



CASE STUDY NO. 2

The Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS): Improving the Quality of Emergency Response through Livelihoods-based Standards

Case Study Summary

Humanitarian interventions have historically focused on saving lives rather than livelihoods, and key livestock assets can be overlooked in the urgency of response.

The Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) project aims to increase the quality of emergency response by promoting minimum standards for livestock-based interventions. The Standards follow the format of the Sphere handbook, including minimum standards, key indicators and guidance notes. They cover a range of livestock-based interventions - destocking, feed, water, veterinary services and restocking – as well as support and guidance on livelihoods-based needs assessment and identification of appropriate, timely and feasible emergency responses. As with SPHERE, LEGS was developed using a broad consultation process involving practitioners and policy makers from around the world.

LEGS contributes to bridging the gap between disaster response and long-term development by highlighting the importance of saving not just lives but also livelihoods through support to key livelihood assets, both during and after an emergency.

ALNAP Innovations Case Studies showcase innovative solutions to the problems and opportunities faced in international humanitarian response. Each case study focuses on a specific innovation, and outlines the process through which the innovation was developed, from the initial recognition of a problem, through development to practical implementation and scale-up. The Innovations Case Study series is designed to act as a key mechanism to improve dissemination and take up of innovations across the humanitarian sector.



**Livestock Emergency Guidelines
& Standards**
Livelihoods-based Livestock Interventions in
Disasters

Implementing agency
The LEGS Project

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Location of programme
Global

Time period
2006-2009

Estimated expenditure
approx. USD 200,000

Estimated Beneficiaries
Potential beneficiaries include
livestock owners affected by disaster



ALNAP
Active Learning Network for
Accountability and Performance
in Humanitarian Action

Background Information and Rationale for Innovation

Historically, emergency response has focused on the primary need to ‘save lives’. However, there is growing debate about the role of livelihoods in humanitarian action and the need to ‘save livelihoods’ as well as lives. The sustainable livelihoods framework (DFID, n.d.) provides a basis for analysing livelihoods and highlights the importance of livelihood capital assets to support positive livelihood outcomes. These capital assets (financial, social, physical, natural and human) are commonly taken into account in long-term development planning, but may be overlooked in emergency situations when the urgent priority is to save lives. However, livelihood assets are vital for the survival of affected communities following an emergency (and sometimes also during it). Many emergencies result in the loss of these assets, leaving communities more vulnerable and unable to maintain their livelihoods independently.

In many developing countries, livestock play a key role in livelihoods and represent a significant financial (and social) asset. These livestock are frequently affected by disasters: for example, in the 1999-2001 drought in northern Kenya, it is estimated that over 2 million sheep and goats, 900,000 cattle and 14,000 camels died, representing losses of 30% of small stock and cattle, and 18% of camel holdings among the affected pastoralist communities (Aklilu and Wekesa, 2002). In the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, over 78,000 cattle and 61,000 buffalo were killed in Indonesia, along with 52,000 goats, 16,000 sheep, and nearly 1.5 million chickens (FAO, undated). However, despite the centrality of livestock, many emergency response programmes do not address the loss of livestock assets, and those which do sometimes fail to be effective.

Description of the Innovation Process

Recognition: In early 2000, a number of livestock professionals began to raise concerns about the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of livestock-based interventions in emergencies. There was growing recognition that the agencies and staff implementing emergency programmes often lacked the necessary technical expertise to make informed choices about livestock-based responses in emergency. Poor coordination between emergency and development activities also meant that emergency approaches could contradict and at times actively undermine long-term development initiatives, for example by the free distribution of veterinary medicines in areas where cost-recovery schemes were operating through community-based animal health workers and private pharmacies. At the same time, there was a growing recognition that livelihoods in general should be more central in humanitarian planning and implementation.

Invention: At an international workshop on ‘Livestock and Livelihoods in Situations of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability’ organised by AU/IBAR in Nairobi in August 2004, the lack of guidelines for livestock agencies working in complex emergencies was identified as one of the

key constraints to improved practice. Tufts University - Feinstein International Center was nominated to take forward a process of consultation in order to develop some guidelines and standards, bringing together the activities of a number of interested organisations that were already reviewing and documenting their experiences in this sector. It was planned that the guidelines would follow the process and practice of the Sphere Project, in order to provide complementary standards to support livelihoods-based responses alongside the urgent need to save lives in emergencies.

Accordingly, the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) Project was initiated, in order to develop a new set of minimum standards and guidelines for livelihoods-based livestock interventions in disasters. Like Sphere, LEGS is founded on a rights-based approach and draws on multi-agency contributions of ideas and experiences. LEGS is based on three livelihoods-based objectives:

1. To *provide rapid assistance* to crisis-affected communities through livestock-based interventions
2. To *protect the key livestock-related assets* of crisis-affected communities
3. To *rebuild the key livestock-related assets* of crisis-affected communities

Based on the identification of key weaknesses in the standard of humanitarian action among livestock-keeping communities, LEGS promotes responses that are **appropriate, feasible, and timely**. LEGS aims to address emergency response in all types of disaster, both rapid and slow onset, in all developing regions of the world. The guidelines are designed to support livestock specialists and general humanitarian staff implementing emergency interventions in areas where livelihoods are derived in part or in full from livestock, as well as policy and decision-makers (such as governments and donors) whose funding and implementation decisions impact on disaster response.

Through developing internationally accepted guidelines and standards to help improve the quality of response and raise awareness of the need to protect and rebuild livestock assets in emergencies, LEGS represents an **innovative process**, building on the model pioneered by Sphere of using internationally recognised standards to improve humanitarian performance. In the same way that Sphere has significantly influenced the quality of humanitarian response throughout the world, LEGS aims to contribute to incremental advances in the standard of emergency interventions for livestock keepers.

At the same time, by emphasising a livelihoods approach, LEGS also contributes to the **innovative re-positioning** of humanitarian aid, in terms of creating improved linkages between emergency response and long-term development. The humanitarian and development sectors have historically been distinct, and even contradictory - at times within the same agency. Despite efforts to increase coherence between the two, there remains in general a gulf between their funding streams, organisation, approaches and conceptual frameworks. Incorporating a livelihoods approach into emergency response helps to bring these two sectors closer together, to the potential benefit of affected communities. In this way LEGS contributes towards a shift in the positioning of aid, helping to turn the debate on livelihoods in emergencies into concrete action.

Development: The LEGS project began with the establishment of a Steering Group in May 2005, made up of individuals from the African Union's Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture (AU-DREA), the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Vétérinaires sans Frontières Belgium (VSF-B), a member of VSF-Europa. Focal point authors were commissioned to develop draft chapters, which were edited into a 'consultation draft' and posted on the LEGS website. The LEGS project mailing list of over 1,700 individuals and organisations were invited to comment on the draft. Substantive feedback was received from over 40 individuals and organisations, including NGOs, animal welfare organisations, independent livestock specialists, government livestock officials, academics and research institutes, donors, and international organisations such as ICRC. Based on this feedback, a second, 'field test draft' was produced and made available to mailing list members and others (via the LEGS website) for field testing in emergency situations, prior to the finalisation of the manuscript for publishing.

LEGS begins with a detailed description of livelihoods-based need assessment and participatory response identification methods. This is followed by a chapter covering common standards such as coordination, targeting, impact assessment and participation; followed by technical chapters on destocking, veterinary services, feed, water, livestock shelter and provision of livestock (restocking). Each chapter considers cross-cutting issues such as gender and the environment, presents different options with their implications and includes a 'decision-making tree' to facilitate the selection of appropriate responses, followed by minimum standards, key indicators and guidance notes for each option. LEGS is not a manual for implementation but aims to provide key questions, guidance and minimum standards to enable the user to make informed choices and plans for livestock-based responses in emergencies. Relevant 'How-to' publications with additional details on each topic are referenced in the appendices to each technical chapter.

The LEGS guidelines were published in May 2009 in hard copy, and also made available as a free downloadable pdf on the LEGS website. An electronic decision-making tool based on LEGS is also available on the website, and on the CD-ROM accompanying the hard copy.

Implementation: At the time of writing of this case study, LEGS has only been available for a few months and hence widespread implementation of the guidelines cannot be anticipated at this early stage. However, there is a growing volume of anecdotal evidence that aid organisations are using LEGS in the field and finding the guidelines in their planning and operations. The broad base of implementing agencies who were involved in the development of LEGS suggests there is both potential and enthusiasm for the implementation of LEGS in a range of emergency contexts. An example of an aid agency applying LEGS in the context of an Ethiopian drought is presented below example.

Application of LEGS in the Field; Save US Camel Restocking in Garre, Southern Ethiopia

The pastoral rangelands of southern Ethiopia have historically been subject to drought, and in recent droughts many pastoralists have lost significant numbers of livestock. In response, Save the Children US initiated a camel restocking project in early 2009, to assist a number of cattle pastoralists among the Garre community to diversify their herds and therefore improve their drought coping strategies. Camels are prized because of their drought resistant qualities and provide children with milk when cattle are no longer lactating. However, the acquisition of camels is generally denied to poorer pastoralists because of the high capital cost. The Restocking Project provided 90 households with a package of two camels and 20 sheep and goats each.

The Restocking Project used LEGS as its

Selected LEGS Restocking Standards

Standard 1 - Assessment: An analysis is carried out to assess the current and potential role of livestock in livelihoods and the potential social, economic and environmental impact o the provision of livestock

- Key Indicator 1: The role that livestock plays in pre-disaster livelihoods is analysed
- Key Indicator 3: The social, physical and natural capital assets of target beneficiaries are considered to assess their suitability as recipients

Standard 2 - Definition of the package: Appropriate livestock types are distributed in adequate numbers and through appropriate mechanisms to provide viable and sustainable benefits to the target communities

- Key Indicator 1: The design of livestock provision interventions take account of indigenous systems of stock distribution
- Key Indicator 2: Selection of beneficiaries is based on local participation and practice
- Key Indicator 3: The type and quantity of livestock provided are appropriate to support livelihoods and are productive, healthy and adapted to local conditions

Standard 3 - Credit, procurement, transport and delivery systems: Credit, procurement, transport and delivery systems are efficient, cost-effective and support quality provision of livestock

- Key Indicator 1: Procurement is based on local purchase where possible

Standard 4 - Additional support: Additional support (veterinary care, training, food) is provided to beneficiaries to help ensure a positive and sustainable impact on livelihoods

- Key Indicator 1: Preventative veterinary care is provided for the livestock prior to distribution
- Key Indicator 2: A system for the ongoing provision of veterinary care is established for all members of the community

operational guideline and many of the Key Indicators for the four LEGS Standards on restocking were met, as highlighted below.

The Project analysed the existing and potential role of different livestock species in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, to inform the selection of the type and numbers of livestock to be distributed [*Standard 1, Key Indicator 1*]. The selection of beneficiaries was carried out by customary elders, local government officials and community representatives. The selection focused on poor and marginalised pastoralists (including women-headed households) but considered the history and livestock management capabilities of potential beneficiaries, to ensure they had the necessary skills and social capital to be able to manage the livestock [*Standard 1, Key Indicator 3*].

Indigenous social support systems involving the distribution of livestock to needy families exist in the Garre community. The Project was designed to build on these, with some of the distributed livestock provided by the community: the Project provided the two camels and ten sheep/goats, and the community another ten sheep and goats [*Standard 2, Key Indicator 1*].

The participatory process enabled involvement of community representatives and elders in the management of the Project, including selection criteria and beneficiary selection. The elders in particular played a key role in negotiating the community contributions of livestock [*Standard 2, Key Indicator 2*]. The number of livestock to be distributed was agreed through this consultative process. In response to the need to adapt to the impact of climate change, the type of livestock selected reflected the growing need for drought-resistant stock such as camels that can produce significant quantities of milk in times of drought, together with the fast reproducing sheep and goats that enable the rapid rebuilding of livestock assets [*Standard 2, Key Indicator 3*].

The livestock were purchased from local traders, through a bidding process managed by the Garre elders [*Standard 3, Key Indicator 1*]. The livestock were then inspected by the community and the elders, and examined and treated/vaccinated as necessary by veterinary professionals before distribution [*Standard 4, Key Indicator 1*]. The Community-based Animal Health Workers in the beneficiary areas were subsequently given refresher training on camel husbandry, management and health, in order to be able to support the restocked families and others in the community [*Standard 4, Key Indicator 2*].

The Restocking Project was carried out in areas where food aid is distributed as a support to poor families. The restocking exercise proved complementary to this programme, as highlighted by one beneficiary: *“It is good to receive food, but there is no milk, no butter and no meat, and the food does not reproduce itself. Also, I have no control: it can stop at any time.*

But camels and goats are my property: I have a title of ownership over them.” (Restocking beneficiary).

Source: Belayneh, A., E. Wondimu, K. Simachew and E. Stevens (2009) *Camel Distribution in Response to Climate Change* Pastoral Livelihoods Brief No. 1, Save the Children US, Addis Ababa

Diffusion: LEGS was formally launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2009 and in London in June 2009. To date nearly 700 hard copies have been sold by the publisher and an additional 1,170 distributed free. Approximately 1,500 copies of the pdf have also been downloaded from the website, with around 500 downloads of the electronic tool. LEGS continues to be publicised through the LEGS mailing list and other media.

In addition to promoting the uptake of LEGS through the hard copy book and electronic pdf, funding has been secured to develop training materials based on the LEGS content and to run a series of regional training of trainers (TOT) training courses. This will result in a cadre of LEGS trainers in many countries of the developing world, who will act as a resource for humanitarian agencies and governments. LEGS will also be translated into French, Spanish and Arabic to promote further diffusion of the standards and guidelines.

Risks

The process of developing the LEGS guidelines entailed a number of risks. First, it was agreed that (as for Sphere) maintaining independence from any single organisation or donor would be vital to ensure wide uptake and acceptance of the guidelines. However there was a risk that some donors or participating organisations would not agree to this and would require their logo or branding to be reflected in the final product. Thanks largely to the efforts of the Steering Group members, this was averted and the LEGS book was published as an independent publication under its own logo.

A second risk lay in the challenge of developing standards that were realistically practical yet succeeded in raising the quality of humanitarian interventions. Too low standards would fail to ‘raise the bar’, yet pitching the standards too high would make them unworkable and of little use.

The development of standards also raises expectations among potential users with regard to the quantification of aid, a challenge that Sphere has also faced. Whilst it is possible to quantify some responses, there is a danger that numerical standards will be used too much as a ‘blueprint’ or an easy answer to complex humanitarian situations, and help to avoid the

analysis required to identify appropriate interventions. LEGS encourages a process of needs assessment based on the particular livelihood strategies and constraints in any given emergency and therefore aims to avoid significant levels of quantification. This position led to some critical feedback on the consultation and field test drafts of LEGS: for example some readers wished to know exact quantities of feed to give a drought-stricken animal, or an exact number of animals to be distributed in a restocking project. However the context in which such interventions take place will vary significantly between communities, countries, continents and disasters, and LEGS aims to prioritise an analysis of this context, including livelihood strategies and the role of livestock in livelihoods, rather than providing a simple answer to fit all cases.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaboration and consultation have been the cornerstone of the LEGS development process. The development of effective independent international standards relies on broad support and interest globally – without this the standards have no constituency.

Accordingly a mailing list of over 1,700 individuals and organisations worldwide was established early on in the process. Regular mailings helped to retain interest in the development of the guidelines and prompted considerable feedback on the consultation draft. This consultation not only helped to maintain interest in and uptake of the guidelines, but also contributed significantly to increasing the quality of the content through feedback and comments on earlier drafts.

The process of contributing to the consultation draft via the internet also helped to increase the sense of ownership of LEGS among the members of the mailing list, even before publication. It is hoped that this collaboration will continue into the next phase and thus help to enhance future revisions of LEGS.

The diversity of organisations represented by the individuals on the Steering Group (United Nations, African Union, a university, an NGO and the Red Cross alliance) also made a vital contribution to the production of the guidelines, helping to ensure that the content was relevant across the sector and facilitating involvement from a wide range of organisations.

Lessons Learned and Evaluation Findings

Lessons Learned

The process of developing the standards and guidelines thus far has highlighted a number of key issues and lessons:

- Although livestock responses are not unknown in the humanitarian sector, identifying evidence-based best practice has been a challenge, because a great deal of experience is undocumented and few impact assessments are carried out. The quality of emergency response can only improve when experience (both positive and negative) is documented and shared with other users, and when impact is rigorously assessed and key lessons distilled to increase the body of knowledge and information available to practitioners and decision makers.
- Promoting a livelihoods-based response to emergencies requires a shift of focus from technical needs to an understanding of the social and economic systems of the affected communities, both before and since the disaster. This level of analysis can pose a challenge to practitioners who may be forced, out of practice or organisational mandate, to respond rapidly to the crisis. However, experience thus far shows that failing to carry out this analysis can lead to ill-informed and/or poorly timed response, which may fail to assist affected communities and at worst may actively undermine their livelihoods.
- The timeliness of response is crucial in all emergency interventions and has particular relevance for livelihoods-based responses. The time that many agencies require to secure funding and process and implement responses often means that aid arrives too late to support livelihoods - for example livestock fodder is delivered to a drought-stricken area as the rains begin. LEGS tries to promote forward and contingency planning, including the analysis – prior to an emergency - of internal and external obstacles to implementation, in order to help ensure that interventions can be carried out in a timely manner to support livelihoods throughout and after the disaster.

Evaluation Findings

Since it was only published in May 2009, LEGS has not yet been formally evaluated. However, the consultation process whereby mailing list members and other interested parties were invited to comment on the first draft, and the testing of the ‘field test draft’ by practitioners in the field provided evaluative comments that could be taken into account before the manuscript was finalised. Initial feedback on LEGS has been very positive (see for example Application of LEGS in the Field below).

Various mechanisms have been established to facilitate feedback on the published guidelines and to enable the production of a revised version after two to three years. These include a feedback form in the back of the hard copy book and pdf, a feedback form on the LEGS website, and a planned testing process by a targeted range of organisations in diverse

emergency settings. A series of impact assessments using LEGS is planned, as a means to promote the wider use of impact assessment of emergency response while also providing evidence to inform the LEGS revision process. The use of LEGS as an evaluation tool has already been tested during a review workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2008, when representatives of a number of agencies involved in responding to the drought in Afar Region came together and reviewed their activities and modes of operation against the LEGS standards in order to draw out lessons for future implementation.

Wider Sectoral Implications

LEGS adds to the growing body of standards in the humanitarian sector that is aiming to improve performance, including Sphere, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) standards on education in emergencies, and the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) Network standards on economic recovery. This *innovative process* of developing sets of standards has the potential not only to improve the quality of response, but also to stimulate more innovation in the sector. Setting benchmarks for intervention can encourage practitioners (and decision-makers) to seek new ways of improving their programmes.

In particular LEGS promotes a context-specific approach to emergency response, based on a participatory assessment and analysis of the livelihood assets and livelihood strategies of the affected communities. It aims to respond appropriately to the circumstances of each emergency rather than providing a blueprint for technical intervention. This approach has the potential to foster further innovation, as practitioners are encouraged to analyse the priorities and opportunities facing the affected communities and develop innovative and appropriate responses in context.

The contribution of LEGS to the *re-positioning* of livelihoods as a key factor in emergency response adds to the growing linkages between the humanitarian and long-term development sectors. LEGS' focus on livestock assets highlights the importance of taking into account the capital assets of affected communities in emergencies, including financial assets such as income generating activities and credit (as addressed by the SEEP economic recovery standards), or human capital such as education (as addressed by the INEE standards).

It is hoped that LEGS is not only a first step to improve emergency response among livestock-owning communities, but also that it can contribute to improved mechanisms and policies among donors and governments to ensure more timely and cost-effective response to disasters.

Key Contacts

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Relevant Publications

Aklilu Y. and M. Wekesa (2002) *Drought, Livestock and Livelihoods: Lessons from the 1999-2001 emergency response in the pastoral sector in Kenya* Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) Network Paper No. 40, London: Overseas Development Institute

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SEEP Network (2009) *Minimum Standards for Economic Recovery after Crisis* First Edition, Washington DC: Small Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) Network

The LEGS Project (2009) *Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)* Rugby: Practical Action Publishing

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