

Repairing a Break in the Chain

NGO Holistic Leadership Platform

Managing NGO Food Programs in Central Africa



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CASE OVERVIEW

As the country manager of a food program for an NGO in a Central African nation, we depend on donations from countries and private sponsors and local government and volunteers for distribution. Local villagers have begun complaining to government bureaucrats and media that supplies are being delivered less frequently, and there are rumors of some villages being charged for food. This has not yet become an issue, but with rumors floating around the capital city, it is only a matter of time before the charges break in a blog or news story.

INTRODUCTION

In Central Africa, approximately 40 percent of the population is chronically undernourished, and more than 50 percent of its children are significantly underweight. For the Team Africa Non-Governmental Organization, reducing the number of chronically undernourished people in Central Africa is both a humanitarian concern and a strategic goal.

The following is predicated on the holistic view of crisis management in the distribution and delivery of food aid, including prevention, preparedness and the tactical steps required for managing issues. Furthermore, post-crisis recommendations play a critical function to Central African food distribution in the future (For an Issues Management Formula summary sheet, please refer to **Appendix A**).

I. Identify Issue

Local citizens are complaining to influencers that the NGO is allegedly mismanaging its duty with food distribution and delivery, potentially leading to lost reputation that negatively impacts global donation efforts and threatens regional famine.

A. Team Africa NGO “DNA”

Dedicated to immediate assistance/alleviation from suffering for the hungry and undernourished people of Central Africa.

1. **Kernel:** Risks loss of reputation and trust with donors and locals.
2. **Leadership Opportunity Flip:** Implementing the strongest set of human rights initiatives and premier steward standards for food distribution and resources in the region, raising goodwill, building trust and alleviating suffering.

II. Challenges

According to Heath and Palenchar (pg. 277), a crisis can lead “to dialogue related to fact, values, and policies that spur national and international regulations and public policies as a response to” actions currently occurring that contributed to the issues in the first place.

Eliminating and alleviating hunger in Central Africa presents numerous challenges for Team Africa (and other NGOs) at several key points of the distribution cycle.

A. Donor trust

1. News of delays, corruption, mishandling or failure to deliver necessary supplies undermines donor confidence and minimizes future donations.

B. Theft

1. Loss of significant food supplies threatens human well-being in affected countries and raises suspicion among supply-chain distributors and involved governments.

C. Flood/Drought

1. Uncontrollable weather challenges such as floods and drought threaten the food supply chain. During the rainy season, flooding closes roads, raises malaria risk and

slows or halts food distribution. During drought, lack of water necessary for crop management and basic human needs can further hinder relief efforts.

A. Government Corruption

1. The instability of governments in many African nations leads to unreliability in the supply line, and is a delicate situation given that potential conflicts with governments can lead to personal harm for NGO workers, banning of food distribution for those in need, and unethical practices such as governments selling relief aid food for their own profit.

B. Armed Regional Conflicts

1. Related to instability in government, regional conflicts are often hostile for those in need of food relief, and extremely dangerous for relief workers. Negotiation and agreements are tentatively discussed, and often unreliable.

C. Subpar Communication Systems

1. The lack of technology development in Third World nations, the propensity of societies in conflict to acquire communications technologies for their own purposes, and unclear planning and processes lead to easy breakdowns in the delivery system.

III. Leadership Opportunities: The “FLIP”

Team Africa faces issues management on several levels, most notable its core DNA to alleviate human suffering in Central Africa. If crisis management, “is an issues management function that entails issues monitoring, strategic business planning, and getting the house in order, Team Africa must avoid events that trigger outrage and uncertainty and have the potential of maturing into public policy issues.” (Heath and Palenchar, pg. 275) Given the issues confronting Team Africa, the “FLIP” encompasses an integrated, transparent campaign where stronger human rights initiatives are implemented, significant standards for food distribution are set, new methods of delivery and food development are introduced, strict ethical guidelines are enforced, and donor confidence is enhanced by continual communications and involvement with the improved strategies.

IV. Message: ????

A. Message Strategy:

B. Message Delivery Tactics:

V. Resource Requirements: When food aid programs are designed, a program budget is prepared that includes all associated costs. The logistics costs are a major portion of this budget (\$330,000 annually) including costs associated with transportation, storage, and handling. By basing the internal transportation budget on detailed calculations of tonnage moved along particular segments of the supply chain, a fairly accurate depiction of the costs for internal transportation is derived. Should there be any changes in handled tonnage (increases or decreases) budget recalculation will be fairly straightforward. It should also make an easy budget to defend if based on accurate, documented unit costs and distances.

VI. Picture of Success:

To maintain focus and the drive to deliver externally, our Central African NGO picture of success is one where food gets into the hands of those who need it the most and donors increase their giving so more people can be fed. Elements include:

- **Identify Stakeholders** for integrated Steering Committee:
 - Central African governments
 - Donor countries and individuals
 - United Nations agencies
 - Activist groups
 - Local professionals
- **Objective & Goals:** to discuss, plan and implement the adoption of a Food Charter and regional Co-OP of NGO-stakeholders, which oversees food inventory control and scheduled food distribution.
- **Tactics:** Food is delivered to those in need during the dry season and storage facilities are built to house foodstuffs for times when villages cannot be reached, specifically during the rainy season.
- As delivery of food to those who most need it increases, additional fundraising will be needed to support a growing need to expand food delivery. The organization will be able to speak of all who have been helped by the donors generosity to engage existing donors to give more and attract others who might have wanted to see a success story before donating.
- Working with local villages to ensure they have the infrastructure in place to become sustainable – growing and harvesting crops, availability of clean water, ability to take surplus goods to market to sell for other goods needed by the villagers.

VI. Measure Results/Evaluation

RESOURCES:

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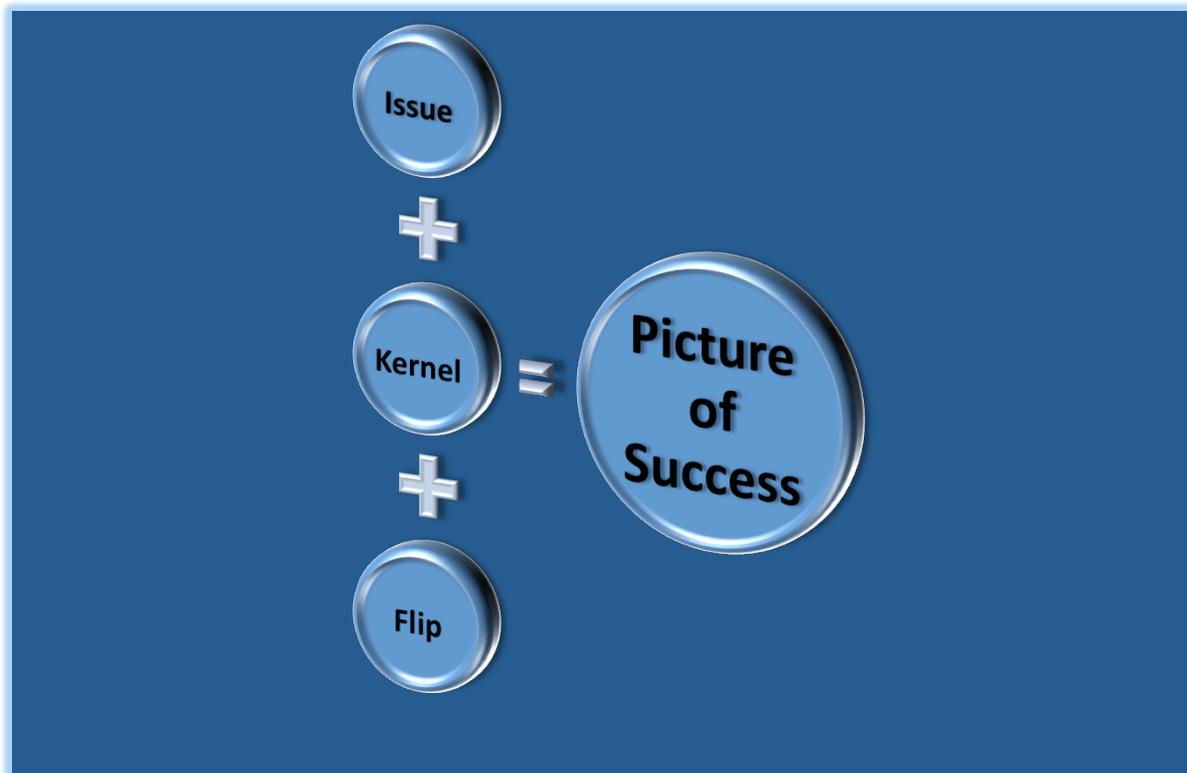
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Appendix A:

HOLISTIC CRISIS MANAGEMENT



ISSUE

Local citizens have begun complaining to influencers that Team Africa NGO is mismanaging food distribution and delivery.

KERNEL

Team Africa NGO risks irreparable fracture of trust and relationships with aid recipients, governments of participating Central African nations, and food program donors.

FLIP

Team Africa NGO will address the issue, kernel and challenges of theft, corruption and cycles of flood, famine and pestilence in the Central African nation by implementing a transparent model of civic and governmental cooperation and accountability. The NGO will simultaneously solidify trust with stakeholders and swiftly alleviate suffering of aid recipients.

PICTURE OF SUCCESS

The NGO will emerge as a model of intergovernmental and civic partnership among world relief organizations.