Humanitarian Practice Network
HPN
Managed by
Humanitarian Policy Group

Number 59
March 2007

Network Paper

Contingency planning and humanitarian action

A review of practice

Commissioned and published by the Humanitarian Practice Network at ODI

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In brief

• Humanitarian agencies have made significant progress in mainstreaming contingency planning into their management and operations. Important advances have also been made in the techniques contingency planners use. At the same time, however, achieving and sustaining truly dynamic contingency planning processes remains a major challenge for humanitarians beset with competing demands, limited staff time and constrained resources.

• This Network Paper explores the current process and practice of contingency planning in humanitarian organisations. It sets out the key terms and concepts relating to contingency planning, explores the contingency planning process, explains the main models used by humanitarian organisations and presents a new concept of the process that enables a more dynamic approach than previous frameworks.

• The paper also looks at the practice of contingency planning, examining scenario development, including the techniques used, the types of scenarios that work in different circumstances and the challenges scenario planners face. A number of case studies illustrate these different approaches.

• While important innovations in contingency planning have been made in recent years, a number of major problems remain. By identifying these challenges and attempting to chart a way forward, this paper aims to contribute to the further development of the field – with the ultimate goal of increasing the efficiency of humanitarian action.

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Printed and bound in the UK

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Acknowledgements

This paper was made possible with the support of the US Agency for International Development through the Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

I would like to thank Frances Stevenson, Jacqui Tong, Thomas Muller, Matthew Foley and Rachel Atkinson of the Humanitarian Practice Network for their encouragement, support and occasional cajoling during the preparation of this review. Thanks too to the members of the Reference Group, without whose considerable input this work would not have been possible: Everett Ressler (UNICEF), Carlo Scaramella and John Aylieff (WFP), Ramesh Rajasingham and Sylvie Dossou (OCHA), Adam Poulter (IFRC), Paul Anticoni (British Red Cross), Jock Baker and Carsten Voelz (CARE), Mark Janz (World Vision), David Hajjar (USAID/OFDA), Ian Howard-Williams (DFID), John Twigg (UCL), Maurice Herson (OXFAM), Valerie Ceylon and Claude Dunn (independent consultants) and Philip Buckle (Coventry University). Your guidance, challenges and demands for excellence have made this a humbling learning experience.

I am also immensely grateful to the practitioners who shared their experiences with me. They include Nadia Vaz and Jacque Higgins (WFP), Jane Cocking and Graham MacKay (OXFAM), David Carden, David Kaatrud, Ahunna Eziakonwa (OCHA), Rosa Malango, John Long, Herve Ludovic de Lys, Gerard Gomez, Douglas Reimer and Jean-Luc Tonglet (OCHA), Frederick Spielberg (UNICEF), Howard Standon (CARE) and Tanya Boudreau (The Food Economy Group). I would also like to thank Pat Henshaw, for her continued support and amazing edits. I am also grateful to the FEWS NET team for their support and patience, especially Roy Stacy, Chuck Chopak, Ellen Mathys and Glenn Levine, who have all helped along the way.

Finally, thanks to my dearest wife, Sarah, who has been incredibly supportive and insightful, and who graciously shared her considerable experience.

ISBN: 978 0 85003 840 8
Price per copy: £4.00 (excluding postage and packing).
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Key principles of contingency planning

- Contingency planning should be practical. In other words, it should be based on realistic parameters and should not be a bureaucratic exercise undertaken for its own sake. This starts with a scenario that is detailed enough to allow equally detailed planning and preparedness – but not overly detailed. It also requires enough flexibility to adapt plans in the likely event that real life differs from the assumptions made in the scenario.

- Contingency planning should be simple and easy to do. Contingency planning should not be a complex task undertaken only by specialists; rather, all staff – and indeed community members – should be able to participate.

- Contingency plans should be realistic enough that they can be implemented when needed. Plans which are not grounded in reality run the risk of failure and may create a false sense of security.

- Contingency plans should allow for efficient, effective and equitable use of resources to appropriately meet humanitarian needs.

- Contingency planning should be process-driven. Although written plans are important, without a good process contingency planning can be ineffective, resulting in plans being left on the shelf or in the filing cabinet.

- Contingency planning should be participatory, in order to maximise the benefits of the planning process.

- Contingency planning exercises should be followed up. Preparedness actions that are identified as a result of contingency planning should, where possible, be taken up, and further planning should be done if necessary.

- Contingency planning processes should be regularly tested through exercises, such as table-top exercises. This helps improve planning and increases staff members' familiarity with the plan.

- Contingency planning processes should include regular updates.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Humanitarians are constantly challenged by crises that rapidly materialise and just as rapidly change. Consequently, how prepared they are to respond to a crisis will often mean the difference between life and death for those affected. In the wake of back-to-back emergencies in Kosovo, East Timor, Mozambique and Central America in the late 1990s, humanitarian organisations have taken significant steps to improve, systematise and professionalise their emergency preparedness. Contingency planning has emerged as a key tool to ensure that agencies are as ready as they can be to respond to natural disasters, conflicts and other crises around the world.

Humanitarian agencies have made significant progress in mainstreaming contingency planning into their management and operations. Important advances have also been made in the techniques contingency planners use. At the same time, however, achieving and sustaining truly dynamic contingency planning processes remains a major challenge for humanitarians beset with competing demands, limited staff time and constrained resources.

Although little formal analysis or evaluation of the impact of humanitarian contingency planning has been carried out, this review found ample evidence, supported by an overwhelming consensus among practitioners, that contingency planning is effective in improving humanitarian response. This evidence shows that contingency planning improves emergency response, in the following ways:

- An active contingency planning process enables individuals, teams, organisations and communities to establish working relationships that can make a critical difference during a crisis. By working together in a contingency planning process, people develop a common understanding of problems, of each other's capacities and of objectives and organisational requirements.
- Contingency planning processes help to reinforce coordination mechanisms by keeping them active, and by clarifying roles and responsibilities before a crisis.
- During an emergency time pressure is an acute problem, denying humanitarians the opportunity to assess, think about and discuss response options. Contingency planning enables this to happen before the pressure of a crisis makes it difficult. In other words, contingency planning can be a tool for organisational learning. For example, World Vision incorporates this type of learning into its contingency planning systematically.
- From a practical and operational perspective, one of the most important benefits of contingency planning is identifying constraints – information gaps, for instance, or a lack of port capacity – prior to the onset of a crisis. Identifying these constraints allows action to be taken to address them. In recent years, this aspect of contingency planning has become a major focus for many humanitarian agencies.

This Network Paper explores the current process and practice of contingency planning in humanitarian organisations. It is organised into three sections:

The first section (chapters 2 and 3) sets out the key terms and concepts relating to contingency planning, and explores the contingency planning process. It explains the main models used by humanitarian organisations, and presents a new concept of the process that enables a more dynamic approach than previous frameworks.

The second section (chapters 4, 5 and 6) looks at the practice of contingency planning. It examines scenario development, including the techniques used, the types of scenarios that work in different circumstances and the challenges scenario planners face. A number of case studies illustrate these different approaches. Finally, this section looks at what constitutes good practice in managing contingency planning processes.

The third section (chapter 7) presents the paper's main conclusions, and suggests some recommendations for the future. While important innovations in contingency planning have been made in recent years, a number of major problems remain. By identifying these challenges and attempting to chart a way forward, this paper aims to contribute to the further development of the field – with the ultimate goal of increasing the efficiency of humanitarian action.

Methodology

This Network Paper draws on three years' research into the process and practice of contingency planning in the humanitarian field. It is based on the experiences of humanitarian organisations, guidance material and evaluations. A wide range of practitioners provided valuable input. In addition, an expert Reference Group was constituted, made up of leading practitioners from NGOs, UN agencies, donors and academia, which undertook an extensive peer review. The paper was also reviewed by the IASC Sub-working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning. Finally, the author has drawn on his own personal experience to inform the work.

Chapter 2
What is contingency planning?

Defining contingency planning is neither simple nor easy: in practice, the term is used to describe a wide variety of activities, in a wide variety of contexts. This paper defines contingency planning for humanitarians as:

> *A process, in anticipation of potential crises, of developing strategies, arrangements and procedures to address the humanitarian needs of those adversely affected by crises.*

Other definitions are given in Box 1. At its most basic, contingency planning means making a plan to respond to a potential crisis or emergency. This includes developing scenarios (anticipating the crisis), determining the objectives of an organisation or group of organisations in these situations, and defining what will be needed to reach those objectives. Contingency planning is used for many types of situation, including natural disasters, conflict and economic collapse. It can also often be used to deal with specific operational constraints, such as a bottleneck in a supply chain. Box 2 illustrates some of the contingencies covered in the plans examined in this paper.

Contingency planning is most commonly undertaken for emerging crises, for example as hostilities break out in a particular area. It also occurs following a crisis, to ensure that, when the next crisis breaks, everyone and everything is ready. Contingency planning under these circumstances enables the lessons of recent experience to be incorporated into the process. Contingency planning may also be undertaken during a crisis, in case the situation deteriorates or improves, as a result of a peace agreement for example. In situations without an on-going crisis, contingency planning is often an annual or semi-annual exercise. The focus of the planning is determined by a hazard, risk or context analysis. In Central America and the Caribbean, for example, countries often plan for hurricanes every May and June before the hurricane season begins.

A great deal of contingency planning is informal, taking place between individuals during the course of everyday collaboration. In contrast, formal contingency planning follows an agreed or defined process, and results in a consensus contingency plan. In practice, however, even in formal processes there is a great deal of informal planning. Guidelines and experts frequently stress the utility of informal planning, and tend to regard the planning process as more important than the development of written contingency plans.

Humanitarian organisations use three main types or methods of contingency planning. *Scenario planning* is the most common type of planning. This involves the development of specific scenarios, which are then used as a basis for developing a response plan. *Preparedness planning* – sometimes called response planning or response preparedness planning – is becoming more widely used. It involves identifying gaps and challenges to effective emergency response, and then planning and implementing a series of actions to increase response capacity and reduce potential gaps. Simple or generic scenarios are used as a basis for developing preparedness plans. Finally, *all-hazards emergency planning*, common among government emergency management agencies, establishes clear roles, responsibilities and chains of command, and uses standard

Box 1

Selected agency definitions of contingency planning

Inter-Agency Standing Committee and World Food Programme: The process of establishing programme objectives, approaches and procedures to respond to situations or events that are likely to occur, including identifying those events and developing likely scenarios and appropriate plans to prepare for and respond to them in an effective manner.

UNHCR and UN Disaster Management Training Programme: A forward planning process, in a state of uncertainty, in which scenarios and objectives are agreed, managerial and technical actions defined, and potential response systems put in place in order to prevent, or better respond to, an emergency or critical situation.

World Health Organisation: The development of different plans to be placed in effect if certain events occur.[1]

Box 2

Common contingencies

- Hurricanes/cyclones
- Floods
- Earthquakes
- Droughts
- Crop failure
- Volcanic eruptions
- Tsunamis
- Landslides
- Epidemics
- Famine
- Economic collapse
- Internal conflict
- War
- Displacement/forced migration
- Border closures
- Peace
- Food aid pipeline breaks
- Prepositioning
- Logistical bottlenecks

Table 1: Common types of contingency planning

	Scenario-based contingency planning	Preparedness planning	All-hazards emergency planning
Focus	Specific scenarios are developed, with a plan focused on responding to these scenarios	Specific preparedness actions are identified and planned for	Defining chains of command and common tasks carried out in emergencies. Developing standard implementing procedures for common emergency response tasks
Best used...	• When specific and detailed planning is needed • When a specific threat or emerging crisis exists	• When no specific threat is identified • When preparing for difficult-to-predict, rapid on-set disasters (e.g. earthquakes)	• To clarify responsibilities and accountabilities • When standardised response procedures are needed
Pitfalls	• Can be too detailed and prone to the 'scenario trap' (see Box 16, p. 21) • Scenarios are often wide of the mark	• Can be too focused on preparedness, without a plan to respond to the emergency • Can be too broad and lacking the detail needed to respond adequately	• Can lack a response plan • Tends to be effective only in established emergency management organisations
Who	Most common form of contingency planning among humanitarian actors. Used by donors, NGOs, UN agencies, national governments and NGOs	Also very common among humanitarian actors. Used by donors, NGOs, UN agencies, national governments and NGOs	Most common contingency planning technique used in developed countries, especially in the West. Most commonly used by national emergency management agencies, civil defence and emergency services

procedures most often formalised in checklists to guide emergency response.[2] Table 1 provides an overview of these common types of contingency planning, and their advantages and disadvantages.

Contingency planning commonly takes place at organisational, inter-agency and community levels. In recent years, inter-agency planning has become more prevalent, with humanitarian actors working to ensure coordination and to maximise the use of resources among agencies in the field. In addition, communities, with partners, undertake their own contingency planning. This paper focuses on organisational and inter-agency contingency planning.*

What *isn't* contingency planning?

Knowing what contingency planning is not is as important as knowing what it is. Contingency planning tends to be used interchangeably with other, similar terms, such as emergency preparedness and disaster management. The most important distinction is between *contingency planning* and *emergency preparedness*. Emergency preparedness consists of all activities taken in anticipation of a crisis to expedite effective emergency response. This includes contingency planning, but is not limited to it: it also covers stockpiling, the creation and management of stand-by capacities and training staff and partners in emergency response.

* More detailed information on community-level planning and preparedness can be found in John Twigg, *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness in Aid Programming*, Good Practice Review 9 (London: ODI, 2004).

Contingency planning experts agree that contingency planning is most effective when done in the context of a well-articulated emergency preparedness framework. Given the complexity of today's humanitarian operations, and the multitude of preparedness mechanisms within the humanitarian system, contingency planning is often used to define what preparedness mechanisms will be used, when and where. Before a response is required, contingency planning affords humanitarian agencies the opportunity to define when, where and why their emergency response teams will be deployed, when emergency funds will be used and what kind of responses, materials and types of personnel they will need. In addition, global-level, strategic contingency planning can aid in decisions about the levels of emergency preparedness required – for example, how many people should be on emergency rosters. In other words, contingency planning is one tool of emergency preparedness, but it is not emergency preparedness itself.

What is a contingency plan?

The output of the contingency planning process is the contingency plan. A contingency plan is the synthesis of the discussions, analysis and, most importantly, *decisions* made during the planning process. It is also a means of communicating these ideas to people who may not have been involved in the planning process. Written contingency plans also document, and in some cases formalise, commitments made during the planning process.

At their simplest level, contingency plans answer some basic questions about a potential situation. These include:

Box 3

How strategic contingency planning supports organisational preparedness

As part of the establishment of its global emergency response depot in 2002, WFP needed to decide how much equipment it should store. Based on recent experiences in Kosovo, Mozambique, East Timor and Central America, a global scenario set was developed in which WFP would have to establish a totally new operation and augment two others simultaneously. This scenario was then used to plan the stock levels in the global reserve. The global emergency response depot has been in constant use in recent years, significantly decreasing the time it takes for WFP to establish operations in a country. In this way, contingency planning was used to guide the development of other emergency preparedness mechanisms.[3]

- What could happen?
- What would be needed to alleviate the situation?
- How would action be taken?
- What materials, supplies and staff would be needed?
- What preparation is necessary?
- How much will it cost?

While most humanitarian organisations have their own contingency plan formats and outlines, common elements address these basic questions. Box 4 provides a generic outline of the typical components of a contingency plan, connecting each element to one of these key questions. Each of these elements is briefly defined below. They are explained more fully in Chapter 5.

Scenario(s)

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) *Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance* defines a scenario as:

> *An account or synopsis of a possible course of events that could occur, which forms the basis for planning assumptions.*[4]

Box 4

Key elements of a contingency plan

Question	Contingency plan element
What could happen?	Scenario
What would we need to do?	Response strategy
How would we do it?	Implementation plan
What would we need to do this?	Operational support plan
What can we do to prepare?	Preparedness plan
How much would it cost?	Budget

Thus, scenarios are relevant summaries of a range of considerations, such as what planners think could happen, what conditions people will face, what impact a hazard will have and what capacity people will have to cope with a crisis. Scenarios contain the main planning assumptions used to develop the contingency plan. As such, they are the foundation of contingency plans.

Response strategy

Based on the scenarios a response strategy is developed, including specific intervention objectives and targets, including beneficiary numbers. The response strategy links the scenarios and the subsequent plans.

Implementation plan

While the response strategy defines what is to be achieved, the implementation plan defines how it is going to be achieved. Thus, the response strategy defines appropriate interventions or programmes; the implementation plan defines how these programmes will be implemented (e.g. using community-based targeting and partnership with local governments) and the steps required (e.g. emergency needs assessment and logistics).

Operational support plan

The operational support plan sets out the administrative, logistical and other support requirements of a response.

Preparedness plan

Almost inevitably during the planning process, actions to improve preparedness for both specific and general crises are identified. In some exercises, these actions become the focus of planning efforts because they can have the biggest potential impact on actual responses. The results of this process, often called preparedness planning, are then consolidated into a preparedness plan.

Budget

Finally, a budget is developed, both for preparedness and for the actual responses that have been planned.

Table 2 (p. 6) provides a simple example of how these six elements fit together to form a complete contingency plan.

The level of detail that should be included in contingency plans is a topic of considerable debate. Some contingency plans are extremely detailed, while others are short and synthetic, sometimes taking the form of a checklist, or in the case of all-hazards planning a series of implementation procedures. Some contingency plans contain only scenarios, while others include procurement requirements, sometimes down to tables and chairs. In general, contingency planners must always question the utility of their work. The details in some plans are useful, while in others they are not.

This last point is key. Effective contingency planning requires planners to consider what will be of most benefit in each context, and to make reasoned decisions about where to prioritise the often limited time and resources available. This principle applies to just about all aspects of

the process, from the number and type of scenario to the format used and the level of participation. Table 3 highlights when different elements of a contingency plan are most useful. Planners can compare this with their own objectives to find the balance of focus and detail that most meets their needs.

Table 2: Sample contingency plan: emergency water for refugees

Scenario	• 100,000 refugees enter the country. They have no access to potable water
Response strategy	• Provide minimum levels of potable water to 100,000 refugees
Implementation plan	• Deliver water by tankers to refugee camps for two months • Drill deep water wells in camps • Set up a camp water committee to manage wells
Operational support plan	• Hire five staff members to carry out the projects • Set up a field office near camps
Preparedness plan	• Identify well drilling sites • Negotiate a rental contract for water tankers • Create a roster of staff who could be hired at short notice • Preposition water equipment and supplies near border
Budget	• $1,000,000

Table 3: When to focus on different elements of a contingency plan

Contingency plan element	Main utility	When to focus planning efforts on this element (and cautionary notes)
Scenario	• Provides a basis for planning • Useful in generating consensus on the nature of potential crises	• Most contingency planning efforts start with scenario development – keep it simple and general if there is no specific threat, but when there is an emerging crisis engage in more detailed scenario development • Avoid the 'scenario trap'
Response strategy	• Developing appropriate humanitarian responses	• Contingency planning should always contain a response strategy, as this anchors the other elements of the plan • A simple strategy can be developed when there is no specific threat. A more complex and detailed strategy can be developed when an emerging crisis is identified
Implementation plan	• Defining how responses will be structured and implemented programmatically and logistically	• Detailed implementation planning is effective when there is an identified potential crisis
Operational support plan	• Identifying the human resource, administration, finance, ICT, security and other needs in a response	• Detailed operational support planning is most effective when there is an identified potential crisis • Implementing procedures can be developed and refined as part of an all-hazards planning exercise at any time to help standardise responses in these areas
Preparedness plan	• Identifying actions that can be taken before a crisis to improve response	• Focusing on preparedness actions is almost always beneficial • When there is no specific threat, preparedness planning can be the main focus of planning efforts
Budget	• Determining the cost of preparedness and response activities	• Developing budgets is most useful when a specific emerging crisis has been identified and the budget can be converted into project budgets • Budgets for preparedness activities are advisable at all stages in the process

Chapter 3
Towards a dynamic contingency planning process

It is not uncommon for a single individual to be assigned the task of writing a contingency plan. In practice, this person is often either a junior staff member, a regional or headquarters staff member or a consultant. Typically, the drafter is left alone, with very little input or guidance, and key staff members are not involved because contingency planning competes with many other more immediate demands on their time, especially when the emergency response is already under way. As a result, these key staff do not always agree with the results. The plans are lost, forgotten or ignored, and the relationships and common understanding about what to do in a new emergency never develop.

In contrast, a good contingency planning process, even one that does not produce a written contingency plan, can be tremendously beneficial. It allows the formation of working relationships which facilitate effective teamwork and better decision-making, because many of the issues, especially organisational ones, have already been discussed and agreements reached. In theory, achieving a good contingency planning process should be relatively straightforward. In practice, however, it is anything but, as this chapter explains.

Box 5

Turning a bad process around

A good contingency planner can turn around a bad planning process. Contingency plans drafted with minimal input from decision-makers often generate contentious discussions. While this might not be the most efficient way to start a planning process, it can yield results. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, one humanitarian agency was closing down operations despite worsening conflict. The agency's draft contingency plan resulted in an internal debate which halted the close out, and led to more resources being allocated to the country. It also resulted in the creation of a high-level management taskforce to oversee preparedness and response to the growing crisis. Without the debate precipitated during the contingency planning process, it is likely that the agency would have continued to phase its operations out, despite the deteriorating situation.

Contingency planning processes considered

Most humanitarian agencies use one of two basic concepts to guide their contingency planning processes: the (more common) linear model, and the (less common) continuum or cyclical model. The linear model provides a step-by-step approach that helps break down the planning process into clear and definable components. The continuum model helps align planning efforts with the various phases of the emergency cycle. It recognises the dynamic nature of contingency planning, showing how it can support the management of humanitarian action at different stages of emergency response.

The linear model

Two examples best illustrate the linear planning model: the World Food Programme (WFP)'s *Contingency Planning Guidelines* and the IASC's *Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance*, which represent the agreed standard for inter-agency planning among IASC members.[5]

The WFP model has five steps, illustrated in Figure 1. In this process, the first step requires analysis of the hazards and risks faced by a population, to develop a better appreciation of the types of situation that require contingency planning. This is followed by a specific prioritisation of contingencies (possible situations). For each of these contingencies, scenarios are developed, and form the basis for a contingency plan. Finally, preparedness actions defined in the plan are implemented, and the plan is periodically updated.

The IASC process focuses more on inter-agency collaboration, both in planning and in implementation. Its model consists of six steps, illustrated in Figure 2 (p. 8).

Figure 1

WFP's contingency planning process

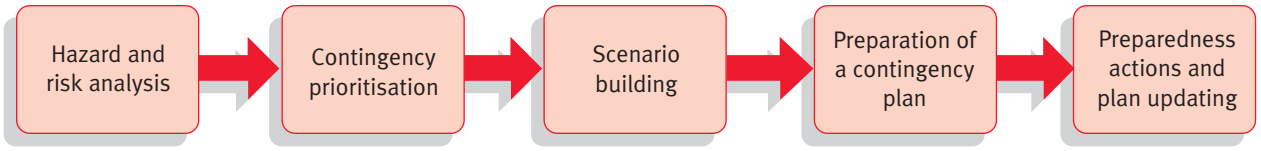
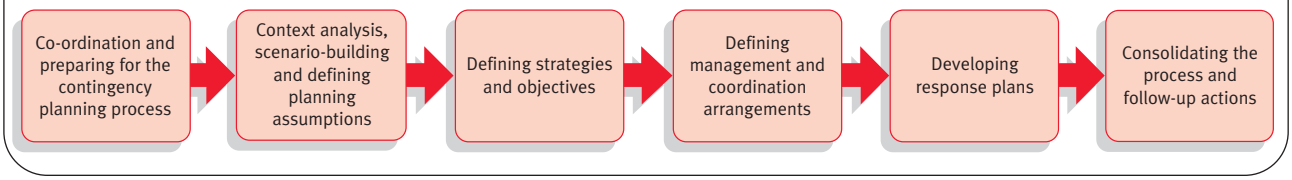


Figure 2

IASC contingency planning process



In the first step, goals are defined and participation is determined, a schedule is set and roles and responsibilities are documented. This is followed by a context analysis to provide planners with a solid understanding of the hazards faced by a population, and their likely impact. Scenarios are then developed, which are used to set objectives and intervention strategies, and then management and coordination mechanisms are defined. Response plans are developed, which in an inter-agency context normally means that each sector or cluster develops a specific plan for the delivery of the services or programmes that they believe necessary under a given scenario. Finally, sector and agency response plans are consolidated and checked to make sure that they are consistent with overall objectives and strategies, and with the roles and responsibilities defined in earlier steps in the process.

The continuum model

Figure 3 illustrates CARE's approach to contingency planning, which utilises the alternative, continuum model. Here, contingency planning is placed at the centre of an emergency management cycle.[6] Unlike the linear model, the continuum approach envisages contingency planning as an ongoing process that does not finish with the activation of the emergency response. Since the situation can evolve rapidly, ongoing contingency planning helps emergency managers anticipate and prepare for different possibilities. As the response moves towards recovery and the support of durable solutions to the crisis, contingency planning again helps humanitarian actors anticipate and prepare for the evolving situation. The cycle is complete when lessons from the response are incorporated back into the contingency planning process, and it is triggered again when early warning mechanisms indicate the onset of the next crisis. In this way, the continuum models anticipates the dynamic nature of contingency planning, showing how it can support the management of humanitarian action at different stages of emergency response.

Contingency planning recast

Three fundamental activities are at the core of contingency planning: scenario development, planning and application. Potential crises or emergency situations are envisaged, plans to respond to them are developed, and then action is taken either to prepare or respond. For a contingency planning process to be truly dynamic, these three steps must be ongoing, and must feed into the cycle of activities surrounding emergency management.

This review proposes a simple conception of the contingency planning process based on these three main activities; it is illustrated in Figure 4 (p. 10). This conception of contingency planning puts scenario-building and the development of contingency plans at its centre. Surrounding these core activities is a series of other activities, in which contingency planning is applied. Organisation, good management and preparation articulate this process.

In this model, scenario development and the development of contingency plans are ongoing processes, building on one another. This does not mean that the job of writing up scenarios and plans never ends. Rather, it means that humanitarian organisations should be constantly asking what crises they may face, how the emergencies they are responding to might evolve, what these changes or crises mean for them and thus what they are going to do to prepare and respond to these scenarios. When a situation is identified with clear humanitarian consequences, requiring some kind of humanitarian action or change in existing programmes, a decision on the level of formal contingency planning is required. This could mean that a quick informal contingency plan is developed, or it could mean that a major national-level inter-agency contingency planning process is pursued.

Ensuring that contingency planning is built into the terms of reference of staff and evaluation processes is one way to help foster a dynamic contingency planning process, but ultimately it has to become part of the culture of humanitarian organisations. The process also has to be clearly and directly linked to action. It must help translate early warning into early action, feed into and guide emergency preparedness, emergency assessment and response efforts, and form the foundation of operational or emergency response plans.

Early warning and contingency planning

Surprisingly perhaps, there is only limited interplay between early warning and contingency planning. Early warning clearly triggers contingency planning exercises, and contingency plans generally contain early warning triggers and indicators. But at a systemic level integration is weak.

Four important links between early warning and contingency planning exist, and can be strengthened:

Box 6

The daisy wheel approach

The daisy wheel approach links agency, sector or cluster planning with the inter-agency planning process. It does this by limiting the inter-agency process to a minimum set of necessary components. The remainder of the planning effort is left to agencies, sectors or clusters. Typically, three main components are found at the centre of the daisy wheel: common scenarios, common response strategies and objectives and common services, such as joint telecommunications, security or logical operations. Common scenarios and response strategies anchor the inter-agency planning process without overburdening it. Once plans in different sectors have been developed, these need to be revised to ensure that they fall within the common strategy developed in the inter-agency process, and so that any potential problems, duplications or other issues are identified.

Diagram source: IASC, *Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance*.

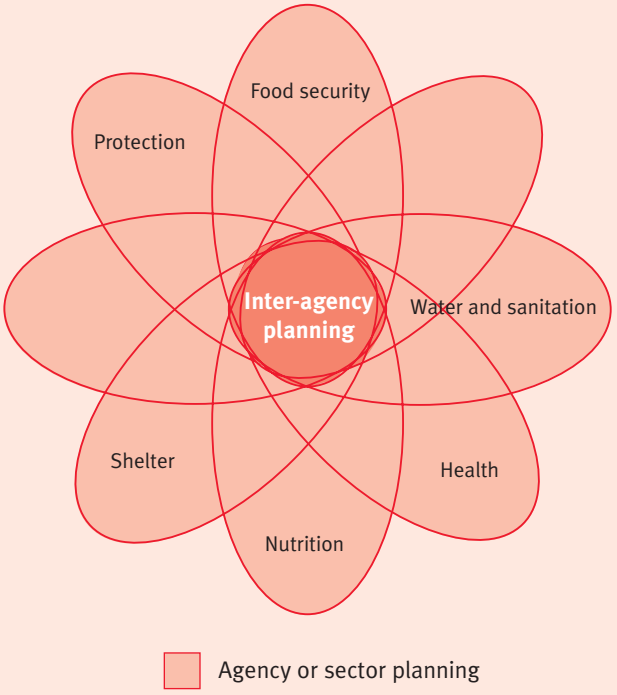
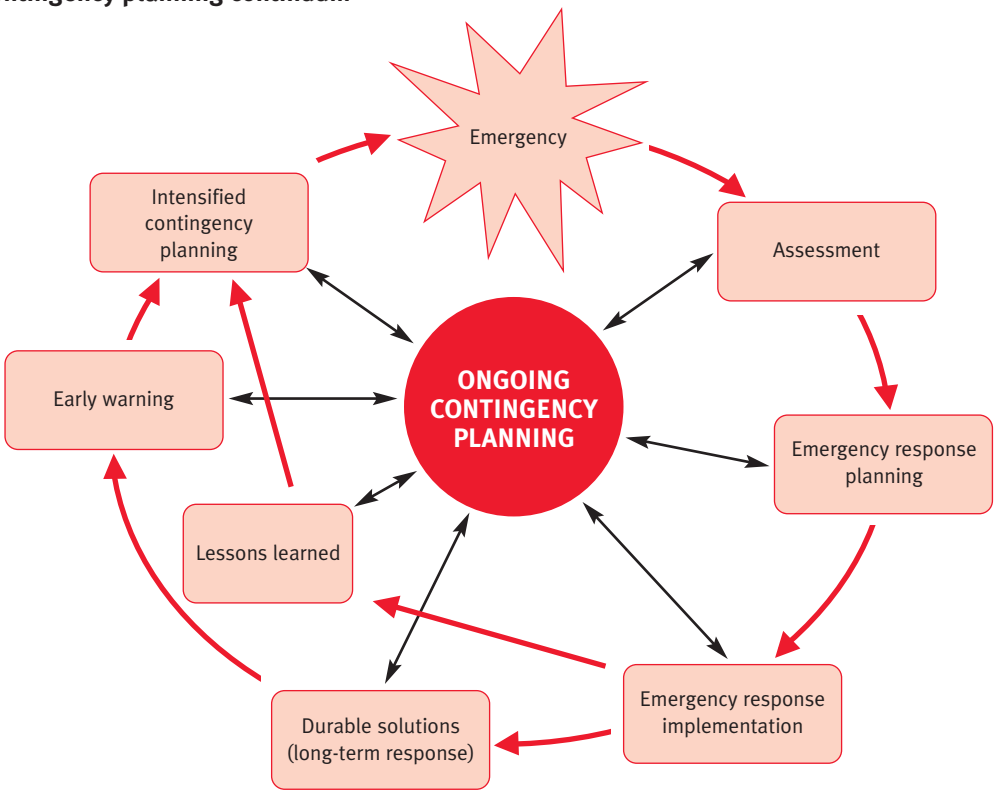


Figure 3

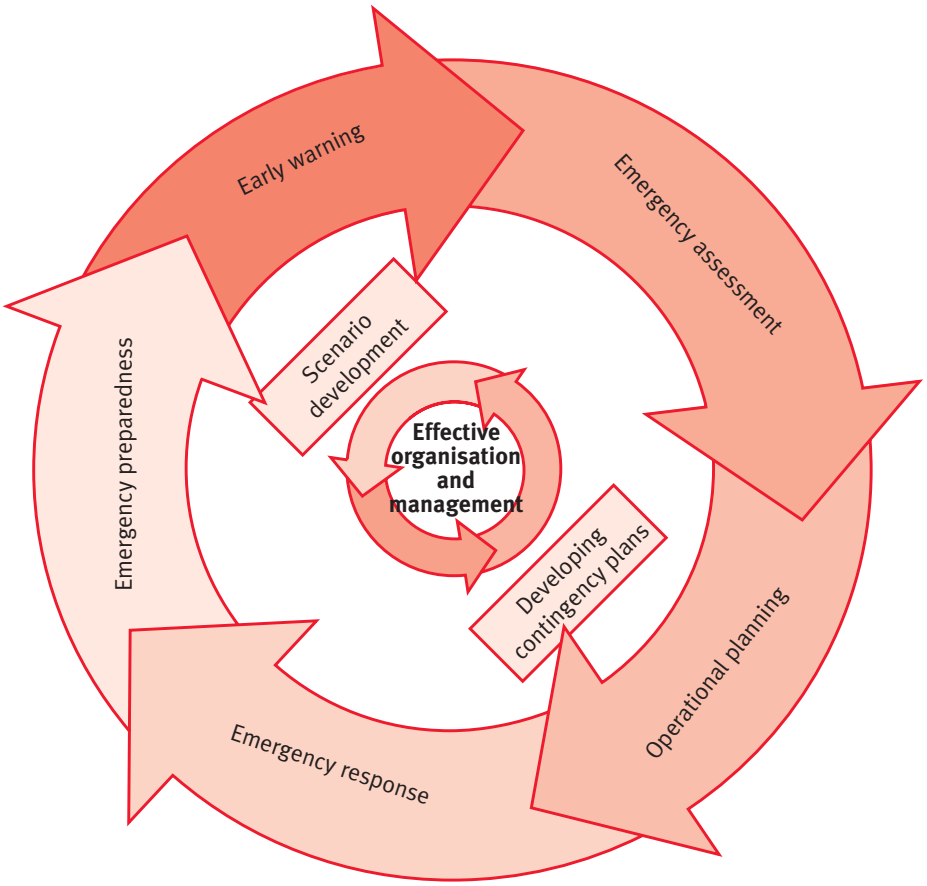
The contingency planning continuum



Source: CARE International

Figure 4

A simple conception of the contingency planning process



1. **Early warning is a catalyst for contingency planning processes.** Early warning prompts contingency plans to be developed, updated and implemented.
2. **Contingency plans help focus early warning efforts.** Scenarios commonly contain triggers for action, and early warning indicators are defined to help planners know when the scenario is occurring and when the plan should be activated.
3. **Early warning is a major source of baseline information, especially for scenario development.** Early warning organisations tend to maintain significant databases on hazards, and on the populations these hazards affect. These are used to determine when a hazard will have an impact that warrants a humanitarian response.
4. **Early warning analysts use scenarios** to examine the impact of hazards to determine if an early warning is necessary, and to illustrate the potential nature of the emerging crisis about which they have issued their warning. These scenarios can be used as a basis for contingency planning. In fact significant opportunities exist here to strengthen the links between early warning and contingency planning. However, in a number of cases amongst those examined in this review, contingency planning exercise led by early warning institutions fell into the scenario trap. Excellent technical analysis was done, but little real planning took place.

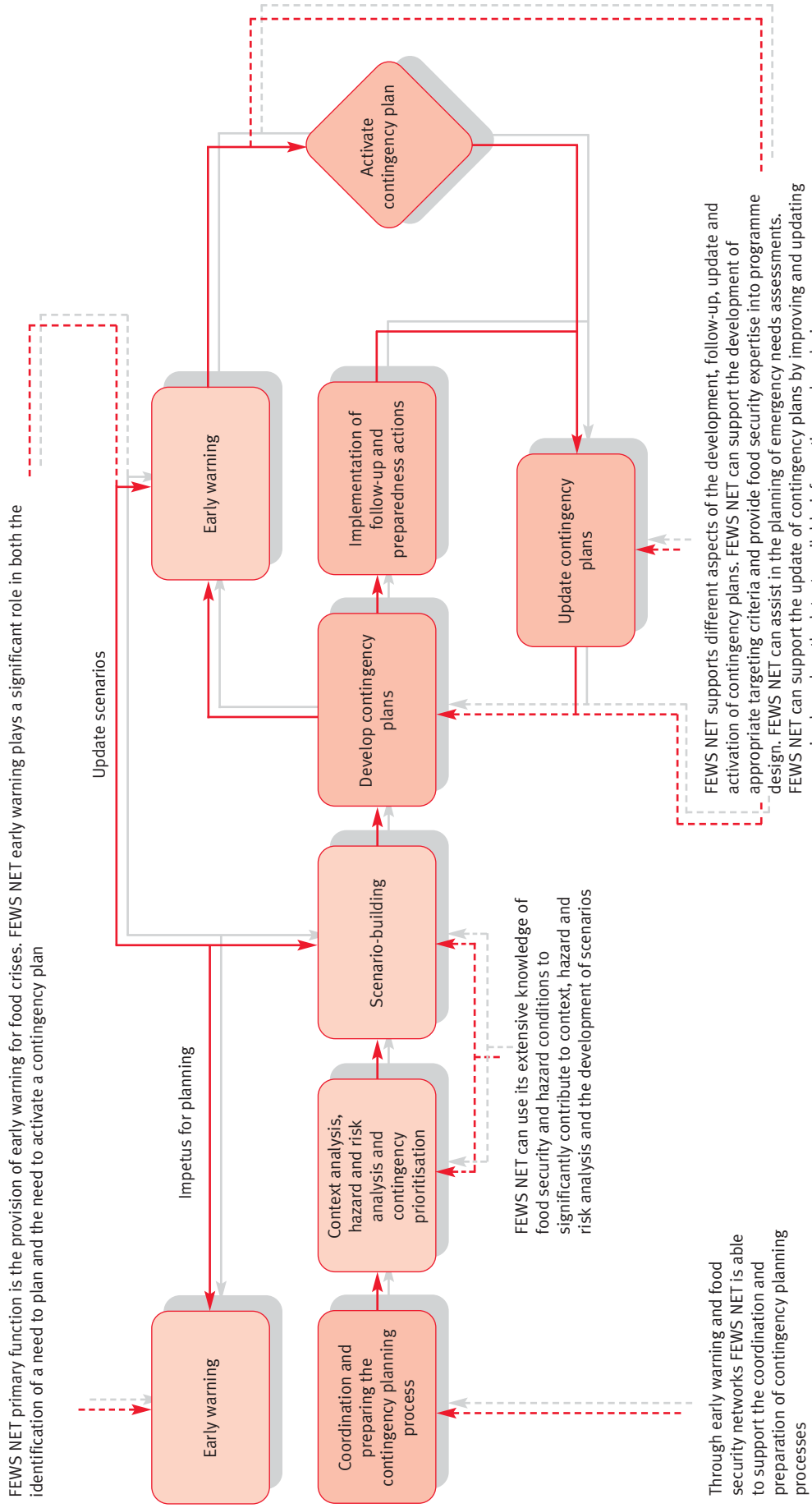
The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), a USAID-funded early warning activity operating for over two decades, has clarified how its early warning work fits into contingency planning processes, using the IASC contingency planning process. Figure 5 illustrates FEWS NET's approach.

Maximising preparedness impact and reducing the burden of scenario planning

Maintaining a dynamic contingency planning process requires the judicious use of often overburdened staff and other resources, with the objective of maximising the impact of the process on the actual emergency response. Recently, humanitarian agencies, including UNICEF and CARE, have begun to adopt a new contingency model combining the practical benefits and flexibility of preparedness planning with a more detailed focus on scenario planning.

Figure 5

FEWS NET's role in contingency planning



Source: FEWS NET Contingency and Response Planning Framework, http://www.fews.net/resources/gcontent/pdf/100752.pdf

This model breaks the contingency planning process into two stages. First, preparedness planning is undertaken on a regular basis, normally during an annual update. The preparedness plan focuses on identifying actions that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of emergency response. These actions are then implemented, to the degree that resources allow. Then, when early warning indicates that a potential humanitarian crisis is developing, scenario-based contingency planning is used to define specific and more detail response plans. In this way, the significant investment made in developing detailed scenarios and response plans is focused only on situations with a high likelihood of occurring. In addition, these plans are built on the solid foundation laid by the preparedness planning process.

Exercises and simulations to test the plan

Exercises or simulations are important parts of contingency planning processes in most developed nations, and are carried out regularly by many national emergency management agencies. But exercises are not common in humanitarian contingency planning processes. Exercises allow plans to be tested and weak points to be identified. They also familiarise participants with the plan and its implementation. Research in developed countries suggests that simulations and exercises have a significant impact on the effectiveness of emergency managers.[7] UNICEF presents one example where exercises have been incorporated into the contingency planning process of a humanitarian organisation. Box 7 describes how contingency planning, simulation and training reinforce each other to improve humanitarian response.

Box 7

UNICEF's triple recipe of contingency planning, emergency training and simulation
Frederick Spielberg, UNICEF

UNICEF launched its annual contingency planning programme in the late 1990s. Since then, it has become standard in every country office. It requires staff members to identify likely risks, elaborate scenarios, plan response strategies and operationalise their support plan. This initiative has demonstrably strengthened emergency systems at the country level.

More recently, the stand-alone annual contingency planning exercise has been supplemented by a regimen of emergency training courses and country office simulations. The training takes the form of a three–five-day hands-on course for up to 40 participants, with modules covering topics such as risk profiling, emergency programming, needs assessment and emergency administrative and financial procedures. The training has focused mainly on UNICEF staff, but other partners have also participated, including WFP, WHO, UNAMA, UNDP, UNFPA and UNHCR, as well as the Brazilian Civil Defence forces and Indian health services.

The simulations are full-day, office-based drills designed to test the country office's capacity to carry out typical emergency response activities during the first 12 hours of a humanitarian emergency. UNICEF uses four different scenarios (flood, drought, earthquake and armed conflict) and is working on a fifth, involving pandemic influenza. The simulations provide an initial situation, adapted to the context of the country in question. The country office is then asked to produce 12 deliverables by the end of the day (such as a security briefing, a situation report, a response plan, a supply list and a flash appeal). Staff are bombarded with a barrage of e-mails, phone calls and meetings, including a mock inter-agency meeting of the UN Country Team.

Staff have found that it is the *combination* of the three exercises – contingency planning, training and simulation – which serves best to prepare country offices for emergencies. A few real-life humanitarian disasters confirmed the value of this triple combination. UNICEF-Zimbabwe underwent the three processes during 2004–2005. In June 2005, when the Zimbabwean government's Operation Murambatsvina razed shanty-towns and left thousands of urban residents homeless, the Country Office responded quickly and efficiently to the humanitarian emergency, completing the various tasks required with a minimum of delay and confusion. In early 2006, the Syria Country Office revised its contingency plan, received a partial training course and passed the earthquake simulation; some four months later, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon pushed a million refugees into Syria. The acting head of office subsequently acknowledged the value of having undergone the exercises as a 'dry run' for the real emergency.

Chapter 4
Developing scenarios

When organisations respond to a humanitarian crisis, one of their first actions is to do an assessment. Humanitarian organisations need to know what has happened, where and why, how many people have been affected, and for how long. The answers to these questions provide a basis for developing an emergency response strategy and plan. But when planners develop a contingency plan, the answers to these questions are unknown. Thus, in lieu of an assessment, contingency planners use scenarios as a basis for planning. This chapter explains the various techniques humanitarian practitioners use to develop scenarios for contingency planning, and outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each.

What is a scenario?

Scenarios are descriptions of situations that could occur: they are sets of informed assumptions about a situation that may require humanitarian action. The most common assumptions are about:

- The cause of a humanitarian crisis (for example natural hazards, conflict, economic collapse). This is often called the *contingency*.
- The effect of this event or situation on people, its severity and the types of humanitarian need it will generate.
- The timing and progression of events.
- Other factors that will affect the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to these needs. For example, will roads and bridges be washed out, or will the conflict prevent access to affected areas? Assumptions about the capacity of humanitarian organisations to respond are also common, such as whether staff and supplies are pre-positioned.

Approaches

By far the most common approach to scenario-building in humanitarian contingency planning is the *best, most likely and worst case scenario approach*. Scenarios are developed which normally (though not invariably) describe differing levels of severity of the same contingency. A variation is the best, middle and worst case scenario approach. Table 4 gives some examples to illustrate this type of planning.

Taking this approach to scenario development allows planners to examine and plan for different scales of the same potential crisis or emergency. The method is easy to understand, which becomes important in complex planning exercises. For example, in some contingency planning processes people from different regions of a country are asked to provide input into a national contingency plan. Using best, middle and worst case scenarios allows for easy consolidation of the results. Box 8 describes how this technique was used in Afghanistan; it has also been applied in similar ways in Ethiopia and Mozambique.

In most contingency planning exercises that use best, middle and worst case scenarios as their basis, little attention is given to the best case scenario. Instead, planners focus on the worst case and the most likely or mid-case scenarios. There are two common arguments for doing this. First, many contingency planners argue that, if they plan for the worst and are flexible, then they will be prepared for anything. Second, the most effective use of time is to plan for the most likely scenarios because these have the greatest chance of being used. However, in some cases the best case scenario also represents a major shift

Table 4: Best, middle and worst case scenarios

Scenario	Drought	Flood	Earthquake
Best	No drought	Normal seasonal flooding	Earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter Scale causing some minor damage in rural areas
Middle or most likely	Moderate drought affecting one part of the country	Major flood affecting 100,000 people	Earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter Scale causing some major damage in rural areas, including some medium-sized towns
Worst	Severe drought affecting large areas of the county	Extreme flood affecting 1,000,000, including people in the capital city	Earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter Scale with an epicentre in a major city causing catastrophic damage

Box 8

Decentralised scenario development in Afghanistan[8]

Humanitarian organisations were faced with constant challenges throughout Afghanistan's long civil war. From 1998 to 2003, conflict was compounded by a severe drought, especially in the southern part of the country. Humanitarian organisations needed to be able to anticipate and plan for population movements in order to provide effective assistance. To do this, a standard format was created which working groups in different regions of the country could use to develop displacement scenarios, incorporating both drought and conflict displacement into the planning. Each working group was asked to provide best, middle and worst case scenarios for displacement from drought and conflict. The results of regional scenarios were then consolidated to develop a national set of scenarios and contingency plans.

in the situation which requires a significant response, such as when a peace process takes hold.

Another approach to scenario-building is the *augmentation* or *step scenario approach*. This describes the potential escalation of a crisis in the scenario, and the corresponding response requirements. This type of scenario is often used in planning for refugee and displacement crises where, as the crisis progresses, the number of people affected progressively increases, along with the scale of their humanitarian need. In turn, the response capacity required of humanitarian organisations also increases.

Augmentation or step scenarios try to set levels at which additional action and response capacity is required. In some situations, the thresholds established by these scenarios are tied to resources. When the threshold is reached, the resources are released. A good example of this occurred during contingency planning for refugee influxes from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into Kosovo in 2001. UNHCR's contingency plan for this crisis was directly linked to a central emergency fund. When the number of refugees entering Kosovo reached pre-established levels, funding was immediately released to allow quick implementation of the contingency plan.[9] Table 5 illustrates this principle.

In the example in Table 5, at each threshold set in the scenarios, additional response actions are planned. In other words, based on the steps in the scenarios, augmented operational capacity is anticipated (this is why this type of scenario is called an augmentation scenario).

Timing is a major issue in this type of scenario. In some cases the crisis can expand dramatically overnight, as it did in Goma in 1994 during the Rwandan genocide. In one IDP camp where World Vision was working inside Rwanda, IDP numbers rose from 10,000 to 50,000 in a week. World Vision's contingency plans, made in the middle of the week, were obsolete by the time the project budgets were approved.[10] Alternatively, the crisis may take months to escalate. Augmentation scenarios need to consider how fast the different thresholds might be reached.

Another approach – the *timeline approach* – defines conditions at set points in time, starting with the onset of the emergency. The timeline then allows planners to define what actions their organisations need to take, and when to take them, in order to adequately respond to the situation. Box 9 provides an example of a scenario timeline from CARE's work in India.

As the example in Box 9 shows, the timeline approach is a simple and effective way of mapping out the complex evolving nature of a crisis, and provides a basis for more realistic planning to take place. This approach is especially useful for rapid-onset crises like floods, but can also be used in slow-onset scenarios.

Another approach to scenario-building is the *operational representative approach*, sometimes called the *generic scenario approach*. Rather than focusing on the humanitarian impact of a potential crisis as a basis for planning, this type of scenario is developed based on understanding the types

Table 5: A refugee contingency plan

Scenario	Number of refugees	Contingency plan
Scenario 1	5,000	• Provide registration and protection to refugees staying with host families
Scenario 2	15,000	• Open refugee camp • Deploy one emergency officer • Acquire one pick-up truck
Scenario 3	50,000	• Open second refugee camp • Hire five additional staff members • Rent a warehouse
Scenario 4	100,000	• Open third refugee camp • Hire six additional staff members • Expand the warehouse

Box 9

Scenario timeline for floods in West Bengal, India[11]

CARE developed a scenario timeline in the flood-prone central region of West Bengal in 2003. This timeline includes early warning indicators before a flood, and specifies the time between indication and occurrence (in this case a week between excessive rains in upstream catchments areas and flooding in the area). The timeline then details what could be happening, both in terms of the progression of the floods and also in terms of the different humanitarian conditions.

For example, at first shelter, food and water are critical. Then, as time progresses, malnutrition and disease become problems. Based on this type of timeline, planners can develop contingency plans which take into account changing conditions and needs over time. The table below presents an extract of CARE's flood timeline for two districts of West Bengal showing the week before a flood, flood day (Day Zero), Day 7 and Day 14.

Timeline	Description
–1 Week	Excessive rainfall in upper catchment areas and in central West Bengal leads to rising water tables as reported by the irrigation department. The meteorological department forecasts continuing heavy rainfall
Day Zero	• Rivers overflow and water enters inhabited areas • 20% of the total area of the two districts are immediately flooded. • An estimated 20% of the population (1.2 million people) are affected, of whom 900,000 are considered to be vulnerable • Displacement begins
Day 7	• Conditions of affected population: – First signs of malnutrition, small-scale epidemics amongst unattended populations – Frustration – Migration – Struggle for limited resources – Misinformation or no information about the general situation – 80% in temporary shelters; 20% remain exposed • Effect on affected households: – Loss of shelter, displacement – Loss of crops, livestock, assets and property – Disruption of income sources – Lack of food and drinking water – Lack of adequate sanitary facilities – Health problems due to loss of shelter, drinking water and sanitary facilities – Security hazards (theft, looting, exposure, snakebite) – Disruption of public services (electricity, telephone, health facilities, road and railway connections, shops, public information systems like newspapers, radio and TV, police and fire brigades, schools) • CARE has access to 1/3 of the affected population by road and by boats provided by the government • 1/3 of the affected population is not accessible due to limited transport • West Bengal government requests army assistance
Day 14	• Conditions of affected population: – few cases of malnutrition – 10% of affected population migrated from the affected districts to neighbouring districts – remaining affected population placed in temporary shelters – sanitary conditions slightly improved due to emergency measures – 60% receive some food aid unacceptable by international standards; no food for people with special food needs (e.g. infants) – 30% receive non-food items – 10% have makeshift sanitation facilities – 20% receive health aid (confined to accessible areas) – 5% suffer from diarrhoeal disease – 25% remain unattended in remote or difficult-to-reach areas • Daily coordination meetings at state level including government, army, INGOs, sometimes UNICEF; practical coordination is not effective • Water level in the flooded territory remains unchanged • Army works on repair of dams and bridges. • Security situation tense; deployment of police begins

Box 10

Operationally representative scenarios in the Great Lakes[12]

In 2000, the Arusha peace process seemed likely to end the civil war in Burundi. With over half a million Burundian refugees in surrounding countries and 350,000 displaced people inside Burundi, a settlement of the conflict would present humanitarian agencies with a major challenge in supporting the return and reintegration of these people.

In order to prepare for the outcome of the Arusha peace process, WFP began a contingency planning process. However, developing scenarios proved to be difficult because there was no agreement on how returns would take place. At one point, at least ten different return scenarios were being considered. After analysing the operational impact of the different scenarios, two main possibilities emerged. The first envisaged an organised repatriation of refugees managed by the UNHCR. The second – thought more likely – involved a massive spontaneous return of refugees.

Even though the basic premise of these two scenarios was the same (i.e. the return of refugees and IDPs), their operational ramifications were very different. In the first case, refugees would travel through established transit centres where they would receive a return package including food, seeds, tools and other necessities to help them when they arrived home. The slow rate of return would mean that the intensity of the operations would be manageable and that operations could occur around transit centres. In the second case, a much more significant operational response would be required. Field presence would need to be scaled up rapidly throughout the country and, because returnees would have bypassed transit centres, distributions of food and other relief would need to be done at the commune level. It would also be very difficult to differentiate refugees from IDPs, and both sets from people who had stayed in their homes.

of operation or response required under different circumstances. This necessitates an analysis of the potential operational parameters of different scenarios. In many cases a number of different scenarios result in similar operational parameters. For example, floods and cyclones often have similar humanitarian consequences, thus demanding similar responses. An operational representative approach would develop a scenario or set of scenarios which could be used in both cases.

Many agencies specialise in a certain type of intervention or sector, for example water and sanitation. These agencies take similar actions or implement similar processes in most if not all emergency responses. These actions and processes can be identified and planned for. All-hazards planning is an effective tool for these organisations because it allows them to develop and standardise emergency implementation procedures and to clarify management responsibilities. But for most humanitarian agencies, procedures must be accompanied by more specific scenario-based contingency planning.

Equally, planners may find that similar scenarios result in totally different operational parameters. One example of this type of situation is illustrated in Box 10, which describes WFP's contingency planning in the Great Lakes region of Africa in 2000.[13]

Operationally representative scenarios can be extremely effective in highly complex situations where traditional scenario analysis results in an unmanageable set of scenarios. This approach is also good for generating preparedness actions that will serve in different situations, and therefore may represent the best overall investment in preparedness.

Table 6 provides an overview of the advantages and applications of these different approaches to scenario-building.

In practice, the most useful scenarios are often hybrids of these different types. Ultimately what makes the difference between a good and bad scenario is how effectively it provides a basis for planning.

Methods

Whatever the approach taken, there are five main methods for developing scenarios. The first draws on *expert opinion*: scenarios are developed by collective consensus among relevant, available experts. This method is common when there is no good historical base for developing scenarios, and when the scenarios deal with social hazards such as conflict, which can be difficult to model.

The second approach – *historical analogy* – uses the history of past crises to develop scenarios for future ones. Previous crises are reviewed from old documents and records, such as assessment reports, project documents and evaluations, and changes in context, such as population growth and urbanisation, are examined. These two analyses are then combined and scenarios developed. In some cases, this method can be as simple as taking an old assessment report and building a scenario from it. Conversely, it can involve the complex analysis of detailed data sets. An example of a more complex use of historical analogy is given in Box 11.[14]

The third method of scenario-building is *field assessment*. During these assessments, baseline information is

Table 6: Advantages and uses of different approaches to scenario development

Approach	Advantages	Best use
Best, most likely and worst case approach	• Provides a basis for planning for different scales of problem • Easy to understand and discuss	• Planning for a single situation • When scenario development involves many actors
Augmentation approach	• Good for planning for situations which increase in magnitude over time • Easy to build plans which allow expansion of operations	• Displacement situations (IDPs and refugees)
Timeline approach	• Allows planners to adapt operations over time while a crisis evolves	• When rapid-onset crises occur, response needs can change very rapidly in the initial days and weeks
Operationally representative approach	• Allows for a greater focus on operations • Can be used to develop more flexible plans • Can be used to identify preparedness actions that help in multiple situations	• Situations that are difficult to predict

Box 11

Using historical analogy in Ethiopia

In mid-2002, early warning indicated that a major food crisis was developing in Ethiopia. In response, the Early Warning Working Group (EWWG), a government-led multi-agency collaborative group that works on food security assessment, early warning and contingency planning, decided to initiate a contingency planning process. To develop planning scenarios, the EWWG combined historical data from previous crises with actual early warning information to model the potential scale of the emerging crisis.

Over a decade's worth of data was organised and analysed, and three scenarios were produced – best, most likely and worst case scenarios. The results illustrated the danger of the situation and quickly prompted action to mobilise resources for a major crisis. The 2003 crisis ended up being one of the largest in Ethiopia's history with over 13 million people affected. Despite the enormous effort needed, all of Ethiopia's emergency food needs were met that year, for the first time ever, in large part because the contingency planning process gave early and credible dimensions to the problem and laid out a plan for addressing it.

In recent years this analysis has been refined and a tool has been developed to support more sophisticated analysis. Instead of minimum, average and maximum beneficiary numbers, quintiles derived from the minimum and maximum caseloads are used to create a sliding scale which allows local-level early warning data to be used to refine the planning figures. This new scenario-building tool allows planners to input response parameters such as estimated beneficiary caseloads for Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, to determine food aid and cash needs.[15]

collected, key informants are interviewed and scenarios are discussed. This method allows planners to gain broad input quickly, especially when little information is available and to inform scenarios and plans with knowledge of conditions in the field.

It is becoming increasingly common for needs assessments to include a scenario development component. Assessments in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia have all produced scenarios as part of their findings.[16] These can be presented as an addendum to the main assessment results, as in the case of Ethiopia (see Box 12), or the results of the assessment can be presented in scenario form. For example, the annual assessment conducted by the Malawi National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) presents two or three scenarios pegged to price increases.[17] The assessment presents scenarios of entitlement deficit based on different price ranges: the higher prices go, the worse food access becomes for poor Malawians.[18]

The fourth method of building scenarios is *projection against a baseline*. Here, key assumptions about the impact of a crisis are made, and then tested against baseline data. The result is a projection that can often be quantified. This technique is most commonly used with demographic baselines, for example to model population displacement based on census data disaggregated by ethnic group (as in Box 13). It is also common in the food security field, in the shape of the Household Economy Approach (described in Box 14, p. 20).

Box 12

Using assessments to develop scenarios in Ethiopia

Between 2002 and 2004, the Ethiopian government and its UN, NGO and donor partners conducted an assessment in August and September each year which produced scenarios detailing emergency food needs for the following year. To conduct the assessment, multi-agency teams were deployed throughout the country. Provided with a standard briefing, checklists and report formats, each team conducted an on-the-ground assessment of current humanitarian conditions, and discussed potential needs with local and regional officials. What would happen if the rainy season finished early, on time or late? How many people would be food-insecure if the crops failed? The results of these assessments formed the basis for the national contingency planning exercise. The assessments were also used in the annual appeal issued jointly by the government and the UN, and to adjust emergency programmes during the last quarter of the year.

The example in Box 13 illustrates how demographic data can be used to model a conflict situation. Baseline analysis can also be used to model the impact of natural hazards. Box 14 presents the example of the Atlas for Disaster Preparedness and Response in the Limpopo Basin in southern Mozambique.[19]

The final method used to develop scenarios is *response analysis*. This method, which is used to generate operationally representative scenarios, is common among emergency services in developed countries, which systematise their planning for common response scenarios using all-hazards planning. Emergency service planning tends to operate on the '80 percent rule', which states that 80% of the tasks performed in an emergency are the same for any given organisation. This works well for emergency medical and fire services that face similar situations regularly. Humanitarian agencies, however, tend to confront very different, and often unique, circumstances, which require tailored responses. That said, understanding when response operations are similar in scope – and when they are not – can help contingency planners develop more flexible contingency plans.

For humanitarian planners, response analysis involves identifying the types of response that would be required under different circumstances. This can often only be done after a set of scenarios and some preliminary planning have already been completed using other techniques. The objective is to identify situations where the parameters of the response are similar enough that planning for them together makes sense. This method is used to develop operationally representative scenarios. This type of analysis was used to plan health responses in Ethiopia (Box 15, p. 21).

Developing scenarios

In practice, many contingency planning exercises become bogged down in scenario development as planners try to disentangle the inevitable uncertainties inherent in predicting the future. Ultimately, this can lead to a counter-productive process, where little real planning is conducted and an overly complicated set of scenarios is developed to satisfy the opinions of different planners. WFP's contingency planning guidelines recommend no more than five scenarios; two or three are typical. If a good process has been followed, especially one where planners have focused on defining the objectives, scope, process and outputs, scenario development can be a productive and efficient process.

Defining the scope and function of scenarios

When developing a scenario, planners should always keep in mind the fundamental purpose of a scenario – a foundation for making planning decisions. Planners need to identify the level of detail and types of information that the scenario has to have in order to develop a plan. As a general rule, scenarios should have just enough detail to permit planning and to communicate to others the anticipated conditions; additional detail is usually superfluous. When contingency planners fail to clearly establish the parameters of their scenarios, they often fall into the scenario trap.

In addition to defining the level of detail and type of information needed in the scenario, from the outset it is good practice to consider and define the method and approach that will be most effective for each situation. While the approach will almost always be a hybrid of different elements and will evolve along the way, considering this at the beginning of the process can save time and focus efforts. However, planners should be careful not to dwell too much on this question as it could become a diversion into theoretical discussions and so impede actual planning. Flexible and adaptable scenarios support the most useful planning, especially when the time comes to implement a contingency plan.

A simple way to ensure adequate preparation for scenario-building is to develop a scenario outline before starting. This can either be done as a separate exercise or as part of a comprehensive outline process for the whole contingency plan.

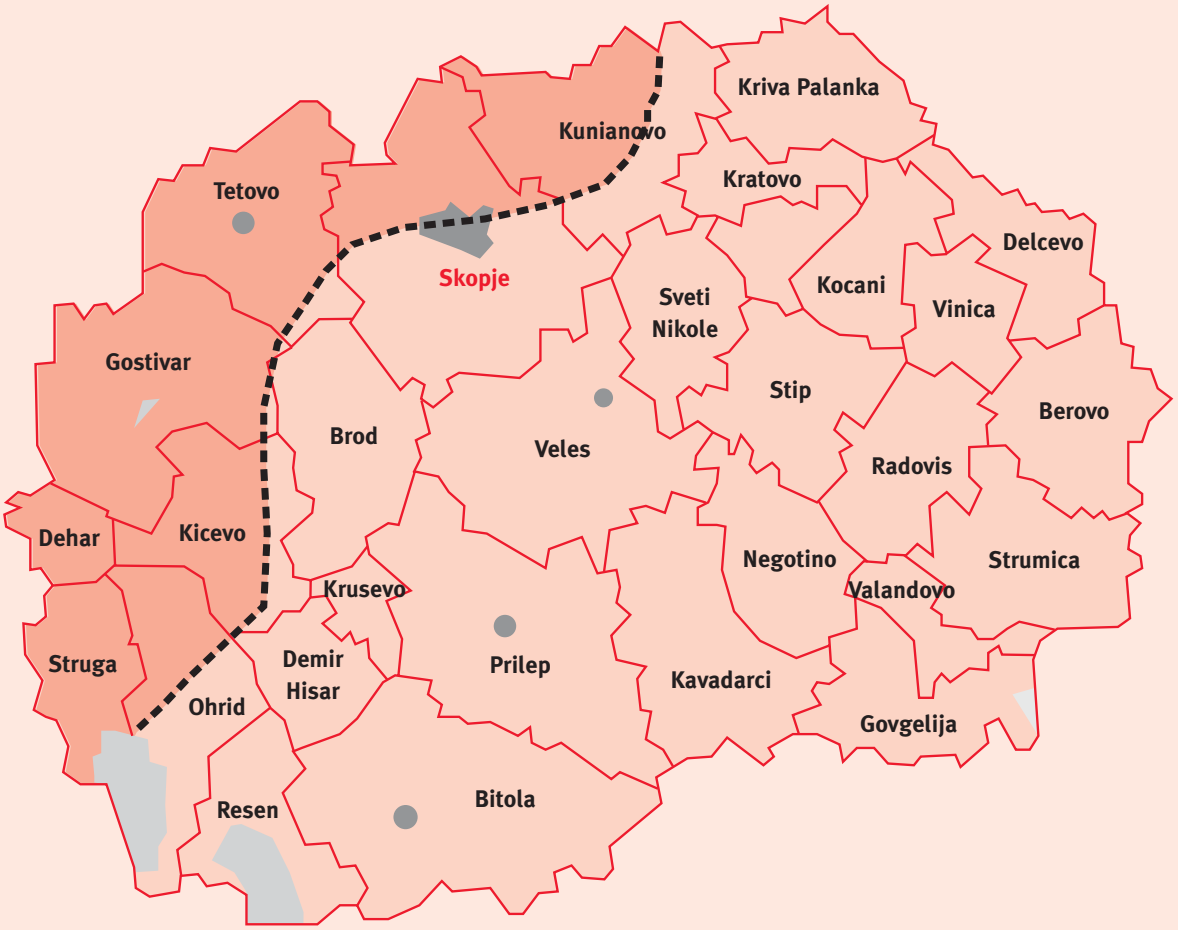
Scenarios for appropriate humanitarian response

Scenarios contain assumptions about many different aspects of a humanitarian crisis, including causes and potential impacts. Often, humanitarian contingency plans jump from crisis to beneficiary caseloads. For example, 'in a flood, 100,000 people will need food aid'. While this may be true, in many contingency plans insufficient attention is paid to the

Box 13

Using census data to develop scenarios for displacement in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[20]

When conflict broke out in Macedonia in 2001, contingency planning for another Balkan tragedy began. At the root of conflict were tensions between the Macedonian Albanian minority and the Slav majority. Contingency planners in the UN needed to know the areas of the country most at risk during a projected conflict, as well as the number of people in these areas who might be affected. To provide this information, UNICEF used census data, disaggregated by ethnic group, to produce a map showing the distribution of the main ethnic groups within Macedonia, including areas of significant co-location. The next step in the analysis was to quantify levels of displacement. This was done by using current trends as a basis for projections. These projections were then regularly updated as part of a continuing contingency planning process. Finally, the analysis was used to develop assumptions about the conditions inside the country in a worst-case scenario. Based on the co-location of ethnic groups and previous experience in the region, it was expected that the conflict would result in the geographical separation of ethnic groups within the country, and in intense fighting in areas of mixed ethnic concentration. A map (shown below) was produced to illustrate where this separation was likely to happen; urban areas, where fierce conflict was thought likely, are also shown. In the event, the conflict was quickly brought under control and the worst-case scenario did not materialise. This example is nevertheless a good case study of how to use population data to model displacement for scenario-building.



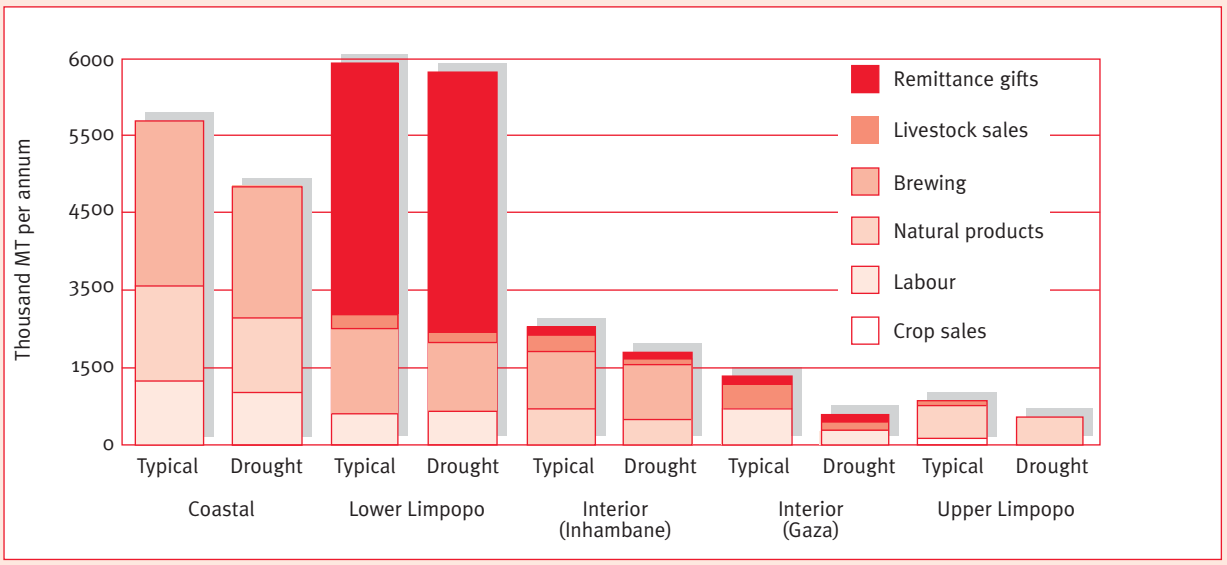
Key: — — — — Line of ethnic separation; Light grey areas: where ethnic violence was expected
Source: UNICEF Skopje

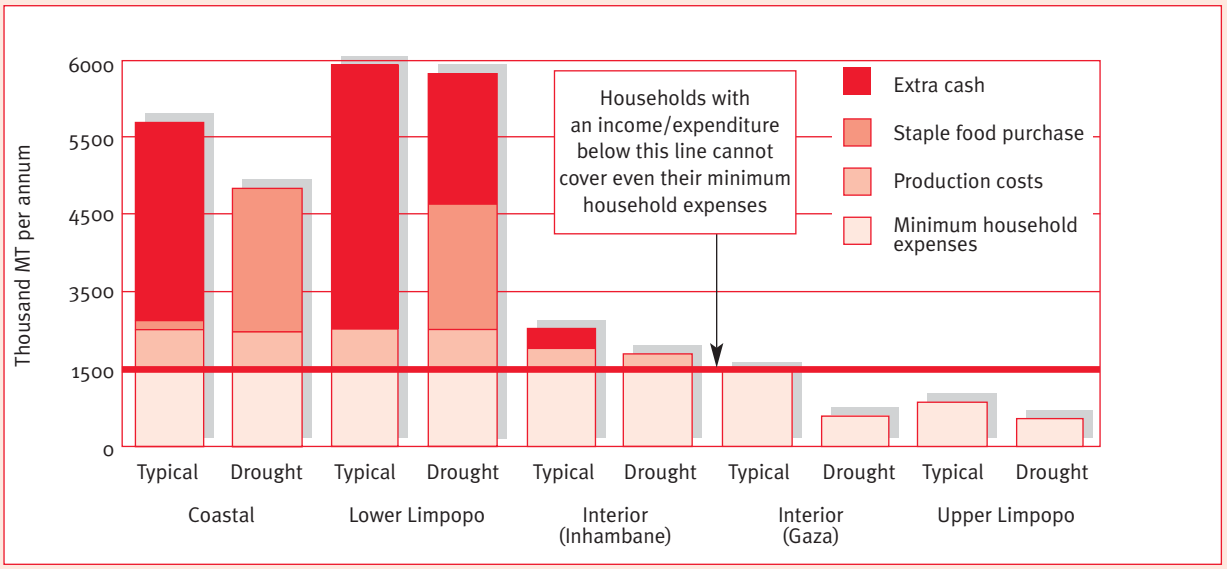
Box 14

Atlas for Disaster Preparedness and Response in the Limpopo Basin[21]

The Atlas for Disaster Preparedness and Response was developed in the wake of flooding in the Limpopo Basin in 2000. It maps communities, roads, schools, populations, hazard risks and livelihoods, creating a detailed baseline for disaster preparedness and response. Scenarios for drought, cyclones and floods model the impact of these hazards on a range of areas, such as infrastructure, food access, crop production, displacement, livelihoods and housing. The analysis also used a livelihoods baseline to model impacts on food security using the Household Economy Approach. One example of this analysis is presented in the figure below, which illustrates the impact of a severe drought on household income and expenditure options. It shows areas – or livelihood zones – where poor households would not be able to meet their minimum food needs as a result of drought.

The impact of drought on income and expenditure patterns





This example demonstrates how baseline data can be used to develop detailed scenarios. It also illustrates the growing use of Geographical Information Systems in scenario building – as does the previous example in Box 13.

Box 15

Using response analysis to support health and nutrition contingency planning in Ethiopia[22]

Planning for health interventions at the national level is a challenge, especially without a strong baseline of epidemiological information. Thus, the health and nutrition working group in Ethiopia decided to focus efforts first on identifying the main types of response it might have to mount in a crisis, such as immunisation campaigns, treatment of diarrhoea and therapeutic feeding. Using these response parameters, flexible scenarios were developed for different scales of crisis. The scenarios were useful for national planning purposes, while the response analysis allowed the health and nutrition working group to plan and prepare in a modular way.

actual impact of a crisis on people's lives and livelihoods. Yet these impacts should be the foundation for developing appropriate interventions which save lives and support viable livelihoods. Examples of this problem can be found in the 'food first' approach taken by contingency planning in Ethiopia (described in Box 18, p. 22) and Southern Africa.

Solving this problem requires planners to focus in their scenarios on the impact on people and their livelihoods, and then to effectively link this analysis to an informed programme or response design for the contingency plan. Developing a scenario followed by a clear response strategy and then implementation plan can help planners work through this process step by step, and present the logic of the programming decisions taken in the plan, without jumping straight from the hazard to the beneficiary caseload.

Early warning indicators and triggers

Early warning indicators and triggers need to be built into the scenarios in order to help determine which scenario is emerging, if any, and to trigger preparedness and response actions. As we have seen, augmentation scenarios provide the clearest triggers, as each scenario is designed specifically to activate the next level of emergency response. For example, UNHCR contingency plans systematically link thresholds, including number of refugees crossing borders per day or week or the total number of refugees to response actions in their plans.

Indicators and triggers need to be specific to the scenarios under development, which means that they vary tremendously. Box 19 (p. 23) details the early warning component of a flood contingency plan developed for Somalia.

Flexibility and adaptability

Flexible and adaptable scenarios support the most useful planning, especially when the time comes to implement a contingency plan. To achieve flexibility and adaptability, three practices work:

1. Build scenarios around specific planning objectives. Planners must consciously define what will be useful for their purposes, and what will not. This is the best way to avoid the scenario trap.
2. Use operationally representative scenarios as a basis for planning. In other words, look at the operational ramifications of scenarios and try to develop scenarios which support responses to a wide range of situations.
3. Do not develop scenarios that are overly detailed. For example, try using ranges of numbers rather than specific figures.

Box 16

The 'scenario trap'

A common challenge faced in contingency planning is the scenario trap. This occurs when planners cannot define or prioritise their scenarios and fail to move on to developing actual plans. The results of the scenario trap are evident in the many contingency plans which contain summaries of scenarios – and nothing else. Especially when groups plan for complex situations, such as conflicts, or in circumstances where there is little information, it is difficult to agree on variables, such as what might happen and how many people will be affected. Numbers are often particularly contentious. This leads to long-drawn-out discussions in an attempt to reach a consensus. In many cases this consensus is never achieved, and time pressure ends the process before any real planning has occurred. Below are some tips for avoiding the scenario trap.

- Admit that you will never be completely right, and accept that you do not need to be for your contingency planning process to be effective.
- Agree to compromise.
- Determine what scenarios are needed to move forward with planning, rather than trying to develop a comprehensive set.
- Understand when differences have a serious impact on the plan and when they do not.
- Do not get stuck on details.
- Set a time limit for scenario development.
- Use ranges or round numbers, not exact numbers.
- Use risk ranking to prioritise scenarios (see Box 17, p. 22).
- Appoint a coordinator and respect their decision to move on.
- Come back to your scenario(s) after doing some planning. This can often focus the scenario discussions and illustrate what issues are worth further exploration, and which ones are not.

Box 17

Using risk ranking to prioritise scenario development and define the level of detail in contingency plans

Risk ranking involves assigning numerical scores for probability of occurrence (1 to 3) and magnitude of consequences (1 to 3) to each scenario. The results are then multiplied to derive the risk represented by each scenario. The scenarios are ranked and prioritised accordingly.

CARE[23] uses risk ranking to determine the level of planning required for different events. Each contingency or hazard is evaluated based on its likelihood and potential impact or gravity. Based on the results, recommendations are developed for the level of planning to be undertaken (shown in the table below). Only situations with a high likelihood and serious impact are considered worthy of detailed planning; work on situations with minor impact and high probability, or low likelihood and serious impact, is limited to scenario development. Other categories merit no planning, or are deemed to be addressed under existing agency policies.

CARE's Risk Ranking Matrix for contingency planning

		Gravity of event*		
		Trivial	**Minor**	**Serious**
Likelihood	**High**	Existing policy	Consider scenarios	Detailed planning process
	Low	No planning	Existing policy	Consider scenarios
	Almost nil	No planning	No planning	Existing policy

* The gravity of the event is mainly determined by the scale of the impact on households, populations or livelihoods, and by how much the event is overwhelming existing structures and mechanisms to deal with it.

Box 18

Food first?

Contingency planning exercises in Ethiopia in 2002 took a 'food first' approach. There were a number of reasons for this. Because the situation in question was a food security crisis, life-saving food aid was seen as the most important form of response. Food aid agencies were the most active in preparing and planning for the crisis (non-food actors did not place as much emphasis on contingency planning) and donors tend to fund food aid more than other types of assistance. It became apparent, however, that a more holistic response was required.

In 2002 and 2003 Ethiopia faced the largest food crisis in its history, with over 13 million people requiring almost two million tons of emergency food aid. Contingency planning in 2002 was a major factor in enabling the government and donors to mobilise the necessary resources. Consequently, all of the food aid needed in 2003 was provided. However, the scenarios in the contingency plan focused only on the provision of general food aid, and did not give serious consideration to the outcomes of such a severe food crisis in terms of higher levels of malnutrition, excess morbidity and mortality and increased destitution and livelihood collapse. In early 2003, it became clear that significant humanitarian needs were not being met. Nutrition programmes were insufficient to provide the level of supplementary and therapeutic feeding needed to deal with extremely high acute malnutrition, seed needs were grossly underestimated and health programmes were inadequate.

More in-depth scenario development and the elaboration of a more comprehensive response strategy could have overcome some of these problems. Since 2003, non-food sectors have been integrated into the Ethiopian national contingency planning process, and now take into account these and other factors.[24] Donor funding patterns have not, however, changed. While food aid is relatively well subscribed, non-food aid funding has been significantly below appeals.

Box 19

Flood contingency planning and early warning

The Juba and Shebelle rivers in Somalia are prone to floods. In 2004, an inter-agency contingency plan was developed to help humanitarian actors prepare for and respond to the consequences of this regular flooding, under the auspices of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) Flood Working Group.[25]

The plan contains two main early warning elements. The first assigns various agencies the responsibility for gathering and disseminating early warning information; the US Geological Survey and FEWS NET, for instance, develop and distribute rainfall forecasts and issue flood risk bulletins, and the Food Security and Analysis Unit (FSAU) provides seasonal livelihoods and vulnerability analysis. The second element equates specific river levels to different flood levels to determine which contingency plan should be activated. Thus, a river level of less than 3.5m in Belet Weyne is normal; a level of 5.5m indicates serious flooding. In this way, early warning is clearly linked to the activation of the contingency plan.

Early warning mechanisms, responsibilities and dissemination methodology

Mechanism	Responsibility	Format	Dissemination
90-day rainfall forecast and flood risk bulletin	USGS FEWS NET	Web page A4 document	Internet OCHA Flood Working Group (FWG)
30-day rainfall forecast and flood risk bulletin	USGS FEWS NET	Web page A4 document	Internet OCHA Flood Information Operations Centre (FIOC)
10-day flood warning bulletin	USGS and FAO SWALIM	Web page A4 documents E-mail HF radio BBC Somalia	Internet OCHA FIOC FWG
Livelihoods and vulnerability analysis before each *Gu* and *Deyr*	FSAU	A4 document	FSAU OCHA FWG

Chapter 5
Developing contingency plans

Once scenarios have been developed, plans can be made defining what humanitarian organisations will do to mitigate a potential crisis. This chapter gives a basic framework for planning a humanitarian operation. It breaks contingency planning down into the five main elements described in Chapter 2:

1. The response strategy.
2. The implementation plan.
3. The operational support plan.
4. The preparedness plan.
5. The budget.[26]

It is not always necessary to develop each section in detail. Rather, contingency planners can make efficient use of scarce resources and time by focusing on the planning elements that are likely to have the most direct and tangible benefit in preparing for and responding to potential crises.

The response strategy

Before constructing a response, planners need to define what they hope to achieve and how they intend to achieve it. In other words, they need to develop a response strategy; only then can an effective set of implementation requirements be laid out. The response strategy in a contingency plan serves this purpose and also acts as a bridge between the scenario and the plan that follows.

A response strategy contains two main elements. First, objectives are set based on the conditions anticipated in the scenario. Second, responses or interventions are developed to meet these objectives. As with any project design process, good objectives are essential to a successful plan. Objectives should be specific and clearly linked to the scenario. Frequently, contingency planning objectives end up being formulaic and not clearly linked to the situation described in the scenario. This results in the loss of one of the chief benefits of contingency planning, namely allowing more time to design appropriate interventions. Such contingency plans are easy to spot as they either contain response parameters in the scenario, typically beneficiary numbers, or have no objectives – only a scenario and beneficiary numbers. A good contingency plan will include the number of affected people in the scenario, followed by an appropriately designed response strategy with beneficiary numbers derived from the scenario. Once the plan's objectives are defined, the actual interventions or programmes that will achieve these objectives must be developed. In addition to the types of interventions or programmes, their scope must also be set. Table 7 provides some basic examples of the flow from scenario through objective to response.

Needs-based versus capacity-based planning

Two strategic approaches are common in humanitarian contingency planning:

Table 7: Linking scenarios to contingency plans

Scenario	Objective	Response
Increased conflict in the region will result in the displacement of an estimated 100,000 people. Most of these people are expected to cross the border. Half will stay with host families, while half will be without shelter	• Meet the shelter needs of 50,000 refugees	• Provide plastic sheeting for 10,000 households
As a result of drought, pastoralists will migrate to areas with limited water and pasture resources. The increased number of animals around water points is likely to lead to increased animal disease and ultimately livestock deaths	• Improve or maintain curative and preventative veterinary care for livestock, especially breeding stock	• Immunise 200,000 head of livestock • Provide essential medicines and veterinary support for 25,000 diseased animals
Food insecurity will lead to high levels of malnutrition in the affected population, especially among children	• Maintain the nutritional status of children and other at-risk groups	• Distribute a dry take-home supplementary food ration through health centres to feed 125,000 malnourished children for six months • Provide community-based therapeutic feeding for 15,000 severely malnourished children
As a result of the spoiling of wells by combatant groups, affected communities will not have access to potable water	• Ensure adequate potable water for affected communities	• Implement a water tankering programme for 175,000 people for six months • Provide water purification tablets for 1,000,000 people for three months

Box 20

The maximum capacity trap

In the maximum capacity trap, plans are based on an organisation's capacity, rather than on anticipated needs. In many cases, maximum capacity becomes the worst case scenario. For example, if an organisation has the capacity to meet the needs of 10,000 refugees, a refugee influx of 10,000 is established as the worst case scenario. This raises the obvious question of what happens if not 10,000 but 15,000 refugees cross the border. In this case, planning immediately breaks down and the organisation is overwhelmed. Unfortunately, in such cases contingency planning can create a false sense of security and become an impediment to effective response. To overcome the maximum capacity trap, planners can engage in joint inter-agency planning pooling the resources of multiple organisations. Planners can also base scenarios on needs, using these needs and an analysis of capacity to develop realistic plans.

Box 21

Planning for assessment as part of a contingency plan

In 2000, WFP Georgia conducted a contingency planning exercise for a number of scenarios, including drought and a resumption of separatist hostilities in Abkhazia. As part of this planning process significant work was done to plan the assessments that would be needed under each scenario. Assessment checklists were compiled from previous crises and updated based on the lessons learnt in their use. Terms of reference for assessment team members were also updated. These tools were then included as annexes to the main contingency plan, so that when needed they could be easily found. In this way, contingency planning was used to perpetuate the lessons from previous crises.

- Needs-based planning uses overall anticipated humanitarian needs as a basis for planning the scope of interventions.
- Capacity-based planning uses available capacity as a basis for planning, regardless of overall anticipated needs.

Planners using the needs-based approach must analyse existing operational capacity to determine how much augmentation will be needed to meet anticipated needs. Planners using a capacity-based approach determine what their organisation can manage in a crisis, and plan according to that. This approach is often used in a single organisation contingency planning process, and therefore can be artificially limiting because it does not take into account the capacities of other organisations. This leads to the second contingency planning trap: the 'maximum capacity trap' (see Box 20).

However, the capacity-based approach can be effectively used to plan for the initial phase of a crisis where external resources are not readily available. For example, UNICEF offices commit to minimum levels of standing readiness where they define exactly what support they can provide at the onset of a crisis: emergency school supplies for 20,000 children, for instance.

Needs-based planning may be unrealistic because it may not fully take into account resource constraints. However, it does allow for a more explicit consideration both of capacity and of overall need; capacity-based approaches, by contrast, may result in under-planning when gaps between need and capacity are unfilled. In practice, a combination of these two approaches is advisable. Overall anticipated needs must be compared with available capacity so that gaps can be identified and plans made to fill these gaps.

The implementation plan

Once the response strategy and the scope of the intervention have been defined, planners can turn to the details of implementation, including emergency needs assessment, targeting, partnerships, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, logistics and security. In other words, they can start defining exactly how the programmes or responses will be implemented. Table 8 sets out some basic implementation questions. Examples of implementation planning are given in Boxes 21 and 22.

Defining implementation requirements and capacity

Whether planners take a needs-based or capacity-based approach, realistic comparisons of capacity versus needs make for realistic plans. In many contingency plans, it is assumed that sufficient capacity either exists or can be easily and quickly put in place. However, insufficient effort is

Box 22

Security constraints leading to more realistic contingency plans

Contingency planning by WFP for escalating hostilities in Burundi in 2001 compared food aid distribution capacity with security capacity. While about 5,000 metric tons of food aid per month could be distributed by NGO teams if required, a lack of security officers to accompany convoys limited the distribution significantly. As a result of this analysis, planners assigned additional security officers during the onset of the scenario, thereby avoiding a potentially critical bottleneck.[27]

Table 8: Common implementation questions

Emergency needs assessment	• How will humanitarian needs be assessed? • What methods will be used? • Who will conduct the assessments? • What kind of logistical support will be necessary? • How will the results of emergency needs assessment be used to refine the contingency plan prior to implementation?
Targeting	• What targeting methods and criteria will be used (e.g. geographic, administrative, socio-economic, self)? • Who will implement this?
Partnership	• What partnerships are needed to make the plan work? • What will the role of these partners be?
Monitoring and evaluation	• What monitoring and evaluation indicators will be used? • How will they be collected?
Reporting	• What reports will be needed? • How often will reports be required?
Logistics	• What logistics capacity is necessary to implement the operation (e.g. storage, transport)?
Security	• How will security be monitored and managed? • What kind of security measures must be put in place? • How will security measures impact on our ability to implement the plan? • What happens if staff are evacuated? • Are security plans compatible with contingency plans?

made to determine what this entails. As a result, contingency plans can give the impression that a crisis can be managed, when in fact it is likely to far outstrip the response capacity which can realistically be brought to bear.

In some cases assessing capacity is a simple matter, and can be quantified. This is especially the case with logistics, where storage and transport capacity can be calculated and compared with the anticipated needs in the contingency plan (see Box 23). But in other less quantifiable areas, assessing capacity can be a challenge. This does not, however, mean that realistic assessments of implementation capacity cannot be done, and are not useful.

The operational support plan

Operational support is often forgotten in contingency planning – as well as in the operational planning for crises. However, ensuring that sufficient administration, financial, human resources, information and telecommunications and other support are available is critical to an emergency response. Insufficient human resources support leads to the late and inadequate deployment and recruitment of personnel. Inadequate financial support leads to late payment of invoices, which can often slow operations or bring them to a halt.

Operational support needs will be driven by internal procedures, requirements and regulations. They must also address the scale of operations envisaged in the contingency plan. As with other sections of a contingency plan, planners must define when this level of planning detail will be useful. For example, in a situation where a

Box 23

Analysing logistical capacity in Burundi[28]

Logistics was a major consideration in WFP's contingency planning exercise in Burundi The country is landlocked, and is supplied through two major corridors, starting at Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Mombassa in Kenya. Food and other humanitarian supplies are carried in a combination of rail, truck and barge transport through a number of transshipment points along these corridors. These corridors also supply humanitarian programmes in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia and Kenya. During the rainy season roads are washed out, and during the agricultural season fertilizer and other inputs take up most of the available capacity along the supply routes.

In order for planners to address potential bottlenecks along these corridors, a detailed analysis of each piece of the supply chain was done and compared with the additional cargo that would be needed under each of the scenarios in the contingency plan. The results indicated that, under the worst case scenario, there would be bottlenecks. The analysis also helped logisticians to plan traffic along the corridors to minimise bottlenecks. As a result of the analysis, additional storage and trucking capacity was planned for the worst case scenario, and increased pre-positioning of food stocks was recommended to minimise disruptions in distributions.

Box 24

Operational Imperatives and Emergency Response Standards

World Vision has developed Emergency Response Standards to guide its response in emergencies. By design, these standards are limited in detail so that they can be flexibly adopted. Complementary Operational Imperatives cover different operational areas, including finance, management, security, supply chain management, communications/marketing/media, information technology and human resources. These list specific actions which must be carried out in each sector to respond to a major crisis. For each operational imperative a Minimum Action Package (MAP) is developed and budgeted for. Finally, responsibility for each operational imperative is defined. The table below illustrates World Vision's Operational Imperatives relating to finance and human resources.

Operational Imperatives – Finance

Action as per Standards	Operational Imperative	Minimum Action Package	Actioned by
Transitions programming implications are studied and plans are begun for appropriate rehabilitation and recovery and/or phase out after emergency response	Open bank accounts Prepare initial finance and procurement policies	Bank accounts to include: • A main US dollar account • Secondary local currency account Include retention policy and finance evacuation plan No additional cost implications	Finance Manager
Write preliminary drafts of funding proposals for most likely scenario within 30 days	Prepare budget for EPRF Request, grant budgets and reimbursements	Based on estimates prepared by: • Regional Relief Manager • Program Manager • Program Officer No additional cost implications	Finance and Programme Directors

Operational Imperatives – Human Resources (HR)

Action as per Standards	Operational Imperative	Minimum Action Package	Actioned by
Capacity assessment	Staff Capacity Assessment	Capacity assessment conducted, including consideration of staff capacity issues No additional cost implications	ERDM/HEA Human Resources
Rapid Response Team and Communications on site within 24–48 hours	HR staff and systems in place to support RRT and Communications	HR Manager is deployed as part of the initial team/first wave response HR systems to include: • Staff contracts and agreements • Staff tracking and monitoring mechanisms • Medical support • Transport, accommodation and staff logistics • Staff support arrangements (leave, briefing, debriefing, etc.) No additional cost implications	ERDM/HEA Human Resources
90 Day Operational Plan in place Transition Plan in place	Ensure second wave staffing issues fully reflected in 90 Day plan and Transition Plan	An HR plan for second wave staffing is in place and reflected in the 90 Day Plan and Transition Plans. No additional cost implications	ERDM/HEA Human Resources

Box 25

Generic ICT solutions for operational support[29]

Although each crisis is different, many of the support needs are similar. WFP's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) emergency response team developed generic templates for information and communications technology requirements in emergencies. These templates were devised for large or small country offices, and for field offices. For example, a small sub-office requires one High Frequency (HF) radio base station, HF radios for three vehicles, eight Very High Frequency (VHF) radio handsets with chargers and spare batteries, five laptop computers and two printers. In contingency planning these templates are used to quickly identify equipment and staffing needs to ensure adequate ICT support to the operation.

crisis is imminent this kind of detail will be immediately useful in the start-up phase. For annual updates of basic contingency plans, detailed planning is not likely to be as immediately useful, and is therefore less worthwhile.

Some organisations have developed tools to support this kind of planning, such as checklists and standard procedures. Developing standard implementing procedures for all aspects of emergency response is the main focus of all-hazards planning. Two examples of these tools are presented in Box 24 and Box 25.

The preparedness plan

Preparedness planning identifies actions that can be taken before a crisis to facilitate an effective response once the crisis is under way. These actions are laid out in a preparedness plan. Focusing on preparedness planning is effective because, once the plan is implemented, it yields direct and actionable results. A number of agencies have developed two-tier planning processes, whereby preparedness actions are elaborated on a regular basis (e.g. annually), and then, once a specific emerging crisis is identified, a more detailed scenario-based contingency planning phase begins. This model is practical and can be highly effective.

Box 26

Preparing for the second Gulf War[30]

The long lead-up to the second Gulf War allowed humanitarian agencies almost a year to prepare. The high profile of the crisis meant that significant resources were committed to support preparedness efforts before the war began. UN agencies engaged in an intensive inter-agency process under which each agency generated contingency plans, including detailed preparedness plans. These preparedness plans included pre-positioning food and non-food items around Iraq, upgrading logistical management systems, opening new offices in Turkey (a major supply route and potential refugee reception area), retraining regional staff in emergency response and establishing regional coordination mechanisms. Even though the scenarios developed in the contingency planning exercise never materialised, the real increases in preparedness enabled a much better humanitarian response than would have otherwise been possible once the war started.

Box 27

Preparing for a refugee crisis in Kosovo

When conflict broke out in Macedonia in 2001, an inter-agency contingency plan led by UNHCR was developed outlining preparedness actions to ensure that the refugees who were expected to flee to Kosovo would be adequately provided for. Using existing resources and additional preparedness resources from UNHCR headquarters, reception centres were established, staff were deployed to border points and supplies were requisitioned. As a result of this preparedness work, UNHCR and its partners were able to receive, register and provide assistance to Macedonian refugees as they arrived.

While preparedness and contingency planning are sometimes seen as competing methods, they really represent different emphases within the same process. To identify what equipment and supplies need to be requisitioned, for instance, it is necessary to first develop scenarios and contingency plans. When preparedness planning is the focus of the exercise, scenarios are typically generic and operationally representative. Preparedness plans can also form part of more specific contingency plans. In these cases, preparedness actions can be identified at each stage in the plan, or consolidated in a dedicated section.

A number of different methods for recording and managing preparedness actions have been developed. The most effective techniques identify specific preparedness actions, the resources needed to implement them and the optimal timing for their implementation, as well as who is responsible. Preparedness actions must also be prioritised so that the most important and cost-effective actions are taken. As a crisis evolves, preparedness plans can be effective tools for guiding the use of scarce resources (though it is important to note that preparedness planning itself is constrained by a lack of funding, especially at the country level). Box 27 illustrates one example of contingency planning being used to guide preparedness activities.

The budget

Many contingency plans include budgets. These can cover both the cost of the responses planned and preparedness actions. Budgets are useful for senior managers, donors

and headquarters offices because they give a clear idea of the scale of operations required under different circumstances. Developing budgets can, however, be an extremely laborious and detail-heavy process, and fully budgeted contingency plans are usually not warranted unless there is good early warning and sufficient time to develop budgets that will be used. In most cases, skeletal simplified budgets are sufficient to provide senior managers with the information they need to prepare for a crisis.

Budgets are most effective when they are written according to existing organisational tools and frameworks. This allows them to be easily adapted and used in a crisis. WFP's contingency planning outline, for example, is closely linked to existing project documents and budgets. As a result, the programme strategy in the plan mirrors the main elements of a WFP Emergency Operation project document, and the sections of the plan are developed in logical clusters around budget elements. In some cases, planners have developed budget spreadsheets linked to scenario assumptions and contingency plan figures. These spreadsheets allow planners to quickly change the parameters of the response they are developing, without having to completely redo their budgets. This approach also allows emergency responders to replace the contingency planning assumptions with real assessment data, enabling them to quickly develop actual operational budgets. One WFP contingency planning exercise in Côte d'Ivoire, for a refugee influx in 2000, linked the agency's standard emergency operation budget format to a series of scenario assumptions, so that the number of beneficiaries and the amount of food aid could be adjusted, automatically updating the budget.

Chapter 6
Managing the contingency planning process

Contingency planning is best done as a participatory process, which means that organisation is critical to its success. This chapter outlines some of the main issues to consider and steps to take in organising an effective contingency planning process. They include:

- Defining the objective and scope.
- Defining the process and outputs.
- Deciding who will participate.
- Facilitation.
- Managing inter-agency contingency planning processes.

Defining the objective and scope

Efficient planning processes start with clear definitions of the objectives and scope of the exercise. These guide the organisation of the process, management of time and the development of a plan. Once the objectives and scope are decided, the planning process can be tailored accordingly. This includes defining the outputs from the process.

Defining and managing participation

Participants in a contingency planning process ideally include all those who will be involved in responding to a crisis. In small organisations this can be done relatively easily. In larger organisations and in inter-agency processes (see below) it is more difficult.

In many contingency planning processes a focal point in each division or office of a larger organisation is selected to participate in the planning process. CARE has developed a contingency planning team, which defines participation in the contingency planning process at different levels (described in Box 29, p. 32). UN agencies in the Americas use a similar method, with inter-agency UN Emergency Technical Teams (UNETTs), which are responsible for the developing and revising contingency plans. These teams provide a sustained effort that permits regular revision of inter-agency plans, facilitates consistency between agency and inter-agency plans and provides an effective base for activating the plan and responding to an emergency. The team also provides an excellent platform for vertical as well as horizontal coordination within the UN system.

Most contingency planning processes focus on horizontal participation, in other words collaboration with offices and organisations in the same geographic location. This level of participation is crucial, but so too is vertical participation, or the participation of regional offices and headquarters in different agencies. Box 30, (p. 32) illustrates the challenges in achieving good vertical participation.

While good participation is essential, clear management is also fundamental. This could be done by a responsible manager, by a facilitator hired for a specific process or by a committee. In most cases, assigning a senior staff member to manage the process is the best option because this individual knows the organisation and has the authority and access to make decisions. That said, an external facilitator can be useful in certain circumstances. In cases where an external facilitator or consultant supports a

Box 28

Organising a national contingency planning process: Ethiopia, 2004[31]

During 2004, the Ethiopian government carried out a formal multi-sector and multi-agency contingency planning process. Carried out under the auspices of the national Crisis Management Group, it covered a range of sectors, including food aid, nutrition, health, water and environmental sanitation, agriculture and livestock, education and HIV/AIDS. Coordinating the process proved a major challenge.

Using a decentralised approach, the Crisis Management Group put major milestones in place for the national process and developed action plans for each sector, detailing how they would lead to respective contingency plans. The plans focused on developing scenarios and humanitarian response requirements for 2005, as these were deemed the most relevant issues. These action plans were then consolidated and implemented by an editorial committee.

The results of the process were significant. A working draft of a national contingency plan was developed, including input from all the sectors mentioned above. This was the first time that non-food sectors had been able to fully participate in the contingency planning process, chiefly due to the investment made in organising it at an early stage.

A significant lesson from this exercise was that especially for large scale multi-agency and multi-sector contingency planning processes, significant lead time is required to organise the process. In this case organisation for the process, which culminated in October, began seriously the previous May. This was made possible by the inclusion of the contingency planning exercise in the sector working groups' annual work plans.

Box 29

CARE's contingency planning teams
Carsten Völz, CARE

CARE has developed the concept of contingency planning teams for its offices in chronically disaster prone areas. The approach is layered, with a core team responsible for driving the process, and other mechanisms to help foster participation and a good process. The management of CARE's contingency planning process is done at four levels:

1. The Core Contingency Planning Team (CT). The CT, comprising three to five people, is responsible for the overall process. This responsibility is reflected in job descriptions and internal operating procedures (IOPs), so that sufficient time is allocated to enable the CT to work regularly on contingency planning, preparedness and capacity-building. The CT is accountable for keeping the process going, and members are evaluated on their performance in these areas during their annual appraisals. The team composition is designed to ensure participation from programme, programme support and senior management.

2. The Contingency Planning Working Group (WG). The WG consists of eight to 20 people (including all key members of the emergency response team and all relevant individuals from sectors and service units). Although they contribute to the work of the core team, they focus on their respective sectors and functions. The WG can break into sector-specific sub-working groups.

3. The External Consultative Contingency Planning Group (ECG). The ECG includes external stakeholders, partners and line managers. This group provides a systematic way to engage with different stakeholders at higher levels of management, without overburdening the process. The group reviews policy frameworks and provides input and guidance.

4. The Contingency Planning Secretariat. The Contingency Planning Secretariat provides administrative support to the planning process. In particular, it is important to index and archive all of the relevant material and to copy and distribute materials to participants in the process.

An essential part of this arrangement is the inclusion of specific contingency planning responsibilities in the job descriptions of the respective staff, especially those on the Core Contingency Planning Team. If the planning work is not part of their core responsibilities and time and resources are not provided, the respective staff will focus on other priorities.

Box 30

Field versus headquarters
Jacqui tong, MSF

The 9/11 attacks altered the landscape of humanitarian action in Afghanistan fundamentally. Before the US-led bombing campaign began in October 2001, contingency planning by the international community assumed a massive outflow of refugees from Afghanistan. Few other alternatives were considered. Relief workers and emergency supplies were positioned at strategic points in surrounding countries to meet this projected flood of people.

On the ground, the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) team's contingency planning regarded earthquakes as the gravest potential danger because sizeable seismic activity was ongoing. Food shortages during the winter were also a major concern. However, MSF Headquarters was largely in line with the international consensus, and saw refugee movements as the most critical eventuality. There was thus a tension between the headquarters view and the view of staff on the ground. In the event, the start of the coalition bombing campaign saw some population movements, but these were limited. There were food shortages, but food aid pipelines were not blocked, either by conflict or by winter snow. There was, however, an earthquake in the town of Barahak, followed by a more serious earthquake in Baghlan Province in March 2002.

contingency planning process, having an internal counterpart with enough seniority to continue to manage the process once the consultant has left is one way to increase its sustainability. Table 9 sets out the advantages and disadvantages of internal versus external facilitation.

No matter what the situation, participation should be considered carefully to ensure representation from different offices, units or organisations; sufficient technical knowledge and experience; and an adequate number of decision-makers. This last point is critical: in many contingency planning exercises, particularly inter-agency ones, technical staff members are assigned to carry out the process, and decision-makers are not sufficiently active. This leads to delays and changes requiring extensive work. Mechanisms such as regular briefings and summary plans, especially for senior decision-makers, can help overcome this difficulty. In the contingency planning process in Ethiopia, a high-level review committee was established, including senior government officials, heads of UN agencies and NGOs and donors. The committee reviewed final documents developed at the technical level prior to general dissemination, thus allowing it to endorse the results or request changes.[32]

Secrecy, politics and participation

Confidentiality and security concerns can limit participation in contingency planning. This is especially true in conflicts. For example, in a conflict where the government is fighting armed groups, planning for an escalation of the fighting or for

Table 9: External versus internal facilitation of the contingency planning process

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Internal	• Knows the organisation and the people • Will be in the position longer and can therefore maintain a more active process and use the plan if needed • Can anticipate internal organisational issues that need consideration during the process	• Not always able to dedicate adequate time to the process given the demands of a regular job • May not have the necessary experience or skills
External	• Often has more specialised contingency planning experience and skills • Can help bring different groups, units and organisations together	• May not know the organisation well • Will not be present to follow up or use the plan

Box 31

Planning in a politically charged environment: UNHCR and the 1999–2000 Kosovo crisis[33]

In 2000, UNHCR commissioned an evaluation of its performance leading up to and during the Kosovo crisis. This evaluation illustrates some of the political impediments to effective contingency planning, for which UNHCR was heavily criticised. In essence, the agency was charged with failing to anticipate, prepare for and respond to the large-scale refugee exodus from Kosovo that occurred.

While there was some contingency planning for refugee flows from Kosovo to neighbouring countries, this planning was only for small numbers of refugees. At the time, planning for a major crisis would have signalled a lack of faith in the on-going Rambouillet peace process. Thus, when the crisis escalated and large numbers of refugees began to flee Kosovo, UNHCR was ill-prepared financially and materially. The agency found it difficult to deploy sufficient experienced staff, and was unable to play an effective coordination and protection role at the outset of the crisis. This had lasting effects on UNHCR's credibility and authority, and limited its ability to coordinate efforts to support refugees.

While UNHCR was certainly not the only ill-prepared organisation, its evaluation of this crisis clearly illustrates the limits that can be placed on humanitarian contingency planning in highly charged political environments – and the consequences for humanitarian response.

an end to it can be highly sensitive. The need for secrecy that this sensitivity enjoins can prevent broad participation in the planning process. In some cases, the political sensitivity of a situation can lead to a decision not to undertake contingency planning at all. In others, it can restrict the type of scenarios that are considered, preventing planners from preparing for the full range of possible outcomes. Box 31 illustrates how these concerns limited planning during the Kosovo crisis.

Facilitating the contingency planning process

In recent years it has become increasingly common to see formal facilitation of the contingency planning process, either by an assigned focal point or by consultants or advisors. Facilitation has a number of benefits, especially in circumstances where participants are unfamiliar with the process and need guidance, and in larger, more complex planning exercises.

Many contingency planning processes begin with a workshop, which normally focuses on developing scenarios and initial response options. Workshops also include some basic training and capacity-building to equip the participants for the process. However, workshops have their limits. While the objective is to encourage good participation in the process, in some situations, such as in small teams, more experienced emergency staff can dominate and prevent effective participation from the whole group. In these situations some practitioners prefer one-on-one working sessions as a complement to group planning, thereby making it easier for less experienced staff to contribute.

Managing inter-agency contingency planning processes

Limited resources, multiple actors, complex problems and the need for coordination have all led to an increase in the number and scope of inter-agency contingency planning exercises. The IASC *Contingency Planning Guidelines* provides an excellent resource in this area, and where these exercises are well organised they are usually productive. In general, however, inter-agency planning tends to be extremely complex and often cumbersome. Poorly organised processes, where clear objectives and useful outputs are not defined, deliver little benefit.

Recent experience in inter-agency contingency planning provides three important lessons:

Box 32

Facilitating a joint contingency planning process in Georgia[34]

In early 2002, the UN Disaster Management Team (DMT) initiated an inter-agency contingency planning process with the government of Georgia. The process began with a three-day workshop with government emergency management officials and UN and NGO staff. The workshop was facilitated by two contingency planning advisors from UN agencies.

The workshop began with a brief training session on inter-agency contingency planning. This established the terms and the process by which planning would take place. The participants were then asked to develop scenarios for an earthquake in the capital city, Tbilisi, and for a resumption of conflict in Abkhazia. Two groups were formed and asked to identify the humanitarian consequences of these two contingencies, to assess local capacity to respond to these needs and to identify the gaps and constraints that might be faced if these crises occurred.

Once the scenarios were outlined, working groups in food and nutrition, information and assessment management, health, water and sanitation and shelter were formed. This was an important step because sector working groups or clusters did not exist in the country at that point. Such working groups are essential coordination mechanisms in an emergency as well as for inter-agency and multi-sector contingency planning.

For the remainder of the workshop, these groups developed basic response plans for the two scenarios. The groups also identified preparedness actions that could be taken to improve emergency response, should it be required. Throughout, the two facilitators worked with the participants to keep them on track and answer technical questions. Local staff acted as note-takers and recorded the deliberations of the working groups. On the last day, all the notes were typed up and turned into draft contingency plans. The final task of the workshop was to develop an action plan detailing the next steps in the contingency planning process.

About four months after the workshop a small earthquake struck Tbilisi. The contingency planning workshop was the first time that government emergency management personnel had met with UN agencies and NGOs to discuss emergency response. Just the fact that this contact had been made and the parties had discussed their capabilities and mandates improved the coordination of the response to the earthquake.

Box 33

Trying to bring planners together in Macedonia

Contingency planning in response to the outbreak of fighting in Macedonia in 2001 was initially uncoordinated, with different scenarios being used by different agencies in different countries. To deal with this problem, an inter-agency team was deployed, and a coordinated planning process was established using common regional scenarios. These common scenarios allowed for consistent planning, and resources were allocated in the region in a more logical manner. The most immediate benefit of this approach was a shift in focus away from Kosovo, where significant response capacity already existed. At the national level in Macedonia, attempts were made to consolidate sector planning into one master plan. However, this proved so time-consuming that it became unmanageable. The sector plans were very detailed, and the consolidated plan was too long and proved too difficult to update. It was also difficult to use.

This example shows that, while consolidating contingency plans may sometimes be necessary, doing so can be a difficult and time-consuming task, and one which does not always result in improved preparedness. In contrast, across the border in Kosovo, a decentralised contingency planning process was implemented. Based on the common scenarios, this focused on operational preparedness. The process was decentralised in that each sector was responsible for planning within its area of responsibility. Rather than a single central plan being developed, separate contingency plans for refugees and food aid were developed. These plans were short, focused, and useful. Reception areas were established; refugees were registered and quickly provided with assistance.

1. Inter-agency processes must have clearly defined milestones and objectives. This allows different clusters, working groups and organisations to progress in parallel, contributing to the overall process. A good practice is to develop a specific work plan for annual inter-agency contingency planning and include this in cluster or sector working group work plans.
2. Second, consolidation must occur – but at a usable level. In some cases, consolidating a single master plan can become a bottleneck, resulting in an unwieldy and

Box 34

Provincial planning in Mozambique

Nadia Vaz, WFP

Based on lessons learned from the floods in 2000 and 2001, the government of Mozambique developed annual contingency plans for the three most likely disaster scenarios, floods, cyclones and drought. The contingency plan was developed in a decentralised manner, both in each sector and in each province.

During the annual preparation and update of the plan, the government's National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC) convenes technical multi-partner meetings and regional workshops to develop scenarios and plans. The UN and other humanitarian organisations participate in this process. Based mainly on weather forecasts, historical data and current early warning indicators, each province estimates the areas and populations at risk in the worst case scenario for each contingency. Sector working groups and experts analyse how the different scenarios could impact on the population, and then develop plans to address these scenarios, including budgets. These scenarios are then finalised, and used by actors at national and local levels to develop a coordinated set of contingency plans. For example, the UN uses these scenarios to develop its own internal inter-agency plan, to complement the national plan.

Mozambique's contingency planning process uses scenarios to tie the multi-agency, multi-sector, provincial and national plans together in a logical way. Although the process can be difficult, without common scenarios it would be impossible.

unmanageable plan. It is good practice to prepare a summary of contingency plans from each sector or cluster to provide senior decision-makers with enough information to see the complete plan and ensure their respective organisations are in line with the overall effort – or take action to change the plan.

3. Processes must be flexible if they are to take into account the diverse needs of the various participants, but everyone needs to work within a set of agreed parameters. Common scenarios provide these parameters, and allow consistent and complementary planning from the start, greatly reducing the effort needed to consolidate plans at the end of the process. Box 34 illustrates the common scenarios used to anchor Mozambique's annual contingency planning process.

Working with national authorities

Ultimately, national governments are responsible for the wellbeing of their citizens, and humanitarian organisations often work with national authorities in pursuit of their mandates. However, in many situations humanitarian actors may be faced with national authorities that are belligerents in a conflict, or where they do not exist or function. In the majority of cases where national authorities play a strong role in humanitarian action, they often take the lead in contingency planning, and a humanitarian organisation's planning should be conducted within the national contingency planning framework. A number of examples of government-led contingency planning have been presented in this study, notably in Ethiopia and Mozambique. Although in some cases the process has at times been difficult, the fact that the planning process took place within official government-led coordination mechanisms meant that many of the problems that would have hampered an emergency response were addressed during the planning process.

One of the clear benefits of contingency planning is developing working relationships and common understandings of potential emergencies. Supporting government-led contingency planning processes is also an opportunity for humanitarian organisations to build national capacity, not only in contingency planning, but also in emergency response itself. For example, the contingency planning process in Ethiopia has sought to build analytical capacity, a key challenge in presenting credible assessments and appeals.

Process, process, process

Process, process, process is the mantra of contingency planners. In practice, achieving an effective process is challenging. Maintaining one is even harder, and requires a commitment to active management and the development of useful outputs. Box 35 (p. 36) provides an excellent example of where these two factors came together to create in an effective contingency planning process.

Box 35

Côte d'Ivoire+5
Hervé Ludovic de Lys, OCHA

Against the background of regional insecurity and instability stemming from the protracted conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, OCHA, the UN Office for West Africa, WFP, IOM, ICRC, IFRC and Oxfam from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana met in October 2005 in Dakar, Senegal, under the chairmanship of the OCHA Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

At this meeting, senior UN officials shared their views on possible developments in Côte d'Ivoire, endorsed the planning scenario and operational assumptions previously delineated by an inter-agency technical team and acknowledged that the resumption of open conflict would have devastating humanitarian consequences both inside and outside Côte d'Ivoire. In response, they decided to develop a regional contingency plan for Côte d'Ivoire and its five neighbours.

To lead this complex process, a 'CDI+5' Task Force was established under the chairmanship of WFP's Regional Office for West and Central Africa. This comprised the UN Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Representatives from the six countries, along with the heads of UN and non-UN regional offices. OCHA provided the secretariat and technical support from its regional office for West Africa. The Task Force held regular teleconferences to:

- share updated information on the latest developments in the crisis;
- reach consensus on the nature of the worst case scenario, while harmonising planning figures for a potential 1.6 million displaced people; and
- formulate a sub-regional preparedness plan (called the CDI+5 Contingency Plan), including funding requirements for enhanced preparedness.

The high level of engagement and active participation by senior management in humanitarian agencies, including from the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, ensured good inter-agency coordination and the allocation of adequate resources to the planning process and preparedness activities. A course of action was established which, thanks to the involvement of senior managers, was more durable than plans that are first defined by technical staff before being presented to senior management. Since the CDI+5 Contingency Plan was developed, OCHA's regional office has been responsible for ensuring that the plan is updated ahead of key political milestones which could trigger instability and violence. The lessons learned from this preparedness initiative have been applied to other potential cross-border crises in the region.

Chapter 7
Conclusions and challenges for the future

Contingency planning can bring significant benefits to humanitarian response. It helps foster agreement on what a potential emergency could look like, and what different organisations will do to respond. It helps identify and prioritise preparedness activities, and the process itself can be a useful exercise in information preparedness. It also helps maintain and improve the coordination mechanisms that are so important in an emergency. The in-depth analysis conducted during scenario development can identify indicators and help focus early warning efforts, while contingency plans linked to early warning systems can help translate early warning into early action.

Contingency planning experts and practitioners alike extol the benefits of the contingency planning process, and the research for this paper clearly shows that humanitarian organisations have made significant efforts to improve and mainstream contingency planning and emergency preparedness. It has also identified some significant challenges, which need to be addressed if further progress is to be made. With a view to contributing to this process, this chapter outlines some of the key challenges ahead, and makes recommendations for addressing them.

Towards a more dynamic and effective contingency planning process

Achieving and sustaining truly dynamic contingency planning processes remains a major challenge for humanitarians, given the competing demands, limited staff time and scarce resources that they face. A continued focus is needed on developing processes that improve preparedness and emergency response – rather than processes that produce documents. The recommendations presented in this section are designed to enable dynamic contingency planning processes to be maintained and improved in humanitarian agencies.

- *Senior managers and decision-makers should lead contingency planning processes.*

Contingency planning should not be seen as a technical activity – it is a management function. Consistently, the engagement of senior management at all levels has resulted in more effective contingency planning processes, leading to improved humanitarian response. The example of Côte d'Ivoire+5 (Box 35) provides an excellent example of how important this level of engagement can be, and how it can facilitate critical decision-making processes. Perhaps one of the most important indicators of how well-mainstreamed contingency planning is in an organisation is the level of buy-in and participation in the process from senior management. Summary contingency plans and regular senior management meetings (or teleconferences) are important tools in enabling leadership. By the same token, senior managers cannot do all the work. They must be supported by their staff.

- *It is good practice to focus the contingency planning process on improving preparedness in regular (e.g. annual) contingency plan updates, and only to develop detailed and specific contingency plans when early warning systems identify an emerging crisis.*

One of the most significant challenges agencies face is how to get the most out of the contingency planning process. Identifying and then implementing preparedness actions is clearly one of the best ways to translate contingency planning into concrete action. But the benefits of good scenario-based contingency planning in the face of an imminent crisis have also been highlighted. In this regard, the two-tier process developed by CARE and UNICEF, where preparedness planning is conducted on a regular basis and is complemented by more detailed scenario-based contingency planning when an emerging crisis has been identified, is a good model, which other humanitarian organisations could emulate.

- *Contingency planning works best in an effective and established preparedness framework. Agencies should carefully consider how to develop emergency preparedness systems and contingency planning processes that reinforce each other, and thus improve the effectiveness of their humanitarian response.*

Humanitarian organisations are increasingly practicing contingency planning as part of well established institutional emergency preparedness programmes.[35] In these organisations, contingency planning articulates emergency preparedness systems by identifying which tools will be needed, when and where. Contingency planning at a global level can also help establish the parameters of organisational preparedness efforts, as described in Box 3 (p. 5). Annex 1 shows how contingency planning supports emergency preparedness in WFP and World Vision.

- *Mainstreaming contingency planning is one of the keys to achieving a dynamic process. Mainstreaming needs to continue, both in individual humanitarian organisations and in coordination mechanisms. The UN humanitarian reform process and the development of the cluster approach represent significant opportunities to pursue this recommendation.*

Several humanitarian organisations have made important progress in mainstreaming contingency planning, while others are just beginning the process. Effective techniques

for achieving mainstreaming include making contingency planning part of the terms of reference for staff, providing adequate time and resources to support the process in core budgets, integrating contingency planning into sector working groups and cluster work plans and combining contingency planning with emergency training.

Over the last decade, there has been a culture shift inside many humanitarian organisations, whereby preparedness and contingency planning are seen as core functions. UNICEF's inclusion of contingency planning as an audit requirement and CARE's incorporation of contingency planning in staff terms of reference are just two examples of this change. Other humanitarian organisations are now following suit, as shown by the emphasis on contingency planning in the UN's humanitarian reform process and the development of the cluster system. The increasing engagement of senior managers is another signal that the contingency planning process is becoming a core function of humanitarian organisations.

Another lesson of this study is the importance of participation in the contingency planning process by administration, human resources, ICT and finance staff. These staff members are often left out of the process. Part of mainstreaming at the organisational level involves getting all the functions involved in humanitarian response engaged in contingency planning.

Mainstreaming efforts need to continue, and should be reinforced. But humanitarian organisations should be careful to focus on the process elements of contingency planning, and should not measure their success solely by the number of contingency plans they produce.

- *A contingency planning process is an effective tool for maintaining and improving coordination mechanisms.*

A major challenge to maintaining coordination mechanisms is that they tend to atrophy and become less effective once the crisis has passed. This tendency is reinforced by the rapid turnover of staff in humanitarian organisations. Contingency planning gives the participants in coordination mechanisms a regular and concrete activity to focus their efforts on, maintaining the relationships and perpetuating the lessons learned by the group, and in this way maintaining the mechanism until the next crisis. Contingency planning processes can also be catalysts for improving the capacity and effectiveness of coordination mechanisms, as shown in Ethiopia and other examples.

- *Improving the links between early warning, assessment and contingency planning, and developing baselines that can support all three activities, is an area humanitarian organisations need to explore in more detail, as this could result in both economies of effort and the improved translation of early warning into early action.*

Baselines are used for many applications, including early warning, contingency planning and assessment. When they are well developed and used consistently, they can provide some of the best information for planning. The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), for example, uses a detailed livelihoods baseline to assess food security conditions, make early warning projections and develop scenarios for contingency planning. The results of the MVAC's system are widely credited with averting a major food crisis in 2004 and 2005. Assessment is also commonly used to develop scenarios, as in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. Finally, the use of scenarios in both early warning systems and contingency planning processes has been explored. Given the overlap and common methods used in all three activities, and the use of baseline data to improve them, much greater integration and consistency is possible.

- *Humanitarian agencies should use exercises and simulations to test contingency plans and build response capacity.*

Among national emergency management agencies and emergency services in developed countries, exercises and simulations make up an essential part of the contingency planning process. Research shows that emergency managers rely fundamentally on past experience to guide their decisions in crises, and that simulations are effective ways of building an emergency manager's experience base.[36] UNICEF has pioneered the use of simulations to complement its contingency planning process. Other humanitarian agencies should consider how this tool can be built into their own processes.

- *Funding for contingency planning and preparedness should be maintained at adequate levels, and should be considered a core organisational activity.*

Funding for contingency planning and preparedness has improved in recent years. This must be continued to ensure that the gains identified in this paper are sustained. Those organisations that have mainstreamed contingency planning and emergency preparedness in their core budget have the most robust and useful contingency planning.

Preparedness and planning are not always visible activities. What if the crisis does not happen? This makes it hard for humanitarian organisations to 'sell' preparedness, and has tended to mean that only large organisations are able to dedicate adequate resources. Yet even when no crisis materialises, the resources used for preparedness can easily be folded back into regular programming. Box 36 describes a contingency planning process in Guinea-Bissau where this occurred.

- *More joint scenario development and contingency planning can lead to more coordinated and complementary humanitarian action.*

Box 36

Preparedness gains in Guinea-Bissau
Frederick Spielberg, UNICEF

Presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau in 2005 were contested along ethnic lines. Seven years earlier, a military coup had sparked civil unrest causing widespread civilian deaths, destruction of infrastructure and massive displacement. Many believed that the 2005 poll would produce similar violence.

In the first quarter of 2005, the UN Country Team carried out a contingency planning process which identified a worst case scenario of civil war and the displacement of over 600,000 people, three-quarters of whom would be likely to require humanitarian assistance. Each agency was then tasked with replicating the process within its own organisation to identify operational strategies for dealing with the impending emergency. UNICEF made field visits to the most likely operational staging base, across the border in Ziguinchor, Senegal, and to the in-country relocation site for staff and dependants. Logistical and supply requirements for the target population were itemised, priced and sourced in each of the basic sectors. Based on the resulting budget, the country office stockpiled supplies and scaled up logistical capacity.

To everyone's relief, the elections passed off without incident. Nevertheless, the collective contingency planning initiative they sparked effectively jumpstarted preparedness efforts for UNICEF and other agencies. The resources spent on preparedness were effectively folded into other programmatic activities. The stockpiled supplies were used in regular programmes, and the scaled up logistics capacity brought greater efficiency to on-going operations.

As the practice of contingency planning has increased, so have the calls for more joint contingency planning and scenario development. In the UN system, this has resulted in an explosion of inter-agency planning over the last decade. But the NGO community has not seen a similar trend. On the one hand, some organisations do not have the specific skills and experience to develop robust scenarios and plans; on the other, humanitarian response requires multiple actors from multiple sectors to work together. Some practitioners argue for a joint scenario development capacity for humanitarian organisations as a way to increase the quality of contingency planning, to make more efficient use of resources and to promote more joint planning. More substantive inclusion of NGOs in UN planning processes is one way to improve the picture. Greater use could also be made of early warning networks and organisations to lead joint scenario development processes.

Towards improved humanitarian action

Contingency planning is not just about the faster delivery of relief assistance. It can also be used to improve the quality and appropriateness of humanitarian action, chiefly because of the time it affords humanitarian actors to think through problems, develop sound response strategies and incorporate lessons learnt. The recommendations below expand on these points.

- *Humanitarian organisations should use contingency planning to improve the appropriateness and quality of their humanitarian action. Making a clear distinction between scenarios and planning decisions, and grounding planning decisions in considered response strategies, provides a simple framework for achieving this goal.*

One of the chief benefits of contingency planning is that it allows time to think. Repeatedly, we have seen hasty decisions made in crises result in unintended negative consequences. Markets are distorted, dependency is created, vulnerability is increased and livelihoods are undermined. Allowing adequate time and attention to develop response strategies that are as appropriate as possible can have a significant impact on the quality of humanitarian action. Often, however, contingency plans jump from disaster to caseloads for predetermined responses. While food aid planning may be the most obvious offender, contingency plans from almost all sectors suffer from the same problem.[37] Overcoming this requires planners to differentiate between a planning assumption and a planning decision. Both are necessary.

FEWS NET has incorporated this concept into its training material in an effort to promote appropriate action when it issues an early warning. Table 10 (p. 40), taken from FEWS NET's training materials, illustrates the distinction between a scenario and a planning decision.

In all the examples in Table 10, an assumption about conditions in a crisis is made, followed by a planning decision. Making the distinction is only the first step: to truly get a more appropriate contingency plan, these planning decisions must be grounded in sound and well-thought-out response strategies.

- *Using contingency planning to incorporate the lessons of previous crises represents a significant opportunity to enhance humanitarian action.*

Contingency planning can be a tool for organisational learning. This occurs in a number of ways. First, evaluations and other relevant documents can be used in the development of a contingency plan to improve responses over previous ones. Second, when a contingency planning process is maintained it becomes a learning process, because each time the plan is updated it is improved based on experiences of using it.

Table 10: Using scenarios to make planning decisions

Scenario	Planning decision
350,000 people will lose their main crops due to drought. They will be unable to meet their basic food needs for a period of five months prior to the next harvest	350,000 beneficiaries will be assisted through a general distribution of food aid for five months
Malnutrition rates among arriving refugees are expected to be over 20% (GAM) for children under five	Supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes will be established for 20,000 and 5,000 beneficiaries respectively
Flooding may knock out several main bridges, limiting road access to the most affected areas of the country	During the initial response phase, air operations will be implemented to supply cut off communities with food
The affected population suffers from high HIV/AIDS prevalence, especially among women and girls from poor households	Supplementary feeding of protein and energy-rich food will be provided to 35,000 women and girls through health centres, where they will receive complementary medical assistance and health and nutrition education
The IDP population includes a high proportion of women and children. Most men and boys have been impressed into the militia or the army	25kg bags will be used rather than 50kg bags at IDP camp distributions, to reduce the burden on women beneficiaries of carrying food home

One good example of incorporating learning into the contingency planning process was found in the Comoros,[38] where a contingency plan developed for volcanic eruptions in 2004 was put to the test twice in 2005. OCHA has conducted a review of the effectiveness of this plan and will integrate the lessons learnt in an updated plan. For all large-scale emergencies, World Vision holds a review process of similar past emergencies. For slow-onset emergencies, this review is held during the contingency planning phase in anticipation of the crisis. In rapid-onset crises, it is held shortly after the crisis ensues.

Towards improved contingency planning practice

A major focus of this paper has been the practice of planning itself. A number of important themes emerged. These included the danger of the scenario trap, the importance of common scenarios, the importance of balancing capacity and potential humanitarian needs in the planning process and the need to increase the formal evaluation of contingency planning. The recommendations outlined below bring these themes together.

- *Contingency planners must do more to move beyond scenarios and to use scenarios more effectively.*

The number of contingency plans and planning processes that get bogged down by excessive scenario development is significant, though hard to quantify. While there is certainly value in developing a common understanding of potential crises, if organisations do not know what to do when one happens, and what to do to prepare, they are not that much better off.

There are numerous examples of contingency planning processes that are devoid of any planning, and that never move past scenario development. In other cases, contingency plans with extensive scenario development are followed by only superficial planning. Finally, detailed scenarios are almost always wrong. While planners do not need to be totally accurate, overly detailed scenarios can invalidate the rest of the planning process, whether the results are useful or not.

The scenario trap has resulted in a backlash among practitioners who see scenario development as ineffectual. Yet scenario-based plans can be very effective. In fact, in almost all approaches to planning practiced by humanitarians, scenario development at a basic level is a critical starting point. Ultimately, scenario development is a necessary tool for managing uncertainty and establishing a basis for planning. Thus, humanitarians need to focus on *effective* scenario development. This means understanding the end goal of the contingency planning process and then using scenario development to meet that goal. So, if the goal of the exercise is to develop consensus on a potential crisis, a focus on comprehensive scenario development derived from a broad risk, context and vulnerability analysis is warranted. On the other hand, if the main objective is to identify preparedness actions, generic or operationally representative scenario development approaches make sense.

To escape the scenario trap, scenarios must have a clear purpose, they must be flexible and they should only contain the detail needed to achieve their purpose. Defining this purpose and redefining it as the contingency planning process evolves is a fundamental task for contingency planners.

- *Inter-agency contingency planning should focus on the minimum set of things required to anchor the inter-agency process. These include common scenarios, common humanitarian response strategies and common services or activities (e.g. joint telecommunications services).*

If contingency planning for a single organisation is complex, inter-agency contingency planning is exponentially so. As a

result, inter-agency planning can easily get bogged down. The IASC *Inter-agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance* are sound. Using the daisy wheel approach (see Box 6, p. 9), individual organisations, sector working groups and clusters are best equipped to plan in their relevant areas of responsibility and expertise. The plans produced can then be checked to make sure that they are consistent, and to identify any potential problems.

- *Effective contingency planning starts with an assessment of humanitarian needs, but also assesses response capacity to identify and find ways to overcome gaps. This avoids empty plans with no capacity, as well as plans that fail to meet needs.*

Research in the United States on emergency plans shows that many are fantasy documents.[39] In other words, the detailed responses they define are well beyond the capacity of emergency services and the government. These plans are dangerous because they give a false sense of security and promote complacency. On the other hand, there are instances where the worst case scenario in a humanitarian contingency plan is defined by the maximum operational capacity of an agency – not the likely magnitude of the crisis.

Systematically building capacity assessment into contingency planning can help address this problem and facilitate planning. World Vision has tried to address this issue by developing an internal management tool to help its staff link risk analysis and capacity analysis in a systematic way. This Risk and Capacity Assessment Tool begins with a risk assessment using risk ranking (see Box 17, p. 22). It then asks planners to define what capacities are required and available for the top three risks, and then to estimate any gaps. Detailed checklists are provided to help planners assess capacity in a systematic way.

Planners also need to develop scenarios which provide a realistic assessment of the impact and likely needs generated by a crisis. These needs can then be compared with capacity, and plans made.

- *Contingency planning and emergency preparedness need to be incorporated systematically into evaluations of humanitarian programmes.*

Contingency planning is not adequately covered in formal evaluations or research. There is a noticeable lack of evaluation data on the application and use of contingency plans. Moreover, when evaluations have examined the role of contingency planning in emergency responses, they have been too superficial and imprecise to do more than restate the belief that contingency planning works.

In some ways, this lack of evaluative evidence is not surprising because evaluating the impact of contingency planning is difficult. It is impossible to measure the impact of having a contingency plan versus not having one, and it is difficult to measure the non-tangible benefits of contingency planning, such as the relationships formed during the process. Many of the evaluations that do consider contingency planning are referring to stand-by arrangements such as an emergency response fund or pre-positioned relief supplies, not to the contingency planning process itself.

The lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of contingency planning poses two important problems. First, while this paper has presented considerable evidence that contingency planning is effective, gaps in knowledge clearly exist. Given the increasing resources dedicated to the task, more consideration by evaluation departments and researchers is needed to bring greater rigour to the subject. Second, in the absence of a body of knowledge on what works in contingency planning processes and plans, and what does not, it is very difficult to focus efforts on improving practice. This paper provides a first step, but humanitarian agencies need a better foundation for prioritising investments in contingency planning and emergency preparedness so that they get the best return possible on their investment.

Three things can be done to strengthen the documented body of knowledge on the effectiveness of contingency planning. First, evaluation departments within humanitarian agencies need to include a minimum number of questions related to contingency planning in their evaluations of humanitarian emergency response. UNICEF's example of making contingency planning an auditable requirement should be followed by evaluation departments. These questions should include whether a contingency plan was prepared, whether it was used, how it helped, if there were any problems associated with implementation of the plan, if the planning process itself helped (i.e. did the activation of coordination mechanisms for planning strengthen coordination during the response?), or if agreements were respected. Evaluators need to look at the concrete results of the planning process, as well as intangibles such as the relationships and consensus generated. They also need to be sensitive to the fact that a good process is not necessarily a smooth one. Some of the most significant actions taken as a result of contingency planning are derived from the controversy or discord created by the process. Nonetheless, these actions resulted in better and faster humanitarian action.

Evaluation departments and evaluators should also determine what other emergency preparedness activities or mechanisms were used, and how effective they were. Individual organisations and the humanitarian community at large would benefit from a better understanding of what emergency preparedness activities, including contingency planning, are effective and worth investing in, and which activities or mechanisms need improvement.

Evaluation units, especially in organisations that have made significant progress in mainstreaming contingency planning, should also consider undertaking thematic evaluations of their own contingency planning practice and

its impact on humanitarian action. This would constitute a valuable resource to inform the further development of contingency planning practice in these organisations, and would provide a guide for other organisations that have made less progress in mainstreaming contingency planning and emergency preparedness. Finally, practitioners should be encouraged to document and share the experiences, challenges and lessons learned from contingency planning processes.

Having argued for more evaluation of contingency planning practice, a cautionary note is necessary. Like most technical areas, a certain level of technical knowledge is required by evaluators if they are to understand what they are evaluating. Some contingency planning experts have found that organisational evaluations of preparedness programmes lack depth, and are in some cases misleading. Organisations must be careful to ensure that adequate technical capacity in contingency planning and emergency preparedness is provided in the evaluation process.

General recommendations

- *More systematic contingency planning is advocated for global threats rooted in climate change, population growth, urbanisation, migration and other trends.*

Contingency planning practiced today tends to have a short time horizon. Yet some of the biggest challenges facing the humanitarian community are long term, or at least less predictable. There is a lack of long-range planning capacity in humanitarian organisations for the challenges raised by climate change, population growth, urbanisation, migration and other trends that will shape the humanitarian crises of the future.[40] Scenario development and contingency planning can help humanitarians to prepare for and adapt to these changes.

Humanitarian organisations need to increase their efforts to plan for the mega-disasters of the future. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami is a harbinger of a future where increasing population density and urbanisation in disaster-prone areas will expose millions of people to major disasters. Recent efforts to prepare for pandemic and avian influenza are positive signs. The humanitarian community, including many national governments and the UN system, has developed a series of contingency plans to respond. Yet other major challenges are barely on the radar of humanitarian organisations.

- *More consistent use of terms related to contingency planning and preparedness is needed to help improve the sharing of experience, lessons and practice.*

Despite the advances humanitarian organisations have made in the field of emergency preparedness, contingency planning and disaster management, the terms they use to describe these activities remain amorphous and loose. Many documents use emergency planning, emergency preparedness, disaster planning, disaster preparedness and contingency planning synonymously. This ambiguity is at best unhelpful; at worst, it limits the development of the tools practitioners use.

Many initiatives have tried to develop glossaries of terms, but they have faced significant difficulties. While fine semantic detail is not required, some basic distinctions can be helpful to highlight the basic components of a contingency planning process and a contingency plan, and to describe the different focuses and methods humanitarian agencies use. Annex 1 proposes a simple set of categories for emergency preparedness more broadly, and provides examples of frameworks from WFP and World Vision, to help add to the understanding of how contingency planning fits into the broader frame of emergency preparedness.

Annex 1
A framework for emergency preparedness

Contingency planning is part of the broader set of activities that constitute emergency preparedness. This annex presents a simple three-tier framework for classifying emergency preparedness activities, and concludes with two examples of emergency preparedness frameworks. This framework can be used as a guide for developing an emergency preparedness or contingency planning programme, or for evaluating one.

This paper has focused on contingency planning, which is one area of emergency preparedness. This annex describes the other two main areas that together make up emergency preparedness: structural and organisational preparedness, and information preparedness.

Structural and organisational preparedness

A major aspect of preparedness is structural and organisational. **Organisations or units** within organisations are required to prepare for and respond to emergencies. How prepared for fires would people be without the fire department? At the national or regional level, **disaster management policies and laws** are essential to clarify the responsibilities and mechanisms which are used for response. Therefore, organisations must be coordinated if emergency response is to be successful, which means **coordination mechanisms** like the IASC are essential. Finally, the organisations charged with responding must have **emergency response mechanisms** which can be used or activated when needed. One such mechanism is the Consolidated Appeal Process.

At an operational level, some of the most important of these mechanisms are often referred to as **stand-by mechanisms** or **stand-by** resources. These are the operational tools of preparedness. They can include rosters of trained staff ready to deploy and equipment and relief supplies stored in warehouses ready to use at short notice.

Finally, **training** is an important element of preparedness; without trained personnel an organisation cannot effectively respond to a crisis.

Information preparedness

Information preparedness is the collection, management, storage and analysis of information so that a group is better prepared for an emergency. **Baseline information**, including maps, census data, socio-economic data, logistical information and procurement information, is critical for making decisions in crises. **Early warning**, which alerts decision-makers to prepare for or respond to a crisis, is also key. **Public information preparedness** enables quick communication about what is happening and what the group is doing about it. If the group fails to communicate effectively, the situation can quickly deteriorate. Finally, good **information management** allows all the data to be used efficiently during a crisis.

Below are two examples showing the comprehensive emergency preparedness frameworks developed by WFP and World Vision, and explaining how contingency planning fits in.

WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework

Carlo Scaramella (WFP) and independent consultant Claude Dunn

WFP has invested heavily in emergency preparedness. Its framework includes **information**, **contingency planning**, **programmes**, **stand-by capacities** and **training**.

Information preparedness

Information preparedness means having the information and information systems needed to respond to an emergency in place and ready to use. In WFP, this consists of a number of elements, including baseline information on populations and their livelihoods as well as food security and multi-hazard early warning systems. Baseline data on logistical infrastructure from regularly updated Logistics Capacity Assessments (LCAs) can provide planners and responders with the information they need to mount operations. It is also important to establish management information management systems to handle information flows in emergencies.

Contingency planning

WFP uses contingency planning to prepare for a new crisis or a major change in an existing crisis. Its contingency planning guidelines allow WFP to establish strategies, objectives and operational procedures to respond to potential emergency situations. The process also identifies actions that will improve preparedness in WFP and its partners. Inter-agency contingency planning processes are also undertaken to ensure coordinated responses.

Mechanisms and procedures

Five programme types can be used as a basis from which to respond to emergencies: Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP); Emergency Operations (EMOP); Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO); Special Operations (SO); and Country Programmes (CP). One of the easiest ways to respond is to expand existing operations through budget revisions to meet greater needs than originally anticipated. In case of sudden-onset emergencies, the IR-EMOP provides the Country or Regional Director with immediate resources. Within ongoing operations, resources can be reallocated to meet an exigent need.

As a member of the UN system, WFP participates in inter-agency mechanisms designed to support coordinated response to emergencies. These include the Security Management Team, the Disaster Management Team, the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. These are part of WFP's efforts to prepare for emergencies

Stand-by capacities

Stand-by capacities enable the agency to mobilise food, human resources, equipment, transport and emergency funding rapidly during the critical initial stages of an emergency response. WFP has an array of both internal and external (other UN agency, NGO or donor) resources, available at short notice through predefined arrangements and agreements.

Guidelines and training

The demands on staff members during an emergency are significant, and it is essential that staff are well-equipped in anticipation of an emergency. Guidance for office set-up, warehouse management, procurement and emergency food needs assessment (ENA) ensures that minimum standards are in place. Guidance has to be available to staff responding to emergencies, but staff members need to be properly trained before a crisis.

The links between contingency planning and the rest of the framework

Contingency planning is an essential element of WFP's emergency preparedness and response. Contingency plans identify what stand-by arrangements, programme categories and early warning indicators and other measures will be used in anticipation of, and in response to, a potential emergency. Contingency planning also enables organisational learning by providing an opportunity to incorporate new lessons, systems, tools and procedures into the preparation of plans. On average, more than 25 WFP contingency plans a year are drafted by the various Country Offices and Regional Bureaux, as well as contributions to inter-agency exercises.

Emergency preparedness and contingency planning in World Vision

Mark Janz, World Vision

World Vision's main preparedness and contingency planning mechanisms are:

- Initial Disaster Preparedness Plans. These country-level plans include best case, worst case and most likely case scenario projections. The plans detail the most likely programming interventions, staffing and networking needs and preparedness and pre-positioning requirements.
- Standards. Emergency response standards have been developed for small-, medium- and large-scale emergencies. These guide emergency preparedness, pre-positioning, staffing, planning and response, in order to foster best practice and meet organisational expectations.
- The Global Pre-positioning Resource Network. A global pre-positioning network has been developed, with stockpiles of a range of items, including relief supplies, equipment, vehicles, staff camp set-up, communications and computer equipment. Agreements with suppliers are in place for goods on consignment, as well as dealer-stocked items. Stocking locations are based on three major continents. This allows for air deployment of equipment and supplies and enables services to be set up in a timely and professional manner. Equipment set-up services are also included during deployment.
- A Designated Global Rapid Response Team. World Vision has developed designated rapid response capacity, with at least 20 experienced emergency response practitioners ready for immediate deployment to emergencies.
- Regional Rapid Response Teams. Regional rapid response teams are available for designated periods of time to bolster World Vision's global response capacity. These teams are in Asia, Africa and Latin America; they are trained and experienced in emergency response.
- An Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund. This is a designated $6 million discretionary fund for rapid emergency response and preparedness initiatives. The fund provides for rapid professional early warning analysis, start-up planning and response. It is replenished yearly from private and grant funding.
- A Relief Register. This registers, trains and orients selected skilled individuals in programming, finance, human resources, administration and information technology within World Vision, and contracts with their immediate supervisors for deployment to emergencies when their area of expertise is in demand.
- Feeder Schools. Identified individuals are selected in specific skill areas (such as finance, human resources, food management and information technology) and work alongside skilled and experienced practitioners in their fields in emergency response situations. Within nine to 18 months they become fully credentialled emergency response staff ready for deployment.
- Crisis Country Clusters. World Vision focuses on approximately 15 prevalent emergency clusters globally to promote early warning preparedness and pre-positioning. The clusters address both chronic civil unrest and natural disasters. Cluster planning brings multiple bordering countries together in a joint planning, preparedness and pre-positioning process. This helps reduce the redundancy of planning preparedness and pre-positioning for each high-risk country, and allows the focusing of resources.
- Food Program Management Group (FPMG). The FPMG provides technical expertise for emergency food assessments, programme design and implementation. The group provides state of the art food tracking and accountability systems, and furnishes and trains professional food aid managers and accounting officers for large-scale emergency food programming.

Notes

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7 R. Flin, *Sitting in the Hot Seat: Leaders and Teams for Critical Incident Management* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons).

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11 CARE India, West Bengal Scenario Timeline, 2003.

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19 *Atlas for Disaster Preparedness and Response in the Limpopo Basin*, INGC, UEM-Department of Geography and USAID/FEWS NET MIND, 2003, http://www.setsan.org.mz/limpopoatlas.

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25 *Inter-agency Action Plan for Flood Forecasting, Preparedness and Response for the Juba and Shabelle Rivers in Somalia*, SACB Flood Working Group, March 2004.

26 Budgets can be developed for both the implementation of the response and operations outlined in the contingency plan, and for the preparedness actions to be taken prior to a crisis.

27 WFP Great Lakes Contingency Plan, 2001.

28 *Ibid*.

29 Based on interviews with WFP staff.

30 Based on interviews with UN staff.

31 Based on interviews and the author's personal involvement in the process.

32 Interviews.

33 'A Change of Policy and Attitude: UNHCR and Evaluation', *RRN Newsletter*, no. 15, http://www.odihpn.org/documents/newsletter015.pdf.

34 Interviews and author's personal involvement in the process.

35 Institutional emergency preparedness programmes focus on ensuring that the organisation is prepared to respond to a crisis. Many humanitarian organisations also have emergency preparedness programmes focused on helping beneficiary communities improve their preparedness.

36 Flin, *Sitting in the Hot Seat*.

37 *Missing the Point: An Analysis of Food Security Interventions in the Great Lakes* by Simon Levine at al. (HPN Network Paper 47, July 2004) provides clear examples of the disconnect between needs and responses in the Great Lakes.

38 Correspondence with OCHA staff involved in the planning process.

Network Papers 1997–2007

Network Papers are contributions on specific experiences or issues prepared either by HPN members or contributing specialists.

19 *Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers need to know* by J. Darcy (1997)
20 *People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* ed. S. Davidson (1997)
21 *Humanitarian Principles: The Southern Sudan Experience* by I. Levine (1997)
22 *The War Economy in Liberia: A Political Analysis* by P. Atkinson (1997)
23 *The Coordination of Humanitarian Action: the case of Sri Lanka* by K. Van Brabant (1997)
24 *Reproductive Health for Displaced Populations* by C. Palmer (1998)
25 *Humanitarian Action in Protracted Crises: the new relief 'agenda' and its limits* by D. Hendrickson (1998)
26 *The Food Economy Approach: a framework for understanding rural livelihoods* by T. Boudreau (1998)
27 *Between Relief and Development: targeting food aid for disaster prevention in Ethiopia* by K. Sharp (1998)
28 *North Korea: The Politics of Food Aid* by J. Bennett (1999)
29 *Participatory Review in Chronic Instability: The Experience of the IKAFE Refugee Settlement Programme, Uganda* by K. Neefjes (1999)
30 *Protection in Practice: Field Level Strategies for Protecting Civilians from Deliberate Harm* by D. Paul (1999)
31 *The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Health and Well-being* by R. Garfield (1999)
32 *Humanitarian Mine Action: The First Decade of a New Sector in Humanitarian Aid* by C. Horwood (2000)
33 *The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know* by P. Le Billon (2000)
34 *NGO Responses to Hurricane Mitch: Evaluations for Accountability and Learning* by F. Grunewald, V. de Geoffroy & S. Lister (2000)
35 *Cash Transfers in Emergencies: Evaluating Benefits and Assessing Risks* by D. Peppiatt, J. Mitchell and P. Holzmann (2001)
36 *Food-security Assessments in Emergencies: A Livelihoods Approach* by H. Young, S. Jaspars, R. Brown, J. Frize and H. Khogali (2001)
37 *A Bridge Too Far: Aid Agencies and the Military in Humanitarian Response* by J. Barry with A. Jefferys (2002)
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58 *Concerning the accountability of humanitarian action* by Austen Davis (2007)

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2 *Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programmes* by J. Shoham (1994)
3 *General Food Distribution in Emergencies: from Nutritional Needs to Political Priorities* by S. Jaspars and H. Young (1996)
4 *Seed Provision During and After Emergencies* by the ODI Seeds and Biodiversity Programme (1996)
5 *Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergency Operations: Registration and its Alternatives* by J. Telford (1997)
6 *Temporary Human Settlement Planning for Displaced Populations in Emergencies* by A. Chalinder (1998)
7 *The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies* by A. Hallam (1998)
8 *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* by K. Van Brabant (2000)
9 *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness in Development and Emergency Programming* by John Twigg (2004)

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Funding support is provided by institutional donors (AusAID, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, Development Cooperation Ireland, MFA Netherlands, SIDA, USAID), non-governmental organisations (British Red Cross, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern, International Rescue Committee, MSF, Oxfam, Save the Children (UK), World Vision) and UN agencies (WFP).

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