervention which is being implemented under the Emergency Appeal mechanism.</p> <p data-bbox="539 1117 1469 1821">Overall, all DREF operations were initiated with emergency needs assessments (some also did detailed analysis of local needs) by National Society branches (in some cases, less independently where governments are in partnership) with consultation of IFRC Delegation to determine the vulnerability threshold. There are limitations with determining the quality of these assessments as there are only few documents to support this review, and the review of this aspect is based on interviews and secondary information. Although branches conducted emergency needs assessments in selected areas, based on various information sources there seems to be a lack of independent localized vulnerability analysis and assessments. This might have influenced the bias or outdated perception when selecting the most vulnerable locations and groups to conduct their needs assessments. There is an acknowledgement from the review team that an independent and localised vulnerability assessment requires heavy resources, however, there could be further emphasis on these efforts. Also, the assessments seem to be done by NS branches, with NHQ taking the lead usually on interpreting the data collected into intervention plans within the DREF/ EA response. This process seems to have gaps of collaboration between NS branches and NHQ. Aside from that that, there is evidence that only some National Societies (usually done by the NHQ, not branches) referred to their Strategic and Annual Plans, and existing Contingency Plans as a basis for planning a DREF / EA response.</p>

⁵ Innovation as a key review area imposed itself during the review process.



Considering the approach towards the Hunger Crisis, the coordination and decision to merge the operations into a Regional Emergency Appeal is innovative of the IFRC. This approach brought allowed for the Africa Region to mobilize and unprecedented 10M from the DREF pot for a single crisis, and benefitted the IFRC Network in terms of visibility, translating in increased awareness and fundraising opportunities, while also providing a more unified coordination towards this large response effort. However, with its efforts through this innovation, there were other factors such as competing crises and/or limited new donors, which hindered the intended fundraising impact. Based on the limited funding harnessed by the Regional Appeal at the time of the DREF Operational Review, **it could be deducted that better analysis of funding potential should have been set to help select countries included to the Appeal.** This could have allowed for National Societies with available data and strong resource mobilization capacity to integrate the Appeal in a context where multiple crises are competing for funding from same sources. The others could have set up standalone larger-scale DREF operations with smaller targeting for better community impact and a transition strategy enabling them to garner long-term funding through annual plans, even if done on a slower pace.

In some of the countries reviewed, **there were unique and context adaptable innovation in interventions within the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and in Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sectors.** As an example, Djibouti newly introduced the use of Kobo and QR codes and facilitated digitization to enable rapid access to beneficiary information during distribution rounds. This is supported through fostering new partnerships with a Financial Service Provider (FSP) and has also strengthened the capacities of the NS in this specific area.

In Nigeria, **the decentralization of the Mother's Club initiative⁶ has brought about good levels of ownership and subsequently the opportunity for scalability.** This allows larger scale reach yet, maintains a localized approach in providing capacity and skills building while developing strong social support networks which brings about community and mental health resilience.



Figure 5: Focus group discussion at Mother's Club, Nigeria


In Madagascar, **the use of DREF as an Emergency Response Global Tool allowed to access geographical areas in the country complex in terms of security; triggering after support from PNS in-country.** The DREF, being an emergency response tool, had

⁶ "Mothers' Club" approach is defined by the Red Cross [Livelihoods Centre](#) as a method of intervention used to reduce the vulnerability of households, especially of women. Its specificity relies on a strong community roots. Its members are mainly volunteer women who adhere to the principles of the Red Cross, and come together to exchange and sensitize other members of the community on topics they have previously been trained on such as maternal and child health, wash, nutrition, etc.

a multiplying effect bringing safer access for volunteers through their- presence and actions in the community which helped ease their acceptance and helped NS showcase their capacities which later translated in further funding in the longer term given the impact recorded from previous operations.

2.2 Programme Sectors

With regards to the programmatic sectors, the operations were found to be relevant & appropriate as they were needs-based, and the strategies mainly designed following assessments (including secondary data review) and operational learning. However, given the complexity and severity of the crisis, the expediency in developing some of the plans based on sectorial knowledge of NS and IFRC teams might have impeded efficiency as communities might not have been sufficiently consulted in exploring adequate solutions for their specific contexts. In addition, the delays in decision making and process regarding going directly for an EA for most of these operations stalled the timely implementation of operations, highlighting the need for extended operational timeframe to ensure proper completion of actions as well as transition into a more longer-term phase.

Key Review Area	Analysis
 <p data-bbox="292 882 491 954">Relevance & Appropriateness</p>	<p data-bbox="545 871 1469 1189">Most of the interventions were initially launched based on secondary data analysis reports from main Hunger crisis/drought experts, including FEWSNET, <i>Cadre Harmonisé</i>, UN reports, Food security cluster data and other secondary data information internal to RCRC like operational learnings and some more recent multisectoral analysis. Within the RCRC Movement, primary/ secondary data review and joint assessments were conducted at varying capacities across all three key sectors (Food Security and Livelihoods, Health and WASH), including assessments carried out in collaboration with government agencies and operating organizations in the country. The findings of these assessments mostly informed the planning of interventions within each sector.</p> <p data-bbox="545 1227 1469 1480">In some countries, the assessment conducted came several months after the launch of the Emergency appeal due to structural delays or security issues (Ex: Madagascar, Burkina Faso). In such cases, activities were planned based on personal experiences and sectorial knowledge primarily from National Society HQ and IFRC Delegation offices. Some National Societies also used operational learning from past interventions to support their activities, including post distribution monitoring (PDM). Such exercises were observed in Somalia, Djibouti, and Nigeria which further validated the relevance of the interventions.</p> <p data-bbox="545 1518 1469 1809">It was noted that the operations which started as DREF (grant) with an assessment as initial/main component (Sahel countries, Djibouti, DRC) were able to provide primary information and evidence with inclusion of primary feedback from household surveys and focus group discussions. That said, the severity and scope of the emergency made most of the secondary data equally relevant and aligned to the same scope and scale analysis made by IFRC on the launch of this EA. Overall, the situation at the time of the launch of the EA with the scope and scale described in the respective analysis, forecasts and detailed assessment conducted were relevant to justify the launch of the appeal to respond to the Hunger crisis in the region.</p> <p data-bbox="545 1848 1469 2000">The support provided through the DREF to the different countries was relevant in the sense that it enabled them to kick-start implementation, supported the data collection, and gathered community-based evidence through detailed targeted assessment for localized suitable actions at a time when media visibility on the hunger crisis was very low.</p>

Sadly, while the initial expert reports triggered the launch of the DREF operations, **it was unclear how the overall Regional Emergency Appeal was triggered at initial launch and as such, unclear how to measure the timeliness of the launch of the different country appeals** (E.g. Somalia) and the Regional Hunger Crisis Appeal.

This lack of clarity on triggers for IFRC emergency tools to be utilized was **further exacerbated by delays in the launch of both the DREF Operations and the Emergency Appeal (EA) itself which took months to be finally launched**. From the first Call for Action and Strategic Ambition, the development of the operational plans underwent a prolonged process which resulted in missed opportunities for effective fundraising. Indeed, the early recognition of the need to address the crisis was not translated into a comprehensive plan in a timely manner, impacting the fundraising potential of the EA. The overall low fundraising of the EA was worst in countries included to the response plan without any prior assessment being conducted.

The limited experience with the DREF tool among implementing team members and high staff turnover hindered the utilization of lessons learned from previous operations, exacerbating the late triggering of the response. This unveiled the need for further capacity strengthening in this area. As a remedial measure to ease understanding and use of IFRC-specific tools, workshops and orientations were organized in most of the countries to strengthen the National Societies' capacities in implementing the operations according to IFRC standards. These workshops covered various areas such as Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER), Information Management (IM), Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). The goal was to capitalize on lessons learned and apply them to future interventions.

Efforts were made to engage with the communities but **for most of the community engagement actions conducted, it came either after the launch of the intervention or during the PDMs**. While the activities were primarily informed by the National Society's assessment, there was minimal participation and consultation with the affected communities. Indeed, **expediency in plan development in some countries was prioritized over a more participative approach which impeded on efficiency, as communities could not be sufficiently consulted in exploring adequate solutions for their specific contexts**. Strategies were derived from learnings, personal and professional experience rather than direct community consultation. That said, the selection criteria for beneficiaries ensured community involvement during which community validation of targeted households and integrity of the selection process were confirmed.



Efficiency

The main findings on efficiency of the DREF support to the operation is linked to what the National Societies were able to achieve with the funds allocated, the timeliness of these achievements, the support costs resulting from the HR coordination structure. This was analysed based on documentations and results shared at the time of the review (which was conducted while implementation was ongoing in most of the countries). The review also took into consideration the financial reports as of May 2023.

Regarding the timeliness, **even if all the planned activities were implemented at 70% at the time of the DREF Operational Review, the implementation was significantly delayed at different moments in all the countries with main reason being insecurity, access, structural delays in processing Surge deployments or procurements through IFRC international structure**. Examples include Madagascar needs assessment conducted in Q2 of 2023, Burkina Faso needs assessment delayed by insecurity in targeted areas, leading to the first distribution in August 2022 as well as PDM and all monitoring completed in October 2022 for an initial DREF allocation

(grant) done on in May 2022. In addition, the DREF operations in Burkina Faso and Djibouti were extended to allow completion of the planned actions.

Some **feedback from interviews with NS members highlighted the imbalance of operational cost versus support cost which was not aligned to the 60:40 percentile ration recommended – 60% being for operational costs and 40% for support costs.** Indeed, at the launch of the DREF operations, the intervention could have benefited of more allocation for direct relief. That imbalance was also highlighted in the effective implementation of the EA where, even if most of the overall plan was adjusted and launched with 60:40 percentile ratio, in the end, either unplanned budget lines were dedicated to National Society Development (NSD) or significant budget lines were re-prioritised for staff or other expenses, thereby excluding costs which could have boosted chances to meet the efficiency criteria. To note, most of these unplanned expense deviations were only sparsely documented in the plan/revision.

Initial grant allocations before scale-up of the Hunger Crisis Appeal was mainly covered a very limited target compared to the number of people already in IPC 3+ at that time. Moreover, these allocations came with high support for effective delivery which could have been pooled to reach a larger target especially compares to the extent of needs. For example, in a DREF of around CHF 200,000 as initial allocation for Burkina Faso, less than CHF 96,000 were dedicated to emergency assistance of 600 households. These 600 households represent less than 1% of general caseload. Even if the purpose of allocations was initially the assessment, some evidence of needs should have been considered for efficient planning. The scale-up to the EA reduced that ambivalence but overall target for the funding received of 57.25M was still 20% of the IPC3+ population, including direct target and indirect impact.

Moreover, **NSs feedback on support versus operational cost percentile allocated always highlighted the high support cost dedicated to the IFRC while it could be more efficient and valuable to have technical and operational staff hired at National Society level, especially at implementing branches.** In Burkina Faso for example, one of the interviewees *“had the feeling that the majority of the costs went to IFRC, when there was not enough cost for hiring dedicated staff at NS or extend other needed activities”*.

All the same, **the availability of the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation staff for continuous support, the expertise provided by IFRC delegates, and the flexibility to reallocate funds were mentioned as positive aspects.** The process and support provided by IFRC were generally considered timely and sufficient, with no significant difficulties reported in using IFRC disaster response tools.

Overall, **the efficiency of the Hunger Crisis operation was dampened by challenges and delays in implementation.** Inadequate cost distribution during implementation, operational challenges, bottlenecks in Delegation management, the absence of a clear mobilization system within the National Society and slow implementation diluted the efficiency of the operation. The post-COVID situation, with staff working remotely or on leave, further slowed progress.



Effectiveness

Most of the interventions through the DREF contribution targeted the immediate alleviation of suffering of the affected population. However, looking at the PDM for Somaliland (449 participants), *“28 % of the participants revealed that cash transfer was not enough to cover their basic needs due to the increase of food prices, 27 % of respondents revealed that the cash grants were not sufficient due to inflation, 19 % due to big household size (large member of household), 14 % due to high transportation cost, 9 % due to no other source of income and 3% for others”*. As such, although the operations achieved their targets in ensuring that people received lifesaving support, this was not sustainable as the needs continued to grow due to

the worsening of the hunger crisis. Indeed, the overall economic parameters leading to increased market prices, needs and affected population, diluted the effectiveness of the DREF-funded support for this crisis. This was also highlight from others visited countries.

Regarding livelihoods and basic needs assistance, the DREF operation aimed to provide basic needs support, including food, through a multipurpose cash mechanism.



Figure 6: Registration of beneficiary following cash distribution in Angola

Indeed, **cash support appears to have worked well**. As per results of Somaliland PDM (449 respondents in November 2022), 99% of respondents reported that mobile money transfer is a proper and convenient delivery modality as “100% of households had at least one person with a mobile which had security code”. For the overall cash approach, the affected population appreciated the assistance which provided flexibility in accessing preferred food items and helped meet immediate needs.

However, **the rationale for multiple payments instead of a single lump-sum payment was questioned by the communities** (in Djibouti and in Somalia). It was unclear to communities why despite delays in completing the cash assistance, the cash grants were still provided by instalment. All the same, consideration of the one-off transfer to the families was adopted in other operations and was more in line with community feedback/ preferences.

It was difficult to evaluate how implementation of nutrition activities reduced the vulnerability. This was because the PDM in some of these operations were still not conducted/completed and no post-distribution vulnerability assessments were planned. For this review, to evaluate the impact of the interventions on reducing the vulnerability, the approach was to direct interviews in the communities and use quantitative data from the existing PDM reports at branch level showing evidence of purchased livestock, or other long-term purchases which would support their nutrition. Appropriate distribution of cash in the right season like in Djibouti allowed to buy more livestock, at cheaper prizes, generating a long-term benefit and reducing the vulnerability in the highest drought season which came with higher prices and low resources.

In addition, **the cash grants also allowed access to a frequent source of nutrition during the lean season, with direct access to food or crops for farming that contributed to early recovery.** Example from PDM Somalia: 38 % of respondents indicate that their household have spent in the last month of calendar by buying common stable food include Rice, Sugar, 18 % spent buying cereal crops include Sorghum, Maize, Wheat, Wheat flour, Pasta, 16% were spent for buying water, 9 % spent by buying back the debts, 4 % for health expenses. The multipurpose cash was found to be an appropriate approach but more needs to be done to ensure sustainability and to build resilience.

Many of the focus countries mentioned IDPs as priority target based on secondary data reports but in some countries where UNHCR and IOM are active, it was not made clear how the level of vulnerability was taken into consideration. As an example, the Emergency Appeal targeting mentioned IDPs in its situation update but at the same time, it appears from interviews that UNHCR and IOM were the ones mainly serving IDPs (not confirmed). IFRC delegates and SRCS Puntland identified conflict related IDP groups which, based on information available to them, have not received adequate support.

Regarding branch capacity, while number of existing branches was used as a determination for intervention/share of support in Somalia, it might be more



Impact

judicious to value needs more and allocate resources based on needs (comparing Somaliland and Puntland, but also applicable to other countries as the branch capacity was not well thought through when allocating resources). In fact, there is need for the specific context of some branches/targeted areas compared to others in the same country to be better included in the determination of intervention and priority needs rather than a general approach; especially when context significantly differs with security consideration and political divisions for example and require sharing support services among two high demanding branches. **Better consideration in the planning should be made as they have a significant incidence on the efficiency of the intervention and adequate HR/support to mobilise for the intervention, etc.**

In general, **although the connection of DREF, EA and Regional EA is linked to the Zero Hunger Crisis Initiative which indicates a clear progression and longer-term transition, the current mobilization of interventions is fragmented with a lack of emphasis on addressing root causes.** One of the biggest challenges hindering this outcome at country level is in the financial allocation where **the team needed to balance immediate emergency relief support activities due to critical humanitarian needs, while also integrating longer-term strategies and activities.** This evidently resulted in the much larger prioritization of immediate needs as opposed to investing in longer-term solutions. This has led to realizing that **the hunger crisis EA had limited long-term interventions and strategies, with only few outputs geared towards long-term impact or addressing the food insecurity beyond the immediate needs;** this despite the use of cash which contributed to a certain extent to the immediate needs and to strengthen resilience for a few months. Some exceptions were the Mothers Club as well as the actions to the agricultural and economic system in general. However, funding limitations and the initial priorities broken down in several sectors did not contribute to enhance robust and streamlined support across all the countries.

Moreover, **the lack of permanent staff at NS branch level hindered sustained efforts beyond the immediate crisis response. As such, volunteers were the most used resources, highly contributing to the impact of the EA.** The first impact being the achievements in terms of community understanding, targeting and engagement. Volunteers, who were part of the community and had prior experience, played a crucial role in identifying the most vulnerable individuals/households. They utilized their knowledge and community understanding to ensure that assistance reached those who needed it the most.

The selection process involved volunteers checking and verifying data using various datasets, ensuring adherence to criteria for identifying the most vulnerable. The NS and volunteers engaged with the community, explained the selection process, seeking cooperation and understanding.

The community feedback system was guided by standards in most of the planning, but it was difficult to gather the community feedback per country and the specific way they were addressed/managed to evaluate the impact during the intervention, especially before the PDMs which were the main survey conducted for the impact analysis.

One of the potential obstructions in utilizing DREF in a slow-onset, longer-term intervention is the perception of the DREF tool which has been promoted for decades as the go-to funding mechanism for rapid onset crises and kick-starter fund for Emergency Appeals. This was confirmed in various interviews with National Society members. This is a barrier for long-term solutions thinking when planning for slow onset responses using DREF as the assumed focus is primarily towards initial and immediate relief activities. Even more so, when using DREF funding as a loan, as planning should immediately incorporate mid-to-long term actions. **While the perception might be founded, there is need to improve dissemination on the DREF**



Coherence

Evolution which since September 2022 allows for use of DREF funding for early recovery through a special modality designed purposefully to support responses to food insecurity crisis.

Another point which was raised was the need for improved information flow, as there seemed to be a tendency towards excessive sector and project-focused approaches which has a time factor as opposed to holistic and integrated approaches with a broader view of timeline and sustainability.

Low resources was also identified as a reason for the limited scope of impact.

Some National Societies had planned activities in the **DREF intervention that were generally aligned with the NS contingency plan and strategic priorities** based on information collected during interviews. Unfortunately, this finding could not be confirmed due to the lack of documentation and data regarding the existing NS emergency and/or contingency plans.

In the same vein, **implemented activities of the National Societies were shared and validated by local authorities and stakeholders, ensuring acceptance and alignment with government guidelines, however, there were instances of National Societies operating in silo.** Many governments were also actively implementing their own programming and response efforts to assist vulnerable households, covering various components such as economic interventions, social assistance, community engagement, and institutional strengthening. **As auxiliary to the government, it was found through this review that National Societies have contributed and complimented these government efforts through the activities planned in the operation.** There were instances where a national-level plan to address the emergency was absent, which made it difficult to align priorities and reach a common understanding of the scope and scale of the crisis, especially with the lack of consistent and reliable data.

The key findings indicate that **the EA was complementary to the activities of other actors on the ground,** and the National Society coordinated with key stakeholders and working groups at both the headquarters and branch levels. However, there were some areas and countries where there were few or no partners working in the National Societies areas of focus.

During the initial phase, **there was significant information exchange and coordination among actors, where some even utilized the results of assessments conducted through the DREF / EA operation as a baseline. However, coordination became laxer during the implementation stage.** Indeed, coordination with other humanitarian actors and information sharing was generally carried out to avoid duplication, however, there was no evidence that this was consistently monitored.

In a few countries (Angola, Djibouti), **strong cooperation was observed and established with government bodies both at the state and national level.** In other countries (Nigeria), local government was responsible for coordinating the roles and geographical distribution of the different humanitarian actors to make sure that assistance coverage was as wide as possible by allocating geographical areas of intervention for every actor. **This helped achieve a wider reach to more affected people but kept the different humanitarian actors working in silos.**

The general observation and collective finding are that throughout the process, information was shared with local authorities, and they, in turn, provided the National Societies with access, data and networks. This engagement with local authorities further facilitated coordination and collaboration in the operation.



Since the launch of the Regional Hunger Crisis EA in October 2022, the Federation wide funding ask is only covered at 27 per cent (as of August 2023 as seen in table below), meaning that important recovery activities have not been possible. The activities can be sustained if the affected population receives further support though resilience-focused programmes which are well connected to the seasonal calendar.

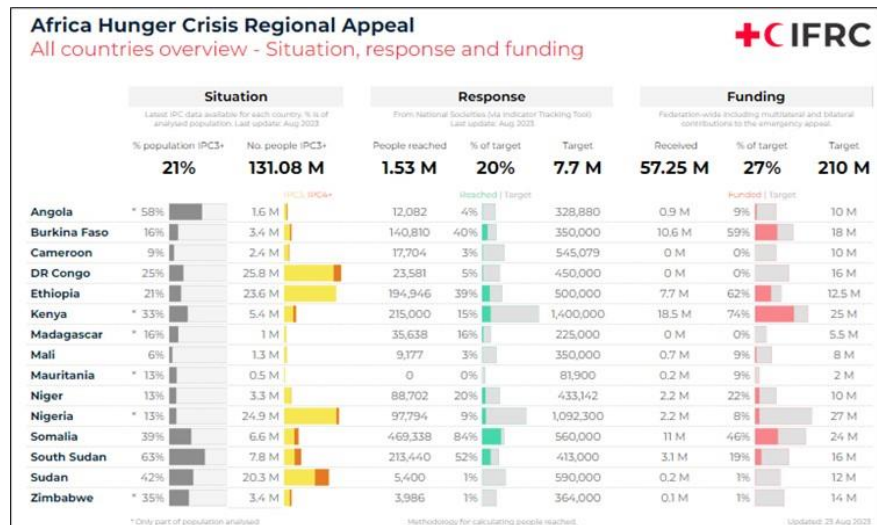


Figure 7: Overview of AHC response funding as of August 2023

Partners interviewed, including UN, Donors, RCRC partners and NSs members, all highlighted the need for funding to support more actions that improve the resilience of the communities and are connected to the seasonal calendar and early recovery to have greater impact. Some great suggestion came from Somalia, for example. It was suggested to conduct a pilot programme to support affected communities to improve their economy by supporting their livelihoods during for about 6 to 12 months period. In Maroodi-jeh region, Somaliland, the SRCS and communities are in dialogue about possible support to ploughing and cash grants for female community groups. This was also brought up by some community members who were interviewed.

The approach to address the hunger crisis was also linked to a better preparedness of the seasonal calendar, preparing the soil for planting but also mitigating the impact of floods on farming. An affected community in Somaliland mentioned the need to build mitigating measures against flash floods and how to take advantage of the rainy season peak to address the drought and food insecurity which are mainly related to water scarcity. Some suggestions for future actions are detailed in Annex 1: Country Specific Reports (Somalia section).



Figure 8: Review Team member visiting a Berkad⁷ in Somaliland.

⁷ Water reservoir used in arid areas to store collect water during rains for use during the dry season.

It was difficult to determine through the DREF Review to what extent there was a link to longer term strategies and planning framework. Indeed, the continuity between the current Hunger Crisis EA and the other past and present interventions in the same locations was not clear in the various plans, when they could have been better reflected and capitalized, especially for NSs such as those in the Horn of Africa or the Sahel, where initiatives in response to food crises have existed for the past decade. This was also recorded in the donor feedback at the launch of several DREF operations.

Coordination at horizontal (with other actors) and vertical (with internal HR structure and other NS plans like unified planning, preparedness plan; climate related EAPs and other projects) levels was difficult to establish clearly and based on various analysis, needs to be enhanced for sustainability and connection with overall approach to address the Hunger Crisis.

The key finding suggests that **while the DREF operation was able to provide relevant and efficient assistance, it did not significantly strengthen the capacities of the affected population to become more resilient, empowered, and less vulnerable.** The main example being the cash assistance provided to direct beneficiaries which had varied outcomes and impacts although there is evidence it provided direct relief to the targeted households. There were instances where the cash assistance enabled beneficiaries to invest in livestock, leading to potential future growth and sustainability. However, there were also cases where the support was quickly exhausted, either through personal usage or due to robbery and violence resulting from conflicts.

There is a need for additional efforts and resources to enhance the impact and sustainability of interventions in addressing the long-term needs of the affected population. Discussions with beneficiaries, volunteers, and the local communities indicated that the assistance provided through the DREF operation was timely and efficient. However, there were concerns regarding the need to scale up the operation in terms of quantity, the number of beneficiaries and types of intervention. **At the headquarters level, there were also questions raised about the allocated amount and the duration of the DREF operation, with stakeholders expressing a desire for further scaling up.**

The DREF allocations provided support for fundraising efforts both at the national and international levels through various strategies, which was beneficial in raising awareness and attracting potential donors. In the initial phase of the operation, the communications focal points / teams in NS (and in some cases with the support of IFRC Delegation office) implemented communications, awareness and visibility efforts via prints, banners and local media. These efforts were well-received by the public and attracted contributions from different stakeholders. There were also efforts on social media to promote the operations where NS showcased their trainings, distribution processes, and express gratitude. **However, it is noted that there was no significant difference in the overall funding situation in some countries after transitioning into the Regional EA as NSs still needed to compete for funds.**

2.4 Cross-Cutting



Key Review Area	Analysis
 <p data-bbox="300 309 466 412">Community Engagement & Accountability</p>	<p data-bbox="560 300 1469 506">During the operations, various measures were implemented to ensure effective communication and engagement with the affected population. Staff members and volunteers participated, to varying degrees, in training programs that covered PGI and CEA. This training equipped them with the basic and necessary knowledge to engage with the community in a sensitive and inclusive manner. However, there are evidence in some countries where these trainings were not done in-depth.</p> <p data-bbox="560 546 1469 857">The findings indicated, in most countries, consistent implementation of feedback mechanisms such as provision of toll-free line for reporting, community focal points for feedback, information hubs at distribution points and in some cases, focus discussion groups organized to collect feedback. However, there are some considerations in terms of the methodology used for the CEA / PDM reports and feedback due to the high rates of satisfaction received. Some of the consideration to reflect on is the level of trust towards the system and anonymity of the data collection. There is also limited information on the follow-up towards community feedback and concerns.</p> <p data-bbox="560 898 1469 1173">There is some evidence that the affected population participated in the monitoring and planning processes, as some were involved with refining the intervention types and providing local knowledge regarding safe distribution points and methodologies, however, this involvement is not found during the development of the overall operational strategy. In terms of monitoring, the affected population were acting as community monitors ensuring transparency with the aid received, and ensuring the most vulnerable are being targeted. This is encouraged via the feedback and reporting mechanisms.</p>
 <p data-bbox="300 1227 427 1330">Protection, Gender & Inclusion</p>	<p data-bbox="560 1218 1469 1462">Evidence demonstrates that efforts were made to adapt activities planned during the operations to meet the needs of the most vulnerable individuals in the affected population, considering factors such as gender, disability, and customs/values. This can be seen via the use of PGI-related criteria fulfilled within the operation for almost all cases (except Somalia). In the case of Somalia (as per IFRC financial report from April 2023), PGI activities were supported bilaterally, presumably outside of the Appeal.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1503 1469 1637">Based on reported findings, all volunteers and staff underwent training on CEA, PGI and PSEA before their mobilisation for the operation. Additionally, all volunteers and staff members signed a Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Annex 3 on CEA and PGI integration into the Africa Hunger Crisis operation.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1677 1469 1883">Efforts were made to incorporate gender considerations in the targeting process and address the specific needs of vulnerable groups during the DREF operation. These criteria were shared with stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and avoid errors in inclusion and exclusion. No complaints were received regarding the implementation of gender criteria. In some cases, the post-distribution lists were also disaggregated by age and gender.</p> <p data-bbox="560 1924 1469 1984">Technical working groups in a few of the countries existed or were established to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups during the operation.</p>





Disaster Response Emergency Fund

Pertaining to the DREF as a funding mechanism for slow onset crisis, especially drought of food insecurity, it was found that there is little flexibility regarding implementation timeframe, eligibility of recovery activities and coverage personnel salaries. The context in which this crisis unfolds requires some investment into staff cost to ensure National Society can maintain a minimum functioning structure. This also helps in keeping staff and avoiding new recruitments which could take, at times, months. It is challenging to approach a funding tool originally designed, developed, and used mostly in sudden-onset situations, for slow-onset situations. However, it is acknowledged that the recent DREF Evolution (launched in 2022), allows for more flexibility in timeline (originally 6 months, now up to 9-12 months operational timeframe depending on crisis categorisation) and eligible cost (e.g., early recovery activities) which slow-onset situations require. Moreover, the cost of staff can now be included to the budget, provided these are in line with staff required for implementation and while respecting the 60:40 percentile ratio. Further details are elaborated in Annex 2 - Analysis on DREF Relevance for Africa Hunger Crisis response strategies.

2.5 Programme Support Services

Key Review Area	Analysis
 <p>Human Resources</p>	<p>During the initial phase of the DREF operation, all implementing National Societies conducted orientation sessions for personnel and volunteers. . However, there were reports and evidence that these were conducted with time constraints, leading towards a rushed outcome and lower absorption rate. Moreover, it is unclear how the trainings resulted in improved operations quality especially linked with monitoring of accountability frameworks.</p> <p>During the implementation of the DREF operation, insurance coverage for National Society volunteers was put in place in most countries, however there is evidence lacking in some.</p>
 <p>Logistics & Supply Chain</p>	<p>The National Society Logistics department played an active role in the assessment and planning phase of the DREF operation; however, this is not evident in all countries. Where this was done, their involvement extended beyond the initial phase, as they were also engaged in the extension of the DREF timeframe and the transition from DREF to the EA. Their contributions ensured that the logistics requirements were considered and addressed effectively during the planning stage.</p> <p>As concerns evidence that requisitions/procurement were completed on time and in line with National Society and/or IFRC procedures, there are no consistent multi-country findings. In Angola, however, findings showed that there were some delays in the initial response activities (provision of food items and WASH non-food items) due to challenges with identifying suppliers. Other challenges referenced include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of suppliers in the local areas that were up to Federation standards. • Difficulties with the CBA process – suppliers providing quotes based on the list provided but upon selection, were not able to provide some of the goods. • Difficulties with terms of payment – difficulty identifying a supplier that would accept to be paid following service (not in advance).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with distance/transport - difficulty identifying a supplier that would deliver to the final locations needed (note, distances sometimes 1000+ km on poor roads).
 <p>Partnerships & Resource Mobilization</p>	<p>There is little evidence showing that the DREF operation enabled additional resource mobilization from other partners/donors. However, there is evidence that the Hunger Crisis regional appeal operation, significantly increased the visibility of all the National Societies, leading some to opportunities for new partnerships and collaborations. This is due to various factors such as an increase in trust built through successful initial phases of the operations, funding for assessments which supported quantifiable analysis to further advocate for support (both funded through DREF operations or thanks to DREF loans), and a bigger platform to reach wider networks. This enhanced image and visibility have allowed National Societies to mobilize resources and attract support from other partners and the public, although the funding gaps remain largely unmet.</p> <p>Although there is little evidence from the DREF operations, the DREF provided the National Societies with opportunities to mobilize resources from other partners and donors for medium to longer-term interventions, through the loans allocated to the Hunger Crisis regional appeal. Discussions with some partners have indicated that partnerships and funding support are possible beyond immediate emergency responses which can be leveraged to strengthen medium to long-term interventions or recovery actions. This indicates a good opportunity for NS to gain sustained support and collaboration in addressing the challenges beyond the operation.</p>
 <p>Communications</p>	<p>During the operations, measures were taken to ensure the visibility of the National Society. In most countries, the communication team / focal point played a crucial role in the initial phase by pushing forward public visibility via various channels (banners, radio, prints, visibility wear, etc.) with the support of IFRC. There were also consistent efforts to showcase NS activity on ground via social media pages and platforms.</p> <p>The operation has significantly contributed to improving the perception of the National Society with partners and communities. The National Society was able to continue building its role as auxiliary to the Government through the operations to both support gaps in ongoing collective response efforts, build trust, as well as use this opportunity to reinforce its value added. During the review, it was reported from two countries that the operation also helped provide more visibility to other initiatives of the National Society. The perception of NS in the public and communities are also continuing to be built, with some countries reporting high level of trust and acceptance of the NS with evidence through interviews, and letters of support and commendation.</p>
 <p>Security</p>	<p>In most countries, there was close communication and engagement between the security and safety personnel from the IFRC and National Societies. During the review, the National Society focal point personnel, reported to have close links and communication with other government- and independently- linked security units especially in preparation and during the implementation of field activities. Based on the above, one can deduct that security and safety risks were regularly assessed and at least minimal protocols put in place to address any eventual security incidents.</p> <p>There is no clear evidence that all NS personnel in the operation received the orientation on safety protocols though it has been included as planned activities in</p>

	<p>the operational plans. There is evidence, however, of security planning and management during the implementation of field activities in some countries.</p>
 <p>Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting</p>	<p>In some countries, there was either no specific PMER coordinator or focal point assigned within the operation, or the capacity was lacking. In some cases, the focal points were new to the job (Angola, Somalia). The responsibility for monitoring and evaluation was occasionally shared among the various coordinators involved, and both volunteers and staff members in most operations were actively involved in data collection on the field. There seems to be a lack in systematic PMER responsibility, which created some gaps and miscommunication in some of the operations.</p> <p>There were no consistent multi-country findings of National Society personnel systematically receiving orientation on the EPoA for the DREF operation. Indeed, each country had varying degrees of orientation towards the EPoA and this orientation was different at NHQ and branch level. Some countries had evidence where branches received the document and orientation, and there are countries where the branches have not even seen the EPoA. Those branches operated based on communication from NHQ on specific planned intervention and the budget to operate within.</p>
 <p>Finance</p>	<p>IFRC delegation provided guidance support to National Society finance team to ensure rules, processes and procedures are understood and implemented, though there are systemic challenges in some National Societies. However, though there is support received in the form of guidance and troubleshooting, the crucial challenge resources are insufficient to adequately support both the broader strategic financial capacity strengthening of National Society alongside the day-to-day in-country admin/finance portfolio. Another challenge is the lack of clear and consistent financial reporting against set budgets. This finding ties in with the limitation of the DREF (and underfunded EA) to support longer term resources for these kinds of slow onset crisis.</p> <p>There were National Society personnel orientations on the DREF operation budget though mainly for staff working on operations, sectorial and finance support. Those with roles outside above sectors were generally not deeply involved with the budget development, only implementation. In the cases where new finance team members were recruited under the DREF or the EA, they did receive needed training but were not involved in the initial planning and development.</p>

CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains recommendations drawn from analysing the six (6) focus countries in the EA and the learnings the Review Team drawn from them and are meant for the Africa operations and implementing country teams (IFRC & NS) as part of the EA and for the DREF team as part of overall Fund management. Specific country recommendations are very important and need to be considered for the operational updates and revision of different country plans while the below inform the overall Hunger Crisis EA management, coordination, and implementation. Country specific recommendations and findings can be found in the respective sections of Annex 1.

3.1 Operational and Technical Coordination

Recommendation	Key Review Area	Operational / Technical Sector	Follow up
<p>1. Integrate longer-term planning from onset of response when addressing slow onset crises</p> <p>While considering emergency needs, planning for hunger crisis should prioritise actions addressing long term factors, thereby empowering communities to ensure the sustainable use of assistance provided. This includes actions/strategies addressing seasonal/climate related factors of the crisis; community-based actions that the community can replicate after the operation; actions which can address income generation; addressing security related situation; agro-pastoral actions, etc.</p> <p>It is equally useful to establish a longer-term intervention strategy that goes beyond immediate crisis response to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and ensure continuity in efforts.</p> <p>Overall, engaging on a longer term from onset of the operation will set the basis for a more resilient and sustainable impact and support vulnerable population not to rely on immediate assistance and build resilience.</p>	Efficiency, Coherence, Sustainability & Connectedness	Operations Coordination, DRR, Livelihoods	Country Team, Africa Region
<p>2. Clarify the linkages between the emergency plan of action and existing longer-term strategies.</p> <p>Establish longer-term interventions and strategies that integrate into other existing programs and efforts such as the agenda for renewal, Zero Hunger initiative, etc. to address the hunger crisis beyond immediate response efforts. Moreover, continuously evaluating, and refining strategies will ensure the sustainability and connectedness of hunger crisis operations.</p>	Efficiency, Coherence, Sustainability & Connectedness	Operations Coordination, Resource Mobilization	Africa Region
<p>3. Enhance coordination on the ground to support sustainability of actions.</p> <p>It is key to establish a broader and more coordinated approach at the national level within the most relevant sectors but even more so, within the various existing plans</p>	Coherence, Sustainability & Connectedness	Operations Coordination	Country Team Africa Region

<p>and existing response partners to address the root causes of the crisis and its impacts.</p> <p>In addition, improving coordination and collaboration among NS branches, ICRC, and partners is particularly important in addressing common challenges such as climate change. As such, there is need to strengthen information flow, coherence, and connectedness to support effective humanitarian diplomacy efforts and leverage the expertise and resources of all stakeholders involved.</p>			
<p>4. Establish a process for vulnerability mapping and strengthen assessment capacities to facilitate operational planning.</p> <p>It would be useful for IFRC to produce vulnerability mapping in line with the IFRC’s Emergency Response Framework, as this will provide valuable information of the risks as well as ease effective response planning and targeting based on available resources. This will not only help with baseline, progress monitoring but will also help ensure quicker disaster categorization, hence selection of adapted response tool.</p> <p>In addition, it is essential to strengthen assessment and data collection by investing more in assessment activities, including vulnerability mapping and rapid assessments, to gather accurate and up-to-date information on the needs of the affected communities. This will provide a solid foundation for decision-making and resource allocation.</p>	<p>Relevance & Appropriateness, Efficiency, Coherence</p>	<p>DRR Operations</p>	<p>Africa Region Country Teams</p>
<p>5. Consider innovative DRR approaches to be integrated from onset of response.</p> <p>Highly recommend across the sectors, especially WASH, to search and include innovative approach with consideration of rethinking scope with e.g., green response sanitation/waste management, livelihoods, DRR parameters and planning in place, with specific performant solution in different context of urban and rural solutions, and resilient solutions that communities can handle later and continue.</p>	<p>Efficiency, Coherence, Relevance & Appropriateness</p>	<p>WASH, DRR, Livelihoods, Operations coordination</p>	<p>Africa region Country team</p>
<p>6. Extend the Livelihood/CVA assistance with a view to ensuring sustainability.</p> <p>The livelihood assistance should consider the possibility to extend the assistance to more host families, to lessen economic and social stress but also to specific recurrent vulnerable groups such as IDPs.</p> <p>In addition, Cash and Voucher Assistance should cover proper training, based on specific sector needs, to affected communities on its management and pre-identified income generation activities based on assessment.</p> <p>Moreover, it is necessary to enhance skills-based interventions, through initiatives such as vocational training</p>	<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>Operations Livelihoods CVA</p>	<p>Country Team</p>

<p>or skills development programs that provide beneficiaries with the necessary tools for sustainable livelihoods. Focus should be on skills and training-based interventions that do not rely heavily on equipment, as they can generate income without significant resource requirements.</p> <p>Overall, these measures could result in more independence from direct aid and longer-term results for impacted people.</p>			
<p>7. Operational learnings should be systematically used during planning exercise.</p> <p>Foster a culture of knowledge sharing by making lessons learned accessible to all team members from regional office to the field, even without a dedicated PMEAL team. This will ensure systematic use of learnings and description of those learnings in the public operational appeals plan of action, reports, etc. In addition, encourage development (as relevant), of an organised and user-friendly storage system allowing team members to search and retrieve relevant information efficiently.</p>	Efficiency, Effectiveness	PMER Operations	Africa Region Country Team
<p>8. Continuously monitor implementation to pre-empt potential issues.</p> <p>Addressing funding delays, enhancing security training, providing necessary equipment, coordinating transport and accommodation expenses for volunteers, and ensuring timely and sufficient support from IFRC. It is key to develop strategies to address delays in mobilizing activities, particularly during periods when staff and decision-makers are on leave.</p> <p>In addition, it is important to continuously monitor the agreed operational versus support cost percentile ratio during implementation to avoid the imbalances of cost allocation observed through this review.</p>	Efficiency, Effectiveness	Operations coordination PMER Finance & Administration	Country Team
<p>9. Ensure timely Surge deployments.</p> <p>Ensure timely deployment of surge based on clear assessment, HR, and financial resources.</p>	Effectiveness, Efficiency	Operations Surge	Country Team Africa Region
<p>10. Extend operational timeframe and set up transition plan of the Africa Hunger Crisis Regional Emergency Appeal.</p> <p>Given the delays recorded in launching the EA, transferring the funds, finalising assessments, implementing activities while also acknowledging the extend of crisis, it is essential to extend the ongoing EA end date beyond the current timeline of 31 December 2023, to allow completion of essential activities but also for a transition plan to be actioned to ensure sustainability and coherence with wider hunger response strategies.</p>	Efficiency, Sustainability & Connectedness,	Operations Coordination	Africa Region, Country Team

3.2 Cross-cutting sections

Recommendation	Key Review Area	Operational / Technical Sector	Follow up
<p>11. Strengthen community voices during planning and implementing phases of the response as it promotes accountability and transparency.</p> <p>Enhance community participation and consultation throughout the PMER cycle through consistent review of community feedback, hosting focus group discussions, running monitoring visits, to ensure interventions align with community needs, preferences, and feedback.</p>	Efficiency, Sustainability & Connectedness	CEA, PMER, Operations Coordination	Africa Region Country Team
<p>12. Buttress community feedback systems to promote accountability and continuous refinement of plans.</p> <p>It is important to continue providing communication channels and tailor the approach to the community's preferences, utilizing community meetings, focus group discussions, surveys, and digital platforms.</p> <p>Sharing with community promotes integrity, transparency, and accountability in aid distribution. As such, it is necessary to develop and disseminate formal procedures for addressing sensitive feedback, establish transparent feedback mechanisms, and promptly address concerns raised by the affected population.</p>	Efficiency, Sustainability & Connectedness	CEA	Country Team
<p>13. Enhance PGI training and standardize gender and diversity indicators to ensure consistency in data collection.</p> <p>Consistency in data collection will help assess the impact of programs on different groups within the community, while provision of continuous comprehensive training and support to volunteers and staff on gender and diversity issues, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to address these considerations effectively.</p>	Efficiency, Coherence, Sustainability & Connectedness	PGI, PMER	Country Team Africa Region
<p>14. Develop clear criteria for using DREF for slow onset and protracted crises.</p> <p>Given the growing trend of slow onset and protracted crises, it is an urgent need to explore different approaches, criteria, and considerations when developing and approving DREF funding for slow-onset situations. This includes different sets of cost and ratio that is generally not allowed under the DREF for sudden onset response such as regular staff cost, investments in some assets vs rental, NS development cost, etc. This is to ensure that NSs, through DREF funding, have the necessary funding and bandwidth to set up responses for slow-onset/protracted crises up to early recovery, thereby allowing for some work to be done to convince donors to invest in longer-term actions through NS plans.</p>	Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability & Connectedness, Innovation	Operations Coordination	DREF Team

<p>15. Develop and promote clear guidance on possible triggers for slow onset/protracted crises operations.</p> <p>Review and clarify the triggers for using DREF for slow onset disasters, such as droughts, to allow for earlier response and timely allocation of resources. This will help address the needs of affected communities in a more proactive manner.</p>	<p>Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability & Connectedness, Innovation, Relevance & Appropriateness</p>	<p>DRR, Livelihoods, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>DREF Team</p>
<p>16. Improve dissemination of the new DREF modality on use of DREF funds for drought/food insecurity crises</p> <p>Devise a dissemination strategy to promote the use of DREF funding for food insecurity/hunger crises response operations is required, to ensure effective use of the modality launched with DREF Evolution. This will help address the needs of affected communities in a more proactive manner.</p>	<p>Innovation, Relevance & Connectedness</p>	<p>DRR, Livelihoods, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>DREF Team</p>
<p>17. Ensure DREF Capacity Strengthening</p> <p>National Societies need to be aware of the existing DREF funding modalities, guidance on how to use them, how they fit in with other IFRC emergency response tools and what level of support is accessible to them via these tools. This will improve the quality of requests, hence reduce the request approval time and ensure timely responses. As such, it is key to continue IFRC's support to build the capacity of the National Society on the use of the DREF tool.</p>	<p>Relevance & Appropriateness, Sustainability and connectedness</p>	<p>Operations Coordination, Anticipatory actions, Emergency Response</p>	<p>DREF Team, Africa Region, Country Team</p>



3.3 Programme Support Services

Recommendation	Key Review Area	Operational / Technical Sector	Follow up
<p>18. Strengthen performance monitoring by establishing and maintaining proper PMER systems at NS and Delegation levels</p> <p>Ensure consistent tracking and reporting mechanisms are updated and used by incorporating useful and relevant indicators to monitor progress and outcomes effectively.</p> <p>Strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities by conducting regular PDM exercises and utilizing the data collected to inform decision-making and improve the operation.</p> <p>Establish a clear and standard platform, process, and frequency for indicators / achievement tracking, documentation and reporting across all countries under the regional appeal.</p> <p>This will ensure ongoing assessment and adjustment of activities based on the feedback and insights from the affected population, as well as provide a more comprehensive understanding of the operation's performance and enable informed decision-making.</p>	<p>Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability & connectedness</p>	<p>PMER, Operations</p>	<p>Africa Region Country Team</p>
<p>19. Strengthen NS/Delegation capacity to conduct quality and timely assessments to allow rapid analysis and decision making.</p> <p>Consider as possible to carry out individual country/areas assessments (needs assessment and vulnerability assessment) as part of DREF initial operation or even when launching the EA. See ENA Process Sept 2018.pdf (ifrc.org) and Secretariat Emergency Response Framework (pg 14, pt. 4). This will be more efficient and impactful as it would support of prioritization of actions and ensure quick delivery of assistance.</p> <p>Build capacity within the National Society to conduct rapid assessments independently, reducing dependence on government assessments. This will provide a better basis for neutral decision-making, enhance relevance in programming, and support effective resource mobilization and advocacy efforts.</p>	<p>Efficiency, Impact, Relevance & Appropriateness, Sustainability & connectedness</p>	<p>PMER, Operations</p>	<p>Africa Region Country Team</p>
<p>20. Strengthen training and orientation for NS staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Ensure proper resources allocated towards National Society personnel and volunteer orientation and training, especially with the core knowledge-sets such as CEA, PGI, Code of Conduct, etc.</p>	<p>Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability & connectedness</p>	<p>NSD, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>Country Team</p>

<p>There is need to improve the comprehensiveness of training and orientation sessions, allocating sufficient time to cover all necessary topics. This will ensure that staff and volunteers have a comprehensive understanding of the intervention and its objectives.</p> <p>Ensure equal access to capacity-strengthening opportunities among NS branches and address disparities between branches and headquarters. Foster a cohesive and capable NS network by fostering coordination and collaboration within teams.</p>			
<p>21. Support and empower volunteers for improved operation quality.</p> <p>Address issues related to quality of volunteer trainings, providing adequate support to cover mobilization costs, monitoring, and reporting of activities. Ensure volunteers are duly insured prior to any deployment as a means to ensure they feel valued and supported in their efforts.</p>	Sustainability & Connectedness	NSD, Finance, Operations	Country Team
<p>22. Strengthen collaboration and communication.</p> <p>Improve information sharing and communication channels between the branch, National Headquarters (NHQ), and IFRC to ensure effective collaboration and decision-making. This will help avoid delays and uncertainties in the implementation of the DREF operation.</p>	Sustainability & Connectedness, Efficiency	Operations Coordination	Country Team
<p>23. Address logistical challenges to reduce delays in provision of aid.</p> <p>Logistics and supply chain capacity mapping could be further improved in peacetime and during the development of DREF request to ensure smooth and timely operation implementation.</p> <p>Establish mechanisms to cover transportation and accommodation expenses for volunteers, reducing the financial burden on them and ensuring their availability for duty.</p>	Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact	Logistics, Operations Coordination	Africa Region Country Team
<p>24. Enhance operational effectiveness.</p> <p>Provide necessary equipment, such as phones and vehicles to NS branches to enhance communication and operational effectiveness in the field. Streamline the funding transfer process to ensure timely resource mobilization on the field.</p>	Efficiency	Logistics, Operations Coordination	Country Team
<p>25. Develop clear communication/fundraising strategy prior to launching EA.</p> <p>From the onset, a clear momentum and communication campaign plan should be elaborated for the overall EA but also for specific countries that will include partners networks management and advocacy to ensure the sustainability of fundraising beyond the DREF and EA into long-term.</p>	Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability & Connectedness	PRD, Communications, Operations Coordination	Africa Region, Country Team

<p>Explore opportunities for partnership and resource sharing with academia and other organizations to enhance evidence of the support needed and the overall effectiveness of the hunger crisis operation.</p> <p>Effectively and proactively seek media coverage in-country, engage in public outreach, and leverage social media platforms to raise awareness and attract potential donors.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive strategy to foster closer collaboration and engagement with government/regional entities at all levels, ensuring alignment with government action plans and national standards/legislation. Regularly communicate and share information to enhance coordination and avoid information gaps. This will enhance visibility, coordination, and fundraising efforts.</p>			
<p>26. Enhance communication and information sharing with partners to demonstrate transparency, build trust and shared ownership.</p> <p>Establish effective communication channels and mechanisms between the National Society (NS) and government bodies, facilitating transparent sharing of data, vulnerable community analysis, and operational plans. Involve government stakeholders early in the planning and implementation process to promote ownership and alignment.</p> <p>Promote integrity by demonstrating transparency and accountability to build donor trust and confidence.</p> <p>Build strong partnerships with relevant international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local organizations operating in the area. Leverage their expertise, resources, and networks to enhance the impact and effectiveness of HC operation activities. This will foster complementarity, avoid duplication, and encourage information sharing and collaboration.</p> <p>Streamline assessments and advocate for support effectively by engaging stakeholders early on to build empathy and understanding of slow-onset crisis such as the hunger crisis.</p>	<p>Effectiveness, Sustainability & Connectedness, Impact</p>	<p>PRD, Communications, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>Africa Region Country Team</p>
<p>27. Disseminate financial procedures and conduct regular financial monitoring to ensure adequate activity planning and prioritization.</p> <p>IFRC needs to improve coordination and clarity in financial processes by establishing clear guidelines and procedures, ensuring all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities. This will help minimize confusion and streamline financial operations, enabling smoother financial planning and reporting.</p> <p>Conduct regular reviews of financial situation to identify and address any misalignments or issues promptly. This will</p>	<p>Effectiveness, Efficiency Impact</p>	<p>Finance, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>Country Team</p>

<p>promote transparency and accountability, ensuring that financial activities are planned and conducted in accordance with established guidelines and regulations.</p>			
<p>28. Improve financial planning and transparency.</p> <p>Involve team members from both the headquarters and branch levels in the negotiation process with the regional office to develop a more accurate and appropriate budget. This will leverage their insights and on-the-ground knowledge, ensuring that the budget reflects the specific needs and challenges of the region and enhances financial decision-making.</p> <p>Enhance financial planning processes to ensure timely disbursement of funds and provide clear and transparent information about funding arrangements. This will address challenges related to delayed payments, uncertainty about future funding tranches, and currency fluctuations, improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the operation.</p>	<p>Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact</p>	<p>Finance, Operations Coordination</p>	<p>Country Team</p>

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