

7. CLOSING THE CENTRE & ENDING DROUGHT FEEDING

7.1 Dependency and development

Feeding programmes should not create unnecessary dependency beyond the emergency.

Make sure the local authorities understand that you do not intend to maintain a feeding presence in perpetuity.

They may wish to turn your presence into something developmental related to food production or food security; discuss well in advance of any pull-out how to structure your services to make such a changeover smooth.

7.2 Helping people to leave the feeding programme

Enforce strict discharge criteria as early as possible in the programme, so that people realise they cannot depend on you forever. This encourages them to maintain and increase whatever possibilities they have of acquiring and producing food themselves

7.3 Help to self-help

Investigate what agricultural inputs (seed, draught power, fuel, tools) are needed in your area to maintain and increase food production.

Do this early, 3 months before sowing, and offer help to find the inputs to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Contact CRDA in Addis Ababa for advice on where to find advice.

7.4 Timing

7.4.1 Food and nutritional status

As the food supplies in the area improve - mirrored by the children's average nutritional status in the area climbing towards 90% WFL (another survey!), your discharge rate will outstrip your registration rate.

When this has happened consistently over one month, investigate whether it is due to improvements in local production or food supply.

If so, this is the cue to start planning closure.

If the improvement is due purely to the excellence of your feeding, or to transitory circumstances, (like a temporary lull in registrations due to military activity), feeding may have to continue.

7.4.2 Rain and food production

Take advantage of the first good rain to discuss what the implications are for local food production, and how many months away the farmers and the authorities think self-sufficiency might be.

Plan your winding-down for 2 months after the FA representative in the DRC estimates that 12-month self-sufficiency will be reached.

7.4.3 Phasing out

Make it clear to the DRC that you will not continue any part of the emergency drought relief operation after the under-80% WFL level falls below 10%.

As your under-80% WFL level drops below 20%, start discussions about:

- handing over residual therapeutic feeding to the local health service, and
- handing over responsibility for any remaining orphans and destitutes to the RRC.

Don't forget to arrange a ceremony or party to mark the handing-over, or the end, of the programme!