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**Determining the Most Significant
Changes of USFS National Incident
Management System Interventions
in Ethiopia: a Qualitative Evaluation**

Final Report

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CONSULTING SERVICES



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Acronyms

AAR	After Action Review
APDA	Afar Pastoralist Development Association
APHI	Amhara Public Health Institute
ARDPFSC	Amhara Region Disaster Prevention & Food Security Commission
BOWCSA	Bureau of Women Children and Social Affair
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DCA	DanChurchAid
DE	Developmental Evaluation
DPFS	Disaster Prevention & Food Security
DPFSPC	Disaster Prevention and Food Security Program Coordination Office
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRMFSS	Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
E-LEARNING	Electronic Learning
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
ECC	Emergency Coordination Center
EDRMC	Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission
EOC	Emergency Operation Center
EPHI	Ethiopian Public Health Institute
ERCS	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
EWR	Early Warning Reporting
FDRMC	Fire Disaster Risk Management Commission
GOE	Government of Ethiopia
IAP	Incident Action Plan
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMS	Incident Management System
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISP	Incident Support Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	Multiagency Coordination
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Acronyms

MOH	Ministry of Health
MOWE	Ministry of Water and Energy
MOWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
MSC	Most Significant Change
NCE	No cost of extension
NECC	National Emergency Coordination Center
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operation Center
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RECC	Regional Emergency Coordination Center
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
SCI	Save the Children International
SDRM-SI	Strengthening Disaster Risk Management Systems and Institutions
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USFS	United State Fire Service
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WVI	World Vision International

Executive Summary

Introduction

USFS has been implementing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) program in Ethiopia since 2010, which was phased out in March 2023. As part of its final evaluation, USFS planned to implement the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach to capture the program's impact on its beneficiaries – predominately DRM institutions. Realizing that traditional, quantitative data collection methods do not capture the full breadth of significance that a program has had and considering available time, this MSC was selected as an appropriate approach to gathering qualitative data regarding NIMS contributions. In-person and virtual MSC facilitation workshops were conducted during the months of March and April 2023 with participants from Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC), Addis Ababa Fire Disaster Risk Management Commission (FDRMC), Amhara region Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) members, and the United States Forest Service (USFS) team. The stories were collected and selected in four consecutive steps. In each MSC workshop, individual participants wrote their most significant change stories, then the participants were categorized into small groups and selected one most significant change story per small group. At the end of the workshop, all participants gathered and selected one most significant change story among the stories prioritized by the small groups. In this way, four stories were selected in the first three steps, one per stakeholder group. As a final step, the four prioritized stories were sent to selected participants by email to select one overall significant change story. Accordingly, this step informed the overall most significant story due to NIMS interventions which are most relevant across the different NIMS stakeholders.

Key Findings

A total of 38 stories of significant change were collected from four NIMS stakeholder groups: EDRMC, FDRMC, USFS, and one regional representative, Amhara region ECC members. The stories collected show that NIMS interventions brought about a considerable improvement in the practice of multi-agency coordination, emergency response operation plan (incident action plan), resource mobilization and management, information management, capacity building, and curriculum development and revision. The stories also indicated that most of these changes are sustainable, and the NIMS approach has already secured strong political support and buy-in from EDRMC.

Multi-agency Coordination: Stories highlighted aspects of improved multi-agency coordination practices in emergency response operations. Over two-thirds of the stories mentioned how NIMS interventions changed the culture of engaging other stakeholders in responding to incidents. The storytellers described that their organization often responded to emergencies separately without engaging other stakeholders. However, after NIMS training, there are improvements in mobilizing and engaging relevant stakeholders while responding to incidents. The improved coordination helped the response team to develop a joint plan, mobilize more resources, avoid duplication of efforts and resources, and develop better stakeholder collaboration and effective execution of responsibility. However, there still needs to be more proactive participation from the other stakeholder side.

Resource Mobilization and Management: More than a third of the stories (15 out of 38) indicated that applying the NIMS concept improved resource mobilization, tracking, and allocation. The stories mentioned that the NIMS approach (the ECC) improved resource

mobilization capacity and helped better logistics management significantly. For example, attending the NIMS E-learning courses helped to execute resource tracking and allocation activities performed in the NECC planning section efficiently. The NIMS capacity building also helped mobilize various stakeholders' resources and information from different administrative levels. NIMS also supported stakeholders to mobilize the community to contribute resources for affected households.

Joint Emergency Operation Plan/Incident Action Plan: Another significant change the storytellers frequently mentioned (10 of the 38 stories) is improvement in emergency response action planning. The improvement in operation planning resulted in more resource mobilization, avoided budget and effort duplication, and helped beneficiaries to receive better support. The assessment highlighted that the NIMS intervention strengthened the on-spot incident operation planning practice, which helped to estimate the need and size to mobilize appropriate personnel and resources and enhanced incident operation effectiveness and efficiency.

Integrated Communication and Information Management: Incident personnel rely on flexible communications and information systems to obtain and provide accurate, timely, and relevant information. Ten out of 38 stories (26%) mentioned that the NIMS intervention improved communication and information management. The ECC and ICP platforms allowed better information flow between actors at different administration levels in responding to emergencies. The ECC weekly meeting and after-action review conducted at the end of the emergency operations were perceived as necessary NIMS practices for information exchange and document lessons. Three stories from three participating stakeholders mentioned that the after-action reviews at the end of the response allowed them to document best practices and gaps and identify corrective actions for future emergency response operations.

Improved DRM Curriculum and E-learning: Five stories from three stakeholders mentioned how the NIMS intervention supported the institutionalization of NIMS in higher education. USFS, in collaboration with EDRMC, supported Bahir Dar University (BDU) and FDRMC training center to inculcate the NIMS concept in their curriculum. Again, USFS, in cooperation with EDRMC and BDU, launched NIMS E-learning, and interested DRM and non-DRM staff in the humanitarian sectors are attending the virtual courses. Thus, including the NIMS concept in the curriculum and the E-learning together enabled the institutionalization of the NIMS concept by providing pre-service and in-service training opportunities to the humanitarian actors in Ethiopia. These two platforms ensure the sustainability of the program impacts by producing NIMS-trained personnel throughout the country.

Improved Political Will and Buy-In: Some stories (21% of the total) described how the NIMS intervention improved political will and influenced resulting effects. For example, regional presidents and other senior officials showed their commitment by leading ECC weekly meetings and making decisions to reshuffle offices and halls for ECC.

Sustainability of Program Changes: Most storytellers indicated that the change stories identified seemed sustainable. Several indicators ensure the sustainability of the changes due to NIMS interventions, including political will and buy-in for the NIMS concept, institutionalizing the NIMS concept in curriculums, the E-learning platform, and NIMS effectiveness verified during the recent multiple hazard response, including COVID-19, conflict-induced IDPs, drought, and flood.

Negative Stories: The MSC process generally captures only the positive side of the stories as the program implementers are the storytellers and tend not to capture the negative side. To overcome this issue, the evaluation team requested storytellers to share any negative stories they encountered as they implemented the NIMS interventions. Only 3 of the 38 stories (7%) shared included negative aspects, all from FDRMC. One of the storytellers raised the engagement of many stakeholders, which had a negative effect as it created crowdedness around the operation area. Another storyteller also mentioned that collaboration among stakeholder groups and sharing resources has a negative impact, making FDRMC dependent on others for help.

Key Recommendations

Below are key recommendations that future NIMS-related projects should consider as a result of the findings and conclusions presented in this assessment.

- 1 Given the marked successes recorded in the stories, any future NIMS-related project should continue supporting higher education institutions to integrate NIMS components in their DRM curriculum fully. This integration will ensure the continuity of the NIMS outcome by producing NIMS-trained professionals.
- 2 The successes of the NIMS program at the federal and regional levels recorded in the stories should be extended in implementation to woredas and kebeles. Bahir Dar University has already started providing NIMS training to zonal and woreda-level DRM actors. Such initiatives should be strengthened and expanded to other universities and regions so that more geographical areas can be covered.
- 3 While the NIMS E-learning initiative is an important platform and an opportunity for humanitarian actors to learn the NIMS concept, only EDRMC and USFS participants mentioned this initiative in their stories; no participants from FDRMC or Amhara ECC members wrote about NIMS E-learning in their stories. EDRMC should advocate for this E-Learning opportunity widely, emphasizing the importance of including sub-national actors so that they have professional development opportunities to learn the incident management systems and processes.
- 4 Not all stakeholders proactively collaborate in the incident response activities, as they often need a request and push from others. Therefore, FDRMC and EDRMC, in collaboration with other partners, should continuously provide awareness creation and capacity building for relevant government sectors and other humanitarian stakeholders to ensure that they proactively involve and collaborate in incident response operations with full awareness of their responsibilities.
- 5 While multi-agency collaboration and engagement are essential in emergency response, more than involving multiple stakeholders is required for proper emergency response. Involving many sectors and actors with no clear assignment, roles, and responsibilities is sometimes counterproductive and jeopardizes the incident response activity by creating crowdedness. Thus, EDRMC and FDRMC should prepare a stakeholder map detailing which stakeholder is relevant for what kind of incidents and what roles they can play. Then, mobilizing stakeholders during incidents should refer to such a stakeholder map to decide whom and how many of them to invite for incident response.

Introduction

The United States Forest Service (USFS) has been implementing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) program in Ethiopia for the last 12 years, and the program was phased out in March 2023. NIMS intended to strengthen the disaster risk management (DRM) capacity of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) by integrating the relevant components of the NIMS into the Ethiopian DRM system. The selected priority NIMS components included Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC), Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Incident Command System (ICS), and Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning.

As part of its final evaluation, USFS planned to implement a Most Significant Change (MSC) study to capture the program's impact on its beneficiaries, predominantly DRM institutions. Realizing that traditional, quantitative data collection methods would not capture the full breadth of significance that the program has had and with the limitations of the available time, USFS selected MSC as the best approach available to gather qualitative data regarding NIMS contributions. Moreover, MSC is a use-focused approach as it is a participatory form of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) often used to evaluate complex situations. It traditionally involves gathering stories of significant change from project stakeholders to make sense of a project's, program's, or activity's implementation.

This evaluation was conducted for USFS and the USAID/Ethiopia Strengthening Disaster Risk Management - Systems and Institutions (SDRM-SI) project team by Headlight Consulting Services, LCC (referred to as Headlight or the evaluation team throughout the report) as a part of the SDRM-SI Developmental Evaluation (DE).

Project Description

Ethiopia's DRM landscape is complex, and a sizable international donor community, including the U.S. Government, plays a leadership role in supporting the GoE. USFS has supported the Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) at various levels for the last 12 years, since 2010. The program focused on helping the Government of Ethiopia to effectively operationalize and institutionalize its DRM system, continuing the journey towards self-reliance.

The main objectives of the USFS/NIMS activity include:

- Improve Ethiopia's DRM system by supporting the NIMS mainstreaming with critical stakeholders.
- Support decentralization of NIMS components with key stakeholders.
- Complete a successful development and handover of contextualized NIMS documents, E-Learning courses, and other program resources, with the goal of institutionalizing these tools within EDRMC and the broader GOE.
- Provide targeted capacity-building opportunities that focus on advanced skills and training of trainers for long-term success.

The program was designed in three phases, and the final phase of this program was completed in September 2022, but due to overwhelming emergencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic, large-scale local conflicts, humanitarian crises, and severe drought and livestock crises, movements and communications were restricted. Therefore, a six-month No-Cost Extension (NCE) was granted

through March 31, 2023. This assessment is part of the program's final evaluation to qualitatively assess the stories and impact of the NIMS intervention on Ethiopian DRM systems. More specifically, the assessment aims to determine the most significant changes in the DRM institutions exposed to the NIMS intervention in effectively responding to disasters.

The main questions guiding this assessment are:

1. What changes in the effectiveness of the disaster response and recovery were brought about by the NIMS intervention?
2. What changes in the behavior of coordination and collaboration in disaster responses and recovery have been achieved due to the NIMS intervention?
3. Were there any other intended or unintended positive or negative consequences due to the NIMS intervention?

Methods & Procedures

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory M&E approach used to assess the change and impacts occurring as a result of a program from the perspective of program participants. MSC was originally developed by Rick Davies in 1994 as a response to the challenges associated with doing M&E of a complex participatory rural development program in Bangladesh. MSC is a story-based or evolutionary approach involving stakeholder participation at different levels in deciding on the stories of change to be recorded and collected. MSC is a form of monitoring because it can be used throughout the program cycle and provides information to help people to manage programs. MSC also contributes to evaluations, as it is used in this NIMS case, to gather participants' impressions of impact and use these stories to assess the performance of a program or work as a whole.

MSC involves participants sharing personal stories of change. The stories are then analyzed and filtered at different levels until the stories representing the most significant changes are selected. Each story is accompanied by the storyteller's interpretation of why the story is significant to them. After other participants review the stories, they also add their interpretations about why the story was selected. Below is a more detailed description of the MSC process, sampling strategy, and data collection steps.

Study Design & Sampling

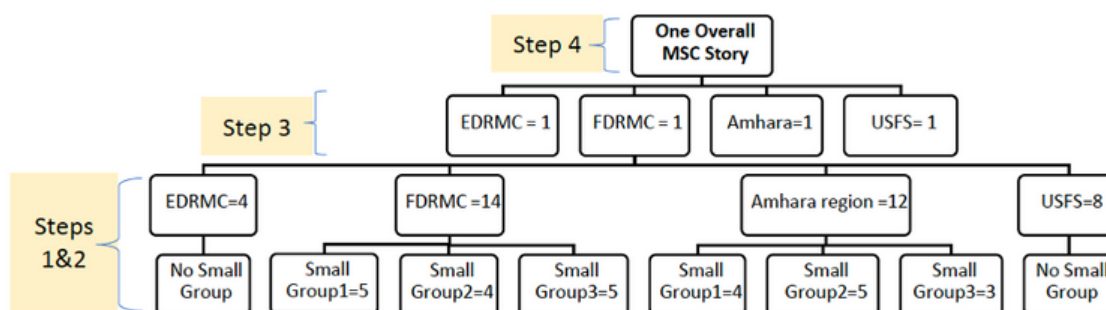
For the MSC approach, the evaluation team invited participants from EDRMC, Fire Disaster Risk Management Commission (FDRMC), regions exposed to the NIMS interventions (Amhara, Afar, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR)), and the USFS/NIMS staff to share personal narratives during the MSC workshops. These stakeholder groups are among the NIMS beneficiaries which received the most NIMS support and practically applied the NIMS concept in the last 12 years. The evaluation team prompted participants to share their stories and reflect on changes they noticed in their respective organizations or communities, which they believe were brought about by the NIMS intervention. Then, the participants determined which change narratives were the most significant and why.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted from March 3-April 10, 2023, in the Addis Ababa and Amhara regions. Initially, the evaluation team proposed to include three regions: Amhara, Afar, and SNNPR. However, the Afar and SNNPR stakeholders were not able to participate. The Afar team initially agreed to participate and rescheduled the workshop twice due to a significant extended event in the capital, Semera, to welcome the new Sultan. Later, they decided not to participate due to other urgent priorities. SNNPR refused to participate as they were dedicated to other urgent priorities. So, after several attempts to reschedule the workshops with these two regions, the evaluation team decided to proceed without their inclusion due to timeline constraints to complete the report.

In-person MSC facilitation workshops were conducted with the FDRMC and Amhara teams in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar. Virtual MSC facilitation workshops were held with USFS and EDRMC. The SDRM-SI DE evaluation team facilitated all workshops, and the USFS/NIMS team managed the coordination and logistics to ensure that selected participants were able to gather and contribute. USFS/NIMS covered all the costs related to the facilitation workshop. All participants were requested to give informed consent before inclusion in the study. The MSC facilitation workshops had four consecutive steps demonstrated below.

Figure 1: NIMS MSC Data Collection Steps and Number of Stories



Step One: A Pair of Storytellers Identify Stories

The stories were collected in a group format to begin the evaluation process. Participants were asked to sit in pairs, with one person collecting the story from their partner and vice versa. This method helped to ensure that the collection of stories was undertaken in a participatory manner. However, this approach was applied only in the Amhara workshop because participants at the other three workshops preferred to write their stories individually in step one. The storytellers were asked the following two questions to begin identifying the stories and then were prompted to respond to three follow-up questions ([see Annex 13](#)):

1. From your point of view, looking back over the time since NIMS interventions started, describe a story that best illustrates the most significant change that has resulted from NIMS interventions in the Ethiopia DRM space (and /or that you have experienced because of NIMS intervention).
2. Why was this story significant to you?

Step Two: Form Sub-Groups and Select First Round Most Significant Stories

The MSC facilitation workshop participants were divided into small groups at this stage. Once the participants were sorted, each group reviewed the stories identified by each participant in step one, clustered the stories into domains, and selected the most significant stories under each

domain. The domains of change that groups chose for clustering reflect broad categories across the stories (i.e., stories about collaboration). The evaluation team did not provide the group with predefined domains or criteria for selecting stories of the most significant change. Instead, the group started this step by discussing what constitutes a significant change definition and agreed on their selection criteria. Then, stories of change were ranked according to the agreed-upon selection criteria, and the reason for selecting stories was clearly recorded. This step informs the main domains of change and the most significant changes brought by NIMS interventions for the different NIMS stakeholders. There were few participants for the EDRMC and USFS team workshops (four participants per workshop), so they were not divided into small groups; step two was their last step. However, during the FDRMC and Amhara region workshops, the participants were divided into small groups and proceeded to step three.

Step Three: All Sub-Groups Come Together and Select the Most Significant Story

At this step, all the MSC facilitation workshop participants came together to review the stories selected by the small groups and discuss which were the most significant. For the EDRMC and USFS teams, the selection of the most significant story was based on decisions made by consensus considering the significance and level of NIMS's contribution to the stories. In contrast, the FDRMC and Amhara ECC team developed criteria to select the most significant change, such as sustainability of change, area coverage, effectiveness, etc. (see Table 1). In both cases, the reasons for selecting the stories were clearly documented (see Table 2). This step concluded with each stakeholder group (EDRMC, FDRMC, USFS, or Amhara ECC members) choosing one most significant change resulting from NIMS interventions.

Step Four: Selecting the Overall Most Significant Change Story

As the last step, the four most significant change stories chosen among the stakeholder groups were sent to eight people chosen from the four stakeholder groups (two per stakeholder) to rank and determine the overall most significant change story. Accordingly, this step informed the overall most significant story due to NIMS interventions, which are most relevant across the different NIMS stakeholders.

Data Management and Analysis

Most of the data management and analysis process was executed during the MSC workshops, as described in the steps above. Then the DE team reviewed each story and identified key domains. Domains identified at least by three of the four stakeholders were prioritized, and the findings are described by domain in the findings section, beginning with a description of the overall most significant change story and rationale for selection/prioritization. Though the evaluation team anticipated seeing patterns of most significant change and key domains by regions, that analysis has been omitted from the report as the workshops were only conducted in the Amhara region and not in Afar and SNNPR as originally planned.

Limitations and Risks

As described above, MSC has several benefits as an evaluation approach—it can engage end beneficiaries and stakeholders, help implementers understand perceptions of impact, and gather rationale behind why one particular change might be more important than another in the eyes of beneficiaries. However, there are several limitations to MSC. First, change over time cannot be evaluated based on the data collected because stories were only collected at one point, at the end of the program to understand the change retrospectively. With no comparative data or baseline, the evaluation team cannot say with confidence how quickly or slowly something changed or where there may have been tipping points. In addition, the findings cannot be fully generalized as the MSC stories were intentionally collected from a limited group of participants. Only one region

participated in this assessment, which is a small sample of each NIMS beneficiary and could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings. The evaluation team proposed to include three regions; however, as described in the data collection section, SNNPR and Afar regions declined to participate after several follow-ups from the USFS team. Therefore, looking at the findings with these limitations in mind and in conjunction with evidence from other monitoring data collected throughout the project's life is essential.

The MSC approach is subject to limitations and potential biases, which the evaluation team sought to mitigate in the following ways during data collection.

- **Biases towards stories of success:** MSC often tends to favor success stories rather than “bad news.” Including questions to capture negative stories is a beneficial mitigating method to avert this bias. The evaluation team added one question for the storytellers to prompt any negative stories participants encountered as they implemented the NIMS interventions.
- **Biases towards the views of those good at telling stories:** MSC is necessarily dependent on the quality of stories being shared by participants, so good storytellers naturally have an advantage in their stories being selected for prioritization. The evaluation team encouraged the reviewers to see other previous NIMS assessments and reports to complement the findings and stories being told to buffer against this potential bias.
- **Subjectivity in the story selection process:** The MSC selection process is subjective in that it is an expression of the people's values in the selection process. Therefore, it is important to be aware of who is and is not represented in the selection process. The facilitator documented the reasons for selecting stories at each stage to mitigate and account for this challenge. Although qualitative data collection will often be subjective, by documenting selection criteria and rationale for prioritization, the evaluation team can help make sense of and add a degree of rigor to the picture to ensure that things are well-defined and weighted appropriately.
- **Bias towards popular views:** Another criticism of the MSC selection process is that particularly harsh or unpopular views may be silenced by the majority vote in prioritization. This is a real issue that was considered in the collection and analysis phase of the process. To address these concerns, the facilitator encouraged open and honest discussion and invited everyone to participate in the story selection process.
- **Anonymity and confidentiality of data and ethical concerns:** Since MSC is based on stories told by people who have experienced the implementation, it is impossible to completely anonymize the data collected for full confidentiality because someone may be able to estimate who told what stories. To mitigate this issue, the participants were fully informed about possible uses that may be made of their stories and were requested to formally give their consent to use their stories in these ways ([see Annex 13](#)). With this informed consent, participants could identify what they felt comfortable sharing, knowing how the information would be used.

Findings

Stories of Change

A total of 38 stories were collected from four NIMS stakeholder groups: EDRMC, FDRMC, USFS, and one regional representative, Amhara region ECC members. Participants used different criteria to select the most significant change ([Table 1](#)). Sustainability of the change and area coverage were the two most common selection criteria used to select the stories by participants. [Table 2](#) below presents the four most significant change stories selected by the storytellers, one per stakeholder group selected during the workshops. The overall most significant change story selected by representatives from each participating stakeholder group is described [below](#). These stories reflect the main findings of the assessment and indicate NIMS stakeholders' opinions about the most significant impact of NIMS interventions in the DRM space in the last 12 years.

Table 1: Criteria Storytellers Used to Select Most Significant Change Stories

Steps	EDRMC	FDRMC	Amhara	USFS
Small group	<p>Discussion and consensus. The following points were emphasized in the discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability of the change - Focus on core DRM components, like preparedness. - The size of the crisis this change help to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area coverage - Solve complex and multiple disasters. - Efficiency and effectiveness - Potential to save life and material damages. - Sustainability - Alignment with NIMS requirement - Information exchange potential - After action review - Level of coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Area coverage - Effectiveness - System development - Automation - Resources mobilized. - Capacity building 	<p>Discussion and consensus. The following points were emphasized in the discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability of the change - NIMS contribution - The size of the crisis this change help to respond
All participants	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Area coverage - Effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Area coverage - Effectiveness 	N/A
Overall	<p>Preparedness and response coordination Coherence and clarity of story Area coverage</p>			

A story from one of the EDRMC storytellers titled "Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination" was selected as the overall most significant change story ([see below](#)). The primary rationale the selection team applied to choose this story as the overall most significant change is that team members felt the story explained the impact of NIMS intervention towards the changes in emergency preparedness and response coordination mechanism in a very comprehensive and concise way and indicated examples that clearly show how the emergency preparedness and response coordination capacity has been enhanced due to NIMS interventions. The story focuses on national and regional emergency preparedness and coordination achievements.

"After the GOE adapted and integrated the relevant components of NIMS, the country's disaster management system as a whole and response coordination activities, in particular, were able to improve. Responding agencies in relevant government organizations and humanitarian agencies can work together seamlessly by coordinating their available resources and information. This has been manifested in the Gedio-Guji and Tigray conflicts and managing massive returnees operations." – NECC Coordinator, EDRMC

The story from one member of the USFS team corroborates the changes described in this overall most significant change by describing how the EDRMC is applying the NIMS concept.

"In earlier years, disaster responses were handled without sufficient preparedness. Emergency interventions were by providing relief foods when disasters occur. However, after deciding to adopt and integrate selected NIMS components into the government system, EDRMC started considering the pre, during, and post-emergency activities and utilizing NIMS protocols during response coordination. I had the opportunity to be part of the National Emergency Coordination Center (NECC) response coordination team as an ECC technical specialist, and able to see how EDRMC utilizes NIMS to prepare and respond to the massive returnees' operation. The NECC prepared the required resources and information, including allocating the budget. NIMS protocols have been utilized to help resource management (identifying, acquiring, mobilizing, dispatching, and replenishing). The NECC releases situation reports and supports the on-scene level response. Other NIMS protocols, like developing operational period Incident Support Plans (ISP), and utilizing the appropriate NIMS forms, help the government to collaborate with relevant responding agencies appropriately to avoid duplications. The system enhances improving the responding agencies' coordination. USFS provides technical support and ensures the NIMS protocols are applied consistently."
– Program Operations Advisor, USFS

Overall Most Significant Change Story: "Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination"

I have been part of the NIMS program since its inception in 2008. I trained as a NIMS Master trainer, participated in the contextualization of NIMS guides and documents, and worked as a NIMS focal person. I have been working as NECC Coordinator on multiple occasions. I assisted in the establishment and activations of regional and zonal ECCs.

Enhancement of response preparedness and coordination is one of the significant changes that resulted from the NIMS intervention. After the GOE adapted and integrated the relevant components of NIMS, the country's disaster management system as a whole and response coordination activities, in particular, were able to improve. Responding agencies in relevant government organizations and humanitarian agencies can work together seamlessly by coordinating their available resources and information. This coordination has been manifested in Gedio-Guji, the Tigray conflict, and managing massive returnee operations. The NIMS intervention and following its protocols helped involved stakeholders to avoid duplications.

This story is significant for me because multiple successes have been seen as a result of using this system. For example, the pre-incident coordination commitment for returnees' operations both from the government and non-government agencies was encouraging. Accordingly, the first phase of the returnees' operation concluded last week with satisfactory results. All returnees were able to travel to their final destinations after getting all the necessary support. This huge operation wouldn't have been successful without using the NIMS protocols. The effects of this change helped the government at all levels (city, regional, and federal) to reach the needy people in time and with good preparedness capacity. The NECC manages all disasters. Sixteen agencies have participated in the returnees operation, among the main ones, MoFA, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, non-government and UN agencies like IOM, UNICEF, DRC, ERCS, COOPI, Italian Development agency, USFS, and a significant number of local NGOs were involved.

As I mentioned earlier, the contribution of NIMS in managing various disasters with the sense of collaborating the available incident resources and information in a very standard way has been encouraging.

This change, I identified among multiple changes that resulted from the NIMS intervention, will be sustained as the GOE currently fully owns it and manages disasters by utilizing NIMS-trained personnel, and there are training refresher mechanisms that enhance this effort.

Table 2 presents the most significant change selected by each stakeholder group, with the summary of change described in the story and the domains the teams identified. The most significant change for USFS is the way that DRM actors, including government, NGOs, and UN agencies, changed their disaster response approaches from individually acting to more coordinated responses by activating ECC, which resulted in more collaboration, joint planning, improved resource mobilization and utilization, better information sharing, and overall effective IDP crisis response. For FDRMC, the most significant change is that the NIMS program enabled the FDRMC training center to develop a more comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum, including adding content that had not existed before. And lastly, Amhara ECC members selected the Amhara Public Health Institute (APHI) Incident Management System, adopting and adapting the NIMS concept and establishing the regional Incident Management System (IMS) as the most significant change.

Table 2: Most Significant Change Stories by Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Group	Name of Story	Change Being Described	Domain
EDRMC team	Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination	EDRMC adapted a selected NIMS component and changed its disaster management system as a whole and response coordination activities in particular. This change resulted in responding agencies in relevant government organizations and humanitarian agencies working together seamlessly by coordinating their available resources and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved emergency preparedness coordination Improved emergency response coordination Avoid duplication of emergency information and resources
		Rationale for selecting this story: The team prioritized this story because it comprehensively tells how NIMS improved both preparedness and response coordination and helped to focus on risk management. These interventions started from the beginning and have resulted in changes over time. The other stories - like NIMS institutionalization for E-learning and curriculum revision- are recent interventions.	
FDRMC team	FDRMC Curriculum Revision	The NIMS program enabled the FDRMC training center to develop a more comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum; it made a great change in its curriculum to include contents that had not existed before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and development
		Rationale for selecting this story: The team discussed and chose sustainability, area coverage, effectiveness, and impact as the criteria to select the most significant change. They discussed how each of the three stories ranked according to these criteria. Based on their discussion, they selected a story called "Curriculum development revision" because it was the most sustainable. The concept is already in the curriculum, and all the commission staff go through this training center, which allows the team to transfer the NIMS concept quickly.	

Stakeholder Group	Name of Story	Change Being Described	Domain
Amhara ECC members	Incident Management System (IMS)	Amhara Public Health Institute (APHI) adopted and adapted the NIMS concept and established the regional Incident Management System (IMS). ECC supported the IMS operation; while ECC is the physical structure, IMS is the system that coordinates the emergency response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination
		<p>Rationale for selecting this story: All the participants gave a score out of 5 for three stories selected as most significant change stories by three small groups against three criteria: sustainability, area coverage, and effectiveness. The story with the highest score was selected as the most significant change story for the Amhara region. Later, participants reflected that this story was the right priority as it has good area coverage and was sustainable, to the extent that the civil service-approved job positions are permanent staff. Additionally, other regions are visiting the center for learning purposes, and the IMS effectively responded to the COVID-19 and conflict-induced IDP crisis.</p>	
USFS team	Guji-Gedeo IDPs Response Coordination	DRM actors, including government, NGOs, and UN agencies, changed their disaster response from individually acting to more coordinated responses by activating the ECC. This ECC activation resulted in more collaboration, joint planning, improved resource mobilization and utilization, better information sharing, and effective IDP crisis response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved coordination • Joint planning • Resource mobilization and management • Effective, efficient, and timely response • Collaboration • Information/knowledge management
		<p>Rationale for selecting this story: The story describes six of the eight domains identified by the team. Coordination is one of NIMS's main changes in the DRM space. This story describes changes in response coordination very well. The Guji-Gedeo IDPs crisis was the most devastating, but applying the NIMS concept allowed the team to manage this crisis effectively. That intervention was the first large-scale crisis managed by using the NIMS approach. Thus, NIMS's contribution and diversity of change were the most important areas discussed in selecting this story.</p>	

Description of the Stories by Domain

Across the 38 collected stories, participants identified several different domains. [Table 3](#) shows the domains identified by different stakeholder groups, including which domains were identified by at least three stakeholder groups, which were identified by two, and which were identified by one. The domains of change identified by at least three of the four organizations include:

- Multi-agency coordination,
- Emergency response operation plan (incident action plan),
- Avoiding duplication of efforts and resources,
- Resource mobilization and management,
- Information management,
- A timely, efficient, and effective response,
- Capacity building,
- Curriculum revision and development,
- After-action-review,
- Improved political will and buy-in, and
- Sustainability

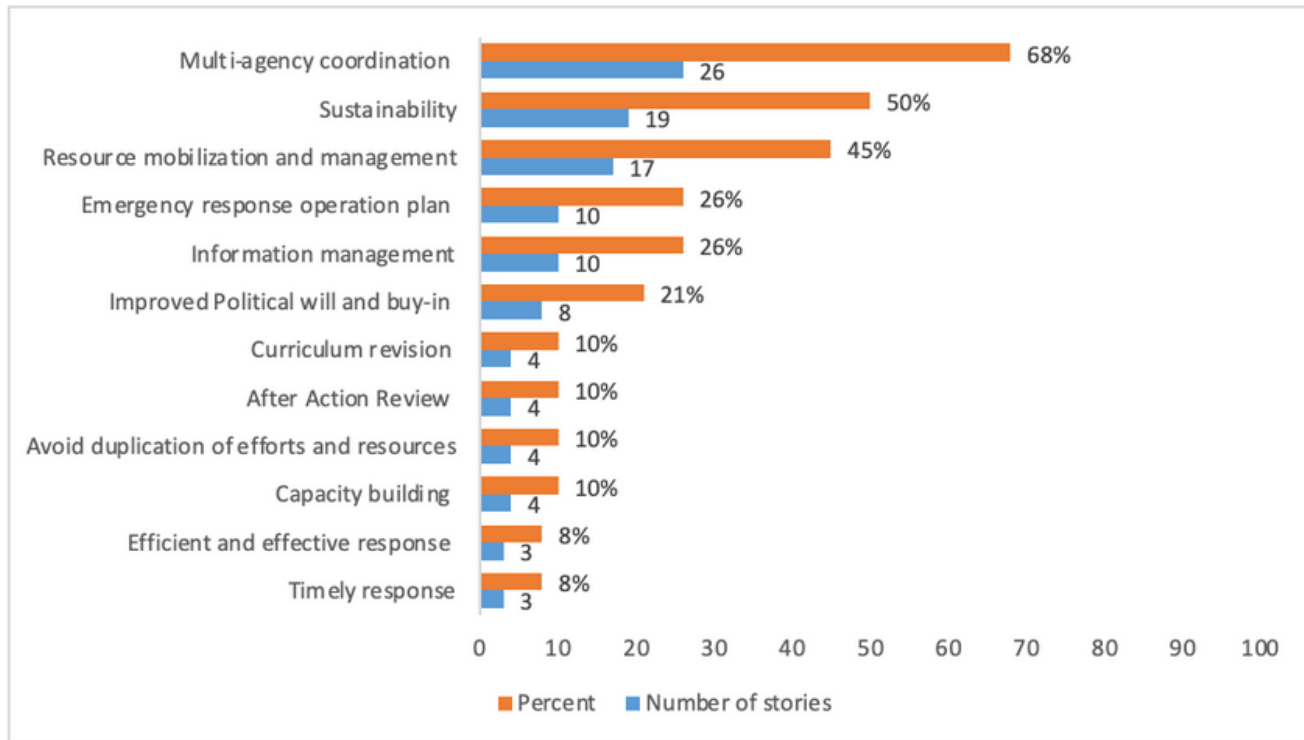
Table 3: Key Domains by Stakeholder Group

Domains identified by at least three stakeholder groups	Domains identified by two stakeholders	Domains identified only by one stakeholder
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Amhara	FDRMC	USFS	EDRMC
Multi-agency coordination	Material support	Improved preparedness	Improved preparedness
Emergency response operation plan	Curriculum revision	Improved response coordination	Improved response coordination
Avoid duplication of efforts and resources	Sustainability	Returnees operation	Returnees operation
Sustainability	Capacity building	Information management	Pre-incident coordination
Resource mobilization and management	Improved incident response leadership	Timely response	Timely response
Information management	Multi-agency coordination	Sustainability	Efficient and effective response
Improved political will and buy-in	Political will and buy-in	NIMS institutionalization	Sustainability
Clear role and responsibility	Improve incident operation confidence	Avoid duplication of efforts and resources	Curriculum revision
Child protection and gender-based violence	Negative impact	IDPs crisis	Standard disaster management system
Accessible service to IDPs	Resource mobilization and management	Resource mobilization and management	Improved skilled person availability
Timely response	Community participation	Efficient and effective response	Capacity building
Vulnerability data	Efficient and effective response	Emergency response operation plan	Avoid duplication of efforts and resources
After Action Review	Improved team spirit	Coordination/collaboration	
Rehabilitation and Reconstruction	Improved accountability	After Action Review	
Psychosocial training	Awareness creation	Capacity building	
Efficient and effective response	Command system	Multi-agency coordination	
Reporting; Monitoring and Evaluation	Improved accountability	Curriculum revision	
Capacity building	Clear role and responsibility	Political will and buy-in	
Command system	Rehabilitation and reconstruction		
Curriculum revision	Flood prevention		
Reduced workload	Emergency response operation plan		
Improve incident operation confidence	Information management		
Improved logistics management	After Action Review		
Improved accountability			

The stories collected show that NIMS interventions, in general, brought about a considerable change in the practice of emergency operation coordination, multi-agency collaboration, joint planning, resource mobilization, capacity building, and logistics management. The changes are observed at individual and system levels. The breakdown of stories by change domains is described as follows:

Figure 2: Number and Percent of Stories Per Domain Identified at Least by Three of the Stakeholders



The evaluation team has included findings subsections on each of the domains below, listed in order of how different components and processes of NIMS enable actors to come together and how they sequentially happen throughout the course of disaster response. Please note that while learning and training are preparedness activities that typically happen before stakeholders respond to disasters, the evaluation team has included these overarching stories about the sustainability of program changes and negative stories at the end, as these are newer and broader subject matter than some of the other domains stakeholders shared.

Improved Multi-Agency Coordination

Stories highlighted aspects of improved multi-agency coordination practices in emergency response operations. Over two-thirds of the stories mentioned how NIMS interventions changed the culture of engaging other stakeholders in responding to incidents. The storytellers described that their organization often responded to emergencies separately without engaging other stakeholders. However, after NIMS training, there are improvements in mobilizing and engaging relevant stakeholders while responding to incidents.

"Unlike the earlier times, after the intervention of NIMS, response coordination efforts have been improved. I am a witness to the improved coordination due to NIMS. Especially in massive returnees operations where I had a chance to lead most of the NECC day-to-day operations, I coordinated with members of incident responding agencies in coordinating relevant resources for the returnees operations in a very standard way. Sixteen government agencies were assigned to collaborate with the NECC during the returnees" operation. MoFA oversees the operations, and most relevant agencies, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, and non-government and UN agencies, were also involved. As a result, the 1st phase of returnees' operations was finalized successfully at the beginning of this month. This change brought a big difference in making the response efforts well-organized and avoiding duplicates." – NECC Operations Section Chief, EDRMC

The storytellers also described many positive stories resulting from the NIMS multi-agency coordination platform.¹ The multi-agency coordination platform helped the response team to develop a joint plan, mobilize more resources, avoid duplication of efforts and resources, and develop better stakeholder collaboration and effective execution of responsibility.

"Unlike the earlier times, after the intervention of NIMS, response coordination efforts have been improved. I am a witness to the improved coordination due to NIMS. Especially in massive returnees operations where I had a chance to lead most of the NECC day-to-day operations, I coordinated with members of incident responding agencies in coordinating relevant resources for the returnees operations in a very standard way. Sixteen government agencies were assigned to collaborate with the NECC during the returnees" operation. MoFA oversees the operations, and most relevant agencies, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, and non-government and UN agencies, were also involved. As a result, the 1st phase of returnees' operations was finalized successfully at the beginning of this month. This change brought a big difference in making the response efforts well-organized and avoiding duplicates." – NECC Operations Section Chief, EDRMC

One of the FDRMC storytellers mentioned that while the multi-agency coordination component supported the incident response operation immensely, the other stakeholder still needed more proactive participation.

"... However, this MAC strategy needs further work to strengthen others' buy-in and proactive participation. Even though there is improvement in stakeholders' participation, they come and participate only when invited; they don't own that responsibility and come and act on their initiatives yet." – A Shift Manager, FDRMC

Initiated Joint Emergency Operation Plan/Incident Action Plan

Another major change the storytellers frequently mentioned (10 of the 38 stories) is regarding emergency response action planning. Emergency response action planning is central to managing incidents. It helps synchronize operations and provides a consistent rhythm and structure to incident management. Three participating stakeholder groups, except for EDRMC, mentioned emergency response action planning in their change stories. The stories described that NIMS encourages emergency operation actors to practice developing emergency operation plans or incident action plans before starting any operations. For example, one of the storytellers described how the returnees' operation team jointly prepared a response plan.

"I attended one of the planning sessions of the recent returnees' operation for returnees coming from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ... Before I joined the meeting, my expectation was that the operation would involve few stakeholders. However, around 15 government and non-government organization representatives were involved. The plan considered every detail of the operation, from the time the plane touches the ground, till the returnees reach their destination - their home or at temporary shelters. The planning was prepared by considering both positive and negative lessons from previous similar operations and I believed that it would make this operation much more effective." – NIMS coordinator, USFS

Another storyteller from FDRMC participants highlighted that FDRMC had the experience of preparing an operation response plan at the incident spot.

"The other change that we applied from NIMS training in this incident is the way we prepared operation planning on the spot. We prepared an operation plan on spot just discussing with

¹ Note that these outcomes have not been substantiated by multiple parties that they affirmatively happened the way described by this participant, nor have there been additional details sought to understand the causal mechanisms involved for cause-effect relationship determination or factor analysis.

the operation team on how best we can respond to that specific incident effectively. This is also a new change that we never did before the NIMS training. Previously we were responding randomly without any operation plan. But this time we quickly gather in the presence of our managers on the spot and identify how and where to start, which part to prioritize for the utmost effectiveness of the operation.” – A Shift Officer, EDRMC

Improved Resource Mobilization and Management

Resource management is one of NIMS’s core components. Emergency management and incident response activities require carefully managed resources to meet incident needs. Efficient and effective deployment of resources requires resource management concepts and principles to be used in all phases of emergency management and incident response. More than a third of the stories (15 of 38) described how NIMS improved resource mobilization and management systems for resource tracking and allocation. NIMS resource mobilization and management concept refers to standard mechanisms to systematically manage resources, including personnel, equipment, supplies, teams, and facilities, before and during incidents to allow organizations to share resources more effectively when needed. For example, one of the storytellers from EDRMC described that after completing the NIMS E-learning courses, he was executing resource tracking and allocation activities efficiently in the NECC planning section. FDRMC also reported that they successfully mobilized various stakeholders from Kebele, Woreda to sub-cities, Addis Ababa city administration, and community members to contribute resources for affected households.

“Even after controlling the incident, we participated in mobilizing different resources including tents, food and other different utensils as a post incident rehabilitation process.”
– Female Commander from FDRMC

The stories also indicated that the NIMS approach improved resource mobilization capacity and helped better logistics management. For example, one of the storytellers said,

“I witnessed the NIMS intervention helped the logistics management significantly. There was a lack of adequate tents before, but after the NIMS intervention, the Regional ECC helped us mobilize more resources and rub halls. This story is most significant as it improves availability of the most needed material for the IDPs.” – Maintenance Expert, Amhara DPFS

Integrated Communication and Information Management

Incident personnel rely on flexible communications and information systems to obtain and provide accurate, timely, and relevant information. With regard to communication and information management, 10 out of 38 stories mentioned that the NIMS intervention improved communication and information management. The ECC and ICP platforms allowed better information flow between actors at different administration levels in responding to emergencies.

“Establishing ICP in all relevant areas allowed the beneficiaries to access services nearby and enabled us to access well organized and up to date IDPs information in a timely manner. The database system also allows us to organize community and household level vulnerability data.” – Expert from the Bureau of Women Children and Social Affairs (BOWCSA)

The NIMS intervention enabled actors to access and share relevant information in near-real-time.

“The information management system became more efficient. For example, if you come to the center (IMS) you don’t need to ask for any information from anyone. There are four televisions in the four corners where you can easily read any information; you can even access previous reports by searching from the repository.” – APHI ECC representative

Improved Political Will and Buy-In

Political commitments are essential to reduce potential human suffering in disasters. The [Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction \(DRR\)](#) underlines the need for political will to apply proactive measures, including prevention and mitigation, rather than reactive responses. In this regard, many stories (21% of the total stories) described how the NIMS intervention improved political will and influenced resulting actions.²For example, regional presidents and other senior officials showed their commitment by leading ECC weekly meetings and making decisions to reshuffle offices and halls for ECC.

I have had a field visit in Afar ... by coincidence, it so happened that the Regional ECC meeting was to be held the next day. The meeting started at around 10am in the morning and was completed at around 1:00pm. The meeting was chaired by the Regional DRMFS Commissioner and was attended by most of the regional government bureaus and humanitarian organizations operating in Afar who were about 30 participants ... In this meeting we have observed that joint situation/needs assessments are prepared and shared, plans and priorities are jointly set, resource allocations, situation updates and challenges are discussed and decisions on the way forward are agreed. The meeting was concluded by agreeing that each responding organization in Afar would share its plans and available resources in a week's time. – Regional Advisor, USFS

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, our institution adapted the concept of NIMS and established the regional Incident Management System (IMS). NIMS supports the IMS operation. ECC is the higher command system, and the operation system is the IMS. The regional IMC is housed in the Amhara Public Health Institute compound. A big hall had been reshuffled to serve as the ECC. We developed an organogram to properly staff the center; it is organized into seven sections. To sustainably practice this approach, we conducted three rounds of negotiation with the civil service commission and finally the structure was approved. For example, there was no PHEOC structure before, IMS was a committee work before. But now it has become a civil service approved job structure. All these pieces of activities were performed separately and by individual sectors before NIMS intervention started. But after The NIMS concept was introduced, we adapted to this well-organized way of emergency response strategy...”– ECC representative, APHI

Improved Curriculum Revision and E-Learning

Five stories from three stakeholders mentioned how the NIMS intervention supported the institutionalization of NIMS in higher education institutions. USFS, in collaboration with EDRMC, supported Bahir Dar University (BDU) and FDRMC training centers to inculcate the NIMS concept in their curriculum. USFS, in collaboration with EDRMC and BDU, again launched the NIMS E-learning platform, and interested DRM and non-DRM staff in the humanitarian sectors are attending the virtual courses. Thus, including the NIMS concept in the curriculum and the E-learning together enables the institutionalization of the NIMS concept by providing opportunities to the humanitarian actors in Ethiopia, either/both pre-service and in-service training. These two platforms further ensure the sustainability of the program impacts by producing NIMS-trained personnel throughout the country.

“EDRMC, the then DRMFS encouraged BDU to incorporate NIMS into their undergraduate program to advance the institutionalization of NIMS. The BDU was able to incorporate NIMS components, and students graduate from the university equipped with NIMS knowledge and

2 Note that these outcomes have not been substantiated by multiple parties that they affirmatively happened the way described by this participant, nor have there been additional details sought to understand the causal mechanisms involved for cause-effect relationship determination or factor analysis.

utilize it in their employment positions. This change is making significant contributions in increasing the pool of NIMS trained people who can also contribute to the policy reform activities. Incorporating NIMS into higher institutions will also ensure producing skilled personnel that again ensures the suitability of utilizing nationwide standard disaster management systems.” – D/Commissioner Advisor, EDRMC

“My change story focuses on NIMS E-learning initiative. The introduction of the NIMS E-learning platform encourages emergency personnel to refresh their NIMS knowledge and for new personnel, it helps them to acquire NIMS knowledge. This change is significant for me because updating your disaster management knowledge helps emergency personnel to perform disaster management support in a very organized way. This makes a difference in my ability. After I conduct NIMS courses from the online platform, I can perform the resource tracking and allocation activities that are performed in the NECC planning section efficiently. From my perspective, this change happens from the great collaboration between EDRMC and USFS.” – NECC Planning Section Chief, EDRMC

Integrated After Action Reviews

After Action Reviews (AAR) are a qualitative, structured review of the actions taken in response to an event to identify and document best practices, gaps, and lessons. AARs seek to identify immediate and longer-term corrective actions for future responses for things that did not go well and replicate actions for what worked effectively. In this regard, three stories from three participating stakeholders mentioned that NIMS interventions introduced the AAR process at the end of the response cycle, which allowed them to document best practices and gaps and identify corrective actions for future emergency response operations.

“The NIMS training introduced After Action Review where we assess what was well performed and what was not and prepare ourselves to improve. This ensures continuity of the NIMS approach.” – Shift Commander, FDRMC

“At the end of the four-month operation, we had an after-action review where we discussed the process we learned. Still now I remember a saying for the participants. Somebody from the UN agency said, “it looks like the birds were flying in different ways but after the coordination was handled by the ECC, the whole birds came to one cage.” – Regional Advisor, USFS

Sustainability of Program Changes

Almost all the storytellers indicated that the change stories identified seemed sustainable for continuation over time. There are several indicators among the stories shared that are promising concerning the sustainability of the changes due to NIMS interventions: the presence of political will and buy-in for the NIMS concept, the institutionalization of the NIMS concept in higher education curriculum, the presence of an E-learning platform, and the presence of previous success stories of NIMS effectiveness during the recent multiple hazard response including COVID-19, conflict-related IDPs crisis, drought, flood, etc.

“... The change I identified among multiple changes that resulted from the NIMS intervention, will be sustained as the GOE currently fully owns it and manages disasters by utilizing its NIMS-trained personnel, and there are training refreshing mechanisms that enhance this effort.” – NECC Coordinator, EDRMC

Negative Stories

The MSC process generally tends to capture only the positive side of the stories as the program implementers are the storytellers and tend not to capture the negative side of the stories. To overcome this issue, the evaluation team requested storytellers to share any negative stories they encountered as they implemented the NIMS interventions. Only 3 of the 38 stories (7%), all from FDRMC, mentioned some negative effects.

One of the storytellers raised the engagement of many stakeholders as a negative effect as it created crowdedness around the operation area. Another storyteller mentioned that collaboration among stakeholder groups and sharing resources has a negative effect as it makes FDRMC dependent on others for resources instead of buying or investing in them when the need arises. NIMS advocates for “size-up” in firefighting to protect the firefighter’s safety and security, but one of the storytellers considered this as a negative practice explaining that the “size-up” takes time and increases the probability of damage for those inside the house.

“One negative impact of this approach was that as it involves many stakeholders, sometimes it creates some crowdedness around the operation area and is difficult to coordinate activities.” – Team Leader, FDRMC

“One thing I want to mention as a negative impact is the way we start operations. When we were trained about firefighting by French experts, they promoted starting from the inside out, but NIMS encouraged us to size-up; to give priority to ensure the safety of the firefighter first which takes time and may risk someone inside.” – A Shift Commander, FDRMC

“I observed some negative impact of this MAC approach. Our organization is not equipping itself with some important materials like excavators and other machines as these materials are being provided by other sectors like from Road and transport Bureau and Water and Sewage authority etc. through the multi-agency coordination system. So, it created a kind of dependency on other sectors”. – Shift Manager, FDRMC

Conclusions

As shared in the Most Significant Change stories by participants, NIMS has contributed to improvements in the three key focus areas of the program: command and coordination of incidents, resource management, and information management. At least three participating stakeholder groups (including USFS) shared stories that corroborate improvements in these areas. Based on what has been shared, the NIMS interventions also improved timely response, avoided duplication of efforts and resources, enhanced political will and buy-in, and improved the efficiency and effectiveness of response operations.

Establishing and activating the ECC seemed to play a crucial role in responding to disasters ranging from fire incidents and conflict-induced IDP crises to massive returnees' operations in Ethiopia. The ECC brings together different humanitarian actors with their resources, information, and skills in responding to emergencies. Coordinating humanitarian actors under the ECC enabled improved, well-coordinated, and timely disaster response. The ECC starts its operation by developing a joint emergency operation plan to identify who is doing what, what resources individual actors have that can be quickly mobilized to support current response operations, etc. Stakeholders are under the impression that the improvements in operations planning resulted in more resource mobilization, avoided budget and effort duplication, and helped beneficiaries to receive better support. In addition, stakeholders cited that the NIMS intervention strengthened the on-spot incident operation planning practice. On-spot incident operation planning helped to estimate the need and size to mobilize appropriate personnel and resources and enhanced incident operation effectiveness and efficiency.

The stories collected demonstrated that applying the NIMS approach improved resource mobilization and management in emergency operations. The NIMS approach is designed to support resource management from determining needs to finding and staging resources to meet these needs and tracking those resources through to demobilization. For example, during the Guji-Gedio and Amhara region conflict-induced IDP crisis operation, the NIMS approach helped mobilize more resources by coordinating the humanitarian actors' resources. The ECC serves as a trusted platform to request and mobilize more resources from donors compared to resource mobilization efforts by individual actors. Establishing and activating the ECC and ICPs also improved information sharing and communication. Mainly, the ECC weekly meeting allows the members to get an overview of the activities of the center and sectoral stakeholders and the ongoing humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation process. Assertive communication is a fundamental and critical element of any team that provides incident response and coordination services to its constituency.

The NIMS capacity-building support provided to the teaching institutions (Bahir Dar University and FDRMC training center) to include the NIMS concept in their curriculum is a strategic investment. Now, NIMS training is being given as mandatory pre-service training for all DRM graduates at Bahir Dar University. The FDRMC training center curriculum has been revised based on the NIMS concept. In addition, the NIMS E-learning ensures in-service training opportunities for those interested in strengthening their DRM skills. The availability of these provided pre-service and in-service training opportunities will continue to contribute to NIMS's sustainability by ensuring sufficient NIMS-trained human resource capacity. NIMS sustainability in Ethiopia is further ensured as there is strong political will and government buy-in towards this approach; currently, the government already owns the NIMS implementation process.

Recommendations

Based on the stories and the conclusions above, the following recommendations are shared for future NIMS-related projects to consider:

- 1 Given the marked successes recorded in the stories, any future NIMS-related project should continue supporting higher education institutions to integrate NIMS components in their DRM curriculum fully. This integration will ensure the continuity of the NIMS outcome by producing NIMS-trained professionals.
- 2 The successes of the NIMS program at the federal and regional levels recorded in the stories should be extended in implementation to woredas and kebeles. Bahir Dar University has already started providing NIMS training to zonal and woreda-level DRM actors. Such initiatives should be strengthened and expanded to other universities and regions to cover more geographical areas.
- 3 While the NIMS E-learning initiative is an important platform and an opportunity for humanitarian actors to learn the NIMS concept, only EDRMC and USFS participants mentioned this initiative in their stories; no participants from FDRMC or Amhara ECC members wrote about NIMS E-learning in their stories. EDRMC should advocate for this E-learning opportunity widely, emphasizing the importance of including sub-national actors so that they have professional development opportunities to learn the incident management systems and processes.
- 4 Not all stakeholders proactively collaborate in the incident response activities, as they often need a request and push from others. Therefore, FDRMC and EDRMC, in collaboration with other partners, should continuously provide awareness creation and capacity building for relevant government sectors and other humanitarian stakeholders to ensure that they proactively involve and collaborate in incident response operations with full awareness of their responsibilities.
- 5 While multi-agency collaboration and engagement are essential in emergency response, more than involving multiple stakeholders is required for proper emergency response. Involving many sectors and actors with no clear assignment, roles, and responsibilities is sometimes counterproductive and jeopardizes the incident response activity by creating crowdedness. Thus, EDRMC and FDRMC should prepare a stakeholder map detailing which stakeholder is relevant for what kind of incidents and what roles they can play. Then, mobilizing stakeholders during incidents should refer to such a stakeholder map to decide whom and how many of them to invite for incident response.

Annexes

Annex 1: Most Significant Change Stories Identified by EDRMC Participants

Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination

Organization: EDRMC

Position: National Emergency Coordination Center Coordinator

I have been part of the NIMS program since its inception in 2008. I trained as a NIMS Master trainer, participated in the contextualization of NIMS guides and documents, and worked as a NIMS focal person. I have been working as NECC Coordinator on multiple occasions. I assisted in the establishment and activations of regional and zonal ECCs.

Enhancement of response preparedness and coordination is one of the significant changes that resulted from the NIMS intervention. After the GOE adapted and integrated the relevant components of NIMS, the country's disaster management system as a whole and response coordination activities, in particular, were able to improve. Responding agencies in relevant government organizations and humanitarian agencies can work together seamlessly by coordinating their available resources and information. This coordination has been manifested in Gedio-Guji, the Tigray conflict, and managing massive returnee operations. The NIMS intervention and following its protocols helped involved stakeholders to avoid duplications.

This story is significant for me because multiple successes have been seen as a result of using this system. For example, the pre-incident coordination commitment for returnees' operations both from the government and non-government agencies was encouraging. Sixteen agencies had participated in the returnees operation, among the main ones, MoFA, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, non-government and UN agencies like IOM, UNICEF, DRC, ERCS, COOPI, Italian Development agency, USFS, and a significant number of local NGOs were involved.

Accordingly, the first phase of the returnees' operation concluded last week with satisfactory results. All returnees were able to travel to their final destinations after getting all the necessary support. This huge operation wouldn't have been successful without using the NIMS protocols. As I mentioned earlier, the contribution of NIMS in managing various disasters with the sense of collaborating the available incident resources and information in a very standard way has been encouraging. The effects of this change helped the government at all levels (city, regional, and federal) to reach the needy people in time and with good preparedness capacity. The NECC manages all disasters.

This change will be sustained as the GOE currently fully owns it and manages disasters by utilizing NIMS-trained personnel, and there are training refresher mechanisms that enhance this effort.

NIMS Institutionalization at Universities

Organization: EDRMC

Position: Advisor to the D/Commissioner

I learned about NIMS in 2010 when the GOE and USG signed an agreement to adopt and integrate the relevant components of NIMS. EDRMC, then the DRMFSS, encouraged BDU to incorporate NIMS into their undergraduate program to advance the institutionalization of NIMS. BDU was able

to incorporate NIMS components, and students graduated from the university equipped with NIMS knowledge and have utilized it in their employment positions. This change is making significant contributions in increasing the pool of NIMS-trained people who can also contribute to the policy reform activities. Incorporating NIMS into higher education institutions will also ensure the institutions are producing skilled personnel, which will contribute to the suitability of utilizing the nationwide standard disaster management system.

For this change, EDRMC and Bahir Dar University were the main actors. The contributions of members from the university community and other disaster management experts involved in this change were also significant. I believe this change will continue. In today's DRM space, you will see an increased number of NIMS trained including university graduates.

NIMS Institutionalization through NIMS E-Learning Platform

Organization: EDRMC

Position: NECC Planning Section Chief

I learned about NIMS when the NECC was activated in 2020 to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. I understand that the NIMS intervention has made significant changes in impacting the country's disaster management system.

My change story focuses on the NIMS E-learning initiative. The introduction of the NIMS E-learning platform encourages emergency personnel to refresh their NIMS knowledge and for new personnel, it helps them to acquire NIMS knowledge. This change is significant for me because updating disaster management knowledge helps emergency personnel to perform disaster management support in an organized way. This makes a difference in my ability. For example, after I completed the NIMS courses from the online platform, I could perform the resource tracking and allocation activities in the NECC planning section efficiently. From my perspective, this change happens from the great collaboration between EDRMC and USFS. The commitment of the students was also significant. The change described above will sustain as this system allows emergency personnel to schedule their own time as required.

Improved Coordination

Organization: EDRMC

Position: NECC Operations Section Chief

I knew about NIMS a decade ago. However, I had a chance to take NIMS training and was able to acquire NIMS knowledge. Currently, I am leading the NECC operations in collaboration with the coordinator and other NECC staff.

Unlike the earlier times, after the intervention of NIMS, the response coordination efforts have been improved. I am a witness to the improved coordination due to NIMS. Especially in the massive returnee operations where I had a chance to lead most of the NECC day-to-day operations, I was able to coordinate with members of incident responding agencies to coordinate relevant resources for the returnee operations in a standard way. Sixteen government agencies were assigned to collaborate with the NECC during the returnees operation. MoFA oversees the operations, and most relevant agencies, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, and non-government and UN agencies were also involved. As a result, the first phase of returnee operations was finalized successfully at the beginning of this month. This change brought a significant difference in making the response efforts well-organized and avoiding duplications. The collaborative efforts also had an impact by reaching the impacted community when required. I very much hope that the current collaboration and good effort in mobilizing resources will continue. There is no doubt that this change will continue as its importance is understood by several responding agencies.

Annex 2: EDRMC Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories Clustering Form

Name of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination	EDRMC adapted a selected NIMS component and changed its disaster management system as a whole and response coordination activities in particular. This change resulted in responding agencies in relevant government organizations and humanitarian agencies working together seamlessly by coordinating their available resources and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved emergency preparedness coordination • Improved emergency response coordination • Avoided duplication of emergency information and resources
NIMS Institutionalization at Universities	EDRMC encouraged BDU to incorporate NIMS into their undergraduate program to advance the institutionalization of NIMS. This integration resulted in students graduating from the university equipped with NIMS knowledge and utilizing it in their employment positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled human resource supply capacity building • Curriculum revision • Cascading NIMS concept
Improved Coordination	NIMS intervention improved response coordination efforts, such as coordinating relevant resources and managing operations for returnee response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information coordination • Improved emergency resource coordination • Improved demobilization coordination • On-the-job training
NIMS Institutionalization through NIMS E-Learning Platform	The introduction of NIMS E-learning platform encourages emergency personnel to refresh their NIMS knowledge and for new personnel helps to acquire NIMS knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Improved standardization
Overall Most Significant Change story for EDRMC: Enhancement of Incident Preparedness and Response Coordination		

Annex 3: USFS Most Significant Change (MSC) Story Selection Form

SN	Domain	Stories Clustered Under This Domain	Most Significant Story
1	Skilled human resource supply	2	2
2	Capacity building	2, 4	2,4
3	NIMS inclusion in DRM curriculum	2	2
4	Improved incident information coordination	3, 1	3,1
5	Improved emergency resource coordination	3, 1	3,1
6	Improved demobilization coordination	3	3
7	On-the-job training	3	3
8	Improved standardization	4	4
9	Improved emergency preparedness coordination	1	1
10	Improved emergency response coordination	1	1
12	Avoid duplication of emergency information and resources	3	3

Annex 4: Most Significant Change Stories Identified by USFS Participants

Guji-Gedeo IDPs Response Coordination

Organization: USFS

Position: Regional Advisor

I learned about NIMS in 2008 when I was working for DRMFSS. I participated in different intermediate to advanced master NIMS training and received 14 certificates. I also traveled to the USA twice for a study tour and seminar to see the NIMS operationalization practically at Montana and California forest fire responses at ICPs. I participated in all NIMS guideline contextualization processes with Bahir Dar University and regional experts. I provided NIMS training for more than 100 experts and NGOs at Federal and regional levels, in Tigray and SNNPR.

For the first time, ECC was activated in 2014 for Afar and Somali Shebele River overflow flood incident response by EDRMC, the DRMFSS directorate alone, without involving any other organizations. This was taken as a big success story at a MAC meeting. The second most successful ECC activation and NIMS operationalization was the 2018 Gedio-Guji conflict response. The Guji-Gedeo conflict and displacement was one of the most significant disasters Ethiopia has faced in history, resulting in more than 800,000 IDPs. Before the ECC was activated, all partners were responding individually by themselves and unnecessarily wasting and duplicating resources. Everyone was working here and there without a joint plan and prioritizing beneficiaries. Both IDPs and host communities were sharing the limited resources available and reselling the provided support materials in the market. Around the shelters, there was a lack of latrines, drinking water, cooking pots, or baking bread. There was also a lack of flour and blankets. Few materials were provided; however, you could find those materials put out on the streets for sale. It was very sad to see children without clothes. To see people struggling was a difficult situation to be in, as they only had hard dry cooked grain to eat.

The DRM technical working group was assigned by the Deputy Prime Minister to visit the affected area and come up with the report and solution. I was one of the technical committee members. There was a tremendous number of organizations in Dilla town at that time. But they were acting individually. What I saw was, the town was full of IDPs, but no significant support was provided. I was working in EDRMC that time and I requested the DRMFSS directorate to activate ECC but there were no adequate responses from EDRMC side. Then I approached the USFS team; by that time, Brenden Manning was the coordinator assigned at EDRMC. USFS supported us in establishing the ECC and it was activated the first week of July 2018 in Dilla town, for Gedio's response and the second was at Bule Hora. For West Guji IDPs, responses were established and activated in July 2018. On-the-job training was delivered for ECC positions, and it was assigned personnel from different governments and NGOs which effectively and in a well-organized way responded after the activation of ECC at both zones.

Once the ECC was activated, we provided training for the stakeholders, all resources were pooled through ECC, and a lot of resources were mobilized immediately. Initially the ECC plan was prepared and assigned to relevant stakeholders. Then we moved to the Guji zone. The process was the same in the Guji zone as well; there were many NGOs, but they were working individually in an unorganized way. In west Guji there were 33,394 affected households that means 189,010 IDPs, in 61 sites in six Woredas and there were 43 spontaneous and collective centers with 82,174 people. The displaced people were sheltered in schools, government offices, churches, tents, and plastic sheets. Once we arrived, a joint plan was developed between partners and the government. Because of the activation of ECC and the developed joint plan, resources were mobilized efficiently, organized, prioritized, and allocated for the IDPs. Government, NGOs, and

UN agencies were participating regularly and pulled their resources through the ECC to implement one joint plan in both regions (Somali and Oromia). Clusters such as WASH, food, nutrition, protection, site management, shelter, and NFI were established and coordinated throughout the ECC. All these clusters had developed a joint plan and were acting together for the continuous four months. Because of these efforts, budget and effort duplication was avoided, and IDPs were receiving the required support. At the end of the four-month operation, we had an after-action review where we discussed the process we learned and still now I remember one saying for the participants. Somebody from the UN agency said, "it looks like the birds were flying in different ways but after the coordination was handled by the ECC, the whole birds came to one cage." In general, applying the NIMS approach resulted in:

- Resource was mobilized efficiently, organized, and prioritized to IDPs
- Government, NGOs, and UN Agencies were participating regularly and pooled their resources through the ECC with one joint plan
- Based on regular monitoring and follow up, we modified the way the supports were provided. For example, we decided to grind wheat/corn to easily prepare food for children and elders.
- Clusters have been established and coordinated through the ECC (Food, WASH, Health, Nutrition, protection, site management and shelter, and NFI)
- Duplication of resources and efforts avoided
- IDP sites were tracked through DTM, by IOM
- Recovery and rehabilitation plan was prepared

This is a significant story for me since currently NIMS is accepted by the government and partners overcoming the challenges to coordinate multiple hazard responses and to bring all partners together, having one joint response coordination center that at the early stage can be recovered and have rehabilitation plans to save lives and livelihood of the affected communities efficiently. The other example is, it also brought all partners together to apply and use NIMS guidelines to speak the same language. Federal Government ministries, regional bureaus (EDRMC, Regions, experts, and the Leadership), UN agencies, NGOs at all levels, and of course USFS technical assistance, and USAID for the financial support.

The change sustained itself 100%, unless otherwise, if the organization has no link with DRM, as far as NIMS's pre-, during-, and post-disaster activities, the components address the DRM pillars. So, there won't be a reason at all not to sustain this system. BDU and recently Semera University have included NIMS in their curriculum and will also have the possibility to produce more DRM cadres on NIMS and have skilled emergency personnel in the field. The newly constructed Ethiopia CDC has an EOC which is another fact that NIMS at any organization will be continuing through time and in the future will justify the benefit of the system.

Government Commitment

Organization: USFS

Position: Regional Advisor

During the conflict between the federal government and TPLF, the activation of the ECC and establishing ICPs was very critical to coordinate the IDP response. USFS, in collaboration with EDRMC, provided training on the benefits of the ECC and the link to ICPs, and technical assistance was delivered to the Amhara Region. The early recovery plan was prepared jointly with the government and partners through their clusters. The ECC coordinated resources mobilized from government, partners, and private sectors for IDPs response in Ebinat, Debarak, Zenzeluma, and Dessie ICPs. Furthermore, information relevant for the emergency operation was gathered, analyzed, and prioritized. The ECC equipment and IT systems were supported by partners. The Amhara region president's office followed up on the MAC status on a weekly basis. The ECC's physical structure improved the commitment and the understanding of how ECCs are the best

coordination mechanism to mobilize resources and bring government and partners together for effective, efficient, and timely response to any disaster-affected communities and incidents.

Amhara IDPs response

Organization: USFS

Position: Program Coordinator

It was early summer 2021. The war in Tigray shifted to the bordering Amhara and Afar regions. The crisis started with some displacements but soon the scale of the displacement became unmanageable by the regional DRM authorities. It is at this stage USFS was invited to be part of the joint mission with EDRMC to help the regional DRMC to reactivate the regional ECC to respond to the IDP crisis. I was part of the mission and when we arrived, the DRMC was overwhelmed by the lack of resources, information, and coordination. IDP families that temporarily sheltered in the regional capital were boarding the DRMC office with requests for help. Partners tried their best to catch-up with the growing need, but it became overwhelming. Unified coordination was absent, and efforts were based on sectoral coordination, while the response required multi-sectoral response. Within a short time, the ECC was activated, and all coordination launched only through the ECC. It was amazing to see how resources were reasonably and easily found when all partners came together in one room and planned. Since the ECC was activated, the response became efficient, effective, and timely and reached most of the people that were desperately waiting for help. Sectoral coordination was also greatly improved.

This story is most significant for two reasons. First, I witnessed the level of frustration and dispersion the regional DRMC leadership and team members demonstrated due to the lack of resources and coordination before the activation of the ECC. I have also observed that IDPs were flooding the commission's office in search of help, and it was a very tense atmosphere. After the ECC reactivation, it was great to hear that tensions were eased. IDPs were supported in a timely manner and at their allocated temporary shelter.

Second, this story strengthened my understanding that ECC is a great platform to mobilize resources. All stakeholders that took part in the ECC had contributed to the change. However, the joint EDRMC/USFS mission was critically important in putting in place the right planning and coordination system. The technical assistance from USFS regional experts was very instrumental. The ECC remained activated since then at different levels. The ECC became the coordination system choice both at federal and regional level. However, the ECC is more effective when the emergency is rapid onset rather than protracted.

Returnees Operation

Organization: USFS

Position: Program Coordinator

It was during the planning session of the emergency related to returnees' operation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I was attending the ECC meeting where all stakeholders joined the meeting in person and virtually. Before I joined the meeting, my expectation was that the operation would involve a short list of stakeholders. However, during this meeting I have discovered that a significant number (around 15) of government and non-government players are involved. The plan considered every detail of the operation, from the time the plane with the returnees touches the ground, till they reach their destination at their home all over the country or at temporary shelters. It was beyond my expectation and mind blowing. The planning also corrected these shortcomings from the previous similar operations and believed that it would make this operation much more effective. This story is significant for me because it is a very good example that ECC works for every type of emergency and proper planning is key for successful response.

NIMS Helps the Government Consider Pre-, During, and Post-Emergency Activities

Organization: USFS

Position: Program Operations Advisor

I have been involved in the NIMS program since I joined USFS in 2014 to support capacity-building activities. Some of my roles include delivery of NIMS trainings, supporting the activation of ECCs, supporting the planning and implementation of simulation exercises, participating in the formal and informal AARs during and after simulation exercises and real operations, and providing ECC technical support for the NECC where the emergency resources and information are coordinated for different disasters including the massive returnees' operations.

In earlier years, disaster responses were handled without sufficient preparedness. Emergency interventions were providing relief foods when disasters occur. However, after deciding to adopt and integrate selected NIMS components into the government system, EDRMC started considering the pre-, during, and post-emergency activities and utilizing NIMS protocols during response coordination. I had the opportunity to be part of the National Emergency Coordination Center (NECC) response coordination team as an ECC technical specialist and was able to see how EDRMC utilizes NIMS to prepare and respond to the massive returnees' operation. The NECC prepared the required resources and information, including allocating the budget. NIMS protocols have been utilized to help resource management (identifying, acquiring, mobilizing, dispatching, and replenishing). The NECC releases situation reports and supports the on-scene level response. Other NIMS protocols like developing operational period Incident Support Plans (ISP), and utilizing the appropriate NIMS forms, help the government to collaborate with relevant responding agencies appropriately to avoid duplications, and the system enhances improving the responding agencies' coordination. USFS provides technical support and ensures the NIMS protocols are applied consistently.

Considering the pre-, during, and post-emergency activities helped the government prepare before incidents in terms of resources (including qualified response personnel), ensuring the communication information system that enables responding agencies to communicate well during emergencies, and ensuring the allocation of the government budget. During the incident, the process of activating all the systems is not difficult as it only requires activating the requirements of response that have been ready before the incidents occur. The changes helped the government make timely responses at different levels to help affected individuals and the larger community. This has been seen during the massive returnees' operation when the government prepared well by preparing required resources and budget, and concluding agreements with government, non-government, and private companies to provide an efficient and effective response to the large number of Ethiopian citizens who have been returning from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia since a year ago.

The participating agencies to implement the effort of EDRMC in considering pre-, during, and post-incident activities are emergency responding institutions that recognized the NIMS benefits, including, MoFA, MoH, MoWE, MoA, EPHI, MoWSA, Federal Police, and relevant non-government and UN agencies. The NIMS support activity in this regard is USFS support of Ethiopia's adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to meet Ethiopia's needs. Accordingly, the government considers pre-, during, and post-activities of emergencies.

This change has been continued since the adoption and integration of the new DRM policy that considers incorporating NIMS concepts (pre-, during, and post-emergency activities), and I hope this will be sustained and ensure a standard sustainable system in the future. Unlike the earlier times that only focused on providing relief foods and NFIS at times of disasters occur, the DRM space today is considering utilizing standard NIMS structures that consider the pre-, during, and post-disaster activities.

Contextualization of NIMS Guides and Development of Capacity-building Documents and NIMS E-Learning Platform

Organization: USFS

Position: Program Operations Advisor

I believe these activities are among the significant accomplishments of the program to help institutionalize NIMS. I was not part of the program when the NIMS guides (ECC/EOC, ICS, MAC Group) documents were prepared. However, in collaboration with the USFS team and EDRMC, I supported reviewing and refining the documents. The ECC guide has been utilized since the recent activation of the NECC in March 2020. I supported the NECC new staff in explaining some of the NIMS terms when we use them as a reference. I was also involved when the NIMS capacity-building and preparedness documents were prepared by US-based experts. I supported reviewing based on the local and available contexts of the country. Similarly, I supported reviewing the NIMS E-Learning courses and supporting the administration with the EDRMC NIMS E-Learning administration team. When improvements were required, I worked with the EDRMC team to improve the platform with the support of the platform designers in South Africa.

The GOE/EDRMC is and will continue benefiting from enhancing the system by using these documents both for preparedness and response purposes. When the NECC staff utilize the ECC guides during the response coordination activities, it guides them to familiarize themselves with ECC functions and levels of activations. Further, the NECC staff understands the roles and responsibilities of the ECC positions and helps staff perform their responsibilities efficiently. The USFS submitted the capacity-building and preparedness documents to EDRMC. When EDRMC starts utilizing it, it would be able to produce more qualified emergency personnel that can be deployed across the country when their deployment is required. These people will use the same terminology, organizational positions, structures, same facilities, etc. as they are trained and certified in the same system.

The participating agencies that help make this system work are EDRMC (leading agency), relevant responding agencies that are contributing to the enhancement of coordination by involving themselves in the NIMS coordination structure, and contribution of emergency resources and information are from MoH, MoWE, EPHI, MoFA, Federal Police, MoA, MoWSA, Non-government organizations (OCHA, UNICEF, IOM, DRC, Italian cooperation development, COOPI, MSF, etc.), the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, and private companies that support the returnees operations. I believe the specific contribution of NIMS in this collaboration is that utilizing the NIMS system avoids duplication of efforts and resources and enhances efficiency that helps save lives and livelihoods of the community.

I believe the changes that have already been observed from utilizing the NIMS emergency response coordination have been continuing, and I very much hope that will be sustained as the government/EDRMC has already realized its benefits. EDRMC guides government and partner responding agencies representatives to refresh their NIMS knowledge from NIMS E-Learning and also to be certified using the NIMS emergency personnel certification programs as stated in the NIMS capacity building/preparedness documents.

Learn from the Best

Organization: USFS

Position: Ethiopia Disaster Management Program Support Specialist

Taking the Afar Consolidated NIMS Training was the only time I got to see the NIMS training conducted in person, since I joined the program, and it was an insightful experience which I will remember. Upon the request from Afar DRMFSC, the USFS team and an expert from EDRMC

started preparing for the six-day training at the beginning of January 2023. That time allowed me to observe first-hand how NIMS played a significant role in realizing the system is useful and needs to be sustained for long-term impact in improving the coordination of emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, both at regional and national levels, which served as a guide for all levels of government, NGO, and UN agencies in the country. The most interesting part for me was also seeing how most participants were eager to get this organized training of ICS, MAC, and ECC, and as a result, get certified for it. Specifically, the positive feedback from OCHA trainees stating that the NIMS training met their expectations and the impact it will have on their own profession showed the long-term commitment in the field that will allow them to practice more on the NIMS effort in their area or field. In addition, the desire to get more NIMS training and expand the number of trained expertise was seen as a success story for USFS efforts in keeping the high spirit of NIMS goal in the DRM sector. Moreover, witnessing the passion and the commitment of the master trainer which showed the many years of experiences and expertise level was the cherry on the top.

This story is most significant for two reasons. First, it allowed me to observe and understand the impact that NIMS has had since its beginning of time and continues to show that effort. Second, it showed that trainees who get to be part of this were able to advance their level of trained skills to the next step where they can excel in their professions. Government and non-governmental organizations were able to be part of this preventive, mitigation, and responsiveness to events/incidents/emergencies. The characteristic of NIMS contributes a lot on its own but, to mention; standardizing structure and preparedness as well as having qualified emergency personnel. The general DRM adaptation I think focused on the participation of communities and social factors. In addition, it highlighted the importance of preventive activities and preparedness of incidents and events through a systematic risk management process.

Senior Officials Leading ECC Meetings

Organization: USFS

Position: Regional Advisor

I've been working with USFS since March 2022. My role as DRM Regional Coordination Advisor of USFS is partaking in training regional government, UN, and NGO staff involved in emergency preparedness and response on NIMS and providing mentorship and technical advice during activation of EOCs and use of disaster management protocols. In terms of learning NIMS, I studied the online courses and was certified on NIMS which includes introduction to NIMS, ECC, MAC, IAP (Incident Action Plan), and completed the in-person training on intermediary ICS-300.

This story is in relation to improved regional coordination of emergency preparedness and response which I have experienced in Afar (Afar ECC Coordination). I was on a field visit to Afar in August 2022 with a colleague from USFS. We had a meeting with the Deputy DRMFS Commissioner of Afar region, the EWR Director, and the EWR Coordinator and after discussion on the purpose of our visit, we were briefed on the general situation of the drought, displacement, and flooding. We discussed in detail on how we can organize and schedule the NIMS Consolidated training for government experts, UN agencies, and NGOs in Afar. By coincidence, it so happened that the Regional ECC meeting was to be held the next day. The meeting started at around 10am in the morning and was completed at around 1:00pm. The meeting was chaired by the Regional DRMFS Commissioner and was attended by most of the regional government bureaus and humanitarian organizations operating in Afar which was about 30 participants.

Afar is frequently impacted by multiple hazards such as drought, flooding, conflict, and desert locust. Afar Region believes that ECC is the best mechanism to coordinate emergency preparedness and responses. The USFS Team understood that the ECC meets bi-weekly in which all clusters (food, WASH, health, agriculture, nutrition, protection, shelter and NFI, and education) participates. UN Agencies such as UNOCHA, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, UNHCR, WFP, and UNFPA are

also participating. In addition, NGOs both local and International such as SCI, CARE, DCA, APDA, and Goal, are also actively participating. In the bi-weekly meetings at the ECC we have observed that joint situation/needs assessments are prepared and shared, plans and priorities are jointly set, resource allocations, situation updates, and challenges are discussed, and decisions on the way forward are agreed. The meeting was concluded by agreeing that each responding organization in Afar will share its plans and available resources in a week time and the next step (final) will be to decide on prioritization.

Afar Regional DRMFS Commission strongly believes that ECC is the best mechanism for effective and efficient coordination of emergency preparedness and response. From my visits and bilateral discussions with agency representatives, I have felt that the leadership of the regional government (Regional DRMFS) is committed to NIMS and is regularly carrying out its ECC meetings bi-weekly as they are convinced that the system has proved to be useful. Besides, the active involvement of multiple stakeholders demonstrates their interest in collaboration and the need to coordinate their efforts.

The most important factor contributing to the change is that the top government officials are trained on NIMS and have given their buy-ins (political will) on the importance of NIMS. With the leadership of the Regional DRMFS, the ECC meetings are ongoing on a regular basis as agreed with multiple stakeholders in the region. NIMS is embedded within the government's organizational structure in the EWRD within the Afar DRMFS and such structural arrangement/institutionalization of NIMS ensures sustainability.

Annex 5: USFS Most Significant Stories Clustering Form

Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
Guji-Gedeo IDPs response	DRM actors, including government, NGOs, and UN agencies changed their disaster response from individually acting to more coordinated responses by activating ECC. This resulted in more collaboration, joint planning, improved resource mobilization and utilization, better information sharing, and overall effective IDP crisis response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved coordination, Joint planning, Resource mobilization and management, Effective, efficient, and timely response, Collaboration Information/knowledge management
Amhara IDPs response	<p>Before the activation of the ECC, there was a high level of desperation at the regional DRM due to lack of resources and coordination and perceived lack of support from the federal government.</p> <p>After the activation of the ECC, resources were mobilized and mainstreamed, and an adequate response plan was in place. The required service/response to the displaced people was delivered accordingly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved coordination Joint planning, Resource mobilization and management, Effective, efficient, and timely response, Collaboration Information/knowledge management
Senior officials leading ECC meetings	Despite the activation of ECC (the system existed beforehand), many stakeholders were operating on their own terms after the senior leadership of DRM was involved and took the lead to change and impact the system operations, which allowed them to perform better with the standardized system. After the ECC, the stakeholders started planning to utilize and provide resources jointly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination Information/knowledge management Political will
Learn from the best	Participants' commitment and positive feedback from NGO agencies are encouraging for the NIMS effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination Collaboration Political will
Pre-, during, and post-emergency	EDRMC changed its disaster response approaches from responding to disasters without sufficient preparedness to considering the pre-, during, and post-emergency activities, which led to better collaboration among DRM actors, coordination of activities, resource mobilization and management, and information management during emergency response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Planning Coordination Resource mobilization and management Effective, efficient, and timely response Collaboration Information/knowledge management
Government commitment	Before the NIMS program, there was no physical structure to coordinate the IDP crisis response in the Amhara region. After NIMS intervention started, the regional government allocated a large space at the DRM compound that serves as ECC. This radically changed the coordination effort, and all partners came together for planning, responding, and evaluating the response operation. The Multi-Agency Coordination Group (the MAC) also used this structure to make critical strategic high-level decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political will Collaboration Resource mobilization and management

Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
Returnees operation	The returnee’s operation preparation and the number of agencies involved was not a public affair. After participation in the ECC planning session, it was revealed that the returnees’ operation involved over 15 government and non-government actors. NIMS was able to bring together such a large number of actors together to plan, execute, and conduct an after action review of such large-scale repatriation operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Coordination • Information/knowledge management
Guidelines and capacity building	Before the NIMS program, the GoE and partners used guidelines of their own institutions, and a standard operating guideline was not available. After contextualization of the NIMS guidelines, stakeholders were able to utilize them during emergency planning and response operations. These enabled partners to communicate in a common language and follow set standards which significantly contributed to the success of most operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Standardization • Collaboration • Resource mobilization and management
Overall Most Significant Change story for USFS: Guji-Gedeo IDPs response		

Annex 6: USFS Team Most Significant Change Story Selection Per Domain

SN	Domain	Stories Clustered Under This Domain	Most Significant Story
1	Improved coordination	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,8	1
2	Joint planning	1, 2, 5, 7	7
3	Resource mobilization and management	1, 2, 5, 6, 8	2
4	Collaboration	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1
5	NIMS Institutionalization	8	8
6	Information/knowledge management	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8	1 & 7
7	Political will	4, 6	6
8	Effective, efficient, and timely response	1, 2, 5	1 & 2

Annex 7: Most Significant Stories Identified by FDRMC Participants

FDRMC Curriculum Revision

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Training Center Deputy Director

My name is [redacted]. I am Addis Ababa Fire Disaster Risk Management (FDRMC) Training Center Deputy Head. I started to work at FDRMC Training Center in April 2014. I have been introduced to the NIMS program at the training center. I have been working as an instructor and I got involved in the Master Firefighter Training of Trainers I and II, provided by the USFS program, as a trainee. Then after, I have been involved in the module preparation and contextualization process, and in conducting training for Firefighters. That is how I got involved with the NIMS program.

Here I tell the story of the training center. I would like to tell the story from 2014. Prior to this, I didn't have much to tell since I had never been there. All I can tell is the information I have heard from other people. The training center was established or started its full operation in 2013. Prior to this, the training has been given in different places, and the content of the training included fire control or firefighting strategy, ladder operation, rescue from height and depression (hole), march drill and physical exercises, and other related training. The introduction of the NIMS program has helped the training center in a lot of ways. The training center has received material support, emergency operation tools, facilities or structures for confined space rescue and structural shoring training, and fire house built from metal using shipping containers and different shapes made from reinforced concrete that were used for forcible entry training. Besides these, different trainings have been given for our instructors and firefighters in our training center. The training that has been given in our training center includes search and rescue, shoring the building that is on its way to collapse, and Master Firefighter Training of Trainers I and II.

After these training sessions, we have made a great change in our training content, or curriculum, to include contents that had not existed before. We have introduced new trainings i.e., structural, and confined space search and rescue, tactical ventilation, forcible entry, emergency vehicle extrication, scene size up and pre-incident planning, rope, and knots (advanced one), rope ladder operation, ICS, and advanced personal protection equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) operation, firefighter health and safety and emergency rehabilitation. I can tell when we took these training, we thought they were a bit fancy for us and inapplicable in our context. But we change our paradigm then after, and we contextualize what we have learnt in such a way that best suits our context. Then we provided training for new firefighter recruits and delivered all what we have got to them. It was amazing and we have noticed as we did a great job with including those new concepts in our training programs. Once we completed the new recruits training, we had expanded our new experience to all experienced firefighters through 15 days of training. The response was good, and they were happy with the new experience. We also expanded the training to our clients from different organizations especially to industrial parks firefighters' team through three months of training. In general, the NIMS program enabled us to make our training programs more comprehensive and up to date.

This story is most significant for me for two main reasons. The first one is that we have made significant changes in the content of our training program for firefighters. We could have continued to teach scanty and old-fashioned firefighting techniques if we had not been introduced to the NIMS program. The second reason is that we would not be able to train our firefighters in such a way that best suits our city's development level if we didn't get involved in the NIMS program. As we all know, Addis Ababa is growing vertically and horizontally, and different urban development projects are being undertaken. The risk is also growing with the

development practices. Those risks have a very dynamic nature since urban centers are very dynamic with constantly changing situations. Taking this into consideration, fire departments must develop different risk control and response strategies to be able to serve the community and save lives and properties. In this context the advancement of our training program with the inclusion of different urban contexts has enabled our firefighter to serve the urban community in such a level that matches the context. It will also enable us to consider the future development and design strategies that suit the situation.

To make this change happen USFS, FDRMC, and the DRM training center were greatly involved. The NIMS program supported by arranging training, providing materials that had been delivered for our training center, and even facilitating the module preparation and contextualization process.

This change is sustainable. Our training is basically based on the content that we get from the NIMS program. We are on the way to develop a more advanced and structured curriculum, and the content that we get from the training about NIMS are the center of the curriculum. We have even developed a curriculum for the TVET program in fire safety and emergency management occupation in cooperation with the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure Development and Ministry of Labor and Skill. The curriculum is prepared to serve at national level, and we took the leading role in content determination. So, we include our new experiences from NIMS in the national curriculum.

German Square Flood Incident Response MAC

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Manager

I learned about NIMS as I participated in the ICS, MAC, and EOS training. Before the NIMS training, we didn't know about the multi-agency coordination (MAC) platform. But after the training we applied this approach in many incidents. For example, we learned a lot from the German Square flooding incident. During this incident we managed to involve many stakeholders, starting from the district officials to the sub-city and mayor's office, including the mayor. Different organizations played their role including Ethiopia Red Cross Society, Road and Transportation Authority, Water, Electric and Power corporation, and many stakeholders participated in responding to this flood. Every organization participated with great responsibility and ownership spirit. This was a great opportunity for me to practically learn about the MAC operations. The other change that we applied from NIMS training in this incident is the way we prepared operation planning on the spot. We prepared an operation plan on the spot just discussing with the operation team on how best we can respond to that specific incident effectively. This is also a new change that we never did before the NIMS training. Previously we were responding randomly without any operation plan. But this time we quickly gathered in the presence of our managers and identified how and where to start and which part to prioritize for the utmost effectiveness of the operation.

German Square Flood Incident Response EOC

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Commander

I am a shift commander at FDRMC. I learned about NIMS and got involved in the project when I took the NIMS EOC training in 2010. This training improved our confidence to respond to any kind of incident. Before the training we were working separately without involving other stakeholders and relatively in a very disorganized manner. But after the training we were able to manage incidents, for example the German Square flood incident, in collaboration with other stakeholders

effectively and we significantly saved lives and prevented material damage. Different stakeholders participated in this response. For example, FDRMC, Addis Ababa police, Federal police, Addis Ababa Health Bureau, Road and Transportation Bureau, Red Cross Society, etc. participated and we practiced the MAC concept this way. One thing I want to mention as a negative impact is the way we started operations. When we were trained about firefighting by French experts, they promoted starting from the inside out, but NIMS encouraged us to size-up; to give priority to secure the safety of the firefighter first which takes time and may risk someone inside.

Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slides Incident

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Manager

My story is about the Koshe dry waste explosion incident. I forgot the time when it happened, but it was before NIMS training, there was a fire incident in the American CDC compound. That time because of lack of stakeholder mobilization and coordination, a lot of damage and unnecessary time and effort were lost. The Koshe incident happened after we received NIMS training. This incident was a complex incident as it involved fire, landslide, house destruction, and people displacement. The waste accumulated in that area produces methane gas and sets into fire which causes the sudden sliding of the waste pile which damages the houses and affects the households nearby. This is a type of complex incident which required a lot of responses and took a long time to respond; it took us seven days to control. In this operation, the concept of MAC was applied. There was great participation of different stakeholders from Kebele, Woreda to sub-cities, and Addis Ababa city administration.

Besides the firefighting and rescue operations, we mobilized the community to mobilize resources including food items. This complex incident management was effectively managed because of the NIMS training we received which particularly introduced the concept of mobilizing and participating all stakeholders in a very coordinated way. This approach is being sustainably applied in our organization as it is evidenced by applying in other incidents including the German Square flood response and others. For example, during the German Square flood response the community members were mobilized and fighting that incident in many ways. The youth used different local materials to prevent it, others brought big trucks and diverted the flood away etc. So, the training that we received was first practiced during the Koshe incident and then applied in other big incident operations then after. This story is most significant for me as it was the biggest incident that we managed using the NIMS approach and was a big event that clearly showed the unique advantage of applying the NIMS approach by demonstrating the effectiveness of NIMS approach in mobilizing relevant stakeholders and easing emergency response operations while minimizing life and material damages. The lessons gained from Koshe incident response encouraged the senior officials and other experts to understand the advantage of collaborating with other sectors, mobilizing the community, and coordinating the responses and continued to apply NIMS approach in other similar incidents then after.

However, this MAC strategy needs further work to strengthen others' buy-in and proactive participation. Even though there is improvement in stakeholders' participation, they come and participate only when they are invited; they don't own that responsibility and come and act on their own initiatives yet. I observed some negative impacts of this MAC approach. Our organization is not equipping itself with some important materials like excavators and other machines as these materials are being provided by other sectors like from the Road and Transport Bureau and Water and Sewage authority etc. through the multi-agency coordination system. So, it created a kind of dependency on other sectors.

Industry Park Fire Incident

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Manager

My story is about a fire incident that happened in one of the Industrial Parks in Ethiopia. The incident happened at night, but we were able to mobilize many stakeholders including the community. There was a huge support from the community. During this incident we applied the MAC concept effectively. By applying this coordination approach, we were able to decrease the level of damage that might happen if we did it separately without mobilizing stakeholders. After the NIMS training, in general the level of damage and time taken to control incidents are decreasing. The NIMS training also helped us to develop a good culture in that we support each other, and the community and other sectors feel responsible. After the NIMS training, we also start creating awareness for the community. Often after we control the incident, we gather the community members and teach them how to prevent, mitigate, and control incidents. This is a big change that we never did before. I feel these awareness creation efforts will help to sustain collaboration efforts in the future.

Beklobet Explosion Response Compared with Recent Emergency Response

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Fire Chief

My name is [redacted]. I am a Fire Chief in FDRMC. I want to tell you a story about the Bekelobet Explosion emergency response in comparison with how we manage incidents after NIMS training. The Beklobet explosion happened in 1991; this time is a transition period from Derg to TPLF. That time it took us seven days to control the fire due to the explosion. The FDRMC staff were fighting the fire until one got tired and then rested. There was no emergency operation plan we developed, there was no incident command system, there was no chain of command, and we used very old machinery to extinguish the fire. During that operation, it was only the FDRMC team fighting the fire; we didn't practice multi-agency coordination and even FDRMC senior officials were not involved. That means the Shift Head, Shift Commander, Fire Chief and Branch Head were not involved in the field. The mayor and his team did not participate. In general, we used very old machineries, and executed the operation without involving other stakeholders. However, after the NIMS training, our organization is practicing the NIMS approach with much better results than before. In recent incidents, everyone goes to the incident areas keeping chain of command, we do resource mobilization and allocating resources appropriately, we also collaborate with different stakeholder groups and involve different stakeholder groups at different stages. If the incident is beyond the branch team, the Branch head leads the operation, and if it is even beyond Branch control, it involves the next higher position until it reaches the mayor. In general, in recent incidents we do the following: we do incident size-up, in case of big incidents we establish a temporary command post, prepare an at spot action plan, ensure we have adequate resources to respond, and identify any challenges in the operation process.

This story is most significant because it clearly shows what difference the NIMS concept brought about in effectiveness of emergency responses. Applying the NIMS concept improved staff awareness and team spirit and introducing the concept of size-up ensured the health and safety of the fighters. Additionally, before there was no command post and no adequate training, but now we establish command posts and staff get training relevant for emergency responses. In general, it helped me by increasing my job-related knowledge and experiences. Previously only FDRMC was responding to incidents alone but after NIMS concept was introduced, or after NIMS training, many stakeholders are involved in emergency responses including federal police, Addis Ababa police, Water and Sewage Authority, Electric and Power Corporation, and Road and

Transportation are participating and supported us, especially after 2006 E.C., there is more accountability among different stakeholders.

Gulele Military Camp Fire Incident

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Commander

My name is []. I am a Shift Commander at FDRMC. I learned about NIMS after I participated in the ICP training provided by USFS. Before I took the ICP training, a temporary command post was not established but after the training we manage incidents by establishing a temporary command post and equipping it with all necessary materials and other inputs required for the operation. All the command post members took assignments and executed his/her responsibilities in a more coordinated way. So, after the NIMS training, FDRMC no longer responds alone but in collaboration with all stakeholders, starting from the FDRMC branch where the incident is happening all the way up the command chain to the mayor office. For example, there was a Fire incident happening in the Gulele Military camp. This incident happened in a very crowded area where a lot of houses are available. So many stakeholders participated in responding to the incident. Even after controlling the incident, we participated in mobilizing different resources including tents, food, and other different utensils as a post incident rehabilitation process. This story is most significant for me because before the training we had inadequate knowledge and skill in fighting fire incidents. But after the training we all have a good understanding of the ICP and practicing it in recent incidents. This NIMS training brought many good results. Branches were disorganized and frustrated when incidents happened. But after the training everyone has confidence and leads very effective incident responses. This change is sustainable as many of the firefighters and FDRMC branches used to practice and test its advantages.

2009 E.C. Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slides Incident

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Commander

The Koshe Dry waste explosion and slide incident caused a lot of damage by burying a large number of households. There was a need to dig people out of the waste pile up, unearth bodies, and transport people who needed immediate hospitalization. It was a big incident and took us more than a week to respond. The response was led by Addis Ababa mayor. This story is most significant for me because we applied the ICS effectively with multi-agency collaboration involving many stakeholders in a coordinated way. The Human Resources were well managed and relevant resources were mobilized and all stakeholders give due attention and focus on the responses. This change is a contribution from NIMS as USFS provided different simulation training, the trained experts effectively applied what they learned, and they involved different relevant stakeholders.

Relocating Flood Vulnerable Households

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Fire Chief

I learnt about NIMS from USFS as I attended a NIMS training. Before the training I didn't have any NIMS knowledge. One of the learnings I received from NIMS training was regarding flood related incident prevention. This prevention activity can be done by relocating flood vulnerable households to safe places. This has been done in collaboration and coordination with other stakeholders. I understand the advantage of this stakeholder collaboration and coordination from the training and from frequently established ICPs. So, to prevent this, first we establish a MAC led by the political leader and collaborate with different sectors to relocate the vulnerable group

away from the potentially flood prone area. These prevention measures are being taken after we received the NIMS training. The NIMS approach helped us to mobilize stakeholders to work together. However, mobilizing the stakeholders and engaging in the disaster prevention activity is challenging as there is no legal framework which forces stakeholders to actively engage in the MAC process. This story is most significant for me because it focuses on prevention.

2011 Janmeda Emergency Simulation and Drill

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Participants

I learned about NIMS when I participated in NIMS training as a trainee. Before NIMS intervention in our organization, there was a big gap in coordinating emergency responses and often the operation took longer time and there was unclear role and responsibility of the emergency response team. In 2016, NIMS supported FDRMC by organizing emergency simulation and drill exercises at Janmeda in Addis Ababa. In this exercise there were participants from different organizations including FDRMC, Ministry of Health, Addis Ababa police, Federal police, Ethiopia Red Cross, Ethiopia Electric Power corporation, and many other volunteers and media. NIMS introduced how different stakeholders can participate in a coordinated manner in responding to a single incident and hence acquainted us with NIMS emergency response strategies.

In this exercise, first we selected an incident commander from FDRMC and prepared a plan that involved all participating stakeholders. Then sub-committees were established and identified who will lead each sub-committee, what the role and responsibilities of each committee will be, and an information sharing system was prepared and agreed. This exercise resulted in the team executing a more coordinated and effective emergency response and an improved information sharing system. This exercise allowed us to timely manage emergencies. This change story is significant as we continue to use the NIMS approach in responding to our day-to-day emergency responses. In this exercise, both those who participated and did not participate in the NIMS approach training were involved. However, those who took the NIMS training performed well in the simulation and drill. Though we prove the NIMS approach is very effective in responding to emergencies in a well-organized and effective way, there is a gap from the FDRMC side in applying the approach for every emergency response mainly due to lack of continued refresher NIMS training and poor pre-disaster NIMS exercise.

Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slide

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Team Leader

My name is Dawit, a Team Lead in FDRMC. I learned about NIMS from my colleagues who participated in NIMS training. I observed many incidents have been managed using the NIMS approach in our organization. One of the incidents managed using the NIMS approach is the Koshe Dry waste explosion and slide. In Addis Ababa around Ayertena, in an area called Koshe, a big dry waste explosion and landslides had happened in 2018 which caused a lot of lives lost and materials damaged. During that incident, NIMS-trained senior managers and experts did an excellent response as per their NIMS training. I also participated based on the skills I got from NIMS-trained FDRMC staff. For example, during this emergency response, the team executed the operation in collaboration with many other stakeholders. The collaboration between FDRMC and other stakeholders was very minimal before the NIMS training. The NIMS training improved understanding of multi-agency coordination among the FDRMC senior managers and other staff and now we developed an organizational culture to mobilize and coordinate different stakeholders in incident response activities.

Before the training there was limited positive attitude to work together, but the training improves our team spirit and teamwork. This story is most significant for me because the new NIMS approach helps me to execute my responsibility in a better way. Moreover, this training helped my organization (FDRMC) to create collaboration with many stakeholders and help us to understand each other which results in effective and efficient incident response. I trust this new emergency operation approach will be sustainable, as individual staff, the organization, and even the city administration already appreciates and understands its effectiveness. I personally will continue applying this approach in my incident response activities. One negative impact of this approach was that as it involves many stakeholders, sometimes it creates some crowdedness around the operation area and is difficult to coordinate activities.

Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slide (Story #2)

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Shift Commander

I learnt about NIMS after I participated in the NIMS training provided by USFS Team. My story is about Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and landslides. This incident happened after we took the NIMS training; it was one of the big disasters after the training. I didn't know or expect that dry waste would cause such an incident. This incident caused human life loss and material damages. I arrived at the incident area first and did a quick assessment; that was beyond my capacity, and I immediately reported to other FDRMC branches. I reported that we need more staff and other stakeholders' support. There was great collaboration and coordination among the FDRMC staff and with other stakeholders during the operation. There was an Incident Command Post established to coordinate the emergency operation activity. The operation was guided by the plan that we prepared at the outset. A lot of stakeholders were mobilized and participated in these operations, organizations like Ethiopia Red Cross Society, Road, and Transportation, and many more. We took many lessons from this incident. Our organization (FDRMC) has changed many practices based on this lesson. For example, preparing a spot emergency operation plan, providing training for the staff to understand and coordinate activities easily, and understanding material gaps we have and what materials are needed in future similar responses. FDRMC starts to give awareness creation for stakeholder sectors and organizations focusing on pre-incident plans and prevention measures. The NIMS training introduced After Action Review where we assess what was well performed and what was not and prepare ourselves to improve. This ensures continuity of the applying the NIMS approach. After I received the training, I had many changes; I understood the sequences of activities, and this helped me to bring tangible changes in emergency operation.

Kolfie Industry Park Fire Incidents

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Fire Chief

My story is about the Sululta Car accident and Kolfie Industry Park fire incidents. In 2009 a Truck full of fuel collided with a public transport minibus. All the people in the minibus were burned. It was the most severe incident that I cannot forget in my life. This incident had happened before we took NIMS training. Another incident had happened in Kolfie Industry Park after we took NIMS training. Comparing these two incidents, the NIMS has helped us to improve our incident management approach in many ways. There is a big difference in emergency operations after the training, starting from improving the incident leadership, involving stakeholders, and making them accountable, to boosting our confidence to manage any incidents in the city. The NIMS training helped me to control the Kolfie Industry Park fire incident effectively. It helped me with coordinating staff and knowing how to control the fire before it affects a wider area. It also helped me in managing resources. These are all skills that we got from the NIMS training.

2011 Janmeda Full Scale Exercise (Simulation Exercise and Drill)

Organization: FDRMC

Position: Health Officer

I learned about NIMS because of the training that the USFS Team provided to us. Otherwise, I did not know about the NIMS approach before. My story is about how the NIMS training supports our capacity-building efforts and approaches. I participated in a simulation exercise and drill that was prepared in Addis Ababa, around Janmeda in 2018. Before the NIMS program started, we had not done a round table simulation exercise, there was no well-organized scenario for the drill, there was no assignment staff for different responsibilities like an incidence commander, line operation chief, or information officer, no stakeholders participated in the drill, there was no adequate inputs required for the exercise, and there was no information system organized. But after the NIMS training, all necessary steps are followed for the drill. For example, we do tabletop exercises, we have well-organized scenarios, we practice the drill as if it is real, we assign adequate observers, and everyone executes his/her role. This story is most significant as the NIMS training dramatically changed our way of conducting drill exercises. We conduct drills following the NIMS/ICS procedure. Before conducting drills, we do many tabletop discussions, prepare well-developed scenarios, and fill out ICS forms. All these changes are solely because of the NIMS program. Our organization follows these good practices in all drills conducted after the NIMS training and ensures its continuity.

Annex 8: Most Significant Stories Identified by FDRMC Participants

Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
Group 1		
FDRMC Curriculum Revision	The NIMS program enabled the FDRMC training center to develop a more comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum; it made a great change in its curriculum to include contents that had not existed before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development
German Square Flood Incident Response MAC	FDRMC changed its incident response approaches to multi-agency coordination (MAC) systems, and stakeholders participated with a great sense of responsibility. The commission also changed its emergency response practices preparing on spot operation plans. Previously the commission never prepared an on-the-spot incident operation plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination
German Square Flood Incident Response EOC	NIMS training improved FDRMC staff's confidence to respond to any kind of incident. FDRMC started to respond to incidents in collaboration with others. FDRMC staff started practicing a new practice of size-up in responding to fire incidents, giving priority to the safety of the firefighter first.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response confidence • Time management • Multi-agency coordination
Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slides Incident	FDRMC applied the MAC approach, which enabled them to engage different stakeholders, including from Kebeles, Woredas, sub-cities, mayor office, and the communities during incident management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination • Resource mobilization • Community engagement
Industry Park Fire Incident	FDRMC applied the NIMS approach, particularly the MAC concept, effectively and mobilized many stakeholders, including the community in responding to incidents. This change helped to decrease the level of damage and time taken to control incidents. Moreover, FDRMC staff developed a culture of supporting each other and good team spirit while responding to incidents. After the NIMS training, FDRMC staff started providing incident prevention awareness creation for the community, which in turn improved the sustainability of the collaboration efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Technical skill • Time management
Most Significant Change story for Small Group I: FDRMC Curriculum Revision Story		

Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
Group 2		
Beklobet Explosion Response Compared with Recent Emergency Response	FDRMC applied the NIMS approach and improved its chain of command, resource mobilization and management, and engaging different stakeholders in responding to emergencies. FDRMC also introduced new practices in incident management, including providing incident prevention awareness creation for the community, incident size-up, establishing temporary command posts in case of big incidents, and preparing a spot action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resource management • Resource management
Gulele Military Camp Fire Incident	FDRMC changed its incident response approaches, establishing a temporary command post and equipping it with all necessary materials and other inputs required for the operation, mobilizing resources and stakeholders to participate. The NIMS training improved FDRMC staff confidence in leading very effective incident responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource mobilization and management
2009 E.C. Koshe Dry waste explosion and slides incident	NIMS intervention helped FDRMC to adapt its incident response operation by implementing ICS and multi-agency collaboration. The NIMS intervention also supported the commission to improve its human resources management and improve resource mobilization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource mobilization and management • Multi-agency coordination • Human resource management
Relocating Flood Vulnerable Households	FDRMC had no strong flood mitigation intervention, but after NIMS training, the commission engaged in flood-related incident prevention and mitigation efforts by relocating vulnerable households in collaboration with other stakeholders; the MAC concept was applied to coordinate the relocation effort. The relocation was led by political leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration
Most Significant Change story for Small Group 2: Beklobet Weapons Depot Explosion Story		
Group 3		
Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slide	The NIMS training improved FDRMC senior managers and other staff's understanding of multi-agency coordination and support to develop an organizational culture to mobilize and coordinate different stakeholders in incident response activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination
Kolfie Industry Park Fire Incidents	The NIMS intervention brought a big difference in emergency operations for FDRMC by improving its incident leadership practices, stakeholder engagement, sense of accountability, and boosting staff confidence to manage any incidents in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination

Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domains
2011 Janmeda Emergency Simulation and Drill	NIMS supports FDRMC in executing a more coordinated and effective emergency response exercise and drill, and improved the information sharing system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination • Information management
Koshe Dry Waste Explosion and Slide (Story #2)	FDRMC changed its emergency operation from responding alone to mobilizing more stakeholders in a coordinated manner by developing a joint emergency operation plan and establishing Incident Command Post. FDRMC starts to give awareness creation for stakeholder sectors and organizations focusing on pre-incident plans and prevention measures. The NIMS training introduced After Action Review where FDRMC assesses what was well performed and what was not and prepares itself to improve for future emergency operations. This ensures continuity of the applying the NIMS concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination
2011 Janmeda Full Scale Exercise (Simulation Exercise and Drill)	FDRMC changed its emergency response exercise and drill practices to a more comprehensive way by incorporating new components like round table simulation exercise, developing a well-organized scenario for the drill, and assigning clear roles and responsibilities to participants following NIMS/ICS procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency coordination • Information management
Most Significant Change Story for Small Group 3: 2011 Janmeda Full Scale Exercise (Simulation Exercise and Drill)		
Overall Most Significant Change Story for FDRMC: FDRMC Curriculum Revision Story		

Annex 9: FDRMC team Most Significant Change (MSC) Story Selection Per Domain

SN	Domain	Stories Clustered Under This Domain	Most Significant Story
1	FDRMC Curriculum revision	1	1
2	Multi-agency coordination	2,3,4,7,10,11,12,13,14	2, 7, 10
3	Emergency response confidence	3	3
4	Time management	3,5	5
5	Resource mobilization and management	4,6,7,8	4, 6
6	Community engagement	4	4
7	Collaboration	5, 9	5, 9
8	Technical skill	5	5
9	Human resource management	6, 7	6
10	Information management	12,14	14
Overall Most Significant Change story for FDRMC: FDRMC Curriculum Revision Story			

Annex 10: Most Significant Stories Identified by Amhara Region Participants

IDPs Crisis Response

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Participant

I learned about NIMS when I participated in NIMS training to zonal ICPs in various zones. Before NIMS interventions started, different sectors managed incidents/emergencies separately without any coordination and collaboration among themselves. The recent conflict-induced IDP crisis in Amhara was managed using the NIMS approach. Regional emergency coordination center (ECC) and zonal incident command post (ICP) were established to support the IDPs crisis response. Since the establishment of the ECC, incidents have been managed in a coordinated manner. Different sectors were involved and provided appropriate responses for the recent Northern conflict-affected populations. I participated in this war disaster response by supporting the North Shewa zone Debre Birhan ICP.

Establishment of the ICP improved sectoral collaboration in jointly planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating the responses together. It improved the multi-sectoral approach and avoided duplication of efforts. All responsible government sectors, UN agencies, and NGOs participated in the response through their own cluster approaches like food and NFI cluster, health and nutrition cluster, WASH, protection, security etc. This story is most significant because it changed our disaster response approach from the conventional individual organization approach to a more systematic and collaborative approach. I'm sure this approach will last for a long time because the system has already been established and the only thing it needs for future use is just to activate any time incidents happen. I didn't see any negative impact because of this change. Though the NIMS approach has proved useful, still there is inadequate commitment from the stakeholders.

COVID-19 and Northern Conflict Response

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Lecturer

I am a lecturer in the Institute of DRMFSS of BDU. There is a course named, "Emergency Management System" and the thematic area at the institute includes the NIMS concept, thus I am familiar with NIMS. That is the reason why I am invited to be part of this project.

Conceptually I was not far from the NIMS concept, but practically I was not active during the COVID-19 pandemic. I realized the importance of NIMS application, especially the information and logistics center, which had a great value to save people's life and resources during an incident. Based on the experience that we got from COVID-19 pandemic, the use of NIMS was good during the conflict related IDPs response. Sectors were more familiar with the concept of NIMS and were actively involved, compared with their participation during the pandemic. Relatively all sectors were involved, including politicians. At an early stage of the pandemic everybody was panicking and there was no well-organized incident management system. But after some days, the national incident management committee organized and led the crisis. Then after the community felt stable and focused on what had been done. Resource mobilization and information flows were good during the conflict induced IDPs response. There is an improvement in giving attention to DRM from all sectors who were part of NIMS. Nine different sectors including plan commission, media, education, health, agriculture, police and security, communication, president office, DRMC, universities, social affairs, and WASH participated in the response. NIMS contributed to

coordination, preparedness, and organizing data and information. Problem identification and prioritization processes were improved, as was activity allocation. However, there remains a gap in making it sustainable.

Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Clusters

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Child Expert

Before NIMS interventions started our organization was responding to incidents separately and individually. But during the Northern conflict the regional ECC was established and promoted multi-sectoral collaboration. After establishment of the ECC our organization learned that responding in collaboration with other sectors is more productive than acting individually and hence executed many fruitful operations in collaboration with other partners. Currently, our organization established child protection and gender-based violence clusters that meet every other week to review, discuss our accomplishments, and solve our problems together. This change is significant because establishing ICP in all relevant areas allows the beneficiaries to access services nearby and enables us to access well-organized and up-to-date IDPs information in a timely manner. The database system also allows us to organize community and household level vulnerability data. Many organizations have been involved in establishing and using the ECC including UNICEF, Action Aid, WVI, UNFP, Save the Children, Action Against Hunger, Care, SOS, IOM, and Grace Children support. Based on the evidence generated via ECC, these organizations work with BOWCSA to create a relatively conducive environment for women, children, and disabled people. This change is sustainable; currently, especially in areas where the problem exists, the region already established Zonal-level child protection and at the regional-level, gender violence clusters. Based on this arrangement, we meet with our partners and other stakeholders every other week and review our performance and challenges, identify solutions, and decide on next steps together.

Urban Development Bureau Engaged in IDPs Crisis Response

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Participant

The Regional ECC was established during the conflict. The NIMS supported this coordination center in different ways, such as training, facilitating face-to-face meetings and Zoom meetings, and planning ECC activities. Before the NIMS intervention, our bureau was not participating in crisis management. But after we were invited to the ECC and received NIMS training, we participated in the operation section of the ECC. Because of this engagement, we collaborated with NGOs and other stakeholders. We supported many conflicts induced IDPs to secure shelter by preparing a site plan in different towns in a way that doesn't conflict with the host community and to the environment. In this collaboration, the political leaders provided great support. This change created a good understanding that our organization can collaborate and execute crisis response in collaboration with NGOs and other government sectors. This story is most significant for me for many reasons. The NIMS intervention gave us a good understanding that emergency response is not the responsibility of one organization and that collaborating with other stakeholders is a key for successful emergency response. It also described how we collaborate with other stakeholders and provide tents and other shelters for internally displaced people. The story also indicated how the political leaders feel that emergency response is their responsibility as well and played a big role in such responses. In this IDP response, besides the regional Urban Development Bureau, other UN agencies like IOM and UNHCR participated. NIMS contributed a lot in this activity. It helped us to establish the ECC and follow up its day-to-day functioning and progress, provided training for the ECC team, and supported the coordination of activities performed by different NGOs by facilitating weekly planning and monitoring/review meetings.

NIMS also supported the ECC in different sections to have their own daily and weekly plan and review meetings. However, I doubt this change will be sustainable because the NIMS approach was used just to intervene in the conflict induced IDP crisis and did not strategically plan for its sustainability.

Conflict-Related IDPs Response

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Food & Nutrition Expert

I am working for the Amhara regional RECC in the operation section, since the Northern conflict started. I learned about NIMS when the Regional ECC was established for the conflict induced IDPs response. Before establishing the ECC, the activities were not done in a coordinated manner. Whereas after establishing the ECC, all interventions were done in a coordinated manner. During the conflict, Regional ECC and Zonal and Woreda level ICPs were established to facilitate the emergency response operation. Priority activities were identified and selected, and planning was done by RECC in consultation with zonal and Woreda ICPs. Data and information were easily gathered using these established systems (ICPs). In collaboration with concerned stakeholders, damaged schools were rehabilitated and reconstructed, psychosocial training for teachers and education personnel was provided, and teaching materials were distributed to affected schools. The education cluster met bimonthly to discuss strengthening education in emergency situations. The NIMS approach helped to design common agendas for all responsible stakeholders/sectors. It also enabled us to assign responsibility to all government sectors and NGO partners. The NIMS approach also improved our partner mapping and resource mobilization capacity and information management and sharing as well. Generally, the NIMS approach enabled all stakeholders including government sectors and NGOs in the region to collaborate to respond to emergencies effectively and in a timely manner.

This change story is sustainable because the coordination established during the conflict induced IDPs response was strong, and the ECC participants can easily gather any time when an emergency happens if there is a need to reopen the ECC.

Conflict Coordination and Information

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Social Development

I learned about NIMS when I participated in the NIMS training and in the Regional Emergency Coordination Center (ECC). Prior to NIMS, it was sector-based and there was loose coordination and poor information flow. After the NIMS training, there were many improvements and changes, including a well-coordinated and multi-sectoral approach, continued information flow, relatively better data collection and analysis, and rapid response for the needy. All relevant government sectors and NGOs were involved in the emergency response. After the NIMS training, we also held continuous discussion, developed action points, held weekly meetings, and automated our information system. The NIMS approach enabled us to produce very organized reports. This story is most significant for me because the approach eased responsibility sharing, improved DRM mainstreaming, sped up emergency responses, improved resource mapping and utilization, increased better capacity development at regional and zonal level, improved information flow, and strengthened the command system. It also enabled us to automate regional information systems and at individual and community level improves rapid response, lifesaving efforts, and individual capacity development. This change is sustainable because strong coordination and collaboration has been created so far and the participating stakeholders can communicate and share responsibilities any time and when a need arises. This change has created no negative impacts so far.

Improved DRM Curriculum

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Lecturer

I learned about NIMS in 2013 while I was working for FDRMC by participating in the NIMS training of trainers. Currently I am a lecturer at Bahir Dar University DRMFSS institute, and I am a member of the Amhara Regional ECC. Before NIMS training, our course contents focused more on traditional ways of responding to disasters; the NIMS concepts were not in our emergency preparedness and response courses. Later our staff received many NIMS-related training provided by USFS including EOC, MAC, ICS, etc. The NIMS training created good initiation and attitude change among the trained staff on the way of emergency preparedness and response. Then the idea of including the NIMS concept in the undergraduate courses came and we developed the curriculum. So, the USFS NIMS training of trainers helped us to disseminate and advocate the NIMS approach via our students. We totally engaged in disseminating the NIMS concept effectively. For those who have not participated in the regular B.Sc. training program, the university developed and approved a short-term training curriculum. With budget support from the European Union and in collaboration with the regional DRM bureau, we are cascading NIMS training to participants from zonal DRM department and other sectors working with the zonal DRM. For example, last June we provided such a short-term training for Mecha Woreda. There was a big storm emergency in Mecha woreda and hence we provided training for the Woreda higher officials and other relevant experts. We received good feedback from that training. The participants reflected that we received a very scientific approach to prevent and manage such emergencies in the future. The NIMS training got good attention after the COVID-19 pandemic and Northern conflict-related IDPs disasters; these incidents exposed the existing challenges and created good awareness on the necessity to strengthen the emergency response efficiency.

This story is most significant as our trained graduates will join the government DRM sectors and other organizations at all levels of the country and apply the NIMS system. Again, this story is most significant because providing pre-service NIMS training equips the graduates with this new approach centrally and will help the students to manage incidents by themselves as well as support others in their future organizations to learn the NIMS approach. In addition, our short-term NIMS training addresses a large number of those interested DRM workers and hence supports mainstreaming DRM in different sectors. This story is more sustainable as the NIMS concept has already been included in the curriculum and reaches DRM students and others interested in our short-term courses. Moreover, woredas which received our NIMS training promised to continually apply NIMS approaches in their future emergency responses operations.

EPRP Planning

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Lecturer

Before 2020, before the Northern conflict began, our region's emergency response was more traditional and without adequate planning and coordination. But once we established the Regional ECC in September 2021 and the NIMS training had been provided for the stakeholders, all stakeholders agreed to respond to emergencies in a more planned, coordinated way and in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. For example, for the conflict induced IDP response, we prepared a detailed work plan, and all the response components were delivered as planned, in a coordinated manner. Resources mobilized from different organizations and individuals gathered centrally and distributed based on need and as per the detail in the plan. The ECC was organized and structured in a way that everyone knows his/her roles and responsibilities with clear management structure and to avoid unnecessary work overload. This story is most significant because this experience gave us more confidence to manage future similar emergencies in a well-

organized way without any tension. And this emergency response (NIMS) approach is something we can easily adapt to zonal and woreda level emergency operations. The USFS Team had helped us by providing guidance on how to prepare an emergency response plan, who should be participating in the planning process, what details the plan should contain etc. This change is more sustainable as it practically demonstrates to all stakeholders how collaboration, coordination, clear role responsibility in responding to emergencies and decentralized responses are important in emergency operation.

Incident Management System

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: APHI EOC Representative

I learned about NIMS when I participated in the NIMS training and in the DRM mainstreaming and regional Information Management System (IMS). My story focuses on improved emergency response coordination. Our institution managers took a four-month NIMS training in America. One of the trainees became director of the institute. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, our institution adapted the concept of NIMS and established the regional Incident Management System (IMS). The IMS is the system that manages any emergencies outside the routine program; be it earthquake, flood or IDP, or any other pandemic. NIMS supports the IMS operation. ECC is the higher command system, and the operation system is the IMS. We established the Amhara Regional Incidence Management System. The regional IMC is housed in the Amhara Public Health Institute compound. A big hall had been reshuffled to serve as the ECC; while ECC is the physical structure, IMS is the system that coordinates the emergency response. Currently it serves the COVID-19 and conflict-related health emergencies.

We developed an organogram to properly staff the center. It is organized into seven sections: namely, PHEOC and planning section, public health emergency operation center, surveillance and laboratory, emergency WASH, clinical service, essential health services, risk communication, and community engagement and logistics. The WASH section coordinates WASH-related interventions. For example, currently there are 51 IDPs centers in the region serving 941,000 IDPs and this section coordinates WASH for all centers. The clinical service section is responsible for services like blood bank service, maintaining war torn health facilities, ambulance services etc. The essential health service maintains regular health services like delivery service and chronic disease follows up like Diabetes and hypertension patients. All members of the IMS including health bureau and partner organizations regularly prepare and present reports on a weekly basis. The reports are prepared as per the IMS template. After the presentation, we develop action points. For example, if 10,000 new IDPs arrive at the shelters we discuss how many tents had been delivered, how many WASH materials were transported, what other things are needed, which organization can cover the cost for this intervention etc. and action points are developed. So, the following week the first presentation is about last week's action points, what was performed, what else other than the action points we executed, what are the action points for next week etc. This approach has been continually practiced for the last three years. To sustainably practice this approach, three rounds of negotiation were held with the civil service commission and finally the structure was approved. For example, there was no PHEOC structure before, IMS was a committee work before. But now it has become a civil service approved job structure. All these pieces of activities were performed separately and by individual sectors before NIMS intervention started. But after the NIMS concept was introduced, we adapted to this well-organized way of emergency response strategy. It enabled us to mobilize more resources. For example, if I worked individually, it is very difficult to mobilize a single water container or medication, but the IMS gives directions, coordinates, and mobilizes more resources from different stakeholders in a very short period.

The information management system became more efficient. For example, if you come to the center you don't need to ask for any information from anyone. There are four televisions in the four corners where you can easily read any information; you can even access previous reports by

searching from the repository. We incorporated experiences from Africa CDC, Ethiopian Airlines, and EPHI. Currently we have civil service approved positions such as IMS ICT expert, IMS information expert, IMS clinical and laboratory expert, IMS EOC managers and we have already hired to fill all these positions. This ensures that our region IMS will sustainably function and continue as a reliable emergency operation center. Linking our operation with the civil service commission is something unique to the Amhara Region. Other regions like Afar, SNNPR, Oromia etc. had visited us for experience sharing and we hope they will follow the same approach. This story is the most significant approach started on a small scale to manage COVID-19 but now it is well organized and has become our routine practice. We have meetings on Thursdays regularly, it is system based, there is good information flow, and the chance of fallback seems improbable.

Rub Hall Availability

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Maintenance Officer

I am a maintenance officer. I learned about NIMS during the recent conflict induced IDPs operation as I manage the rub hall installation process. I witnessed how the NIMS intervention significantly helped the logistics management. There was a lack of adequate tents before but after the NIMS intervention, the Regional ECC helped us mobilize more resources and rub halls. This story is most significant as it improves availability of the most needed material for the IDPs.

Store Management

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Storekeeper

My name is [], I am a storekeeper. I learned about NIMS when I worked for the recent conflict induced IDPs response. Before NIMS intervention started, the requests came from different departments in an unorganized way. But after NIMS intervention started, requests come in a well-organized form and the distribution is well coordinated. The ECC committee is working closely with us. They collect weekly distribution reports from us and ensure the supports are properly distributed to the beneficiaries. This change is most significant as the new approach helped the beneficiaries to receive available support in a timely manner. The ECC member sectors had contributed a lot in improving our store and distribution management system. They supported in improving information flow, they supported improving the in-and-out (inward and outward) registration and delivering the supports in a first come first served manner. It changed our working style and behavior and I hope we will sustain this approach in the future as well.

Rub Hall Installation

Organization: Amhara Region ECC

Position: Storekeeper

My name is []. I am an Electrician working for DPFSPC. I learned about NIMS when I was working on Rub Hall installation and removal for the recent IDPs intervention. The continuous information from the ECC helped me to expedite the Rub Hall installation activity.

Annex 11: Most Significant Stories Identified by Amhara Region Participants

Story Name	Change Being Described	Domains
Information and Communication		
EPRP Planning	USFS NIMS support helped the ECC members to prepare a detailed work plan. As a result, all the response components were delivered as planned, in a coordinated manner. Resources were mobilized from different organizations and individuals gathered centrally and distributed based on need and as per the detail in the plan. The ECC was organized and structured in a way that everyone knows their roles and responsibilities with a clear management structure and to avoid unnecessary work overload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPRP Planning
Improved DRM Curriculum	Bahir Dar University revised its undergraduate DRM curriculum and incorporated the NIMS concept into emergency preparedness and response courses. The university also developed and approved a short-term training curriculum, provided in-service trainings, and cascaded NIMS training to participants from zonal DRM department and other sectors working with the zonal DRM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum development
IDPs Crisis Response	The Amhara region applied the NIMS concept and changed its emergency response approach by establishing an emergency coordination center (ECC) and zonal incident command post (ICP). This change resulted in improved joint planning, multi-sectoral collaboration, and avoided duplication of efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination
COVID-19 and IDPs Crisis Response	The Amhara region applied the NIMS concept and changed its emergency response approach by engaging all relevant sectors, including political leaders in emergency response operations. This change resulted in better resource mobilization and information flows and assigning clear roles and responsibilities of each participating stakeholder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication
Most Significant Change story for Information and Communication Small Group: Improved DRM Curriculum		
Operations Group		
Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Clusters	The Amhara BOWCSA changed its emergency response approach from separately responding to collaborating with other stakeholders. This change allowed the bureau to establish child protection and gender-based violence clusters, which meet every other week to review and discuss accomplishments and solve encountered problems together. This in turn helped to establish ICP in all relevant areas and allow the beneficiaries to access services nearby, and enable the bureau to access well-organized and up-to-date IDPs information in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination
Urban Development Bureau engagement in the IDPs crisis response	The Amhara Region Urban Development Bureau started to participate and collaborate with other stakeholders in emergency responses for the first time. These changes helped the bureau to collaborate with NGOs and other stakeholders and to more easily secure shelters in a way that does not conflict with the host community and to the environment. The NIMS approach also helps to increase awareness and participation of political leaders in the emergency response operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter

Story Name	Change Being Described	Domains
Conflict-Related IDPs Crisis Response	Establishing the regional ECC and zonal and woreda level ICPs improved multi-agency collaboration and coordination of the IDPs crisis response process. The RECC coordinates the identification of priority activities and joint planning. The NIMS approach helped to design common agendas for all responsible stakeholders/sectors and to assign responsibility to all government sectors and NGO partners. It also improved partner mapping, resource mobilization capacity, and information management and sharing. Generally, the NIMS approach enabled all stakeholders, including government sectors and NGOs in the region to collaborate to respond to emergencies effectively and in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination
Emergency Response Coordination and Information Management	The emergency response approach adopted the NIMS concept which resulted in well-coordinated and multi-sectoral response, continuous information flow, relatively better data collection and analysis, and rapid response for the needy. The RECC was supported to hold weekly stakeholder meetings, develop joint action plans, and automate the information system. It also enabled the region to produce very organized reports. These changes eased responsibility sharing, improved DRM mainstreaming, sped up emergency responses, improved resource mapping and utilization, contributed to better capacity development at regional and zonal level, improved information flow, and strengthened the command system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination
Incident Management System (IMS)	Amhara Public Health Institute (APHI) adopted and adapted the NIMS concept and established the regional Incident Management System (IMS). ECC supported the IMS operation; while ECC is the physical structure, IMS is the system that coordinates the emergency response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination
Most Significant Change story for Operations Small Group: Incident Management System (IMS)		
Logistics		
Rub Hall Availability	NIMS intervention helped DPFSPC logistics management significantly; the regional ECC helped mobilize more resources and rub halls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics
Store Management	NIMS intervention enabled DPFSPC to change its store management. Now requests come in a well-organized form and the distribution is well coordinated. Weekly distribution reports are shared with RECC members to ensure the supports are properly distributed to the beneficiaries and in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics
Rub Hall Installation	The continuous information from the ECC helped DPFSPC to expedite Rub Hall installation activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics
Most Significant Change story for Logistics Small Group: Rub Hall Installation		
Overall Most Significant Change Story for Amhara Region: Incident Management System (IMS)		

Annex 12: Amhara Team Most Significant Change (MSC) Story Selection Per Domain

SN	Domain	Stories Clustered Under This Domain	Most Significant Story
1	EPRP Planning	1	1
2	Curriculum Development	2	2
3	Coordination	3, 5, 7, 8, 9	9
4	Communication	4	4
5	Logistics	10, 11, 12	12
Overall Most Significant Change Story for Amhara Region: Incident Management System (IMS)			

Annex 13: Most Significant Change Story Collection Form

CONTACT DETAILS			
Name of storyteller		Sex	
Organization		Position	
Region		Date	
Confidentiality	We may wish to include your stories in our final report. Do you allow us to write down your story and share it with others?	YES	
		NO	
NIMS interventions (support DRM mainstreaming, NIMS decentralizations, NIMS capacity building, developing different guidelines etc.) were implemented in Ethiopia for the last twelve years. Briefly describe how you learned about NIMS and how you got involved with this project.			
1	<p>From your point of view, looking back over the time since NIMS support interventions started, describe a story that best illustrates the most significant change that has resulted from NIMS interventions in the Ethiopia DRM space (and /or that you have experienced as a result of NIMS intervention)? Please provide details about who took what actions, when, and how those actions led to the change you saw. PROBES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the situation like prior to NIMS intervention? • What happened/what was the change? How did it happen? Who was involved? • What was the situation like after the change 		
2	<p>Why is this story significant for you? PROBES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What difference has this made now or will make in the future? • What has been the effect of this change at the individual, community, or city level? 		
3	<p>Who all participated in making this change happen? From your perspective, what was the NIMS support activity's specific contribution or role in supporting the change story above?</p>		
4	<p>Has the change you identified continued or been sustained? What is different about the DRM space today, if anything, because of this change?</p>		
5	<p>Are there any stories around negative impacts or changes you encountered because of the NIMS support activity that you wish to share? If so, can you share some details below.</p>		

Annex 14: Most Significant Stories Clustering Form

NO.	Name Of Story	Change Being Described	Domain
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Annex 15: Most Significant Change Story Selection Form

SN	Domain	Stories Clustered Under This Domain	Most Significant Story
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

For any further questions about this Most Significant Change study or the SDRM-SI DE, please contact:

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