

## WORKSHOP REPORT

# AAP CO-DESIGN & VALIDATION WORKSHOP

*Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Anticipatory Action in Somalia*

Mogadishu · 9–10 September 2026

## INTRODUCTION

**AHEAD – Anticipatory Humanitarian Action for Displacement** is a global project led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) that aims to strengthen humanitarian responses by improving the ability to act before displacement occurs. By leveraging and improving early warning (EW) tools and anticipatory action (AA) mechanisms, the project seeks to mitigate the negative impacts of conflict-driven displacement, increase operational preparedness, and ensure more effective humanitarian interventions.

A key objective is to include diaspora and other actors not traditionally part of AA frameworks. Diaspora sit at the intersection of a trusted, real-time information ecosystem, receiving community signals within hours through family, elder, mosque and WhatsApp networks, while the same channels provide a rapid means of mobilising resources in hard-to-reach locations. **This dual role of sensing and acting sets them apart from formal EW actors and makes their inclusion a missing piece in AA systems.**

In Somalia, one of AHEAD's pilot contexts across five districts in Gedo and Hiraan, these informal networks often carry the earliest signs of conflict-induced displacement but sit outside the formal system, connected by trust rather than protocol. AHEAD is working to **build that link through a community-based early warning structure that brings diaspora and local partner signals into the AHEAD response mechanism.** This represents an emerging and largely unexplored frontier in anticipatory action, with the potential to strengthen how anticipatory action is designed, funded and activated.

At the centre of this work is the co-design of Somalia's Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP), which sets out how early warning signals translate into action: **what triggers action, what happens once a threshold is reached, who does what, and how different actors coordinate before displacement occurs.**

This two-day workshop in Mogadishu was a key co-design and validation step, building on earlier online consultations bringing together diaspora, local partners, DRC and key stakeholders partners for joint reflection. Diaspora organisations and local partners, SODMA, the NGO Coalition, DRC worked through scenario-based simulations in their actual roles to test and refine the alert-to-action chain, unpacking how to effectively translate the AAP into timely, protection-centred and operationally feasible action under realistic conflict conditions.

## THE WORKSHOP WAS GUIDED BY THREE OBJECTIVES:

- **Validate the AAP** — review and refine the draft plan with the actors who will use it, so it holds up against real operating conditions.
- **Integrate diaspora and community early warning** — build the diaspora and local-partner signal layer into the AAP's monitoring and activation, connecting community-level warning to the AHEAD response.
- **Agree roles at activation** — define what diaspora and local partners deliver at partial and full activation scenarios, and how this complements DRC's response.



# 1

Day 1 brought the whole alert chain into one room to build the early warning structure together. In groups by district, participants set out which signals each location monitors, on a shared cycle with the community committees, with diaspora and local partners adding their own signals — remittances chief among them. They agreed a common reporting tool (Kobo) and worked through how a signal is verified, how it moves up the chain, and how information flows back to partners in return, while reflecting on considerations linked to safeguarding, risks mitigation and conflict sensitivity concerns that were consolidated into a joint Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) framework.

# 2

Day 2 turned to what happens once a threshold is reached. After distinguishing preparedness from activations (partial and full activation), each group designed a locally-grounded scenario from its own district and worked it through the chain — deciding what kind of activation it called for, which actions to take, implementation timeline and budget. The clearest lesson emerged when plans were tested against the timing logic: preparedness can run without a trigger, but an anticipatory action is data-informed and only counts if it fits the lead time — a two-week response cannot answer a forty-eight-hour warning. The day closed with identifying pre-agreed set of actions each partner can realistically deliver, location by location.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### 01

**MONITORING — EARLY WARNING IS BUILT TOGETHER, ON TRUST THAT ALREADY EXISTS**

The trusted networks of communities and diaspora are where the first signals surface. Connecting them — through joint verification and an agreed reporting route — is what makes early warning lead to early action.

### 04

**PREPAREDNESS IS THE GROUNDWORK; ANTICIPATORY ACTION IS THE TRIGGERED RESPONSE**

Preparedness runs continuously and needs no trigger — pre-positioned supplies, vendor contracts and pre-agreed budgets must be ready before activation. Anticipatory action is triggered and data-informed, and only counts if it fits the lead time: with conflict windows as short as one to two days, a two-week plan is no longer anticipatory action but emergency response.

### 02

**VERIFICATION — VERIFY BEFORE YOU ACT**

A fast signal can still be a false one, and acting on an unverified rumour can inflame a conflict rather than calm it. Reported signals are verified before they escalate — the same discipline that makes rumour management itself an anticipatory action.

### 05

**PEACEBUILDING IS BOTH THE GROUNDWORK AND THE FIRST RESPONSE**

As preparedness it is an ongoing process — sustaining dialogue and trusted relationships long before a crisis. At activation it becomes an anticipatory action in its own right: elder- and committee-led dialogue to de-escalate tension before it turns into displacement.

### 03

**ACTIVATION — TWO SOURCES, ONE DECISION**

Activation draws on two sources: the AHEAD forecast model and the community signals partners monitor. Either pathway alone — the model reaching the district threshold, or more than four signals (or a single designated imminent-threat signal) reported by 66% of community monitors — opens a partial activation; both together open a full one. The model gives scale; partners give the ground truth it misses.

### 06

**COMPLEMENTARITY MEANS DIFFERENT SPEEDS WORKING TOGETHER**

Diaspora can respond quicker than formal procedures permit. The design question is how partners act early without waiting on the process, in a way that reinforces rather than duplicates DRC's role.

## KEY OUTCOMES

**A validated and refined AAP** — reviewed across the full alert-to-action chain, with gaps fed back as real inputs to the revision.

**Early warning operating agreements per location** — indicators, reporting format and channel, monitoring and escalation pathway, and conflict-sensitivity and safety rules.

**A response and co-financing matrix per location, and draft SGA annexes** — the pre-agreed DO+LO activities per location, across preparedness, partial and full activation, feeding directly into the sub-grant agreements. These remain proposals pending confirmation.



About AHEAD



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