

April 2021

BACKGROUND



The Building Resilient Communities in Somalia BRCiS is a humanitarian consortium that takes a bottom-up approach to supporting Somali communities in developing their capacity to resist and absorb minor shocks without undermining their ability to move out of poverty. Its primary mandate is to help marginalized and vulnerable communities in building their own resilience. BRCiS Consortium was created in late 2013 and has received funding from DFID, EU and the Ministry of Finance of Somalia. It grew to include 9 NGOs: Action Against Hunger (AAH), Candlelight, Cesvi, Concern Worldwide (CWW), Kaalo, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Candlelight (CL) and Save the Children (SC). The project activities range from livelihoods, basic services (WASH/health) to natural resource management and governance.

BRCiS currently works directly with more than 220 communities

an area outreach to more than 500 different communities

communities in 34 districts of Somalia

targeting more than 500,000 people

PEOPLE FIRST IMPACT METHOD



The People First Impact Method (P-FIM) is an approach that provides a practical way to properly engage communities. This is by training front-line staff to use simple, proven techniques that enable community members to discuss their issues and to share their knowledge and views openly. This feedback enables agencies, governments and donors to be aware of the issues that are most important to local people.¹ P-FIM is a tool and an approach that gives communities a voice. It identifies the causes of positive, negative and neutral change in their lives. It emphasises active listening, understanding context, shared ownership and responsibility for improved response. P-FIM module incorporates the following aspects, goal-free communication, two-way communication, working in teams (e.g. facilitator &

reporter), achieving best possible results, Continued engagement and How to incorporate innovation.

What does success look like?

- We have engaged the most vulnerable groups and included their inputs.
- The Community Action Plans (CAP) are re-aligned to take into account learning and evidence. i.e. how engagement was instrumental in informing our programmes and how information was translated into positive action e.g. improved targeting and impact.
- Each CAP presents a clear pathway to resilience at community/cluster level.
- Exit strategies are planned. Our 'exit strategy' should be to achieve local ownership before the end of the programme as the most effective exit strategy.

METHODOLOGY

1

In April 2020, BRCiS facilitated P-FIM consultations on COVID-19 with more than **100 Community Resilient Committees (CRCs) and Community Health Workers (CHWs)** across Somalia. The aim of this extensive process was to ensure that lessons from the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and DRC in 2019 on the importance of community engagement in preparedness are reflected in BRCiS programming. Consistent with the P-FIM two-way engagement model, consultations on COVID-19 were carried out with community representatives (CRCs, CHWs, etc.) on their understanding and the impact of COVID-19. In addition, to appreciate the local perceptions of the virus and prevention methods and the current spread and influencers. These findings provided BRCiS with a starting point in understanding the major issues communities face and to develop appropriate messaging and inform responses for each community.



2

Following initial community consultations in April, frontline and programme staff from the BRCiS agencies participated in a series of **online P-FIM Training of Trainers to enhance learning and discuss how best to continue community consultations.** The trained field staff went back to the community with the six main issues from the initial consultations to achieve greater insight, agree action plans and hear if new important issues are emerging.



3

BRCiS agencies completed **Round-2 P-FIM Consultations** between May 19 and June 7, 2020. Reports were shared with agencies to assist respond to COVID-19 and other priorities. On July 23rd, 40 agency personnel discussed adaptations following P-FIM R-2 discussion and actions communities and agencies are taking forward.



¹ Gerry McCarthy and Paul O'Hagan, People First Impact Method Facilitator's Toolkit, pg 4, <https://p-fim.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/P-FIM-Toolkit.pdf>

4 BRCiS agencies completed **Round-3 P-FIM Consultations** between August 12 and September 24, 2020. P-FIM Round-3 discussion issues were selected from R-2 discussion findings and cross-checked for accuracy with BRCiS agency teams. **8** issues were selected for two-way discussion. The first discussion issue gives community representatives the opportunity to discuss issues that are most important to them, whether positive or negative.



5 We began with **goal-free discussion** so that people first share whatever is important for them and to build trust (e.g. fear of hunger or flooding may be more important to people than fear of COVID-19). We then shared the **6 two-way discussion points** and ask if they are clear, record their statements and confirm they are recorded accurately. A consolidated report was shared with each agency to assist in their Community Action Plan (CAP) programmes.



FEEDBACK ON APPLICATION OF P-FIM BY SC

- **Communities appreciate** the change in engagement and the inclusion of vulnerable children and PLWD was important to accurately include their perspectives in the CAPs.
- **P-FIM builds trust in communities** and local stakeholders. It adds quality to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and findings including listening, recording, discussing, agreeing, validating and developing CAP. Meeting and listening requires time and this improves how we relate to important issues with the community.
- **Engagement failures:** Through using P-FIM, we realized that people often do not understand our questions or information we shared with them – we assume they do. During targeting, we use Local Authorities to inform communities of our projects but this alone is not enough. With P-FIM we meet all groups e.g. especially vulnerable girls. Without leading questions people shared a lot and freely asked us questions.
- **Quality information:** With P-FIM, we gather high quality information in understanding context and how communities address challenges before we add value. In this way we included community issues accurately in the CAPs.
- **Community feedback:** SC teams conducted discussions with 26 community representative groups. The standout issue shared by the community is the impact of multiple emergencies on family and community life with COVID-19 and lockdown exacerbating an already difficult situation. Addressing issues such as livestock disease, locusts, flooding etc. may considerably help communities rebuild.



HOW DID SC USE THE FEEDBACK FROM P-FIM?

PFIM became the foundation approach of engaging with communities, identifying the CAP priorities, and ultimately building trust between SC and community groups. Three key successes can be identified:

- 1. Community dialogue on women empowering and leadership training** were conducted for 30 female participants in both Baidoa and Beletweyne. The session aimed at empowering women on decision making in the community, having an active voice and decisive role within society to reduce gender inequality in political and social representation and have decision role for any activity that is taking place at their respective locality.
- 2. Peace building and conflict management training sessions** were conducted to 30 participants mainly from Community Relief Committees (CRCs) from BRCiS target communities while others were from local authority representatives, community elders and youths in Hiiraan region. The training was intended for the participants to understand fully the basic causes conflicts at grass root and ways of solving, the other objectives was to provide the opportunities for peace practitioners to learn conflict transformation and peace building skills.
- 3. COVID-19 engagement** was enhanced due to P-FIM engagements. In 2020 P-FIM engagements were conducted via phone calls to community groups, building on the already established trust and P-FIM platform. This informed SC response to COVID-19, understanding who communities would listen to and what the level of awareness and local acceptance of COVID-19 prevention activities was within communities.

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS



Shortage of trained P-FIM staff including female workers to listen to the voices of women and girls. We need to train more staff on P-FIM.



Managing community expectations is a challenge. This was especially a challenge for those who were not trained on P-FIM.



It requires time to **change agency and community mind-sets**, it was a challenge to take all the community issues and formulate them into the CAP.



Important to **involve managers in P-FIM:** The challenge is how to stay loyal to and integrate community information into CAPs. Managers are not present in the community, in the process we might lose the value of the community voice.