

**infoasaid/World Vision Kenya  
Pilot Accountability/Communication Project: A Learning Review**

**09 – 14 July 2012**

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## List of Acronyms

CRM	Complains Response Mechanism
DSG	District Steering Group
FFA	Food for Assets
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FO	Field Officer
GFD	General Food Distribution
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RC	Relief Committee
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Programme
WFP	World Food Programme
WVK	World Vision Kenya

## **1. Introduction**

This report presents the findings of an infoasaid learning review conducted between 09 and 14 July 2012, which sought to examine the implementation and results of a 6-month infoasaid/World Vision Kenya (WVK) pilot accountability/communication project implemented in Taita Taveta County, Coast Province, Kenya from February - July 2012. It is hoped that the findings will enhance learning and support WVK to improve its communication with the drought-affected population of Taita Taveta and its on-going Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation.

## **2. Background and context**

In July 2011, infoasaid and World Vision International held a meeting in London to discuss the possibility of working together in an emergency response. Kenya was identified as a country in which infoasaid could support World Vision to improve its communication with drought-affected populations. In a follow up meeting in Nairobi in October 2011, World Vision Kenya identified its field office in Voi, Taita Taveta County in the Coast Province of Southern Kenya as a potential location for an infoasaid/WVK pilot communication project.

Taita Taveta county is situated in the south-western part of Coast Province and has a population of 284, 657 (KNBS, 2009). The county covers an area of 17,000 square Kilometres of which 62% is covered by the Tsavo National Park, 24% is range land suitable for ranching and dry land farming, 11% is arable land, and 3% is rock land and forest (County Council of Taita Taveta, 2012). The main livelihoods are mixed farming (including livestock, dairy and crop production), casual waged labour and formal employment (Dienya et al., 2012).

In 2011, a Long Rains Season Assessment conducted by the Kenyan Government's Food Security Steering Group classified most areas of Taita Taveta as having deteriorated from the 'Stressed Phase', in which households have reduced food consumption but are not engaging in irreversible coping strategies, to the Crisis Phase, in which households experience significant food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition or are able to meet minimum food needs only by engaging in irreversible coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood assets or diverting expenses from essential non-food items (ibid).

A more recent Short Rains Assessment conducted in February 2012 found that food security had since improved in many parts of the district but remains fragile (Dienya et al. 2012). The main factors affecting food security in Taita Taveta include uneven rainfall; low adoption of modern agricultural technologies; a poor road network that hinders market integration; poorly diversified crop production and over reliance on maize production in areas unsuitable for maize production; and chronic poverty, which limits people's access to credit facilities, farm inputs or information on how to improve their livelihoods (GoK KFSSG, 2011; World Vision 2010).

### **3. World Vision Kenya's PRRO intervention**

At the time the pilot project was being designed, there were 119,000 people (42% of the entire population of Taita Taveta) receiving food assistance under the Kenya Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation (PRRO) sponsored by the World Food Programme and implemented by WVK.

The goal of the PRRO was to improve community resilience to the adverse effects of drought on local livelihoods, and it was implemented in three modes:

1. General Food Distribution (GFD), which provided food rations to the most food insecure individuals and households to meet their basic/emergency food needs.
2. Food for Assets (FFA), which required recipients to do 10 days of work a month creating community and on-farm assets such as irrigation canals, roads, pasture etc. in exchange for food rations.
3. Cash for Assets (CFA), which required recipients to do 10 days of work a month creating community and on-farm assets such as irrigation canals, roads, pasture etc. in exchange for cash to purchase food.

Due to the size of Taita Taveta county, the PRRO projects were divided up into smaller units known as Field Distribution Points (FDPs), each with its own elected Relief Committee (RC) responsible for overseeing the smooth running of PRRO-related activities, sharing information with communities and reporting to WVK on work outputs achieved and other issues. As of January 2012, 84 FDPs were receiving assistance via WVK's PRRO programme: 9 FDPs (10,500 people) were receiving GFD; and 75 FDPs (108,500 people) were receiving CFA (56,100 beneficiaries) or FFA (52,400 beneficiaries) or both.

In April 2012 (three months into the implementation of the infoasaid/WVK pilot) the existing PRRO programme (10666) came to an end and a new PRRO programme (200294) began which focused on CFA only. The new programme is significantly smaller and targets just 61,000 people across 60 FDPs. Six of these continue to receive GFD and the remaining 54 receive CFA only. This scaling back of food assistance and termination of the FFA programme had important implications for both the accountability/communication project and the learning review, which will be discussed in further detail below.

#### **4. infoasaid/World Vision Kenya Pilot Accountability/Communication Project**

Underlying the selection, by WVK, of the Taita Taveta PRRO as the focus of the pilot accountability/communication project were a number of perceived communication challenges. These included:

- Slow, labour-intensive mechanisms for disseminating information to communities resulting in frequent delays in mobilising communities for food distributions;
- Limited community engagement focused more on extracting information on project outputs rather than listening to communities' needs and concerns;
- Inadequate mechanisms for soliciting feedback from recipient communities on the delivery of PRRO services;<sup>1</sup> and
- Lack of access among communities to practical information to help them improve their food and livelihood security.

The pilot project was designed to address these challenges and improve two-way communication between WVK and the drought-affected communities of Taita Taveta, thereby improving the overall quality<sup>2</sup> of the PRRO programme.

As a first step in the project design process, infoasaid supported the WVK field office in Voi to carry out a rapid information needs and access assessment. Between 22 and 25 October 2011, community members in 14 FDPs were surveyed about their information needs and access. Some of the community members were reached by phone because the long

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<sup>1</sup> According to WVK Senior Management, although WVK had in place a number of feedback mechanisms - including a telephone hotline, community helpdesks and suggestion boxes - these were underutilised by communities.

<sup>2</sup> Here quality is defined according to a number of OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian action including: **coverage, relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness** and **impact**. For further information on these see: Beck (2006) *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies*. London, ODI. Available at: [http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha\\_2006.pdf](http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha_2006.pdf) Last accessed, 11th November 2010.

distances could not be covered within the short assessment period. In addition, WVK staff were asked to complete two feasibility assessment checklists: one for radio and the other for mobile phone technology. Based on the findings of these assessments, infoasaid drafted a proposal for a 6 month pilot accountability/communication project.

Although no specific project objectives were included in the project proposal drafted by infoasaid, which focused more on activities/outputs, a range of intended project outcomes were articulated by both infoasaid and WVK staff at different times in different documents over the course of the project design. While these were articulated in different ways, there is a high level of consistency. Importantly, both sets of outcomes include a mixture of those related to *improving communication as a form of aid in and of itself*, as well as those related to *improving communication as means of improving the delivery of WVK's food and cash assistance*.

WVK staff articulated their intended outcomes for the project when interviewed as part of a baseline study conducted by infoasaid in January 2012. These included:

a) *Improving communication as a form of aid:*

- Increased access of communities, in particular women, to practical information which will help them to improve their food and livelihood security.

b) *Improving communication as a means of improving the delivery of WVK's food and cash assistance:*

- Faster dissemination of information to communities in order to improve the timeliness of, and attendance at, food distributions.
- Increased understanding of WVK's mandate and PRRO activities among communities
- Increased understanding of communities' needs and concerns by World Vision
- Faster and more accurate data collection on PRRO programme outputs
- Improved relationship between WVK and communities

The following project goal and intended outcomes were listed in a project log frame drafted by infoasaid in February 2012:

*Goal: To improve the quality (relevance/appropriateness, coverage, efficiency and effectiveness) of the WVK PRRO in Taita-Taveta, Kenya.*

*Outcomes:*

*a) Improving communication as a form of aid*

- The crisis-affected population of Taita-Taveta have increased access to information on key humanitarian issues affecting their lives.

*b) Improving communication as a means of improving the delivery of WVK's food and cash assistance*

- World Vision's humanitarian assistance (PRRO) is more in line with and responsive to the needs and priorities of the crisis affected population in Taita-Taveta.
- Improved timeliness and efficiency of the collection of data on programme outputs by World Vision from Project Committees.

The final project proposal drafted by infoasaid included the following activities, which are described in much further detail in **section 6.1** on Implementation:

1. Sponsorship of a weekly interactive radio programme on Anguo FM targeting women aged 15 – 40.
2. Establishment of a FrontlineSMS information hub in the WVK Voi field office.
3. Use of FrontlineForms to collect data from PRRO RC focal points on programme outputs.
4. Distribution of java-enabled Nokia C1-01 mobile phones and Tough Stuff 1.5 watt solar charger kits to RC focal points in the 75 FDPs receiving either FFA, CFA or both.
5. Training for WVK staff and other stakeholders on Communication with Crisis-Affected Populations.
6. Appointment of a Local Communication Officer.

Funding of the pilot project came from infoasaid and WVK. The total value of the six month pilot communication project was approximately £18,700. £7,400 was provided by infoasaid to cover the costs of equipment (84 mobile phones and solar charger kits), Safaricom airtime for the FrontlineSMS hub, a 5-day training workshop and per diems for food, accommodation and travel. Travel costs for technical support provided by infoasaid staff for carrying out the scoping, training and learning review amounted to £6,000 and £5,300 was provided by WVK to cover air time for the radio programme.



## **5. Scope and objectives of learning review**

### **5.1 Rationale**

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

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this review is to enhance learning and support WVK to improve its communication with the drought-affected population of Taita Taveta, as well as its on-going Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation. It should be noted that the review was conducted by infoasaid research staff and can therefore be considered a self-review.

### **Objectives**

The review examines the implementation and results of the infoasaid/WVK pilot accountability/communication project.

In terms of implementation, the review seeks to compare what was planned with what actually happened and explain any differences. It also seeks to understand, from the perspectives of both WVK staff and the drought-affected population of Taita Taveta, what worked well, what didn't work well and why.

In terms of results the evaluation seeks to understand, to the extent possible, the effect of the accountability/communication pilot project on communication between WVK and the drought-affected communities of Taita Taveta; the collection of programme output data from community focal points; and the overall quality of WVK's PRRO programme in Taita Taveta.

Using the OECD DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian action as a framework, it attempts to summarise answers to the following questions from the perspective of World Vision Kenya staff and the communities of Taita Taveta:

- **Relevance/appropriateness:** *To what extent did the project correctly address the problems and real needs of the target groups? And to what extent has the project enabled WVK to better align its PRRO activities with the needs and priorities of the target group?*
- **Coverage:** *To what extent has the project enhanced the organisation's ability to reach population groups in need with a) information and b) food/cash assistance?*
- **Efficiency:** *To what extent has the project influenced the time- and cost-efficiency of WVK's PRRO programme?*
- **Effectiveness:** *To what extent has the project met its objectives?*

## 5.2 Methodology

The methodology involved qualitative key informant interviews with WVK staff involved in the project as managers, implementers or end-users; a meeting with staff of Anguo FM radio station; and focus group discussions (FGDs) with representatives of the crisis-affected communities participating in WVK's PRRO programme.

The sampling frame for WVK staff included staff who had participated in the pilot accountability/communication project. Fifteen members of staff were interviewed including the Voi Integrated Programme Area manager, the Commodity Officer, the Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, the Field Coordinator and 11 Field Monitors.

The sampling frame for the Relief Committee members and community members was based on the geographic and urban/rural spread of WVK's PRRO programme, travelling distance to and from Voi town, and the ethnic and linguistic diversity of FDPs in Taita Taveta.

3 FDPs were visited: Choke, Rukanga and Mwachabo. 3 FGDs were held in each FDP (one with RC members, one with men and one with women) making a total of 9 altogether. The selection of participants for the focus groups was done so as to ensure, as far as possible, a

mixture of Taita and non-Taita speaking people in order to understand the relevance of the radio programme for different ethno/linguistic groups.

### **5.3 Research Limitations**

The learning review was limited by a number of factors.

Firstly, infoasaid relied on WVK to select and mobilise focus group participants, translate and take notes during discussions, and translate and transcribe the tape recordings. It is therefore possible that the selection of participants was biased towards those with knowledge about or a favourable attitude towards the project or that the participants might have felt uncomfortable criticising the project.

It is worth mentioning that on a number of occasions during the FGDs there were indications that participants felt under pressure to provide a positive account of events. At times participants attempted to silence others when making a negative or potentially sensitive comment. At others it was clear that participants were citing what they had heard was supposed to be happening, rather than what was actually happening. On the whole, these issues were dealt with during the discussion and questioning and in most cases the review team was confident that the truth had emerged, but is worth mentioning here as an issue that may have implications for the reliability of some of the data provided.

Secondly, due to time constraints, the research team was limited to visiting just 3 FDPs that could be reached within a day's drive from Voi town. The fieldwork is therefore not in any way representative of all the communities participating in WVK's PRRO programmes.

Thirdly, due to some delays in project implementation, the review took place quite early – just five months into project implementation – which may have affected the amount of learning that could be captured.

Fourth, the WVK's PRRO faced a number challenges during the pilot project implementation period including the scaling back of its food assistance activities and severe delays in cash payments to CFA recipients: no CFA recipients received cash payments during the project period and very few food distributions were carried out. Also, new Relief Committees were formed, some members of which were very new and had little knowledge of the accountability/communication project. This made it extremely challenging to assess *the*

*extent to which the accountability/communication project improved the quality of food or cash assistance.* It also meant that work projects stopped and no data on programme outputs was being reported for a period of time while CFA recipients of the new PRRO were being selected. This complicates the assessment of the results of the FrontlineForms intervention.

Finally, monitoring systems for weekly tracking of the implementation of the radio programme, FrontlineSMS and FrontlineForms interventions were put in place at the outset of the project, but only nine weeks' worth of monitoring data (covering the period 27 Feb – 09 May) were collected by WVK and shared with the reviewer. It was also not possible to access and analyse the data stored in the FrontlineSMS hub during the learning review period due to technical problems. Although the monitoring data was extremely useful, it provides an incomplete picture.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1 Implementation

As outlined above, the communication project design involved 6 key activities: 1) the sponsorship of a weekly interactive radio programme on Anguo FM; 2) the establishment of a FrontlineSMS information hub in the WVK Voi Office; 3) the use of FrontlineForms to improve data collection on programme outputs and 4) the distribution of mobile phones and solar chargers to RC focal points; 5) training for WVK staff and other stakeholders on communication with affected populations; and 6) the appointment of a Local Communication Officer.

Before considering the results of these activities, this chapter briefly examines their implementation, looking specifically at *what was planned, what actually happened, what worked well and what did not*. The section also briefly touches on three additional aspects of project implementation: assessment, coordination and sustainability.

#### 6.1.1 Radio programme on Anguo FM

Anguo FM (90.9 FM) is a relatively new commercial radio station serving Taita Taveta County and the Coastal region of Kenya. It has a broadcast reach of more than 100Km radius around its transmitter in Voi and is on air from 5am to 12pm every day. Most of the station's shows are interactive and its presenters receive calls from all over the county.

Anguo FM was identified through the information needs and access assessment as one of the most popular radio stations in the county. Its popularity was understood to stem, in part, from the fact that it is broadcast in Taita, which is the mother tongue of the majority of inhabitants of the coastal region.

**The sponsorship by WVK of a weekly, interactive radio programme was intended to improve two-way communication between WVK and the drought-affected communities of Taita Taveta** by allowing for an open discussion about WVK's mandate and activities as well as other topics of interest to communities; providing updates on key humanitarian issues affecting the community; and providing a platform for listening to communities' questions, concerns and feedback via a phone-in segment. WVK was

expected to provide experts fluent in Taita to talk on the programme either from its programme staff or from collaborating partners.

For the most part, the programme was implemented according to plan and was considered to have been a successful initiative by communities, WVK and Anguo FM. WVK entered into a contract with Anguo FM for a period of 6 months from February – July 2012 to sponsor a 45 minute live, interactive radio programme called “Sikira Kusikiro” (“Listen and also be heard”) to be broadcast every Wednesday evening from 20:15 – 21:00.

Except on a few occasions mentioned below, the programme was aired every Wednesday evening and featured many of the topics identified by community members as being of interest to them during the baseline study including: marketing farm produce; goat keeping; poultry keeping; nutrition and malnutrition; safe motherhood; malaria causes and prevention; WVK projects including CFA; and the scaling back of PRRO activities. WVK successfully identified guest speakers to participate in the programme including staff from different WVK departments and officials from the Ministries of Livestock and Development and Health and Public Sanitation.

In general, the guest speaker would be interviewed for 30 minutes allowing for 15 minutes of interactive discussion to follow, with calls and SMS messages coming in from the general public and receiving a direct response. According to monitoring data provided by WVK, 55 SMS messages and 82 phone calls were received by the programme between 29 February and 09 May 2012. It is worth noting, however, that several community members who participated in the learning review said that they had tried to call into the programme but were unable to get through because the line was engaged. WVK staff reported receiving similar feedback from other communities. All communities consulted, and Anguo FM staff, expressed a wish for the interactive discussion time to be extended.

*“The time has been really tasking because most of the time people remain with questions that they want to be tackled, but they won’t get the answers there and then. So the time has to be extended.”* (Radio presenter, Anguo FM).

**The key implementation challenge faced by WVK was the required travel to Nairobi, which was costly and time-consuming.** At the time the project was being designed, Anguo FM was being broadcast from Nairobi but planned to have a fully functioning studio based in Voi, Taita Taveta, by early December 2011. Unfortunately, due to technical problems, the studio in Voi did not materialise during the project period and was only just

being set up at the time that the learning review was being conducted. Although Anguo FM was contractually obliged to cover the costs of WVK's travel to Nairobi, making the 5 hour journey on a weekly basis to conduct live interviews proved extremely time-consuming for the guest speakers and the A, M&E Officer accompanying them. Consequently, a planned programme addressing food security issues did not go ahead because guest speakers were unable to travel to Nairobi. Another programme had to be cancelled because the guest speaker did not have their cash advance (to pay for the travel to Nairobi) approved on time.

### **6.1.2 FrontlineSMS information hub**

Another key feature of the project was the establishment of a FrontlineSMS information hub in the WVK Voi Office. The hub was designed to enable WVK to send out bulk SMS messages – including programme updates, livestock and commodity price information, disaster preparedness information etc. - at the click of a button to defined contact groups including RC focal points. In addition, incoming SMS messages from key contacts could be received by the hub, stored and analysed centrally. Ultimately, **the hub was expected to improve the speed and regularity of two-way communication between WVK and drought-affected communities via SMS.**

The hub was run using free, open source FrontlineSMS software, which was downloaded onto an office computer and then connected to a mobile phone line through a Safaricom modem stick. It used a Safaricom modem because the telecommunication company offered a deal that allowed subscribers to send an unlimited number of SMS messages for a fixed fee of only 10 Ksh (less than one pence) per day.

Although the information hub was established in January 2012, it was slow to get going and the first messages were sent out in early March 2012. According to monitoring data provided by WVK, **81 different messages were sent out to RC focal points over a 9 week period from 27 February - 09 May.** 29 messages were categorised by WVK as being related to the PRRO food/cash assistance. Some directly addressed programming issues such as targeting criteria for food and cash projects or delays in cash payments or food distribution. Others were messages informing communities about the communication project. It should be noted, however, that a significant number of the messages sent out were messages to RC focal points themselves (rather than the wider communities) regarding the use of FrontlineForms or notifying them of technical problems with FrontlineSMS.

The 52 remaining messages included a mixture of messages mobilising communities for meetings and/or the radio programme; educating communities about flood preparedness; and encouraging safe motherhood. There were also statements regarding WVK values and principles; celebratory messages and one or two messages containing information on livestock and commodity prices.

The original project proposal had included the weekly sharing by WVK of livestock and staple commodity prices with RC focal points via FrontlineSMS. **It was proposed that the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock would share commodity and livestock prices from markets in Voi and Taveta with WVK each week, which WVK would broadcast to communities via the weekly radio show on Anguo FM and FrontlineSMS.**

**Unfortunately, this agreement did not translate into practice.** The main reason for this was to avoid any complication with the CFA payments. CFA payments were calculated based on market price surveys carried out by WFP. In the case of a discrepancy between market price information collected from different sources and shared with the community and actual payments made based on WFP data, misunderstanding and conflicts could have arisen.

Over the same period, 163 messages were received by the hub. 56 of these were categorised by WVK as relating to food assistance. These messages included work output data (sent by SMS instead of using FrontlineForms); appreciation messages from RCs regarding reminders about FrontlineForms; requests for plant seedlings and for information about the timescale of the PRRO activities and the protocol when a beneficiary dies; and complaints about delayed cash payments and perceived unfair targeting.

59 messages categorised as 'other' included appreciation messages from RCs; happy women's day messages; notification of technical problems with forms; notification of the death of a beneficiary and poor radio reception; and one message regarding commodity prices.

48 messages were messages confirming receipt or expressing appreciation of WVK's mobilisation messages about the radio programme and other community meetings.

**Over the course of the project the FrontlineSMS hub experienced a range of technical problems.** In March 2012, sending bulk SMS messages took a very long time, in some cases more than a day, to send out. The AM&E Officer in charge of the hub was advised to create and send out messages to smaller contact groups, and this reportedly helped speed



up the sending process. There were also problems with message duplication at times, when a sent or received message would be duplicated up to 10 or 15 times. In mid-April, the hub experienced a serious technical failure which lasted for two weeks during which neither SMS messages nor forms could be received. The FrontlineSMS Advisory team suggested upgrading the software from version 1.6 to 1.7. This reportedly worked well.

Unfortunately, **the new FrontlineSMS hub could not be accessed during the learning review period due to a new technical problem: it would not open. This limited the data analysis to that for the months of March and April 2012 which were available on the old 1.6 information hub. This data revealed that only 33 out of the 75 RC focal points had sent SMS messages to the hub during March and April, and only 16 had ever sent a FrontlineForm to the hub.** Further analysis of the entire data set is required in order to provide more accurate detail about the use of FrontlineSMS and Forms by RC focal points.

### **6.1.3 FrontlineForms**

FrontlineForms are electronic data collection forms, which can be downloaded onto java-enabled mobile phones and sent via SMS to the FrontlineSMS information hub. Forms can be customised and allow for the collection of up to 10 separate items of data and a small amount of free text. Once received by the hub, the form data can be displayed on a computer screen in table form. The tables can be exported to excel spreadsheets for further processing or distribution by email.

**The use of FrontlineForms to collect PRRO work output data was expected to reduce phone calls that Field Monitors were required to make, thereby reducing their workload, saving money on airtime and increasing the speed of weekly data collection and the comparability of the data collected.** The initial scoping and baseline studies conducted by infoasaid had identified a number of challenges faced by Field Monitors in gathering output data. Sometimes the data would be provided by RC focal points through an SMS message or a phone call to a Field Monitor's phone, but they often lacked airtime or experienced problems charging their phones due to lack of electricity and so were unable to share the data. As such, Field Monitors were required to travel long distances by car or motorbike to FDPs to collect worksheets containing the output data. Due to lack of time and available vehicles, this did not always happen. The idea was that the 75 RC focal points who were given java-enabled phones would send a customised FrontlineForm containing the output data to the hub at the end of each week.

**In theory, over the 6 month project period, there was potential for the hub to receive 900 FrontlineForms. In practice, however, very few forms were received by the hub.**

During the months of March and April 2012, only 14 out of 75 RC focal points sent any forms to the hub and most only sent 1 or 2. According to WVK monitoring data, just 44 forms were received between 27 February and 09 May. Although this monitoring data available does not provide the complete picture, it suggests that the FrontlineForm intervention was not working according to plan.

According to WVK staff, the main reason for this was insufficient training. infoasaid provided training on FrontlineForms to a core group of WVK staff in January 2012. The training model used was one of “training of trainers” whereby WVK staff was expected to train the 75 RC focal points on how/when to use the FrontlineForms to send their weekly programme output data to the FrontlineSMS hub. WVK staff attended one infoasaid training session. Likewise, RCs only attended one WVK training session, which was not actually delivered until mid-March (2 months into the project implementation). WVK staff interviewed suggested that the amount of training provided by infoasaid was insufficient, particularly given the high turnover of Field Monitors responsible for delivering the training to the RC focal points. They suggested that **a better approach would have involved having refresher sessions for staff on a rolling basis.**

According to WVK staff, **another explanation for the low use of forms by RCs was because they simply preferred to send data directly to Field Monitors via SMS, a phone call or a face-to-face meeting, rather than to the hub.**

*“We cannot really manage to go to all these centres... so what we do mostly is that the community will send us a message. They are not easy in using the forms, but they are easy in using a message, so they just text a message that our output this month is such and such.”* (WVK staff member).

Another explanatory factor is that fact that the existing PRRO (1666) came to an end in April and was replaced with a new PRRO (200294). This change in programmes meant that **for April and May no work was being carried out, so there was no output data to send or collect.**

**Despite these challenges, many WVK staff recognised the potential value of the forms**

**in increasing the timeliness and efficiency of data collection and reducing Field Monitors' workload.** They expressed their desire to see FrontlineForms work better:

*“If this [FrontlineForms] can be actioned in such a manner that those outputs come to my computer, I would be very happy.” (WVK Staff member).*

*“If the forms could be developed to be effective, it could be a great way forward because there are challenges in getting output data from the communities. There are delays and some Field Monitors may not even reach their FDPs to get concrete data. Although we haven't achieved a level of replacement through the forms, if we achieved that, it would be highly desirable.” (WVK staff member).*

#### **6.1.4 Mobile phones and solar charger kits**

infoasaid supplied WVK with 84 Nokia C1-01 phones and 84 accompanying Tough Stuff 1.5 solar chargers.<sup>3</sup> 75 mobile phones and chargers were distributed to RC focal points – usually the RC Secretary or Chairperson – in 75 FDPs throughout Taita Taveta county.<sup>4</sup> The remaining 9 phones were distributed to key WVK staff including 7 Field Monitors, a Supplementary Feeding Project Officer and the Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer who was responsible for implementing the pilot project.

**The solar chargers were considered critical in overcoming the challenges RC focal points faced in keeping their phones charged due to lack of electricity in their villages.** Combined, the FrontlineSMS information hub and solar chargers were intended to improve two-way communication between WVK's field office in Voi and the drought-affected communities of Taita Taveta, via RC focal points.

While the Nokia phones worked well and were greatly appreciated by Relief Committees, the solar charger kits were less reliable and this had important implications for the success of the project.

In Choke FDP, both RC and community members claimed their solar charger was faulty and

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<sup>3</sup> Although the baseline research highlighted that 80% of RC members already had mobile phones, the distribution of java-enabled phones was essential in order for the RC focal points to be able to send the programme output data using FrontlineForms.

<sup>4</sup> 17 phones and chargers were distributed to RCs in centres receiving CFA only; 28 were distributed to RCs in centres receiving both CFA and FFA; and 30 to RCs in centres receiving FFA only.

had never worked. In Mwachabo, the Relief Committee stated that the solar charger rarely worked and when it did, it took a long time (one or two days) to charge one phone and often failed to charge the battery fully. Consequently, in both FDPs, no-one apart from the RC Secretary had ever used the solar charger and the RC Secretaries were providing the airtime for the phones themselves. Community members from Choke added that they have to walk long distances to charge phones at charging centres.

Asked if there was any difference between the mobile phone provided by World Vision and his personal phone, the RC Secretary in Choke FDP responded,

*“There is no difference, since the solar charger is faulty, I am forced to charge the phone with electricity just like mine.”*

The RC Secretary in Mwachabo stated that the only difference between the community phone and his own personal phone was that the former could send FrontlineForms.

*The limited impact of the solar chargers was also acknowledged by WVK staff,*

*“I think there is no difference. They [communities] were told to use the solar charger to charge people’s phones and get credit. But at the end of the day, sometimes those solar chargers are not working. So there is no difference between the previous communication and now.” (Field Monitor, WVK Office).*

Problems regarding the solar charger in Rukanga FDP were of a different nature. None of the community members interviewed had ever seen or used the solar charger, nor were they aware that it could be used by community members to charge their personal phones. The Relief Committee explained, somewhat reluctantly, that the previous RC Secretary had failed to hand over the mobile phone and solar charger to the new RC Secretary when she was replaced and a new RC was formed following the scaling back of the PRRO activities in April 2012. They noted that the new RC Secretary had been given a second mobile phone by World Vision but no solar charger, and that the phone was therefore no different to their personal phones in terms of functionality.

Interestingly, upon learning about the faulty chargers during the learning review, the A, M&E Officer sent out a FrontlineSMS message to all RC focal points via the hub asking if their solar chargers were working. Of the 15 additional FDPs that responded, 4 said that they were working. 6 FDPs said that the chargers were not working at all and that they do not use

them. 5 said that that the solar chargers work occasionally but highlighted problems similar to those in Mwachabo including that they take a very long time to charge one phone and that they do not charge phone batteries to full capacity.

As explained above, the rationale underlying the provision of solar chargers to Relief Committees was:

- To enable RC focal points to keep the community phone charged at all times.
- To enable RCs to generate income to pay for airtime for the community phone by allowing other community members to use the solar charger for a fee.

It can be concluded on the basis of the above findings that the intended benefits of the solar chargers in ensuring that the World Vision phones were always switched on and had airtime were not realised, and this limited the extent to which the hub improved the speed and regularity of two-way communication between WVK and communities (for further discussion on the results of the FrontlineSMS hub see **section 6.2.4** on effectiveness).

#### **6.1.5 Appointment of a Local Communication Officer.**

In the project proposal, infoasaid suggested that WVK recruit a full time Local Communication Officer to be responsible for developing and managing partnerships with local media; developing content for the radio show; assessing the information needs and access of affected communities on a regular basis; and managing and sourcing content for the FrontlineSMS information hub (infoasaid 2011a). However this did not happen. Instead the role was attached to **the existing Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, who took on these responsibilities while continuing to fulfil his A, M&E duties. By all accounts, this led to him being significantly overburdened.** Almost all staff stated that the project required a full time Local Communication Officer.

#### **6.1.6 Training on communication with affected populations**

Before implementation began in earnest, infoasaid and FrontlineSMS provided a joint training on communication with affected populations to WVK staff and other stakeholders including government officials. Topics covered by the training covered:

- The importance of communication in emergency response
- How to integrate communication into programmes

- Media training (how to participate in a radio discussion, how to get a key message across, how to write messages for different channels)
- The pros and cons of different communication channels
- How to use FrontlineSMS
- How to use FrontlineForms
- How to use and maintain the Tough Stuff Solar charger kits
- The importance of conducting baseline research with World Vision staff and affected communities

**While the content and quality of the training was considered very good, one workshop was widely perceived among WVK to be insufficient,** particularly given the high turnover of Field Monitors responsible for delivering the training to the RC focal points. They suggested that a better approach would have involved having refresher sessions for staff on a rolling basis.

*“It’s a good project where the community is well capacity-built... the training should include a refresher every 3 months. By then some of the staff have left and the new ones don’t know what infoasaid is. It began too soon and ended too soon when we’ve had a lot on our plates.”* (WVK staff member).

### **6.1.7 Assessment**

As is recommended practice, before the project was designed infoasaid supported the WVK field office in Voi to carry out a rapid information needs and access assessment with communities and complete two feasibility assessment checklists: one for radio and the other for mobile phone technology.

While the information needs and access assessment provided lots of useful and accurate information - including that most households had access to mobile phones and radio sets, which they listened to in the evenings - **the questionnaire used was not gender-sensitive.** Questions about access to radio and mobile phones were directed at the household and community level and therefore failed to provide sex-disaggregated data.

Interestingly, the radio and mobile phone feasibility checklists, which WVK staff were asked to complete, were more gender-sensitive. The radio checklist included the question, *who controls access to the radio sets and chooses the stations and programmes that are listened*

to? The answer provided by WVK staff was “mostly men”. Despite this, **no mechanisms were built into the project design to ensure that women could listen and benefit equally from the radio programme.**

The mobile telecoms checklist also included a question on differences in mobile phone ownership between men and women, but this question was not answered by WVK, perhaps because of a lack of data. Moreover, questions on local communities’ use of mobile phones were not gender-sensitive. It is possible that this lack of gender analysis contributed to barriers in accessing radio which are particular to women in Taita Taveta going undetected. For further discussion on this issue see **section 6.2.2** on Coverage. Also see **Appendices 1, 2 and 3** for further information on the questionnaire and feasibility checklists.

### **6.1.8 Coordination**

Interviews with WVK staff revealed weaknesses in coordination, particularly with regard to the use of the FrontlineSMS hub and Forms. The hub was located in the office of the Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, given his role in soliciting feedback from communities. This would not have been a problem had the rest of the staff - including the Field Coordinator, FFA Technical Officer and Field Monitors (many of whom had received the infoasaid training) - been assured continuous access. As it happened, given problems with power outages, the hub was transferred to the personal laptop of the A, M&E Officer, which restricted others’ access to it.

This had direct implication for the success of the FrontlineSMS and Forms. Given their role in reporting to the FFA Technical Officer on programme outputs, Field Monitors preferred to have RC focal points continue to send data to their personal mobile phones in case they were unable to access the hub to retrieve the data. Had they and the FFA Technical Officer had better access to the hub, they could have monitored the incoming data directly and identified any gaps. This would not only have reduced the reporting workload of FMs considerably, but also provided a greater incentive to RCs and Field Monitors to use the forms. Almost all WVK staff saw this as a significant barrier to implementation and recommended that the hub be centralised:

*“If we can share the work it would help a lot. Sometimes I’ve been using my own phone to mobilise because it may happen that the A, M&E Officer is not here and I need to pass a message.... If a way can be found so that the Field Monitors, Field Coordinator, RCs*

*and the A, M&E Officer can be linked it would be better.” (WVK Staff member).*

*“There is a need for widening the capacity building to a wider scope within the office. We all need capacity in terms of getting exposed to it, getting a wider team that can handle the same issues. Now, as a pilot, we are too narrow and I’m sure that one individual having this technology is too little. I would suggest forming a small team that can handle the issues as a unit, and having a more centralised database. So that it becomes more sustainable, even in case of a transfer or a change of job” (WVK staff member).*

### **6.1.9 Sustainability**

Although WVK staff, including Senior Management, seemed keen for the use of FrontlineSMS technology and the radio broadcasts to continue, no aspect of the project was factored into WVK’s financial planning for the current financial year 2012/13. This means that WVK would have to source additional funds in order for this to happen.



## 6.2 Results

### 6.2.1 Relevance/Appropriateness

6.2.1.1 *To what extent did the accountability/communication project correctly address the problems and real needs of the target groups?*

**Findings indicate that the content of the radio programme is extremely relevant to communities' problems and needs.** Listeners valued the programme's educational approach and its focus on new farming methods and livelihood strategies. Several respondents mentioned that they had encouraged others to listen to the programme and to implement the new farming methods discussed. Others said that they encouraged their children to listen, so that they too could benefit from the information shared.

While men are listening more than women (see **section 6.2.2** on coverage below), the topics are very much of interest to both sexes and reflect many of the information needs identified during the scoping and baseline research.

Community members who had listened to the programme were able to recall many of the topics they had listened to including terracing, preserving cattle fodder, goat rearing, poultry rearing and malaria prevention. Some participants asked for additional programmes on how to take loans from financial institutions. Others indicated that they would like to advertise their products, such as baskets (kiondos), on the radio programme.

**The radio programme's interactive call-in feature was also extremely popular** among communities, partly because it provided a channel for communicating directly with World Vision; and partly because it enabled communities to receive "instant responses" to their questions.

Community members in both Rukanga and Mwachabo FDPs recalled a discussion about WVK's CFA programme during which community members had asked WVK when they would receive their cash payments for their completed work. Despite the fact that they still had not received any payment, they appreciated the chance to put questions directly to World Vision via the radio programme and receive an immediate response.

*"It is good because if someone has a complaint they can ask their Officer in Charge directly through the radio programme"* (Community member, Choke).

*“It educates us and also the language is easily understandable, our questions are answered directly.” (Relief Committee member, Choke)*

*“We like it because we can ask questions and get an immediate response. Also, the presenters are ready to listen to our suggestions” (Community member, Choke).*

*“It helps to answer many questions that community members have about World Vision programmes” (Relief Committee member, Mwachabo)*

*“It [the radio programme] is more interactive than any other, because they want information. Info, info, info that is what they want” (Radio Presenter, Anguo FM).*

Several groups said they enjoyed hearing the questions, concerns and experiences of others like them who are living in different areas of Taita Taveta.

The FrontlineSMS hub, mobile phones and solar chargers were also directly relevant to communities' expressed problems and needs. **Communities described how they often lacked battery power and airtime for their personal phones and that they valued having an official “community” phone for communicating with WVK.**

*“It is of great use to us. Previously we used to go to World Vision’s Office and we had to contribute fare for the person we were sending, but nowadays it’s just a call away” (Community member, Choke).*

*“It’s now easy for anyone to access the WVK offices, because the WVK phone numbers are in the phone and we all feel like we own the phone” (Community member, Rukanga).*

They also explained how the phones had made a difference to their ability to manage delays in food distributions and mobilise communities at the right time, particularly where RC Secretaries did not previously own phones.

*“When there was no phone, the food was brought to our FDP and was returned to WVK office because the message did not reach the people” (Community member, Mwachabo).*

*“Most of the time we face delays in food and cash distributions in our area... In case of delays, the phone is used to make enquiries to the WVK office”* (Community member, Rukanga).

*“It has really improved the way we communicate with our officers [Field Monitors], we are in touch with them all the time as compared to 6 months ago when we had no phone”* (Community member, Choke).

*“Initially the Secretary used to walk across villages to pass message but nowadays it’s just a phone call.”* (Relief Committee member, Rukanga).

Despite the problems with the solar chargers, the mobile phones were being used in a variety of ways, including reporting to Field Monitors on programme outputs achieved; confirming times of meetings and food distributions and forwarding this information to focal points in other villages via SMS; enquiring about delays in cash payments; and calling for medical assistance when someone is injured at a worksite. All communities expressed the view that one phone per FDP was not enough, and that all RC members should be given phones so that all villages have a community phone.

*6.2.1.2 To what extent has the accountability/communication project enabled the humanitarian organisation to better align its activities with the needs and priorities of the target group?*

During the scoping study and baseline research, WVK staff had expressed concern that its communication with communities was too heavily focused on extracting information about outputs and activities and that its feedback mechanisms were underutilised and inadequate. The project sought, therefore, to increase community feedback via the FrontlineSMS information hub and the radio programme in order to increase WVK’s understanding of communities’ needs and priorities.

*“One of the main outcomes that could be very healthy is helping us restructure our systems in terms of how we deliver our services, because when they give feedback it helps us to change the approach.”* (WVK staff member).

**Findings suggest that the interaction with communities afforded by both the radio and the FrontlineSMS hub has, to varying degrees, improved WVK’s understanding of**

**communities' needs and priorities and most importantly, prompted it to adjust its activities accordingly.**

For example, after hearing from a radio caller that some PRRO recipients had registered for both CFA and FFA programmes, WVK took steps to identify these recipients and retain them in just one programme.

WVK also adjusted its planning and proposal writing for the financial year 2012/13 to include a greater focus on individual rather than communal asset-building after hearing via SMS and radio that communities had a preference for working on their individual farms as it benefited them more directly. Consequently, the current PRRO (200294) incorporates a greater focus on individual farm work than the previous one (10666).

SMS messages received by the FrontlineSMS hub included complaints about delayed cash payments. Although this issue has not been fully resolved, WVK staff stated the feedback from communities had helped them recognise the scale of the problem and the level of frustration among communities. WVK is currently in discussion with Equity bank and the World Food Programme on how best to resolve the issue.

In a number of locations, including Rukanga, WVK has provided food rations instead of cash. Despite not having received any cash, people in Rukanga said that WVK's action to provide food instead had made them realise that at least they were being heard.

On the whole, the radio programme was considered the more successful channel for feedback compared to the community phones and some attributed this to its anonymity:

*"They [communities] can easily relay messages without delays in terms of getting the feedback. And of course, not everybody has the courage of speaking in open discussion, so it really adds value."* (WVK Senior Management).

**An important assumption underlying the intended use of the FrontlineSMS hub and mobile phones as a feedback channel was that community members would pass on messages to WVK via their RC focal points who controlled the phones.** However, this was not happening in practice. While community members were generally aware that they could ask for a messages to be passed on, none of the community members interviewed had done so, and it was obvious that many would not have felt comfortable doing so.

Asked why, some explained that they preferred to wait for Field Monitors to visit their areas so that they could speak to them directly. This preference was also noted by Field Monitors, and other WVK staff including the A, M&E Officer and the Commodity Officer who reported that some community members prefer to visit the office or call them directly, particularly if the issue is sensitive. Others pointed out that their RC Secretary was slow to respond to their problems,

*“Sometimes we take complaints directly to our officers because our Secretary delays in sending messages to the World Vision Office”* (Community members, Rukanga).

Others seemed unclear about the process,

*“The phone was brought to receive information from World Vision, and if we have any information we should call them through it, but there is no transparency regarding how the phone should be used”* (Community member, Choke).

If RC Secretaries use the phones to contact the WVK office in Voi, it is usually regarding issues affecting the whole community, for example, to complain delays in cash payments or to inform WVK about the types of projects the community would like to implement. Individual complaints, communities suggested, were more likely to be dealt with via other channels, including complaints and response mechanisms established by WVK for that purpose.

The A M&E Officer analyses community feedback and complaints received through all communication channels and shares a Complaints and Response Mechanism (CRM) report with relevant stakeholders during monthly operations meetings involving WFP, WV, Equity bank, Arid Lands Management Authority department and the District Nutrition office. Suggested resolutions and actions are then shared with the WVK National office on a monthly basis.

## **6.2.2 Coverage**

*6.2.2.1 To what extent has the accountability/communication project enhanced WVK’s ability to reach population groups in need with a) information and b) food/cash assistance?*

There was a general sense among WVK staff that both the radio and FrontlineSMS have helped them to reach more people with information.

**The radio programme has reportedly enhanced WVK's ability to reach non-beneficiaries.** WVK staff reported that non-beneficiaries had called into the programme, some asking how they could receive assistance or benefit from WVK's activities.

*"We are talking of reaching the messages even to non-beneficiaries. The essence of why we communicate about World Vision is not about only our projects. It's about for them [people of Taita Taveta County] to know who World Vision is, what World Vision is doing, and what are the various interventions in their communities"* (WVK staff member).

*"The radio programme benefits everybody, all those who are in the programme, as well as those who are not in the programme"* (Field Monitor, WVK)

**The FrontlineSMS information hub was also thought to have improved coverage among people who owned phones.** In addition to RC focal points, many contact groups had been created on the hub including local leaders, farmers' groups, government officials, WVK staff and so on, all of whom were receiving information from the hub.

#### *Radio is reaching men more than women*

**Discussions with communities revealed that men were listening to the programme far more than women.** This is particularly interesting given that, during the project design process, WVK decided that the radio programme should target women aged 15 – 40 and address key issues in their lives.

The main reason provided by communities for women not listening was that they are busy in the kitchen cooking when the programme is on and men listen to the radio outside the kitchen. Other reasons provided by women were that they had no working batteries for their radios or that they did not receive the radio signal where they lived.

*"Most of the time it is children and men because we are always busy in the evening cooking for our families"* (Community member, Choke).

*"Most of the time the women are busy doing house chores so they don't have the time to listen to the programme and make calls"* (Community member, Rukanga).

Of the 30 women who participated in the community focus groups, fewer than half (11) had ever heard the programme. Surprisingly, women were not in favour of changing the timing of the radio programme, stating that they were busy all the time! Importantly, some of the women who did not listen to the programme were still made aware of the topics through discussions about them in their families and communities.

It follows that the majority of those calling in to the programme and/or sending SMS are men. None of the women interviewed had tried to call in or send an SMS. WVK monitoring data revealed that out of 82 phone calls received by the radio programme between 29 February and 09 May 2012, only 23 were from women. Reasons provided for this included: that most households have one phone and men tend to own the phones, provide the credit for the phones and therefore control the use of the phones. Some community members stated that men often deny their wives the opportunity to call.

*“Some of us don’t have phones, and our husbands wouldn’t allow us to use theirs”  
(Community member, Choke).*

*“Women are mostly over-occupied by house chores, thus they are too busy to make a call” (Community member, Choke).*

*“The problem is that we [women] don’t have mobile phones so we cannot contribute”  
(Community member, Rukanga).*

*“I think women are not confident enough to call into the programme... also most women don’t have mobile phones” (Community member, Mwachabo).*

**It should be noted however, that none of the men participating in the FGDs had successfully called in and only one had sent an SMS.** A few said they had tried to call with farming-related questions but were unable to get through because the line was always engaged.

**Communities all asked for the programme to be extended and repeated at the weekend for those who missed the Wednesday show.** Participants from Rukanga asked for the programme to be repeated specifically on Sundays. Some suggested that if WVK wanted to reach more people with announcements, they should attach them to the end of the 7pm Anguo FM news because everyone listens to it.

### Taita language seen to limit the reach of the radio programme

Findings from FGDs with communities reveal mixed views about the fact that the radio programme is broadcast in Taita.

For people in Choke, a mainly Taita-speaking area, the fact that the programme is broadcast in Taita does not present a problem. On the contrary, for the Taitas this was a clear selling point. By contrast, people in Rukanga, a more ethnically diverse FDP, stated that some of the locals do not speak Taita and are therefore unable to understand or benefit from the programme. They suggested the programme be aired in Swahili in order to reach more members of the Taita Taveta population.

*“There is a problem because not everyone is Taita speaking, so they are disadvantaged... we think Swahili is better because everyone understands it and can easily contribute to the discussion”* (Community member, Rukanga).

*“We would wish the language of broadcasting to be changed because it only favours the Taita community and here in Rukanga we are people of mixed tribes”* (Relief Committee member, Rukanga)

Views on this issue among WVK staff were equally mixed. **While some felt that more people could be reached using Taita including the very elderly, many of whom could not speak Swahili, others felt strongly that the programme would reach more people, including non-beneficiaries, if broadcast in Swahili.**

Interestingly, Anguo FM was reluctant to broadcast the show in Swahili because, they explained, Taita is the language that most people understand easily. They said that they had broadcast two shows in Swahili and found that fewer people participated or asked questions.

*“This is a Taita station targeting people living in Taita Taveta and Taita people living outside the region. It is a tool that we use to empower the Taitas. There is a vacuum when it comes to people passing information in the right language which is actually understood by the Taitas. That is why we decided to do a Taita station to mainly target this community.”* (Radio Manager, Anguo FM).

### Both radio and FrontlineSMS helped to reach more of the most vulnerable



The findings suggest that the pilot project not only helped to reach more people with information, but also led to the identification of gaps in targeting, which in turn resulted in more of the most vulnerable being reached with food assistance. For example, upon learning from a radio caller and via SMS that the CFA targeting process was perceived to have been unfair, with elites receiving assistance instead of the most vulnerable, WVK carried out a re-targeting in the relevant areas.

*“There was a time we did targeting and verification, and we went through the whole process and the projects were about to begin and then Emmanuel aired a programme about the new [programme] phase, and issues arose that some targeted members in some communities are well off, you know, so now we had to go back and re-target based on that finding, but us on the front level we didn’t know about it so I think somebody just anonymously called and shared it with the radio programme” (Field Monitor, WVK).*

### **6.2.3 Efficiency**

#### *6.2.3.1 To what extent has the communication project influenced the time- and cost-efficiency of WVK’s PRRO programme?*

As previously mentioned, FrontlineForms was expected to reduce the amount of phone calls that Field Monitors were making to collect and report on weekly output data, and increase the speed of data collection and the comparability of data. To date, however, there has been little change to the data collection process. This is partly due to the fact that, as outlined in **section 6.1.3** on FrontlineForms, very few forms were received by the FrontlineSMS hub during the project period, and partly due to the fact that Field Monitors and the FFA Technical coordinator did not have regular access to the hub, which meant that they were unable to receive any weekly monitoring data that was sent in via FrontlineForms. Having the data in advance could have speeded up their monthly reporting process.

It is worth noting that while FrontlineForms had the potential to reduce the amount of travel that Field Monitors were making to FDPs sites to collect output data, this was not expected to happen because Field Monitors are required by WFP to visit sites to verify output data in person.

*“Our visits for collecting physical forms still continue alongside that information [FrontlineForms]. And because they [Field Monitors] are still going out as usual, it will not be very clear what has come down in terms of reduction of movement but possibly, as we think*

*of another phase with improved structures, that is a desired development” (WVK staff member).*

The same applies to FrontlineSMS, which had the potential to reduce the amount of travel required for mobilising communities for food distributions. While it has certainly increased the speed of the communication (See **section 6.2.4** on Effectiveness), it has not reduced the amount of vehicle travel required because formal notification letters are still being sent by vehicle:

*“In terms of tangible evidence [of cost implications], it is not available. And there are standards which have to be followed in implementing certain things. For example, if I have to mobilise a community, as per the food programming guidelines, they have to receive a notification letter as evidence that the community was mobilised and informed in time about a certain activity... so you see, the hub is not creating that so we still continue to mobilise the same resources.” (WVK staff member).*

**There are indications, however, that FrontlineSMS has reduced the number of follow up phone calls that Field Monitors were making to communities to remind them about, and mobilise them for food distributions, as these are now done via the information hub.** Field Monitors receive a set amount of Ksh 2000 per month for phone calls, which makes it difficult to quantify this change in terms of changes in airtime bought. However, some of the Field Monitors said they had noticed that they had more airtime available for other types of calls.

## 6.2.4 Effectiveness

### 6.2.4.1 *To what extent has the accountability/communication project met its stated objectives, as articulated by infoasaid and WVK?*

The learning review faced difficulties in attempting to answer this question, given that the PRRO faced a number of challenges during the project period, including the scaling back of its food assistance activities and severe delays in cash payments to CFA recipients - no CFA recipients received cash payments during the project period and few food distributions were carried out. This made it almost impossible to assess the extent to which the communication project improved the quality of food or cash assistance.

Still, a number of intended outcomes were articulated by stakeholders. The following paragraphs explore the extent to which these intended outcomes were achieved.

Outcomes have been broadly grouped into two categories: a) those relating to *improving communication as a form of aid*; and b) those relating to *improving communication as a means of improving the delivery of WVK's PRRO programme*. To prevent repetition, only those intended outcomes which have not already been addressed elsewhere in the report are addressed below.

#### *a) Improving communication as a form of aid*

- ***Increased access of communities, in particular women, to practical information which will help them to improve their food and livelihood security***

According to the baseline report, there was a consensus among WVK Senior staff that the objective of the project should be aligned with WVK's mission to address the causes of food and livelihood insecurity within the community, which include lack of information (infoasaid, 2012a). The findings reveal that the objective of increasing communities' access to practical information to help them improve their food and livelihood security has, to a great extent, been achieved by the radio programme. Many stories of change with regard to the implementation of new farming and health practices were heard during discussions with communities. As one listener observed, "it has changed our lives in terms of new farming methods" (Relief Committee member, Mwachabo). Quotes describing these stories of change are listed in box 2 below.

## **Box 2: Communities' stories of change**

*“On my part... the first time I heard about it [the radio programme] I didn't really care that much. But when I continued listening to it I realised its benefits because it talked about livestock keeping. I am happy I listened to the programme on Anguo FM because I did not know how to build a poultry house and now, through it, I have built one. I am also very happy because I learnt how to feed them. Previously I used to feed and water the chickens once a day. But through listening to the radio programme, now I feed them four times a day and give them water 3 times a day. When a chicken lays an egg I take it and number it so that I know when it was laid. When it [the chicken] sits on the eggs, I replace the new eggs with the old eggs so that when it starts to hatch the eggs, it hatches all of them.”* (Community member, Mwachabo).

*“This programme has educated us. It is important because through it we have learnt a lot of things like hay preservation... We get the grass from the bush and I bring it here, tie it up and store it and it helps us when it is dry. I give it to my cattle and I also generate some income through selling it, which helps to cater for household needs such as food... All this we learnt through the radio programme”* (Community member, Mwachabo).

*“By listening the radio station, they talked about trenches, and we dug the trenches and we saw they were of great importance, because when it rains, the trenches fill with water, and the water helps banana trees and cassava plants. So we see the trenches are very important, and if they fill with soil we remove it so that when it rains again water fills up again.”* (Community member, Choke)

### *b) Communication as a means of improving the delivery of WVK's PRRO programme*

- ***Faster dissemination of information to communities in order to improve the timeliness of, and attendance at, food distributions.***

Prior to the communication pilot, communities' lack of electricity to charge phones, coupled with a lack of credit to load onto the phones to make calls, were cited by both WVK staff and RCs/community members as significant barriers to timely communication between WVK and the communities they serve. Given the technical problems experienced with the solar charger kits (see **section 6.1.4**), these barriers remain, for the most part, unchanged. **There are, however, indications that FrontlineSMS, combined with the distribution of mobile phones, improved the speed of information dissemination to communities.**

Firstly, bulk SMS is perceived to be quicker and more effective at delivering messages to RCs than the previous system which relied on Field Monitors to make large volumes of individual phone calls or send individual SMS messages:

*“It [the project] has assisted a lot in field operations because you will find that, at times you call places without a network and you can’t get the person, and then, because of competing priorities, you forget to call back again. So once an SMS is sent out, you can be sure that the person will receive the communication... Even if the person is not in network area, it [the SMS message] will still hang around for about 24 hours and will eventually deliver the message when the person comes into a network area.”* (Commodity Officer, WVK).

*“It has helped me as a field monitor, because sometimes I’m out in the field, where there is no network and maybe some mobilisation is needed. When I’m back in the office, instead of going to my phone to start mobilising, Emmanuel has already done it and the community are now call me to say ‘we got the message’* (Field Monitor, WVK)

*“Sometimes our meetings used to fail, because we were told to mobilise the community and maybe there’s no network. So maybe others get it and mobilise, but me I didn’t mobilise because I was out of network. But when you come back to the office to start mobilising, the community have already got the message so it helps.”* (Field Monitor, WVK).

Secondly, **the fact that the mobile handset is understood by both WVK staff and communities to be an ‘official’ community phone (and as such a more formal communication channel compared to RC member’s personal phones) has made a difference to the speed with which WVK notifies communities about food distributions.** As WVK staff explained, they are required by their organisation to formally notify communities of any disbursement of food or cash and were thus not previously allowed to call or send messages to people’s personal phones in the first instance. Instead, they would send formal notification letters by vehicle, which could take a long time and the information often arrived too late. The creation of official “community” phone lines allows them to disseminate urgent information quickly *and formally* via SMS message.

*“Initially we used to mobilise the community using letters but they weren’t effective because of the time frame. You find that you want to distribute food tomorrow in Taveta, but it is very far away, around 200km from here. So you need to dispatch a vehicle to that place but you may find that the vehicles are not there. So now the easiest way is to use the phones, whereby you can communicate directly to the RC and the letters will follow later as a formality.”* (Field Coordinator, WVK).

*“Some of the RCs are women and they share their phones with their husbands, so if you call them, you might end up calling the husband... and he may be in Nairobi or choose to ignore the call. But now that there is an official phone, they know that the message is official and it goes to the right person”* (Field Coordinator, WVK).

**Importantly, while the speed of information dissemination to RC focal points and other contacts in the FrontlineSMS database has improved, challenges remain with regard to sharing the information with the wider community.**

An important feature in the design of the FrontlineSMS information hub was its reliance on Relief Committee focal points to share information received from WVK with the wider community. When asked how this happened, RCs and communities generally described the same three-stage process:

**Box 1: Process by which RC focal points share information with wider community**

1. The RC Secretary receives the information via a phone call or SMS from the WVK field office in Voi.
2. The Secretary then uses the community mobile phone to inform other members of the Relief Committee via phone calls or SMS messages sent to their personal mobile phones.
3. Each Relief Committee member is then responsible for sharing the information with the wider community in their respective villages. They do this through a variety of channels including face-to-face conversations with people at (particularly at work sites); sending SMS messages to key people in the community who own mobile phones who then spread the information via word of mouth; announcements in church meetings; or notification of village elders who may use a whistle to call a village meeting and share the information.

Yet community members interviewed expressed some doubts about the effectiveness of this system. People from Choke explained that sometimes, after receiving information from WVK, the RC passes the information on verbally because the community phone lacks airtime. As a result, communities still often have to rely on face-to-face meetings, house-to-

house visits and church meetings to receive the information. In Rukanga, communities attributed information delays to the large distances between villages. In addition not all areas in Rukanga have network coverage so other channels still need to be used.

*“Sometimes the information is delayed because we live in different villages which are far apart and we only have one phone, which is not sufficient to pass information to all the villages”* (Community members, Rukanga).

WVK staff also acknowledged this problem:

*“One FDP has 8 villages, so you will find the Chairlady who was given that phone is from village 1, then all the others are in their respective villages... they will only meet all of them together at the end of the month for a community meeting so that’s when they will see the Chairlady and by then, the Field Monitor is also there so they will go to the Field Monitor.”* (WVK Staff member).

*“There are still difficulties sharing information from RCs to wider community...The infoasaid phone is only one per committee... Sometimes the RC with the infoasaid phone is not able to reach all the communities, so you might go to a meeting and find that they have seven villages and only five have arrived”* (Field Monitor, WVK).

All communities requested that phones be provided to all RC members so that at least each village has a community phone.

Unfortunately, due to the challenges experienced by WVK’s PRRO during the project period, including the scaling back of its food assistance activities and severe delays in cash payments to CFA recipients, it was not possible to assess *the effect the speedier communication had on the quality of food or cash assistance being provided.*

Asked what difference the communication project had made to the PRRO assistance they received from WVK, community members from Choke pointed out that they had not received a food or cash distribution since the beginning of the project so it was difficult to tell,

*“We are yet to receive a distribution, but it is likely that it has helped a great deal”* (Community member, Choke).

*“It is still somehow early to answer that, but I think with time the relationship will have greatly improved”* (Community member, Choke).

WVK staff took a similar line,

*“We may not be able to say there is a clear position of improvement, but I trust that in the long run, it may yield fruit in terms of getting better communication and reporting. And again, I think it is good to embrace technology as a new way of going forward.”* (IPA Manager, WVK).

- ***Improved relationship between WVK and communities***

When asked about how the project had affected their relationship with WVK, some community members stated that things were more "open" since it began. Community members from Mwachabo said they felt the radio programme had brought WVK closer to them. Others said that they hadn't noticed any changes or that it was too early to tell, but that over time they expected the relationship to greatly improve.

From WVK's perspective things had improved. When discussing the delays in cash payments to CFA registrants, a member of WVK Staff recalled,

*“There was a day when the community was planning to come to the office to make a demonstration. They carry branches and make so much noise. We heard that they were coming, so the manager said, ‘you know what you can do, just send a FrontlineSMS and share the information with the community’. And that worked, because we shared information that ‘yes, we have received the complaint and we acknowledge it and we are working on it, so please calm down and we will get back to you.’ And they did calm down. So you feel that something positive is happening.”*

- ***Increased understanding of WVK's mandate and activities among communities***

While all communities stated that they felt they had a better understanding of World Vision's mandate and activities as a result of the radio programme and community phones, they cited little evidence of this. The only indications of this came from WVK staff, many of whom felt that communities' understanding of WVK's projects had increased, or rather that miscommunication had reduced, as a result of project, and that they now devoted less time in community meetings to clarifying misunderstandings than before the project began. They also explained how an episode of the radio show which discussed the scaling back of WVK's FFA assistance had helped to psychologically prepare communities:



*“The community was sad psychologically when the FFA programme was nearing its end. Emmanuel did an episode some weeks before the close of the project. He also did the messages so at least they [the community] know that we have an extension for like a month and after that the programme is coming to an end... Emmanuel explained to them how we go about getting the numbers [of beneficiaries] for the specific centres so they know we don’t just sit in the office and dream up this number of 100 households in such and such an area... the information was widely sent. Initially, we had people in certain distribution areas or during community meetings asking or finding ways of getting back into the system or project, but now, at the centres I’ve attended this has reduced.” (Field Monitor, WVK)*

- ***Increased understanding of communities’ needs and concerns by World Vision***

See **section 6.2.1** on Relevance/Appropriateness.

- ***Increased timeliness of data collection on programme outputs***

See **section 6.1.3** on FrontlineForms and section 6.2.3.1 on Efficiency.

## 7. Conclusions

For the most part the interactive radio programme on Anguo FM was implemented according to plan and is widely considered to be extremely relevant to communities' information needs. It has not only increased communities' access to practical information to help them improve their food and livelihood security, but also helped to manage communities' expectations and provide psychological reassurance as projects were winding down. In terms of coverage, it enabled WVK to reach non-beneficiaries, as well as to reach more of the most-vulnerable people through the detection of targeting errors. It has also successfully facilitated the provision of feedback from communities on WVK's activities and enabled WVK to better align its programmes and activities with communities' needs and priorities.

An important finding, however, is that women are often busy cooking in the kitchen and lack access to radios when the programme is broadcast. Women also lack access to mobile phones to call in or send an SMS to the radio station. It is likely that failure to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to information needs and access assessments contributed to barriers in women's access to radio going undetected. The programme could benefit from positive action to increase women's listenership and participation in the interactive segment of the programme. This could be done for example through the provision of recordable radio sets to women working at CFA/FFA sites who could listen in groups to recorded programmes. RCs present could note down their questions and send them to the hub via FrontlineSMS.

The programme has also raised an interesting point regarding the choice of language to use as the medium for radio programmes. In ethnically mixed communities, it is arguably more inclusive and effective to broadcast in the lingua franca that everyone understands, rather than the mother tongue of the largest ethnic group.

On a practical note, would-be callers have been unable to participate because the line is engaged. WVK should consider extending the time allocated for the interactive segment of the programme.

The scaling back of the PRRO project in April and the challenges faced by WVK in terms of delayed cash payments throughout the pilot project period made it impossible to review the extent to which the use of FrontlineSMS and mobile phones to communicate with RC focal

points improved the quality of PRRO operations<sup>5</sup>, but findings suggest they have served to increase the speed and regularity of information dissemination by WVK. The hub's bulk SMS function has also served to reduce the amount of time and airtime that Field Monitors spend on mobilising communities for food distributions or community meetings via SMS or phone calls.

Importantly, while the speed of information dissemination to RC focal points and other contacts in the FrontlineSMS database has improved, challenges remain with regard to sharing the information with the wider community. Moreover, while it has facilitated feedback from Relief Committees on general issues affecting the communities, such as delays in cash payments, individual members of communities are more likely to use other channels, such as the radio show, face-to-face meetings with Field Monitors or other complaints and response mechanisms, to provide feedback to WVK.

The findings suggest that the expected benefits of the solar charger kits in ensuring that the community phones always had battery power and airtime were not realised due to technical problems. Further investigation is required to ascertain whether the problems encountered with the Tough Stuff equipment are mainly due to unreliable hardware that has a short working life rather than to poor practice in the way that the chargers were used.

FrontlineForms was not implemented according to plan and did not therefore lead to increased speed and efficiency of data collection. Very low numbers of RC focal points sent programme output data to the hub via FrontlineForms (just over 10% did so in March and April 2012). Findings suggest that insufficient training and a preference among RC focal points for communicating directly with Field Monitors via simple SMS messages or phone calls are the main reasons for this. Despite this, many WVK recognise the potential value of the Forms for increasing the timeliness and efficiency of their work. Arguably, FrontlineForms would be more effective as a tool for fast data collection and management when put in the hands of agency staff (Field Monitors) rather than members of the recipient community. This is because agency staff are more familiar with the use of such technology and have a stronger professional incentive to complete the forms and submit them.

It is clear that more time and effort needed to be spent on training all the relevant stakeholders on everything from the use of FrontlineSMS and Forms to the use of solar chargers. The classroom-based training carried out at the beginning would ideally have been

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<sup>5</sup> Arguably, to maximise learning, pilot communication projects should be trialled in situations where the delivery of aid is either constant or expanding.

followed by a period of onsite mentoring as project implementation began. In addition to this, and given the high turnover of Field Monitors (50% of currently serving Field Monitors were recruited after the training), the project staff would have benefited from a refresher training half way through.

Findings reveal weaknesses in internal coordination in the Voi field office in relation to the FrontlineSMS hub and Forms. The success of the interventions was hindered by the fact that several key stakeholders, including the Field Coordinator, FFA Technical Officer and Field Monitors did not have continuous access to the hub in order to analyse incoming data. Having a centralised hub and training a team of relevant staff to make use of it in their day-to-day work might have created the necessary incentives for change and yielded better results.

No aspect of the pilot project was factored into WVK's financial planning for the current financial year 2012/13, which means that at present, the project is not sustainable.

## 8. Recommendations

### *For World Vision Kenya*

1. Organise a meeting to discuss the lessons learnt from the pilot accountability/communication project and make decisions about which aspects of the project to continue, change or close down.
2. Ensure that if Senior Managers in the organisation are committed to the any continuation of the project, then ~~and secure~~ appropriate human and financial resources should be secured.
3. Should WVK want to continue the accountability/communication project, ~~if~~ identify champions for communication with affected populations at various levels of the organisation who will make the business case for how paying attention to primary stakeholder feedback will improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of their programmes.
4. Ensure that a team of staff from different departments within the organization work together and support each other to implement the project so that no one is overburdened by too many obligations and that feedback doesn't remain isolated within particular teams.
5. Ensure that there is dedicated human resource capacity to manage the project, develop and manage partnerships with local media and other stakeholders; develop content for the radio show; assess information needs and access of affected communities on a regular basis; and manage the FrontlineSMS hub. This full time post could be held by one member of staff or shared between two or several members of staff.
6. Conduct a gender-sensitive information needs and access assessment to inform the design of any subsequent phase.
7. Articulate clearly defined SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) objectives for the accountability/communication project.
8. Adopt a prospective approach to monitoring and evaluation by developing both process indicators (to enable the monitoring of implementation) and results indicators (to enable a before and after comparison) at the outset of the project and conducting a baseline study before project implementation begins.
9. Develop a system for analysing, verifying and sharing information and feedback received via the radio programme and FrontlineSMS information hub with relevant stakeholders/decision makers in order to ensure a response.

10. Dedicate more time and effort to training all relevant staff, including Field Monitors, on everything from the purpose of communicating with the drought-affected communities, to the use of FrontlineSMS and FrontlineForms and the operation and maintenance of solar chargers. Consider inserting a short refresher training into the pilot project.
11. Take positive action to increase women's listenership and participation in the interactive segment of the radio programme. This could take the form of distributing recordable FM radio sets, batteries and mobile phones to women's listening groups. However, these may be difficult and time-consuming to set up if functioning women's groups do not already exist at the village level. If women's listening groups are formed, it is essential to broadcast the programmes targeted at them at a time when they can meet and listen to programmes live or have the ability to play back the programme and make it the focus of a discussion in the group with experts to hand.
12. Explore opportunities with Anguo FM to repeat the programme at the weekend and to do a programme on Milele FM in Swahili (the latter would only work when topics are useful for a national audience).
13. Increase the time allocated to the interactive segment of the radio programme and invite programme recipients onto the show as guest speakers to share experiences.
14. Conduct an audience survey to better understand the reach of the radio programme.
15. Give Java-enabled phones to all 16 Field Monitors (rather than community focal points) to complete and submit CFA/FFA programme output data to the hub rather than submitting paper-based reports.
16. Carry out closer monitoring of technology-related services to ensure bugs/issues are addressed as early on as possible. This will help to avoid users being put off by poor functioning systems.
17. Make inquiries into the performance of the solar chargers to ascertain whether the problems encountered are mainly due to unreliable hardware that has a short working life rather than to poor practice in the way that the chargers were used. If the solution requires new equipment, ensure a budget line is developed for this.
18. Explore the possibility of providing mobile phones to every RC member who does not currently have a phone.
19. Include communication with affected populations as an element of all future programmes and funding proposals.

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## Appendix 1

### Questions on Information Needs and Access for Needs Assessments

#### *Essential questions*

1. How many households in your community have access to a functioning radio now?

- Most
- Many
- Some
- A few
- None at all

2. Which are the main radio stations that people in your community listen to now (if any)?  
(list up to three)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How many households in your community have access to a functioning television set?

- Most
- Many
- Some
- A few
- None at all

4. Which are the main TV stations that people in your community watch now (if any)? (list  
up to three)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many households in your community have access to a functioning mobile phone?

- Most
- Many
- Some
- A few
- None at all

6. Which language(s) do people in your community speak?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the three most important sources of information that your community uses to get information now?

- Radio
- TV
- Newspaper/magazine
- Telephone voice call
- SMS message
- Internet
- Noticeboards and posters
- Friends, neighbours and family
- Community leader
- Religious leader
- Government official
- Military official
- Aid worker
- Other (please specify)

8. What is the most important information that your community needs now?

- Food provision
- Access to water
- Health advice and treatment
- How to contact aid providers
- Market information
- Security updates
- How to communicate with your family
- News about the situation in my home community/country of origin
- Weather information
- Personal documentation (e.g. ID cards)
- Shelter (or shelter materials)
- Repair and reconstruction
- Government activities
- Environmental issues (e.g. nuclear disasters, chemical spills)
- Other (please specify)

*Optional questions*

9. What are the most trusted sources of information in your community?

- Radio
- TV
- Newspaper/magazine

- Telephone voice call
- SMS message
- Internet
- Notice boards and posters
- Friends, neighbours and family
- Community leader
- Religious leader
- Government official
- Military official
- Aid worker
- Other (please specify)

10. How would your community like to give information to aid providers?

- Telephone voice call
- SMS message
- Call in/SMS to radio/TV programme
- Email/social networking site
- Suggestion box
- Face-to-face meeting with aid worker
- Face-to-face meeting with government official
- Via community meetings
- Via community leaders
- Via religious leaders
- Other (please specify)

11. What kind of information would you like to share with aid providers? (Tick all pre-defined categories that apply)

- Questions and concerns about (please specify issues)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Alert aid providers to the needs of my community
- Complaints
- Share experiences
- Provide feedback about the delivery of aid and services (e.g. quality, gaps)
- Others (please specify)

## Appendix 2

### Check list to assess whether radio should be used to communicate with crisis-affected communities in a humanitarian emergency

1. How important is radio as a source of information in the affected community?
2. Which FM radio stations cover the area where the affected community is at present?
3. Which medium wave stations cover the same area?
4. Which short wave stations cover the same area and can be received clearly?
5. Which radio stations does the community usually listen to?
6. Does the affected community have access to working radio sets?
7. What are the peak listening period
8. Do people listen to the radio individually or collectively (in family or neighbourhood groups)
9. Who controls access to the radio sets and chooses the stations and programmes that are listened to? (This may affect the ability of women and children to hear messages and programming directed particularly at them)
10. What language(s) does the crisis-affected community speak?
11. Which radio programmes are particularly popular in the crisis-affected community?
12. Do any of the radio stations listened to regularly by the crisis affected community carry audience participation programming? (Phone-ins, SMS messages read out on air, debates with studio audience participation etc.)
13. Do you have suitably qualified specialists with appropriate language skills available to be interviewed by the radio station or take part in its audience participation programmes?

## Appendix 3

### Diagnostic survey to determine the viability of using mobile telecoms to communicate with a crisis-affected community

#### *Questions to determine mobile phone usage at a national level*

1. Mobile phone penetration rate (number of subscriber lines per 100 people)
2. Mobile network coverage in terms of population (percentage of population covered)
3. Mobile network coverage rate in terms of geographical area (percentage of territory covered)
4. Adult literacy rate (to determine the viability of using SMS messages)
5. Which mobile phone networks have the highest number of subscribers? (What percentage of market share do they have?)
6. Are there significant differences in network coverage and mobile phone ownership between urban and rural areas?
7. Are there significant differences in mobile phone ownership and literacy rates between men and women?
8. What do people mainly use their mobile phones for?
9. To what extent do people use mobile phones for the following purposes:
  - Send and receive SMS messages
  - Send and receive cash
  - Obtain information from organizations
  - Surf the internet
  - Listen to the radio

#### *Questions to determine mobile phone use at the local level – in the event of a humanitarian crisis affecting only part of the country*

1. What is the existing mobile network coverage in terms of the local population? (Has any of the telecoms infrastructure been damaged?)
2. What is the mobile phone penetration rate? (Is it significantly below the national average?)
3. Are local facilities to recharge mobile phones still operational?
4. Which mobile phone companies provide best coverage and have the most subscribers in this area?
5. What do local people mainly use mobile phones for?
6. To what extent do people use mobile phones for the following purposes:
  - Send and receive SMS messages
  - Send and receive cash
  - Obtain information from organizations
  - Surf the internet
  - Listen to the radio