**Communications guidelines for slow-onset or chronic crises**

Slow-onset or chronic crises, such as food crises, droughts or conflict, are different than rapid-onset emergencies. It is often difficult to raise awareness or keep media attention on the crisis; they often become ‘forgotten’ emergencies. Media and communications work therefore needs to be more creative and strategic, and additional, sustained effort is required to keep the spotlight on or reignite media interest in the crisis, and generate ongoing fundraising tie-ins and support advocacy objectives. Communications activities for slow-onset crises should follow general communications guidelines (see [CET – Communications in Emergencies](http://minerva.care.ca/Livelink1/livelink.exe?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=2562353)). The following steps are recommended for chronic or slow-onset crises:

1. **Develop a communications strategy and workplan.** The workplan should include:

* **Key events** that could be used as media hooks to bring attention to the crisis. Global events could include donors’ meetings or commemorative days (such as World Refugee Day); country/region-specific examples could include the start of the rainy season, cholera outbreak, planting season, political events, six-month/one-year anniversary of the crisis.
* **Mapping of CARE’s planned program activities** to help identify communications materials to be produced or possible media hooks (i.e. a new education project planned in month six; new assessment report planned etc.).
* **Scenario planning** of how the situation could change, to help plan for how we would handle different situations and how our communications plan would change.
* **List of communications materials to be produced and when.** See the Critical First Steps for Media management in Emergencies in the first 72 hours for examples.
* **Special projects** to keep the momentum and reignite media/donor interest and use all possible media channels.
* **Media package** to share with journalists, highlighting different aspects of the crisis that would be of interest to the media. The package should include a number of ‘itineraries’ (descriptions of what a journo would be able to see and who they would be able to speak to); quotes and photos from the case studies; details of locations and logistics (traveling time, type of accommodation, availability of internet connection).

1. **Communications resources should focus on highlighting:**

* The deteriorating situation/ need (important for fundraising)
* Impact on women and girls
* People’s coping mechanisms and concerns as they’re exhausting these
* Resilience, communities helping each other (ex. Women resorting to growing vegetable gardens, to traditional ways of living or using more traditional materials (moringa leaves) in the case of a food crisis; communities hosting those in need, mothers accompanying daughters to school in case of conflict, displacement)
* CARE’s response
* Advocacy messages
* NOTE: Depending on the crisis, important to highlight the contrast where possible of communities that are coping better as a result of CARE’s ongoing programming or DRR activities versus those with less support.

1. **When to deploy communications staff:** It is recommended that communications staff, external videographer/photographer are deployed when there is a media spike/a media spike is highly likely due to turn of events; and to implement a ‘special project’.
2. **Examples**
   1. **Examples of special projects:**

* Visit by UK mum blogger to Niger in 2012 for World Vision, which led to the UK Government matching every penny raised, and interviews with Christine Amanpour, BBC. (For more details click [here](http://fieldcraftstudios.com/portfolio_archive/shareniger-world-vision-uk/))
* A multinational mum bloggers trip to Niger in 2012 for World Vision, which led to significant media exposure and fundraising tie-ins in the bloggers’ countries of origin. (For more details, click [here](http://mombloggersinniger.wordpress.com/))
* World Vision’s ‘Hungerfree’ campaign to coincide with the G8 meeting in 2012 (For more information, click [here](http://www.hungerfree.org/))
* Oxfam’s Syrian refugees Twitter takeover in 2013 (refugees posting ‘directly’ on Oxfam’s account throughout a whole day)
* WFP’s ‘Molly’s World’ initiative 2011-2012 (a young girl who was given a small video camera to document scenes of her daily life at home and school to raise awareness on the situation of poor communities in Kenya; more details [here](http://www.wfp.org/stories/international-womens-day-her-future-starts-today))
* CARE’s Refugee Week activities in 2013 focused on Syria crisis. Live Twitter Q&As led to CARE’s Syrian refugees participating in a live blog by *The Guardian* in July 2013.
* CARE’s Thunderclap and social media campaign focused on SGBV issues in DRC for the G8 special meeting on preventing sexual violence in conflict, April 2013. Along with traditional media engagement, this has generated social media traction, raising CARE UK’s profile as well use of CARE communications materials by media and the UK Government in its external communications on the event.
* Commissioning a short report or briefing paper to establish ourselves at the beginning of a crisis.

**4.2 Examples of communications workplans:**

* [Mali Food Insecurity and Conflict 2013](http://minerva.care.ca/livelink1/livelink.exe?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=2685746)
* [Syria Refugee Crisis 2013](http://minerva.care.ca/livelink1/livelink.exe?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=2562305)