CDAC NETWORK

Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action

How to Guide for leaders and responders

Foreword: voices of leaders and responders

It is well recognised that good communication and participation are prerequisites for successful community engagement in development and humanitarian action. We need more sustained dialogue and meaningful interaction with the people we serve so that they can take informed decisions and play an active or lead role in the aid they receive.

So how do we get better at working alongside people affected by disaster? How do we build communication channels fit for purpose so the people we serve maintain or regain control of their recovery and the aid they receive?

While coordination between organisations is vital, deeper collaboration around common goals is needed to reduce the burden of the aid industry on affected communities.

This guide puts the spotlight on collective ways of working through locally-led communication and community engagement platforms to enable more systematic efforts across an emergency response.

We offer practical guidance to embed communication and community engagement in emergency response and broader aid efforts, enabling leaders and frontline responders to communicate and engage effectively with people affected by disaster.

Marian Casey-Maslen, Executive Director, CDAC Network

"To make the Participation Revolution a reality, we, humanitarians, must listen to the people we seek to serve, understand their needs and communicate with them in the best possible way. This valuable guide helps us do just that. It provides a palette of vivid examples and practical advice on how we can act as one in making the principles of efficiency, accountability and transparency towards affected people come alive." **– Marina Skuric Prodanovic, Chief, System-wide Approaches and Practices Section at the Coordination Division, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).**

"#commisaid is the simple notion that everyone's an expert in their own right and that the humanitarian system should allow the affected population to be part of the decision-making process. Because when you ask for input, you have to be willing to make the necessary changes in your programming. Ultimately this means #commisaid is about shifting the power and allowing the affected population to drive their own recovery."
Stijn Aelbers, Humanitarian Advisor, Internews

"World Health Organization has an essential role in supporting countries to build capacities to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from health emergencies. Our experience with health emergencies has taught us that the most critical part of any emergency response is engaging with communities. Community engagement is a public health intervention. This guide provides practical tools and examples of how effective risk communication and community engagement can be operationalized through the collaboration of community networks and field responders."
Aphaluck Bhatiasevi, Team Lead, Social Science Interventions & Risk Communication, Infectious Hazard Management Department, WHO Health Emergencies

"This guide is extremely important. For decades we have been focusing on communication as a way of promoting our brands rather than as a tool to listen to the communities we are trying to serve. If we are to truly allow communities to shape and lead our response efforts, then we have to go back to the drawing board and hand the drawing board over to the communities. We seem to have forgotten that it is for the communities that we work. It is time for candid communication between members of our sector in order to bring the communities back to the heart of what we do. In my view, currently community voices and concerns are pushed on the back burner while headquarters rule."
Marvin Parvez, Regional Director, Community World Service Asia

"Like food, water, shelter and safety, communication is essential in responding to humanitarian emergencies. Just as we plan the delivery of tangible aid, we need to understand, plan, fund and deliver communication – in languages, methods, and technologies – that helps and empowers the communities we serve. When we put communication at the heart of our response, not only do we gain in efficiency, we support resiliency, dignity and community empowerment."
Sara Speicher, Deputy General Secretary, World Association for Christian Communication

"If there is one thing that all humanitarian and development actors can agree on, in spite of their different mandates, missions and visions, it is the importance of the involvement of affected communities in their work. And yet we have, until now, struggled to find a coherent approach that we can all work to. This How to Guide offers a terrific opportunity for us to harmonize our approaches to communication and community engagement, bringing greater accountability to affected populations and importantly shifting power to the grassroots level to ensure communities have dignity, rights, sustainability and ownership of programs."
Elijah Manyok, Founder and Executive Director, Smile Again Africa Development Organization – SAADO

"If we wish to deliver high quality aid, the foundation for that must be trusting and collaborative relationships with crisis-affected children and adults, supported by ongoing dialogue and a genuine commitment to take other people's perspectives into account. By working together in a way that recognises our individual weaknesses and builds on our respective strengths, aid actors can help make the rhetoric around communication and community engagement a reality."
Philippa Hill, Humanitarian Evidence, Effectiveness and Accountability Adviser, Save the Children

"This is a really useful and readable guide that I hope will inspire more organisations to start, or step up, their community engagement actions alongside others. At IMS, our work in Somalia in particular through the Radio Ergo project shows how critical it is for us to work together to ensure that community engagement is coordinated and institutionalised. Separately we tend to serve our individual organisations, but collectively we can strengthen information for communities and ensure their voices become part of decision-making processes."
Louise Tunbridge, Programme Manager, International Media Support

Your feedback
Collective ways of working are new to the humanitarian sector. This guide is currently being tested. We welcome your feedback if any of the best practice outlined in this guide needs to be updated.

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About the CDAC Network
The CDAC Network is a growing platform of more than 30 humanitarian, media development, social innovation, technology, and telecommunication organisations, dedicated to saving lives and making aid more effective through communication, information exchange and community engagement.

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A list of individuals who contributed to this document can be found on page 75.

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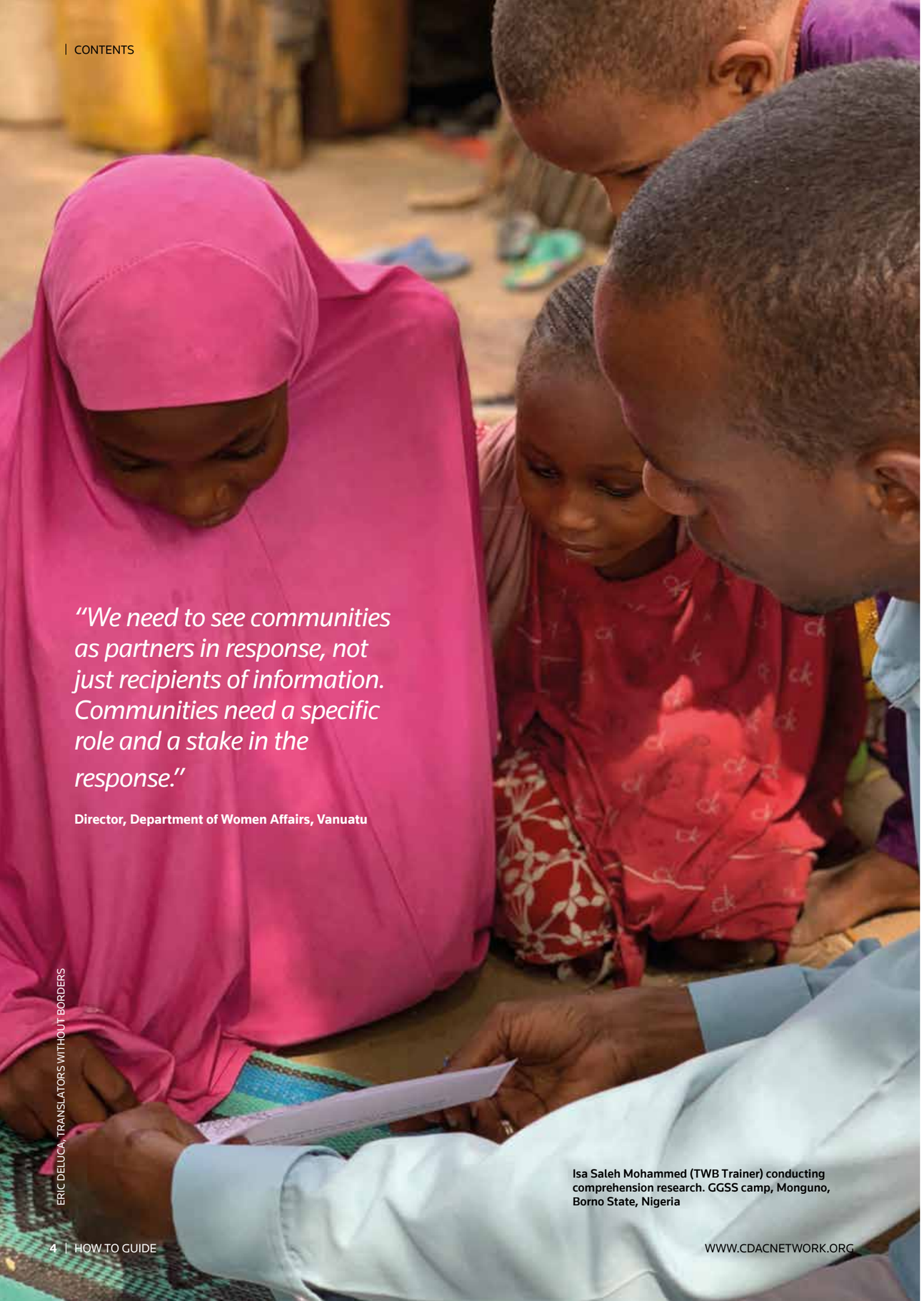

"We need to see communities as partners in response, not just recipients of information. Communities need a specific role and a stake in the response."

Director, Department of Women Affairs, Vanuatu

ERIC DELUCA, TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Isa Saleh Mohammed (TWB Trainer) conducting comprehension research. GGSS camp, Monguno, Borno State, Nigeria

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Section One: Communication is aid

Communication. It's talking to a neighbour. It's emailing friends. It's reading the news. We all depend on giving and receiving information to share our experiences and feelings, manage our lives and connect with our families, friends and communities.

In a crisis, communication networks can shatter along with resources and lives, when we need information and connections more than ever.

Communication is as crucial as food, water, shelter and medicine.

Where do we go for help? What dangers should we be aware of? How can we find missing family, or contact friends further afield? Who will listen to us? What do we do if help is not reaching us? How can we report an issue or complain when there's a problem?

Insufficient or conflicting information can cause confusion, risk safety and worsen feelings of isolation. If we don't trust the information we are given, the most important messages can miss the mark. If we are not engaged in decisions about the response we can feel like bystanders, not to mention being powerless to complain or report abuse.

When our voices are heard and we know what to expect we regain control of our lives. We can actively shape services and hold service providers to account. We can rebuild and connect with the wider world, speeding up recovery. **Communication is aid and community engagement is critical**. Take three minutes to see why: https://youtu.be/ZDmKLcY7Nis

Why do we need this guide?

In recent years humanitarian responders and donors have adopted significant commitments and standards that seek to achieve better outcomes for people affected by disaster.

The **Grand Bargain**[1] (2016) is an agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, including a **participation revolution:** to properly include people receiving aid in the decisions that affect their lives. The **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability**[2] sets out nine commitments, including that **communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them**, and can raise **complaints that will be addressed**.

The **IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**[3] similarly commit responders to **inform**, as well as **solicit, hear and act upon the voices, priorities and feedback of affected people** (including sexual exploitation and abuse-related complaints) and ensure people can **play an active role in decision-making.**

National government systems set the context – many have in place policies and regulative frameworks committing to information management and communication systems for the rapid and coordinated flow of information to communities, as well as the gathering of feedback on community concerns. Annex 1, on page 72, outlines these national and international frameworks in more detail, as well as donor requirements.

However, there are still gaps in the system:

- **Communities do not feel sufficiently involved in decisions that impact their lives**. An indicator used to track the Grand Bargain in six countries examines the participation of disaster-affected people. Nearly everywhere aid workers feel that people are sufficiently

OCHA/YASMINA GUERDA

IDP camp, Bama town, Bama local government area, Borno State, Nigeria

Structure of the guide

Part One describes why we need a guide on communication and community engagement.

Part Two describes what communication and community engagement encompasses, the vision for a collective approach and the minimum actions and services for preparedness and response.

Part Three provides guidance on implementing the minimum actions and services.

Part Four provides guidance on setting up national, multi-stakeholder platforms.

Part Five offers guidance on providing leadership, championing and advocacy for change in this area.

The Annex outlines commitments, standards and donor requirements for communication and community engagement.

Key resources are indicated throughout the guide. These are CDAC Network resources and available at **www.cdacnetwork.org** unless otherwise stated.

involved, and disaster-affected people feel that they are not.[4] Time and again evaluative exercises point out the need for greater community voice and participation in strategic and programmatic decision-making.[5]

- **More effort is needed to solicit, hear and act upon the voices and complaints of disaster-affected people**. Many people in humanitarian crises are unaware of how to make complaints, about aid provision, abuse, or anything else. When asked whether they believe they would get a response if they did make a complaint, the majority say they doubt they'd hear back.[6]

- **Communities cannot access information to help them make decisions and regain control of their lives**. In the 2017 response in Cox's Bazar, 77% of people surveyed did not have enough information in a language they could understand to make good decisions affecting their family. 62% were unable to speak to humanitarian providers due to language barriers.[7]

- **The role of communication and community engagement in helping people psychologically cope with disasters is insufficiently recognised.** But it can promote senses of safety, calm, self-efficacy, connectedness and hope.[8] A woman who had been affected by Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 told a Haitian woman who had experienced the 2010 earthquake, "If only we had been able to hear stories about how you coped so we could learn what to do. We would have had more hope and been able to manage much quicker." [9]

- **People affected by disaster are increasingly reliant on connectivity, and response programmes need to catch up**.[10] Mobile telephone networks and the connectivity they provide can be a lifeline for those affected by humanitarian emergencies. People rely on these to stay in touch with family and friends, but also for other reasons, such as to help them navigate whilst they are fleeing dangerous situations. [11]

There are many efforts and indeed successes in implementing national and international commitments, standards and frameworks, but an analysis of the humanitarian system shows that these are not widespread and systematic. Collective platforms, services and tools are needed to support communication and engagement to improve outcomes for disaster-affected communities.[12]

About this guide

This guide suggests practices to support an active role for communities in humanitarian services and decision-making, improve access to information and keep people connected to support their own ways of coping. It emphasises a collective approach where humanitarian actors coordinate, collaborate and are held accountable for their actions. It is based on action research into a number of initiatives and organisations as well as gap analyses and recommendations for strengthening and scaling practice.

The guide is intended primarily for practitioners and leaders working in national and international humanitarian and media development organisations as well as other entities involved in preparedness, response and recovery. Experience in the humanitarian sector and prior knowledge of relevant policies, plans and processes is assumed, as is familiarity with the humanitarian architecture, the humanitarian programme cycle and accountability to affected populations.

KEY RESOURCES

Communication is Aid
In English www.youtube.com/watch?v=0l9Y--OTWs8
In French www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VbNSuT5XLY
In Arabic www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB6yS7Sirrc

infoasaid (2012)
A short video which explains the case for communicating with communities, available in English, French and Arabic on CDAC Network's YouTube channel.

BBC Media Action (2012). Still left in the dark?
How people in emergencies use communication to survive – and how humanitarian agencies can help
http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/briefings/policy-still-left-in-the-dark

BBC World Service Trust (2008). Left in the dark:
The unmet need for information in humanitarian responses
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/humanitarian_response_briefing.pdf

> *"When local actors and communities are not in the driving seat, humanitarian action cannot truly restore humanity, respect dignity and reduce need."*
>
> **Participation Revolution Workstream** [2]

SECTION REFERENCES

[1] The Grand Bargain (2016).
https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861

[2] *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*. CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project (2014).
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

[3] IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2017).
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-56

[4] *Tracking the Grand Bargain from a field perspective*. Ground Truth Solutions (2018)
http://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/tracking-the-grand-bargain-from-a-field-perspective/

[5] E.g. *Time To Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*. M. B. Anderson, D. Brown & I. Jean (2012). CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/time-to-listen-hearing-people-on-the-receiving-end-of-international-aid/ and *On the road to Istanbul: How can the World Humanitarian Summit make humanitarian response more effective?* Humanitarian Accountability Report CHS Alliance (2015)
https://www.chsalliance.org/2015-humanitarian-accountability-report

[6] *Tracking the Grand Bargain from a field perspective*. Ground Truth Solutions (2018)
http://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/tracking-the-grand-bargain-from-a-field-perspective/

[7] Rohingya Zuban: *A Translators without Borders rapid assessment of language barriers in the Cox's Bazar Refugee Response*. Translators without Borders (2017).
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/rohingya-zuban/
http://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=683a58b07dba4db189297061b4f8cd40

[8] *Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence*. Psychiatry Interpersonal & Biological Processes 70(4):283-315; discussion 316-69 (2007)
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/5668133_Five_Essential_Elements_of_Immediate_and_Mid-Term_Mass_Trauma_Intervention_Empirical_Evidence

[9] Personal communication to the author

[10] See e.g. *The Importance of Mobile for Refugees: A Landscape of New Services and Approaches*. GSMA (2017)
https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Importance-of-mobile-for-refugees_a-landscape-of-new-services-and-approaches.pdf

[11] See e.g. *Voices of Refugees.* BBC Media Action (2016)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/research/reports/voices-of-refugees and Iraq's displaced people need information, not only food, water and shelter. CDAC Network (2014)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20140917162422-moeda

[12] *Policy Paper: The Role of Collective Platforms, Services and Tools to support Communication and Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action*. CDAC Network (2017)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20170531072915-3fs0r

In this section

- What is communication and community engagement?
- Taking a collective approach: platforms, services and tools
- In practice: minimum actions for communication and community engagement
- Case studies: a sub-national platform in Bangladesh and a common service in Nepal

Section Two: A collective approach to communication and community engagement

What is communication and community engagement?

Humanitarians now recognise that **keeping people connected to each other, providing information for and communicating with people affected by conflict or natural disasters** are among the most important elements of emergency response. The quality, effectiveness and timeliness of humanitarian action is improved by involving those affected because they possess valuable local knowledge, can identify needs and priorities and should have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

The recognition is generating a trend whereby governments, national and international organisations, media development agencies, technology companies and other actors in high-risk countries collaborate in a collective approach to ensure **communication and community engagement 'platforms' are set up and ready for future disasters**. These national platforms often identify as a working group, community of practice or a project-based collective service. They provide key **services to communities** in a response, **coordinate** actors, activities and **feedback**, and **support other structures** in the humanitarian architecture, such as clusters, inter-cluster mechanisms and governmental departments. They play a key role in **preparedness**, for example in advocacy, capacity strengthening and the inclusion of digital technology for supplying information, data and connectivity, or mobilising resources (financial, human or hardware). Diagram 1 (on page 12) visualises such a platform and its functions.

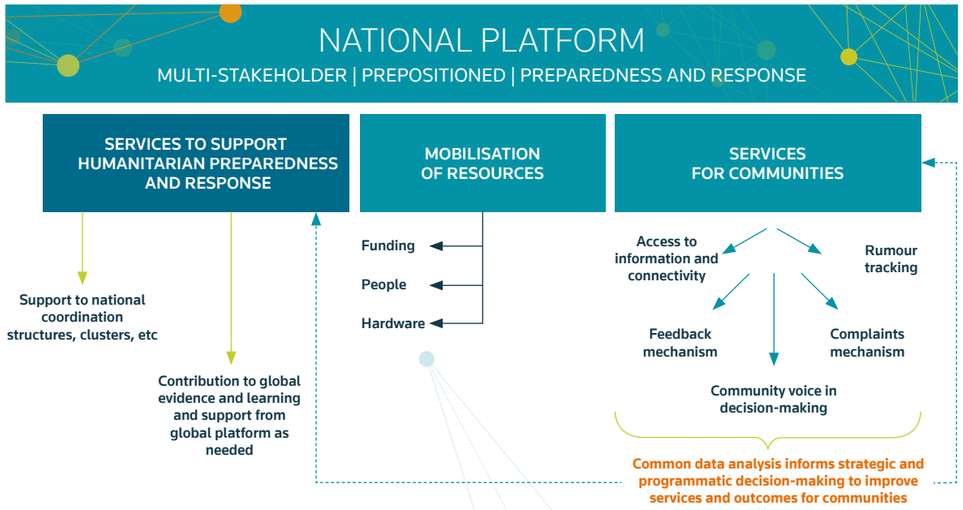
A definition of communication and community engagement

A working definition is given below for the purpose of this guide, though other definitions and terminologies (such as Communicating with Communities or CwC[13]) are in use.

Communication and community engagement is an area of humanitarian action based on the principle communication is aid. It gives priority to sharing life-saving, actionable information with people affected by disaster using two-way communication channels so aid providers listen to and act on people's needs, suggested solutions, feedback and complaints, and people receiving assistance have a say in and lead decisions that affect them. It also prioritises keeping people in crisis connected with each other and the outside world.

OCHA/IVO BRANDAU

Gbiti, Cameroon, 17 July 2014: The Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, Robert Piper, meets with recently arrived refugees



There is a growing movement by governments, national and international organisations, media development agencies, media and technology companies and other actors in high-risk countries to collaborate through **communication and community engagement 'platforms'**. These provide a **coordination role** for those working on communication and community engagement, as well as providing **services for communities** and **support for other structures** in the humanitarian architecture, such as clusters, inter-cluster mechanisms and governmental departments tasked with humanitarian preparedness and response. The diagram visualises such a platform and its functions.

The following elements are essential for communication and community engagement:

1. **Understanding and working within the local communication landscape** – social, cultural, economic, political and infrastructure aspects, local power dynamics, and barriers to information sharing. Preparedness and response actions are communicated in locally appropriate terms, languages and through channels used by the affected population. Aid providers work in partnership with communities and incorporate their knowledge and perspectives.

2. **Community leadership** – Humanitarian action supports and mobilises the capacities and capabilities of individuals, groups and organisations so that affected communities are better able to lead and shape preparedness and response efforts.

3. **Information exchange and dialogue** – Priority is given to the exchange of accurate, useful, timely information from trusted sources, in an appropriate language and format. This is a two-way exchange and requires in-depth understanding of the local communication landscape and capacities, and must include managing false information that can put lives at risk.

4. **Participation** – Humanitarian actors make time and resources available to build on positive local community engagement processes and, where needed, put in place supportive, inclusive structures and processes that ensure people, particularly those who may be disproportionately disadvantaged like women, girls, children, young men, persons living with disabilities and older people, take a leading role in designing, shaping and evaluating humanitarian responses. [14]

5. **Feedback** – Communities are aware that their perspectives – positive and negative, solicited and unsolicited – are important to aid workers. Feedback is systematically collected, analysed, reported and acted on, and explanation is provided to communities as to how strategy and programming has been adapted to reflect these views.[15] Feedback is collected at key decision points in the programme cycle, on both the humanitarian response and agencies' performance, including service quality, relevance and responsiveness to people's concerns.

6. **Complaints**[16] – People affected by crisis know that they have a right to raise a concern or complain about the humanitarian assistance they did or did not receive or about the behaviour of aid workers. They are included in the design of and have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to raise concerns, which are addressed.[17] Humanitarian actors actively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption linked to humanitarian aid.

7. **Protection** – Communication and community engagement approaches require a careful assessment of risk, especially in situations of armed conflict or violence as engaging individuals or certain groups may put them at greater risk or alienate them. Adequate and effective safeguards are put in place, including effective data security and protection mechanisms.

8. **Connectivity** – Measures are taken to re-establish, build or maintain communications technology infrastructure and support affected communities to restore contact between family members and communicate with service providers.

9. **Coordination and collective services** – Coordinated, collective models and common services in preparedness and response will reduce the burden on communities, ensure a more coherent, effective response and leverage diverse expertise, knowledge and learning. Actors should include local, national and international NGOs, UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent agencies, government, media development agencies, local media and the private sector.

A Translators without Borders staff member trains responders on Rohingya terminology

TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Taking a collective approach: platforms, services and tools

Communication and community engagement require the collaboration of a diverse set of humanitarian, communication and technology actors with the objective of catalysing communities' ability to connect, access information and have a voice in humanitarian emergencies.

These include Governments, National and International NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies, as well as media development agencies, media (especially those that have a humanitarian broadcasting[18] mandate), technology providers (such as mobile network operator signatories to the Humanitarian Connectivity Charter) and others from the private sector. These actors are convened through national communication and community engagement platforms, which should be recognised in existing or emerging humanitarian architecture. Leadership is not predefined and should be afforded by the government body or responding organisation best placed to take it on. At global level, collective work supports national platforms by sharing guidance and good practice, and advocating with donors, developing standard materials for country adaptation. Platforms are discussed in detail in Section Three.

Working collectively requires actors to overcome barriers, such as policies that prohibit information sharing, competition for funding and pressure for visibility. Benefits range from the collective development and standardisation of tools to improved coordination and efficiencies (see Benefits box-out below) and the promotion of leadership by national stakeholders.

Leading, co-leading or participating in collective platforms does not replace agencies' responsibilities on accountability to affected people. A collective platform should render these efforts better coordinated, more timely and more effective, achieving greater participation and ownership as envisaged by the Grand Bargain and Sustainable Development Goals.

BENEFITS OF A COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A collective approach can:

- Reduce confusion, tensions and conflict with and between communities through consistency of messaging;
- Equip local communities with the information they need to be more effective responders to disaster;
- Shield affected communities from being overburdened and over-questioned;
- Increases the likelihood of comprehensibility, consistency and accuracy of language and cultural interpretation;
- Enable more consistent and stronger advocacy messaging through collective community and humanitarian voices;
- Contribute to greater understanding of trends and issues due to increased data collection and analysis outreach;
- Include and value diverse views and expertise in response analysis and implementation design through the inclusion of media development, technology and private sector know-how;
- Improve cost-effectiveness due to shared resources;
- Broaden ownership; and
- Enhance the likelihood of more innovative and appropriate tools being created.

Communication and community engagement can be:

A programmatic area providing relevant, actionable information for disaster-affected communities to save lives, protect livelihoods, support recovery and address dangerous rumours.

A means for community voice to inform strategy and improve programmatic areas such as cash transfer, shelter or nutrition programmes by engaging people in decisions that affect their lives and in shaping services, as well as providing ways of giving feedback to improve them (thereby encouraging adaptive programming).

A means for accountability to affected populations, providing mechanisms to solicit and act upon the voices and priorities of affected people in a coordinated manner, including for sexual exploitation and abuse, before, during and after an emergency[19]. It is also an approach to putting into practice other sector standards, like the Core Humanitarian Standard and Grand Bargain, and meeting donor requirements (see Commitments, standards and donor requirements).

An enabler for people helping themselves and each other by keeping people connected to each other or helping them reconnect.

Coordination, collaboration and diversity of actors through a 'collective approach' is critical in communication and community engagement.

CASE STUDY

Nepal's inter-agency common feedback project proves adaptability to a changing context

A collective feedback mechanism was established in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, with funding from DFID. It had been **conceptualised as a 'common service' to the entire humanitarian community**, which would **collect and aggregate feedback** from earthquake-affected communities through **multiple channels** and feed into the Humanitarian Country Team and Inter-Cluster Coordination Group to **inform decision-making**. It was the first time such a concept had been put into practice. Yet it quickly proved to play a significant role: for example, when over 40% of people were raising water supply interruption as their primary concern the Common Feedback Project advocated with UN, government, donors and other partners, resulting in an increase in programmes to address this as well as £4 million in new funding made available by DFID to address this community concern. No one knew just how far the concept would go. By its third year, the Common Feedback Project had not only **proven that systematically engaging communities works in relief, but also in recovery, development and preparedness.**

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Nepali woman asking a question as part of 'Milijuli Nepali' - a BBC Media Action radio programme to help people affected by the earthquake

In February 2016, as relief and winterisation support was winding down and reconstruction programmes were beginning, the Common Feedback Project **successfully transitioned its approach** into the recovery phase, securing an additional two-year mandate from DFID. In this period a large series of focus groups were undertaken across all the priority earthquake-affected districts which identified themes and issues that were important to communities so that when feedback would be gathered from them in future the feedback questions would be framed in the themes and issues that are important to them.

This set the project up to **respond quickly and expand once again** into the humanitarian space during the August 2017 flooding. The feedback collected showed a significant contrast to what clusters were reporting as priority needs and requesting in funding. As a result, the Central Emergency Response Fund now allocates funding for each cluster based on the importance that communities attribute each type of assistance needed.

The model focuses on feedback from communities, however the government operates a hotline for complaints so anyone wishing to make a complaint is advised how to do this via the hotline. Issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse are referred to the protection cluster and its sub-group working to stop gender-based violence. At later stages, the Common Feedback Project worked with the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters on activities to close the feedback loop, for example broadcasting local radio programmes on issues and questions arising in the feedback.

In 2017 the model was tested in a **development context**, receiving an innovation fund grant from the UN Development Group for a **perception survey on the priorities and ambitions of communities** in some of the least developed areas, around the four pillars of UN Development Assistance Framework (2018-2022) to guide programme planning.

www.cfp.org.np

CASE STUDY

The sub-national working group on communicating with communities (CwC) in the Rohingya refugee response, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017 led to the displacement of over 655,000 Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh. The country had already been hosting a verified population of well over 200,000 Rohingya and likely many more.

The refugees mostly live in camps around Cox's Bazar. The response is coordinated by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). IOM is the lead agency for a sub-national working group on CwC to address information and communication needs of refugees and host communities. Many national and international agencies participate.

Services implemented include radio broadcasts and information hubs to provide information, answer questions, capture new questions and offer referrals to services, face to face or through phone and text lines. This is supplemented by roving information teams. A community feedback service collates and publishes feedback. The working group performs coordination, linking with the clusters and ISCG to relay feedback and provide training and mentoring.

BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders operate a **common service** for community engagement and accountability, with funding from DFID and IOM, which includes a collective feedback analysis service (What Matters?), the production of common communication tools; the provision of training to dozens of agencies; and a regular narrowcast and rumour-tracking bulletin.

The project improves efficiency, cost-effectiveness and accountability in the overall Rohingya response, closely aligned with several shared commitments of the Grand Bargain. BBC Media Action's report *How Effective is Communication in the Rohingya Refugee Response* explains the mechanism and analyses the results of this initiative.

http://www.shongjog.org.bd/response/rohingya/

BBC MEDIA ACTION

A presenter at local public radio station Bangladesh Betar interviews a guest as part of a special programme to help the Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar

KEY RESOURCES

Policy Paper: The Role of Collective Platforms, Services and Tools to support Communication and Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20170531072915-3fs0r

This paper makes the case for communication and community engagement in humanitarian response at global and national levels, and describes the shape and functions of collective platforms, services and tools and describes minimum actions for collective efforts. An annex lists potential national and global services and activities for preparedness and response.

Pre-crisis information mapping and consultation
TOOL: Pre-crisis community perception survey / mapping / consultation
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/philippines/document/philippines-cop-community-engagement-pre-crisis-community-perception

Super typhoon pre-crisis information and consultation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHR06Ee6Dgc
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/philippines/accountability-affected-populationscommunications-communities-community

The Philippines Community Engagement Community of Practice (2017, 2018)
Tool, reports and video on the preparedness work undertaken by the Philippines national platform on communication and community engagement.

SECTION REFERENCES

[13] Although the term communicating with communities (CwC) and others (e.g. community engagement and accountability, C4D in Emergencies, #commisaid and beneficiary communication) are also used to describe this work, communication and community engagement is the preferred term for the CDAC Network, as it implies a pro-active process that brings together the expertise of humanitarian actors with that of communications and media specialists, all of whom are dedicated to saving lives and making aid more effective through communication, information exchange and community engagement.

[14] *Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivise participation as a way of working for GB signatories*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2017)
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/final_participation_revolution_workstream_reccomendations.pdf

[15] Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Participation Revolution Workstream.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/participation-revolution-include-people-receiving-aid-making-decisions-which-affect-their-lives

[16] *PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook.* CHS Alliance (2017)
http://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/PSEA%20Handbook.pdf

[17] Commitment 5. Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project (2014)
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

[18] Humanitarian broadcasting in emergencies means mass media interventions in enabling people to survive and recover in emergencies.

[19] *Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2017)
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc_caap_endorsed_nov_2017.pdf

[20] This refers to information on a country or area's media and telecommunications outlets and coverage, mobile phone usage, etc. as well as on the audience's demographic profile, languages, media preferences, etc. This is sometimes known as the *information ecosystem*.

MINIMUM ACTIONS AND SERVICES FOR COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Establish a national platform for communication and community engagement

1. Under national leadership by the most appropriate actor, preposition and maintain support for an **inter-agency communication and community engagement platform or collective service** to convene duty bearers, diverse actors and specialists to coordinate activities. The platform should serve existing and emerging humanitarian architecture, particularly those that support government-led and localised responses.

› See Section Four for guidance on establishing a national platform

Platform members coordinate and collaborate to:

2. Establish and document an **understanding of the context**, communication culture, language and customs to facilitate meaningful and respectful engagement with various affected communities. This will form pre-crisis information that can be rapidly updated in a crisis.

3. Ensure that **assessment and analysis** of the humanitarian context (as reflected in Humanitarian Needs Overviews) includes community perceptions, coping mechanisms, data on what information people need, how they prefer to receive such information and which channels they trust, and how they prefer to provide feedback and complaints, as well as a media and telecommunication landscape snapshot. Data should be disaggregated by sex, age and other vulnerabilities.

4. Ensure that **preparedness and contingency planning and response strategies, policies and plans** include meaningful communication and community engagement components, with requisite staffing and budgetary allocations to implement the minimum actions and services.
5. Put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms for ensuring that crisis-affected people have **access to the information** that they need. This should be in the right languages and formats, based on trusted sources of information and shared through preferred channels, which may all vary upon disaggregation of the intended audience.

6. Put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated **feedback mechanisms**. Feedback data should be collected, analysed and linked into individual and collective referral mechanisms to ensure that strategic and programmatic decisions are informed and corrective actions taken.

7. Put in place an appropriate, systematic and coordinated **mechanism for** ensuring **complaints**, including sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption are investigated and acted on.

8. Create or build upon opportunities for disaster-affected people to play an **active role in response decision-making processes, ensuring clear links between community structures and the humanitarian architecture.**

9. Build components into preparedness and response programmes to **keep people connected** to each other to support their own ways of coping, for example by planning ahead to safeguard, restore or extend mobile phone connectivity or radio access.

10. Undertake **advocacy** and **capacity building** to ensure an enabling environment for communication and community engagement.

Platform members may work collectively on these activities, or an individual or group of members may provide a 'common service', whereby they implement one or more components.

› See Section Three for guidance on implementing the minimum actions and services for communication and community engagement

In this section

1. The communication landscape and understanding information needs and communication preferences
2. Strategic response, action planning and funding
3. Human resources, expertise and training
4. Dialogue with the community: collective mechanisms for seeking feedback from communities
5. A collective approach to sharing information for communities
6. Opportunities for people to play an active role in decision-making and leadership
7. Keeping people connected
8. Monitoring and evaluation of the minimum actions and services

Section Three: Implementing minimum actions and services for communication and community engagement

1. The communication landscape and understanding information needs and communication preferences

Communication and community engagement requires a sound understanding of the community: its languages, culture, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with engagement efforts by outside groups. Attention should be paid to whether particular groups (such as women, children, disabled or older people, minority language speakers) face specific challenges in accessing or providing information.

Needs assessments tend to focus on sectors (e.g. food security or shelter) but don't always assess information needs and communication preferences. It is important that these are included in initial rapid assessments to inform how community engagement is undertaken in the response.

They should also be included in the detailed assessments that follow. Information needs and communication preferences vary over time. After an earthquake, for example, people might want information on tracing missing relatives, how to access aid, whether they can enter damaged houses and what to do with bodies recovered. But later, they tend to want information on replacing lost documentation such as ID and property deeds, compensation rights, death certificates and legal issues.[23]

There is a range of different ways ('channels') by which people prefer to communicate and access information, from radio, newspaper or television, to word-of-mouth, participatory theatre, leaflets or town hall meetings with community leaders.

Preferences vary depending on factors such as mother tongue, literacy level, age, ethnic group, social or economic vulnerability, disability, gender or religion, and can change over time, particularly when usual channels are disrupted.

Understanding these factors is important not only to ensure you know who in a community you can reach, but also to avoid doing harm.

Data should be disaggregated by sex, age and vulnerabilities[24], taking into account specific needs of all diverse groups, and explore evolving information needs, as well as seeking opportunities to promote and support community leadership.

Over time, as assessments become more nuanced, so should the questions associated with communication and community engagement to better inform services and activities. The more you know about how people receive, share and trust information, and can anticipate how this might change – the better you will be able to determine how to best support community engagement.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

Rapid assessment:

- **Undertake a pre-crisis community perception survey** to feed into preparedness and contingency planning so that community voices, including those of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are reflected in any contingency plans (see Key Resources on page 24).
- Check which actors have conducted or are planning a **needs assessment** and collaborate to avoid duplication of effort and burden on communities.
- Find out what information is already available ("**secondary data review**") and coordinate with others to **update existing data, such as media and telecommunications landscape guides** (see box on page 22). Use this information in conjunction with your emergency preparedness plan, context analysis, scenario projections and response planning.
- **Include communication and community engagement questions into needs assessments**, whether these are undertaken by government, single agency or multiple agencies (e.g. Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment, Joint Needs Assessment or Multi Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment). A bank of questions can be found via the Key Resources on page 24. Only conduct a separate assessment if it is not possible to integrate it into planned ones.

ICRC/MOHAMED ABDIKARIM

Mogadishu, Mustaqbal radio station. The ICRC and the Somali Red Crescent Society are working with a local radio station to encourage everyday habits that will help keep diseases, like acute watery diarrhoea and cholera, away. An actress is recording.

As well as gaining a broad understanding of the community, early assessments and analysis should explore:

1. What are the most effective ways for humanitarian responders to communicate with communities following a disaster, so that engagement mechanisms can be developed?

2. What information are communities missing, so that this can be provided for them by authorities, and humanitarian and communications actors?

3. To what extent has damage been caused to local communications capacity following a disaster, and how best can trusted networks be restored?[25]

- If it is not possible to integrate questions into a wider inter-agency assessment or you need more in-depth information as a context evolves, you can conduct a specific **information and communication needs analysis**. Whether one or several agencies conduct the assessment, it is imperative to coordinate (at a minimum, see what information already exists by contacting relevant agencies) and undertake the assessment as a common service given its response-wide relevance.

- **Work with a mix of partners**, such as media development organisations, ACAPS and anthropological researchers that have expertise in assessing and analysing different aspects of the context of the response. .

After the assessment:

- **Analyse and share results** with actors to inform the response strategy. Remember to **disseminate a public version of the assessment report** suitable for the community to explain how the data has been used, to close the 'feedback loop'. This may need to be done verbally.
- **Design interventions to meet immediate information and communication needs and plan for longer-term engagement**. It will be necessary to continue obtaining and verifying community information to design and refine interventions.

- **Keep checking how things are evolving**, what is working and not – both in the media and telecommunications landscape and your community engagement efforts. Adjust accordingly.

- Explore the use of **suitable technology** to facilitate the collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of data (see Key Resources on page 24).

BE PREPARED:

- What do you know about information needs and communication preferences from previous, comparable disasters? [26]
- Do you have plans and agreements in place for working with media and telecommunications providers?
- Do you have access to a communications landscape guide?
- Are you ready to rapidly update information and plans when disaster strikes?
- What communication and community engagement activities and actors exist?
- Do you have questions on communication and community engagement ready for inclusion in needs assessments?
- Are you prepared to assess impact of the crisis on the media and communications landscape?

MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE GUIDES

ACAPS' Briefing Notes and other resources include data on the communication landscape and media development organisations such as BBC Media Action, International Media Support, Internews and Fondation Hirondelle may have undertaken assessments on local media and telecommunications (if not publicly available these could be sourced through in-country contacts).

Media and telecommunications landscape guides – often produced by media development agencies[28], NGOs or United Nations[29] – typically provide information on:

- Cultural and social information
- Literacy levels
- Languages spoken and understood
- Popular and trusted sources of news and information for various groups
- Media outlets that command significant national, regional, ethnic and religious audiences
- Peak audience periods for radio and television
- Offline or traditional forms of communication, such as theatre, music, dance and respected messengers (e.g. religious leaders or local celebrities)
- Mobile phone access, ownership and usage
- Social media usage
- Profiles of telecommunications companies in each country, regulatory environment and network coverage
- Media service providers with capacities to produce radio programmes, print posters or creative videos
- Profiles and contact details of the main radio, TV stations, newspapers and websites.

Community data should be disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

CASE STUDY

Differences in information needs and preferred sources between men and women following the 2015 Nepal earthquake[27]

Many people said that their main information needs straight after the 2015 earthquakes were to do with shelter and temporary settlement, how to access relief, and how to stay safe and survive aftershocks. These needs were partially met, but rumours caused concern and confusion. Seven months on, information needs changed. People wanted to know about government assistance, especially for permanent shelter solutions as winter intensified, and whether the land was safe to settle and cultivate. The information circulating was contradictory.

It is important to disaggregate data as differences emerge. Women wanted information about dealing with trauma and future quakes but did not feel these needs were well met. They also wanted information on caring for children, older people and pregnant women. Men tended to be concerned by how to treat the injured and deal with the dead (including animals) and what they could expect from the government. Young people wanted to know when schools and colleges would re-open.

Most information initially came from family members and friends via mobile phone, which has high ownership and usage in Nepal. Subsequently it came from external sources, although less accessible locations were very poorly served. Information channels reaching men and women varied considerably.

Men usually had better access to information about the external context and assistance, from local government representatives and discussions in teashops. Women relied more on personal contacts – their relatives and friends, social and health workers. Where available and functioning, radio and TV were cited as information sources, more by men than women. Marginalised groups and remote communities were generally less well served.

Face-to-face communication was preferred and trusted, especially for information that was more personally relevant as people sought to rebuild their lives and communities. This was most likely to come from known sources, from the VDC Secretary and/or Ward Coordinator for men, and for women from social or workers and neighbours.

IOM distributes tarpaulins to earthquake victims in a remote mountainous village in Dhading district in Nepal

IOM 2015/EUNJIN JEONG

"Our friends and family in Manila are the ones telling us on Facebook if there is further news about a disaster."

Dulag resident, Leyte, the Philippines[3]

KEY RESOURCES

Media and Telecommunications Landscape Guides
Guides providing comprehensive and detailed information on the media and telecommunications landscape in various countries. Available in interactive, online formats (see e.g. Bangladesh or South Sudan) as well as downloadable formats (see e.g. Dominica).
http://bit.ly/2BIzdky

Assessing Information and Communication Needs: A Quick and Easy Guide for Those Working in Humanitarian Response

Pocket Guide: Information & Communication Questions in Rapid Needs Assessments
Both at http://bit.ly/2CvEQV4

Both CDAC Network & ACAPS (2014)
Guidance and associated questionnaire for use in rapid information and communication needs assessment, and what to do with the data.

CDAC Network Suite of Common Needs Assessment Tools
A set of tools that is useful if you are conducting a separate or more in-depth information and communication needs assessment.
http://bit.ly/2PXbmCY

Information and Communication Needs Assessment Tool
http://bit.ly/2QP2vbB

UNHCR Innovation Service Master Form - Information and Communication Needs Assessment
http://bit.ly/2V8sNnZ

Both UNHCR Innovation (2017)
Guidance and associated database of questions on information and communication needs that can be downloaded, adapted and deployed using various mobile data collection tools. Questions cover e.g. baseline demographic information, channel access, radio / mobile telephony/ face-to-face communications, communication modalities with humanitarian responders.

Understanding the Information and Communication Needs of IDPs in Northern Iraq
http://bit.ly/2GADCM3

Inter-agency Rapid Assessment Report (2014)
Example of a stand-alone information and communication needs assessment report, undertaken as this was a gap in other needs assessments.

Rapid Information Communications Accountability Assessment (RICAA)
http://bit.ly/2AdJ95T

Philippines Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement: Communication, Accountability, Community Participation and Common Service Partnerships (2016)
The RICAA is a simple needs assessment tool designed to capture the information needs and communication preferences of people affected by crisis. It includes a toolkit for survey design, data collection and analysis via smart phones and tablets, and has an online platform that facilitates the online tracking, compilation and visual mapping of information received from communities, Ham (amateur) radio and SMS.

Pre-crisis information mapping and consultation tool
Pre-crisis community perception survey / mapping / consultation
http://bit.ly/2QNNFCj

The Philippines Community Engagement Community of Practice (2017, 2018)
Tool used in preparedness work undertaken by the Philippines national platform on communication and community engagement.

BE PREPARED:
Have you planned ahead to disaggregate assessment data by sex, age and type of disability? Are you ready to consider other factors in your data, such as socio-economic status, social minorities, ethnicity, language, capacity, vulnerability, geographical disparity, or literacy and numeracy levels? The IASC Gender and Age Marker[30], being rolled out as a sector-wide standard tool, can help with this.

A newspaper stand in Antananarivo, Madagascar

ANTHROLOGICA 2018

2. Strategic response, action planning and funding

Emergency responses where international assistance is requested by a Government are typically guided by a response-wide, coordinated Humanitarian Response Plan[31] (HRP) based on a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

Where no international assistance is requested the Government will set the response plan, for example, Vanuatu's Country Preparedness Package[32]. Response plans are used to communicate the scope of the response to affected communities, donors and the wider public, as a key means for resource mobilisation.

They are also used for response monitoring, setting out the goals and targets, complemented by indicators. Communication and community engagement needs and plans must be clearly articulated in such documents if they are to be funded and included in a response. A good example of this is the *2018 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis*[33].

As each context and response will be unique it is not possible to provide a blueprint for what will be needed in each response plan, however it should state explicitly how the minimum actions for communication and community engagement (see page 19) will be addressed in the response.

The detail of how this will then be implemented should be developed by the national platform though action planning (also known as operational or tactical planning), which should also determine the required resources (human, financial and material) and how success will be measured.

This approach supports fundraising through mechanisms like OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF).

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Ensure that communication and community engagement is included in any preparedness and contingency planning as well as in the assessment and analysis phase**, advocating for its inclusion if necessary. To ensure that communication and community engagement is strategically included in the overall response plan it must be included in the preparedness and needs assessment stages.

- **Advocate for inclusion of minimum actions for communication and community engagement** (see page 19) in response-wide plans, such as the Humanitarian Response Plan or Joint Response Plan (see example under Key Resources on page 31).

- **Draw on available data** (e.g. from assessments) as well as the judgement, skills and experience of key stakeholders to decide what is appropriate for the context. There is no ideal framework for this – do what is most relevant. You could undertake the action planning through brainstorming and drafting workshops, supplemented by further research and validation. It is essential that multiple actors feel ownership over this process for it to be effective.

- **Develop a detailed action plan** for communication and community engagement by engaging relevant stakeholders. Make explicit links to other strategic elements of the response (e.g. Clusters, cross-cutting issues, etc.) to ensure that the community engagement approach is coherent, integrated and has a better chance of being resourced. Avoid being vague: list specific activities, not concepts. See tool under Key Resources on page 31.

- **Develop a budget** for the inter-agency action plan. A sample budget is given below, which can be adapted to your action plan. The budget could be funded as a programme, included as a component in a larger response budget or broken down for inclusion in different programmes.

- Include your **communication and community engagement planning as an explicit element in agency and response-wide plans and budgets**, referencing the framework and minimum services and actions for communication and community engagement (see pages 53-55).

- **Clarify stakeholder roles, responsibilities and accountability** in relation to the action plan.

"The objective is to provide real-time, actionable information from people at the receiving end of aid that can be translated into programme improvements, while empowering people to express their views."

How to Establish and Manage a Systematic Community Feedback Mechanism. IFRC and Ground Truth Solutions

"Systematic participation of targeted populations in assessing their needs and evaluating how humanitarian assistance has met these needs is paramount for ensuring quality of aid delivery."

Monique Pariat, Director General, ECHO, European Commission

Sweet vendor in Sundarbans, West Bengal, India

3. Human resources, expertise and training

There is a sector-wide gap in personnel skilled at communication and community engagement, particularly working at an inter-agency level. Staff must be actively trained, mobilised or recruited to work on technical projects, inter-agency coordination or data management. To find the staff you need, you may draw on existing teams, find new capacity or utilise staff from deployment rosters.

It is always a good idea to provide awareness raising and training on communication and community engagement across your organisation and partners working in the response, both to gain buy-in and deepen knowledge and skills. This is an area that cuts across all technical areas.

Staff are required for the following aspects:

- **Coordination** of the inter-agency, national platform. This is a key role. It requires a person with the ability to influence leadership; convene and coordinate multiple, diverse actors; identify gaps; lead others to take action; and solve problems and conflict.

- **Staff will also need skills in technical areas, such as:**
  - Information management including data analysis and liaison
  - Assessment and analysis of information needs, perceptions and communication preferences
  - Assessment and analysis of anthropological information
  - Local media and/or private sector (e.g. mobile network operator) engagement
  - Set-up and project management of inter-operational feedback mechanisms (e.g. call centres, perception surveys, radio and video production, print and digital media, information, communication and technology, face-to-face consultations)
  - Engagement of specific or vulnerable groups
  - Translation, interpretation and cultural mediation
  - Communication and community engagement training.

In a coordinated approach these functions are often split across different organisations.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Plan ahead** as to which staff are required, as well as internal agency requirements (including the platform focal point and alternate): where, in what role(s), for how long and what competencies and skills they will need (such as language or technical knowledge). Remember to include required **budget** in your overall response funding plan.

- **Develop new partnerships as a preparedness activity** rather than in the heat of a response. Develop partnership protocols ahead of time and ensure people can be mobilised immediately to help. This is especially important for partners with whom you are not used to working or who have a different organisational culture.

- **Seek out organisations with specialisations** with whom to partner. They could second a staff member to your organisation or participate in your national platform. Such actors could include local groups with expertise in engaging with certain communities, media or media development organisations, mobile network operators and other private sector actors. Through partnerships you may be able to mobilise not just skills, but materials and funding.

- **Organise training**. Tailored materials are available for varying seniority and technical experience and can be adapted to the context and requirements of the target participants (see Key Resources on page 31). Seek to build capacity of staff locally for more sustainable outcomes.

- **Recruit locally**. People may not be trained as humanitarian community engagement experts, but there will be a plethora of people with expert skills in data management, minority group engagement, language, anthropology, to name a few. Universities and community groups are great places to start. Investing in national staff and familiarising them with response systems will be a more sustainable investment than relying on short-term expatriates.

Budget template

ITEM DESCRIPTION	LEAD PARTNER(S)	COST
ACTIVITY COSTS		
Outcome 1: Communication between affected communities and humanitarian organisations is improved so that communities are receiving information they need, are aware of their rights and entitlements, shape services on offer and can raise issues when needed.		
Output: Communities are well-informed, including about how to access relief and services		
Activities: • Conduct assessment of information needs and communication preferences using standardised format to allow aggregation		
• Formulate common key messages for communities in appropriate languages and identify channels for dissemination		
• Strengthen local media on rumour tracking, fact checking and debunking rumours		
Output: Community perspectives are collected systematically through an appropriate range of channels		
• Conduct micro-surveys of community perceptions using standardised format to allow aggregation		
• Provide technical and financial support to SMS-based platform		
• Augment youth engagement on tracking, fact checking and debunking rumours		
• Augmenting local group engagement on tracking, fact checking and debunking rumours		
Outcome 2: Enhanced and scaled cross-sectoral community feedback from affected communities is escalated to the leadership through one single and easily accessible mechanism for decision making		
Output: A common data analysis mechanism is put in place		
• Sort and classify data into data set with appropriate disaggregation and analysis		
• Display disaggregated data by sex, age, disability, ethnicity and other considerations using online platform e.g. HXL, HDX or KoBo Toolbox		
• Design feedback report in sharable formats accessible to partners and community		
Output: Community perspectives are fed back into system level to inform decisions that affect people's life and well-being		
• Ensure responders have the skills to engage with community and respond to rumours, concerns, feedback and complaints, e.g. training		
• Ensure clusters, ICCG, HCT meetings have a standing agenda item on community feedback and engagement so that appropriate action is taken and agencies feedback on action taken for accountability		
Outcome 3: Collective Service Model is improved and refined throughout implementation period		
Output: Monitoring, evaluation and learning processes in place		
• Regular monitoring by the CCE national platform		
• Mid-term review; after action review at the end		
STAFF SALARIES AND BENEFITS		
National/sub-national platform coordinator: staff salary, insurance, travel, lodging, etc. Information support officer: staff salary, insurance, travel, lodging, etc.		
STAFF SALARIES AND BENEFITS		
For example: mobile phones, laptops, etc.		
OTHER OPERATIONAL AND SUPPORT COSTS		
For example: website, IT support, communication costs, translation and interpretation, publication and design costs, etc.		
SUB-TOTAL		
% indirect cost recovery / non-project attributable costs (NPAC)		
TOTAL COSTS		

The budget template is based on a planned inter-agency service in Central African Republic[34], which embraces the minimum elements for communication and community engagement with a focus on addressing rumours and working with youth groups, based on context analysis and needs assessment. A learning element was also incorporated to refine and improve the collective model during implementation. Activities are led by different partners, each contributing to the collective approach.

EXPERT ROSTERS

Many humanitarian agencies draw qualified staff from rosters when local capacity is exceeded in times of emergency, or when specialist skills are needed. Deployments can support response, capacity strengthening and preparedness. Community engagement experts are often deployed to coordinate, conduct information and communication needs assessments, set up appropriate mechanisms or provide appropriate on-the-job training to field staff.

Some agencies have their own internal rosters (you can ask your human resources department whether your agency has one). There are also specialised rosters such as those from Standby Partner agencies (e.g. NORCAP or RedR – see Key Resources on page 31) that deploy expert personnel in communication and community engagement.

As a preparedness measure, consider setting up a partnership agreement with any rosters from which you may request deployments in future. This helps roster managers to understand demand, advocate for funds and plan for future surges in requests.

CASE STUDY

Inclusion of community engagement in the humanitarian response plan in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Increasingly, community engagement action planning is included in Humanitarian Response Plans in order to meet donor requirements linked to the Grand Bargain.

As part of the activation of the Level 3 emergency and in line with IASC Commitments, the Humanitarian Country Team put in place a collective mechanism to ensure participation of affected people in humanitarian planning and programming, and to regularly monitor community satisfaction and priorities in the DRC.

It included the adoption of a collective code of conduct and the establishment of a network of focal points for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

This mechanism, co-led by OCHA and UNFPA, was detailed in the Humanitarian Response Plan and a range of actors contributed projects. It received funding through the CERF which enabled response-wide community engagement activities to be scaled up, with a specific focus on streamlining community engagement and ensuring multiple channels to reach vulnerable groups, especially women.

IDPs in Goma, DRC

IOM

KEY RESOURCES

Guidance to develop a Community Engagement and Accountability Plan of Action
http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/tool-7-guidance-to-develop-a-cea-plan-of-action/

International Federation of the Red Cross (2016)
Developing a plan of action specific to communication and community engagement rather than incorporating this into the overall response plan.

JRP for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis: March - December 2018
Strategic Executive Group and partners (2018)
The Joint Response Plan provides the Strategic Executive Group and partners shared understanding of the crisis, including the most pressing humanitarian needs and the estimated number of people who need assistance. It represents a consolidated evidence base and helps inform joint strategic response planning. This example includes a common service feedback mechanism as well as a needs assessment section and specific objectives on communicating with communities.
http://bit.ly/2Er9vVP

The Humanitarian Communication Roster
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/humanitarian-communication-and-media-roster/

NORCAP and CDAC Network
Information about requesting an expert deployment from the roster and sample terms of reference for staff posts with communication and community engagement competencies, e.g. Communication and Community Engagement Coordinator, Humanitarian Liaison Officer, Technical Team Leader.

Tool 21: CEA responsibilities for job descriptions
International Federation of the Red Cross (2017)
Ideas for lines to include in job descriptions setting out an individuals' responsibilities in relation to CEA.
http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/tool-21-cea-responsibilities-for-job-descriptions/

Communication is aid e-learning
This introductory, scenario-based e-learning course raises awareness and teaches basic elements on how to engage affected communities to help provide the information they need and establish communication mechanisms for dialogue with disaster responders.
https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768

Technical training on communication and community engagement in humanitarian response
The in-depth, modular training takes participants through the theory and practical steps to embed communication and community engagement into normal operational practice, and how to ensure it becomes a predictable, consistent and resourced element of emergency preparedness and response. This training pack includes a detailed facilitator's guide, which can be used both with the training material and independently from it. Commission the training from CDAC Network or download the training materials.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/learning-centre/foundation-training/

Advanced technical training on communication and community engagement in humanitarian response
The advanced technical training is for two primary audiences: i) field and technical staff who have completed the technical training and whose work requires a more in-depth knowledge of communication and community engagement, and ii) senior staff or those on deployment rosters, who need to have a deeper knowledge of communication and community engagement. It covers a number of subjects including needs assessments, planning, resource mobilisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/learning-centre/foundation-training/

Briefing Module on CCE
In this two-hour module participants receive an overview of what communication and community engagement is, why it is important and how it feeds into improving accountability and participation.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/learning-centre/foundation-training/

4. Dialogue: collective mechanisms for seeking feedback

The opportunity to inform, influence, comment on and critique actions, projects and services must be linked to a mechanism to inform and drive improvements in humanitarian programmes and across the response. Regular input and feedback from communities is vital to better measure performance and results and improves the relationship between humanitarian responders and the community. Feedback can be structured and proactively sought, for example through surveys or community meetings, or unstructured and passively sought, by monitoring rumours and social media.

Whilst humanitarian responders increasingly have feedback mechanisms in place, they need to come much earlier in the response and communities need to be much more aware of their existence. There is scope for mechanisms to be designed so that feedback data can be aggregated across multiple agencies for macro analysis and embedded in the humanitarian architecture to facilitate a systematic and coordinated approach, resulting in changes that are clear to communities.

A common feedback mechanism (CFM) is a collective, easily accessible mechanism for sharing information with affected communities. The CFM not only addresses complaints and feedback but also serves as a tool that generates information for planning, performance evaluation and decision-making by all actors, either for individual organisations, or for the response as a whole.

CFMs are often used by the community as information points where communities ask for information related to services. Analysis of information requests can help in planning future communication campaigns or highlight areas where information sharing is weak.

In Pachong, South Sudan, journalists from Radio Miraya, jointly funded by the United Nations Mission in Sudan and Fondation Hirondelle, hold village debates and host live broadcasts with voters during the registration period.

OCHA

Effective CFMs help build trust with and among the affected population, and enhance the credibility of humanitarian responders among stakeholders including potential partners and donors. CFMs also help inform decision-making and enhance accountability, rights, transparency and service improvement.

EMBRACING RUMOURS AS A FORM OF FEEDBACK

Rumours can be a matter of life or death. They can create suffering, raise false expectations and provoke inappropriate or violent behaviour. And yet rumours are often dismissed or unnoticed by humanitarian actors; until they have to deal with the consequences.

Communication and community engagement should allow for the identification and monitoring of rumours. Rumours thrive on a lack of information and uncertainty, so they are rife in humanitarian situations. They also feed on information overload or proliferation of fake news.

How will we engage and work with them? Can we reimagine rumours as an early warning mechanism or barometer to help us understand risks and what people are feeling or thinking? Can we embrace them as a form of input and feedback to inform or improve programming?

Our humanitarian mandate demands that we pay attention to rumours and act on those that cause harm. Our commitments to accountability demand that we listen to rumours about our programmes and staff, and investigate them.

Adapted from Rumour has it: A practice guide to working with rumours. CDAC Network (2017). http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20170126102435-rdj7l/

There is also scope for a common service approach, whereby a group of members (e.g. BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders' monthly feedback bulletin (*What Matters?*) in Bangladesh[35]) or one entity (e.g. Ground truth) undertakes feedback processes on behalf of the national platform, allowing for greater data independence.

It is the role of the national or sub-national platform to design and implement the collective feedback mechanism. It should be endorsed by the appropriate coordinating body for preparedness / response and work in conjunction with any clusters and working groups within the humanitarian architecture.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

Preparedness

- **Undertake a pre-crisis mapping of feedback mechanisms** to learn what is already in use and working. Refer to, or gather, data on information needs and communication preferences.
- **Design a common feedback mechanism to be used during humanitarian response:**
  - Secure organisational and interagency/cluster **commitment** to support the establishment, resourcing, implementation and monitoring of the mechanism.
  - Prepare a concept note outlining the **context, objectives, implementation** framework, partnerships, resources and expected results. Share these with relevant programme sections, partner agencies and other stakeholders for feedback and consensus building
  - **Consult community and stakeholders on objectives** of the CFM, ensuring clarity and consensus on what the CFM aims to achieve and the best approach/mechanisms to ensure its success.
  - **Work with service providers** to establish that you have the resources (a toll free number or secure server) to establish the preferred mechanism.
  - Work with other partners to establish a list of **frequently asked questions** to ensure that you are able to answer key information requests.
  - **Conduct a 4Ws** (what, who, where, when) to establish relevant stakeholders for the CFM
  - **Establish how feedback will be sought or collated from existing mechanisms**, based on which channels (see box on page 35) are preferred by those you are seeking feedback from and likely availability during / after the disaster, and how you will collect both structured and unstructured feedback, as well as monitor rumours. As a basic requirement, the mechanism / channels selected must be community focused and appropriate to their needs and circumstances taking into account issues including accessibility, friendliness and assurance of confidentiality. Design CFM operating guidelines. In consultation with the affected population and other stakeholders, determine and agree on the standard operating procedures of the CFM including the actual CFM platform itself (e.g. hotline), location of the mechanism (e.g. community information centre), frequency and timing of feedback (e.g. focus group discussions, community meetings), format of feedback (calls, SMS, forms, reports, etc.).
  - **Set up CFM infrastructure and train relevant staff** on the operations of the platform, e.g. hotline, call-centre, feedback and or complaint forms, interpersonal communication skills, conducting FGDs with the affected population, operating community radio, etc.
  - **Obtain relevant permissions, authorisation, and licenses** necessary for the smooth

operation of the CFM: e.g. some contexts may require authorisation to establish hotlines, call centres or prior permission to hold community meetings.
- **Inform the community about the establishment of the CFM** and guidance on how to use it when providing feedback and complaints. If necessary, train selected community members on the requisite skills e.g. how to run the system / operate equipment.
- Most importantly, **explain to the community what to expect after giving feedback or making a complaint**, including response times for the different categories of feedback or complaint.
- **Develop a common data handling process for feedback** taking into account planning, collection, processing and presentation, interpretation, dissemination and referral pathways for acting on the data, and closing the feedback loop.
- Agree on a set of **tools and systems for acknowledging receipt** of a complaint or feedback, how data will be entered, stored and analysed and who has access to the various types of data, including sensitive and confidential data.
- **Include clear commitment and agreement on roles and responsibilities** of platform members on responding to feedback and complaints, including formal and informal mechanisms for investigating and resolving complaints, reporting back to individuals and/or the community on how the feedback is being addressed or action taken.
- **Be clear on responsibilities** for recording, analysing, reporting responses to feedback and complaints and for sharing outcomes and learning with others who will be expected to use the feedback, such as other coordinating bodies (e.g. the HCT). Be clear on how this links to the humanitarian architecture and decision-making.
- **Resource the mechanism adequately, building on existing systems, services and staff capacities** for sustainability.
- Ensure the mechanism **promotes dialogue**. Analyse the communication channels – are they one-way or two? If one-way, how can the approach be adapted to enable interactivity and dialogue? Is there a way of using complementary channels together to ensure this?[36]
- **Take adequate data protection measures** to ensure confidentiality and security of data and databases including mitigation measures against hackers, operators, inappropriate action, and system failures. Some measures may include background checks on hotline/call centre operators, training, back-ups, access restrictions, encryptions/software licensing, and constant monitoring. This should not inhibit the sharing of information but ensure data is protected from abuse. See box below and Key Resources on page 36 for guidance.
- **Plan for how urgent issues, complaints and sensitive issues will be handled** which are likely to arise through the feedback mechanism (see later section).
- **Pre-position any necessary items and software to facilitate feedback in a crisis**, such as emergency crank, ham or suitcase radio facilities (e.g. http://www.firstresponseradio.org/equip), solar / crank radios, ham radios, generator and SMS-based software (e.g. Frontline SMS).
- **Provide training to community workers, staff, volunteers and others who will be collecting feedback.**
- **Develop any necessary partnerships** to support the feedback mechanism.

During a response
- **If necessary, activate a sub-national platform that will lead the common feedback mechanism** among its actions and services for communication and community engagement.
- **Implement the common feedback mechanism and process the data in line with the agreed protection and protocols**. Ensure the data is referred as appropriate to the relevant coordinating body as well as any clusters and national platforms that are active.

MINIMUM DATA PROTECTION MEASURES

In feedback, complaints or otherwise, ensure minimum **data protection measures** are in place[37].
- The purpose of using data is clear and defined;
- Responders have core competencies and capacity to use data responsibly, including secure infrastructure, data sharing codes of conduct and harm minimisation guidelines;
- Actors identify and manage risk of use and non-use of data to vulnerable populations proactively across contexts;
- Data collection adheres to domestic and international legal regulations, and ethics;
- Data protection measures are regularly updated to address new challenges in an evolving landscape.

POSSIBLE CHANNELS FOR FEEDBACK

Community meetings / assemblies
Community representatives
Volunteers, community relays
Suggestion / feedback boxes
Feedback during distribution
Transparency forum
Newsletter
Radio and TV programming
Pre- and post-distribution feedback
Hotline numbers
Needs assessment
Household surveys
Community Resource Map
Focus groups
Key or personal interviews
Flyers, leaflets
Voice recorders
Perception surveys [38]
Helpdesks
Infohubs
I/NGO reports
After Actions Reviews
Information caravans
SMS
Social media, e.g. Facebook
Messaging apps, e.g. WhatsApp

See Key Resources on page 36 for characteristics of these different means.

- **Undertake monitoring of informal feedback** such as rumours (see Key Resources on page 36).
- Consult with communities and responders to **identify and address barriers** to feedback being shared, listened to or acted on, e.g. staffing gaps, poor or non-existent communication channels, inappropriate reliance on technology, bad data management or confused information flows.
- The (sub-)national platform should monitor, receive and analyse feedback and **ensure that community voices or concerns are shared in regular situational reports and info bulletins.**
- Advocate for the restoration of power lines, radio and TV outlets and the telecommunications towers. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster or companies may set up centres to provide free calls, SMS and battery charging services. If needed and appropriate to community communication preferences, **distribute relevant relief items**, such as crank or solar radios.
- **Collect data that is relevant, understandable and useable**. If asking for feedback on a response, only solicit information that you can't find elsewhere (e.g. in standard needs assessments) and that is usable to make improvements. Coordinate. Various agencies might be collecting feedback data and you don't want to ask the same questions more than once. Design your mechanism to collect structured data that enables you to take action at the right time.
- **Use technology appropriately.** It can be tempting to use mobile phone technology and apps due to their ability to reach large numbers of people, fast, with 'innovation' appeal. Technology can be an incredible enabler but when using it for humanitarian engagement, you must assess who won't be reached (often, women), and plan accordingly. It is very unlikely that there is any response where only technology-based channels will work to reach all people for all purposes.
- Access to feedback channels may change as the context evolves, so **monitor** over time and adjust. Mobile phones, for example, may be used in the immediate aftermaths of a typhoon, then go offline if battery charging is not possible, resuming when power is restored. Using multiple channels mitigates the risk of complete loss of engagement if access to one fails.
- **Plan and budget** for (re)establishing and strengthening communication channels. Include all appropriate components in any proposals being developed (e.g. staff undertaking assessments, then providing fuel for a generator and power points to enable mobile phone charging while liaising with mobile network operators for increased access, all cost money).
- **Show you've listened**. Explain changes you've made or not made on the basis of feedback; close the feedback loop. See next section on information sharing for the community.
- **Take action**. If, for example, a feedback bulletin noted a concern that pregnant women were not getting enough nutritious vegetables, it's then over to aid agencies to either facilitate access to that food or provide information on what nutritious options are available. People can become rapidly disillusioned if they try using a plethora of suggestion boxes and hotlines, but nothing happens. We must not only listen to communities but also act on what we hear.

A Somali girl in Sayidka IDP camp in Mogadishu tells Radio Ergo she practises writing by listening to the radio

ALI NUR SALAAD/IMS-RADIO ERGO

KEY RESOURCES

How to Establish and Manage a Systematic Community Feedback Mechanism
http://bit.ly/2s1x0MZ

Ground Truth Solutions and IFRC (2018)
A step-by-step guide aims at supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers to establish and manage a systematic community feedback mechanism using the Ground Truth Solutions' Constituent Voice™ methodology.

What makes feedback mechanisms work?
Literature review to support the ALNAP-CDA action research into humanitarian feedback mechanism
http://bit.ly/2QQfkme

ALNAP (2014)
Humanitarian feedback mechanisms: research, evidence and guidance[39].

Best Practice Guide on Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms
http://bit.ly/2PX0GEd

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2016).
Operational guidance on how to set up and run an inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism to handle reports of sexual abuse and exploitation by aid workers. It compiles lessons learned, examples, and case studies gathered throughout the course of a pilot project.

Core Humanitarian Standard Guidance Notes and Indicators
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators

Core Humanitarian Standard
Aimed at those involved in planning, managing or implementing a humanitarian response, this document provides guidance on the Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities laid out in the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). Available in multiple languages.
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

A Framework for Data Sharing in Practice
http://pim.guide/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Framework-for-Data-Sharing-in-Practice.pdf

Protection Information Management. Global Protection Cluster (2018)
Practical guidance for how to undertake or assess the benefits and risks of a given data-sharing scenario, for humanitarian or non-humanitarian colleagues. The objective of the Framework is to work towards the overall reduction in the risk of sharing or not sharing by illustrating the benefits of sharing through a set of minimums in terms of trust, concepts, principles, methods, and processes.

OCHA Think Brief: Building Data Responsibility into Humanitarian Action
https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/TB18_Data%20Responsibility_Online.pdf

Nathaniel A. Raymond (2016)
This paper, co-written by the Signal Program, NYU Gov Lab and the Center for Innovation at Leiden University, identifies critical issues and proposes a framework for data responsibility in humanitarian operations.

Rumour has it: A practice guide to working with rumours
CDAC Network (2017)
Recognising the need to work with rumours to prevent the loss of lives and alleviate suffering, this good practice guide captures approaches, practices and tools to working with rumours. It is aimed at programme managers and field staff to enable them to integrate working pro-actively with rumours into their response programmes.
www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20170126102435-rdj7l/

Service Directory
The Service Directory provides information about various tools and services to help communicate better with communities. There are a range of resources available that fit a variety of different needs, from managing SMS online for data collection to managing information following a disaster.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/training-and-tools/service-directory/

Chamila, a young mother walking through the remnants of her home destroyed by the 2017 floods in Ratnapura, Sri Lanka. Living in a temporary shelter with her son, Chamila was one of the many women with limited access to health services including family planning. The reproductive health clinic supported by UNFPA has enabled her to access information and services about family planning and matters related to sexual and reproductive health

UNFPA/MUNIRA MUTAHER

Referral pathways: how feedback from communities is referred for action[39]

Whatever its channels, a feedback mechanism will only be as effective as its underlying referral pathways. Some matters may be addressed immediately by the person receiving the feedback or complaint, whilst others need to be referred to the right person or team and treated with confidence.

An issue raised with field staff that is not referred onwards could lead to a breakdown in the relationship with the community. Feedback that informs a decision without it being fed back to the community can lead to a lack of confidence in the system and people may stop using it.

Getting this right requires strong coordination. Urgent and sensitive cases must be treated accordingly. Working on a collective mechanism can be more complex as more actors are involved and accountable. See page 38 for more detail.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- Working with responders, sectors and decision-making bodies (eg. HCTs), put in place procedures that clarify how the referral pathway works. If multiple mechanisms are in place work out how they converge, complement or could be adapted to become part of a common mechanism. Agree the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of partners. You will need to work with the Protection Cluster, Gender Based Violence Sub-Working Group or equivalents.
- Design how the referral pathway will influence action, adaptive programming and policy.
- Ensure data protection see minimum measures box on page 34 and Key Resources on page 36).
- Ensure the referral pathway closes the loop (see Key Resources on page 44).

Receiving and addressing complaints

Addressing complaints through a national platform or common service does not replace individual agencies' responsibilities and activities, but should contribute to a system-wide approach.

Complaint mechanisms must be fit for purpose, yet rarely are. In a six-country study with the OECD Ground Truth Solutions discovered that many people are unaware of how to make complaints on aid provision, abuse or other matters. In Haiti just a quarter of people said they knew how to make a complaint. Uganda rated the highest, with two-thirds knowing how to do so.[40] When asked whether they believed they would get a response if they made a complaint, the majority expressed doubts.

Keep in mind:

- Data shows that hotlines are never the preferred channel to make complaints. People prefer face-to-face conversations, preferably one-on-one, with actors not directly associated with programme implementation.
- Trust plays a significant role in whether complaints mechanisms are used. Trust is built and nurtured through ongoing dialogue with affected communities. When a population feels sufficiently empowered they will start making complaints and raising concerns.
- Responders must demonstrate that complaints will be taken seriously, addressed and lead to change. When complaints come in, effective referral systems need to be in place, ensuring concerns are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- Most complaints mechanisms expect people to complain to the same organisation whose staff members may have abused, harmed or disappointed them. This raises questions of how complaints might be handled, and leads to a multiplicity of mechanisms, which may cause confusion, or inaction (if the wrong one is used and thus no action is taken.) This makes a move towards a collective approach all the more important.
- **Feedback** mechanisms whereby community engagement enables feedback to be collected, analysed and linked into individual and collective response efforts should include safe ways to complain – more information about how this can be done can be found in the CAFOD and CHS Alliance documents in the Key Resources on page 44. This ensures complaints are investigated and acted on.
- **Complaints** mechanisms should be backed by outreach on community rights and responsibilities and developed at community level. IOM's Community Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCM) provide some examples.
- **Close the loop**: feedback should be provided back to the community or complainant to inform them what action has been taken.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

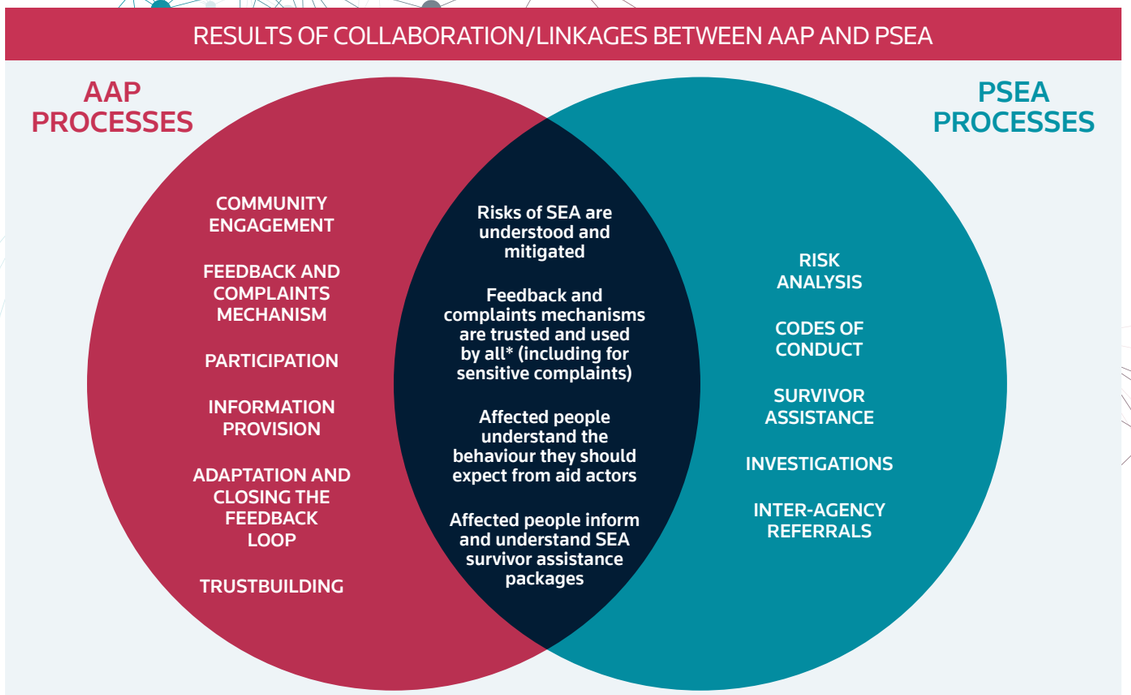
One of the most grievous violations of basic human rights is sexual exploitation and abuse. Agencies have non-negotiable staff codes of conduct, training, processes for dealing with complaints and severe punitive measures for staff who breach the code. But this only does half of the work.

What if community members don't raise complaints because there is no appropriate way to do so? What if they don't understand their rights and wrongly accept that aid is conditional? What if sexual exploitation and abuse is never raised as a staff issue because it is being conducted by intermediaries or community leaders, and agencies never know about it?

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

It is critical that any communication and community engagement approach includes:

- **Engagement with communities on their rights**.
- **Clear information on what community members can do if rights are breached**, including sharing details of appropriate channels for raising sensitive complaints, based on assessment of community communication preferences specific to women, children, men, people with different types of disabilities, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community, etc.
- **Clear, safe referral pathways** that ensure appropriate investigations are made and actions are taken. There needs to be an accountable process for handling sexual exploitation and abuse complaints, and closing the loop with the complainant.
- **A process for identifying trends** in community complaints on sexual exploitation and abuse. Trends might identify a number of complaints from a certain area, meaning there needs to be significant reform; or, they may identify no complaints at all, which can sometimes mean there is a lack of understanding on what sexual exploitation and abuse is or that the complaints mechanisms are inappropriate. Communications expertise is critical to combatting sexual exploitation and abuse in times of crisis.
- **Training for staff, volunteers and other key stakeholders** to ensure that at a minimum they understand the IASC core principles on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (see Key Resources on page 44), with further technical training as required.
- **Working with protection actors on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**, ensuring community engagement efforts complement and support protection strategies.



Adapted from a diagram created by the IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (AAP/PSEA).

*The term 'all' intends to capture all groups in the community; women, men, girls, boys, youth, and older persons, as well as persons with disabilities and specific minority groups without any such distinction

"An investment in researching access, sourcing, flow and trust around information movement in any given community is vital to the design of truly effective communications strategies, ensuring that people will believe, trust and act upon the information they receive, and thus ultimately saves time and money."

Internews policy paper: Communicating with Communities – Walking the Talk[4]

5. A collective approach to sharing information for communities

"Our needs are not only food and water, we want to know about our future." [41] People must be able to receive information that can help them keep themselves and their families safe, and protect their livelihoods. They need to know their rights, what aid they are entitled to and how to access it. Humanitarian responders increasingly have mechanisms for sharing information but they can often come late in the response and not coordinated, resulting in confusing or conflicting information.

In the Philippines in 2013, a misunderstanding of the terms 'storm surge' and 'typhoon' used in early warning messages about Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) is thought to have led to the loss of many lives. [42] Had the word 'tsunami' been used, people would likely have taken appropriate action because they had participated in tsunami drills and understood that a tsunami warning required evacuation.[43]

Responders should put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms for ensuring that people have **access to the information** that they need to make decisions about their safety and wellbeing, and know their rights and aid entitlements.

This should be in the right languages and formats, based on trusted sources of information and shared through preferred channels, which may all vary upon disaggregation of the intended audiences, making a mixed methodology approach the best.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

Preparedness

- Pre-approved key messages on humanitarian principles and other thematic areas
- Understanding of appropriate channels and likely information needs
- Work with local authorities to ensure that systems for mass information dissemination are in place and can be scaled up

Information:

- Weather updates
- Evacuation Procedures
- Early Warning Advisories
- Public Service Messages
- Life Saving News

Be prepared:

Choosing appropriate channels should not be underestimated. Following the Nepal earthquake in 2015, the information being shared by responders largely matched what people wanted to know, but there was a mismatch between local people's preferred channels and sources of information and those used by humanitarian responders.

People had a strong preference for face-to-face communication, but many humanitarian responders favoured radio broadcasting on the assumption that they were reaching large numbers of people relatively cheaply.

Developing information content

Appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms should ensure that crisis-affected people have access to the information that they need in order to make decisions about their safety and wellbeing, and know their rights, what aid they are entitled to and how to access it. This should be in the right languages and formats, based on trusted sources of information and shared through preferred channels, which may all vary upon disaggregation of the intended audience.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, information needs will likely focus on what happened, how to trace missing loved ones, how to connect with family and friends, how to stay safe, what aid is available and how to access it. Over time the needs will evolve and become more complex.

Information should be clear, concise and simple. If people are affected by trauma they may struggle with complex information. Stick to a few key messages to aid retention and clarity.

It should be expressed in plain, jargon-free, local language. It should encourage and highlight the benefits of positive action. It should build in means for interaction, so that people can ask questions and provide feedback, and so responders know how information needs are evolving.

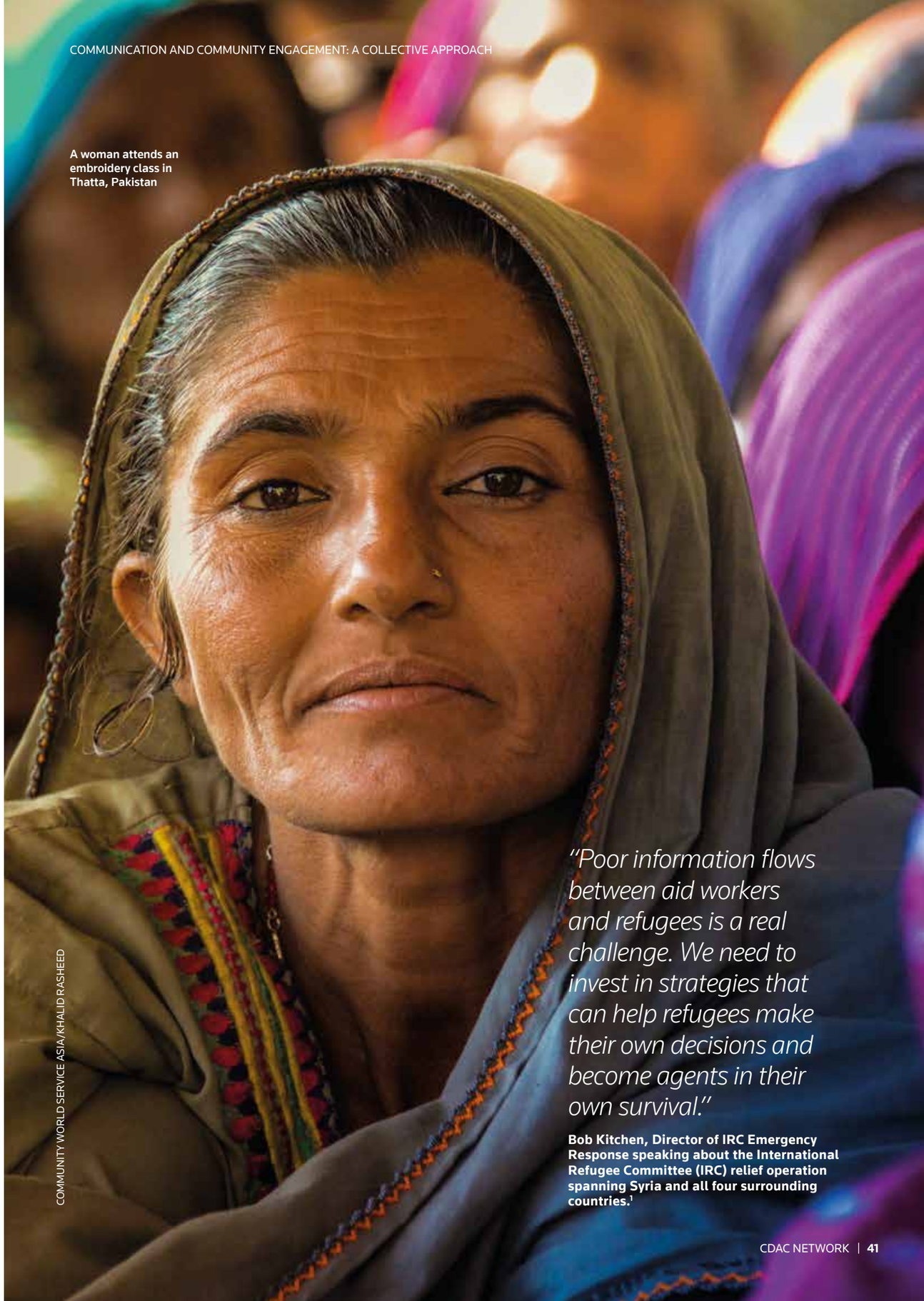
Criteria for effective information sharing

- Get input from communities regarding what information is needed and how it should be provided.

- Always include opportunities for people to ask for clarification and raise questions, issues or complaints. The provision of information should be a cyclical dialogue of 'call and response'.

Information content and key messages will have most impact if the information is **relevant, useful and actionable**, and if people:

- Are encouraged to discuss the information and ask questions;



A woman attends an embroidery class in Thatta, Pakistan

COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE ASIA/KHALID RASHEED

"Poor information flows between aid workers and refugees is a real challenge. We need to invest in strategies that can help refugees make their own decisions and become agents in their own survival."

Bob Kitchen, Director of IRC Emergency Response speaking about the International Refugee Committee (IRC) relief operation spanning Syria and all four surrounding countries.[1]

- Understand how they, their families and communities will benefit from acting on it;
- Feel the language, approach and actions are compatible with their culture and customs;
- Know and trust the source of information;
- Hear repeated and consistent messages from different sources.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- Determine **what** information content is to be developed and shared. Consult needs assessment data, lessons from comparable responses and community consultations.
- Check whether prepositioned life-saving information exists. It might have been developed by the National Disaster Management Authority, government health ministry, or clusters.
- A **message library** can be used. This is a searchable database of critical messages for rapid dissemination in an emergency. Messages will need to be contextualised, translated and adapted for the channel through which they are being disseminated and/or pre-tested with a sample of the intended audience.
- Make sure that the information is **useful, relevant and actionable**, enabling people to take action ('news-you-can-use'). It should evolve over time as the context and needs change.
- Ensure that the language, approach and actions are **compatible with people's culture and customs**. Use community profiling questions to develop a clearer picture of who you are trying to engage and determine how best to do so (see Key Resources on page 44).
- Engage the target audience in the design and delivery. **Test comprehension** by mother tongue, level of education, gender, and age. This can help determine the best combination of format, pictures and language to use. Text on its own has limited value. It can help to include pictures, or use radio messaging, loudspeaker announcements, videos, and in-person communication. [44]
- Share information on an interactive, **two-way basis.** Use different channels to reach different groups in a community and reinforce information.
- Ensure a cycle of **listening** and **conversation** to identify rumours, assess risk and act. To **verify** a rumour, identify reliable information sources, find the facts and triangulate them. To correct misinformation spread by a rumour, you'll need to create a compelling new narrative.
- Work with sectors / clusters / national platforms to develop consistent information to **avoid confusion or harm due to the use of different terminology.** Get specific support from technical experts for sensitive issues such as non-refoulement, protection, gender, targeting.
- Think about your audience – what will motivate them? What is their level of knowledge of the issue? How will different languages in different areas be considered?
- **Sometimes you will need to restrict information** as not all information is for everyone. Assess all information for suitability and risks. Publicising staff salaries or information about cash distributions could put people at risk of being attacked.
- Think about timing. There are suitable formats for more complex information, such as radio dramas or community theatre, however, these may take time to develop and may be more relevant in weeks and months after a disaster rather than immediately unless they are prepositioned.

PRIORITY INFORMATION TO BE SHARED FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

Programmatic information

1. Who is entitled to receive support
2. What to expect, when to expect, from whom
3. Plans for distribution
4. Reasons for any changes to plan
5. Requirements for the safe handling and use of the items that are distributed

Accountability messages

1. Aid is free and needs-based. If you are asked to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable to receive aid, you can complain [add the organisation's complaints procedure here].
2. You have the right to complain and give feedback
3. You have the right to be informed
4. You have the right to be treated with respect
5. Information about right to prevention of sexual and exploitation and abuse

'News you can use' & connectivity

1. Public health and safety information
2. Government services and regulations
3. Family tracing processes
4. Ways to connect with loved ones and service provider particularly when systems have been disrupted
5. Rumour tracking and management

Tips on developing rapid, life-saving information

Identify what the **hazard** is – *what* could cause harm or suffering? What **action or behaviour** do you want to encourage? What is the **motivation** for people to take this action or behave differently? What are the resulting **key messages** you need to convey? Prioritise the hazards that post the greatest risks to the community.

Once you have established the key messages, develop information content that is suitable for the formats you intend to use, such as a bulletin, public service announcement, drama, debate, or Q&A with subject experts. Pre-test messages to avoid misunderstandings that could have devastating consequences.

What is the **hazard**?	What is the desired **action** or **behaviour**?	What is the **motivation**?
A plague outbreak in Madagascar, with risk of serious illness and death	Seek early health care if suspected symptoms occur	Keeping you and your family safe from the disease

Key messages from World Health Organisation and Ministry of Health

- The plague is a serious illness that can affect people in urban and rural environments, families that are wealthy or disadvantaged, citizens and leaders, children and adults.
- Pulmonary plague progresses very rapidly and a sick person who does not receive treatment within 48 hours may die.
- Treatment against plague is **FREE** and **AVAILABLE** in medical centres. Correct administration of treatment must be overseen by medical professionals.
- Treatment is effective if it is administered as soon as first symptoms appear. Report immediately to the nearest primary health centre as soon as first symptoms appear for health care treatment.
- To protect their family against infection, sick people should be taken care of at the primary health centre by health care professionals.

This is a selection of messages to encourage early health care seeking behaviour developed by the World Health Organisation and Ministry of Health in Madagascar. Messages were also developed on recognising signs and symptoms, understanding how it is transmitted and prevention measures, locations of health centres that were treating the disease, amongst other aspects. Information about a free, government hotline for information and questions was also given.

The key information was used to produce a range of communication materials, largely in Malagasy, and shared widely, e.g. public service announcements, talk shows, social media, through community health workers.

KEY RESOURCES

Closing the Loop – Effective feedback in humanitarian contexts. Practitioner Guidance.
http://bit.ly/2EJhEUQ

Bonino F., with Jean, I. and Knox Clarke, P. for ALNAP / ODI (2014)
Guidance for people designing or implementing feedback mechanisms in a humanitarian programme and deal with a broad caseload of non-sensitive issues (feedback) in addition to sensitive ones (complaints).

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): the IASC 6 core PSEA principles
http://bit.ly/2BHkMgz

Translators without Borders and the IASC AAP and PSEA Task Team
Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in the humanitarian sector starts with an understanding of the basic principles. The IASC Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Team and Translators without Borders (TWB) have developed a plain-English version of the six principles and are working towards translating it into 100 languages.

Enhanced Due Diligence guide– safeguarding for external partners
https://www.ukaiddirect.org/safeguarding/

Department for International Development, Better Delivery Department (2018)
This guidance provides details of the new standards announced by DFID in March 2018 and how they will be used in enhanced due diligence assessments to assess an organisation's ability to protect from sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment, children, young people and vulnerable adults they work with as well as their own staff and volunteers.

The Characteristics of Different Communication Channels
http://bit.ly/2RDhiWr

infoasaid (2013)
A description of different communication channels, their coverage and reach, the type of information that is suitable for dissemination in this way, the level of interactivity with the audience, and the cost. Channels range from mass media such as TV, radio and print to the more traditional methods such as drama or music.

Radio Feasibility Assessment Checklist
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104143357-wwwyp/

Assessing the Mobile Environment
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104143357-auoqe/

TV Feasibility Assessment Checklist
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104143357-oozvu/

All infoasaid (2013)
These checklists help you to decide whether radio, SMS, mobile and television are appropriate channels of communication to use to communicate with a crisis-affected population.

Emergency preparedness and response checklist for communication
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104143357-aqzwr/

infoasaid (2013)
A checklist to help you be better prepared both before and after an emergency breaks.

Communication toolbox: Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members
https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/communication-toolbox.pdf

Catholic Relief Services (2013)
Practical guidance for programme managers who want to communicate more effectively with programme participants and community members.

Message Library
A searchable database of messages developed in conjunction with UN Clusters for those wanting to rapidly disseminate critical information to affected populations in an emergency.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/message-library/

Community Profiling Questions
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104143357-induz/

infoasaid (2012)
A tool to develop community profiles, illustrating socio-economic characteristics, lifestyle and media consumption habits so as to inform your information and message development.

UN OCHA Strategic response planning: Overview
http://bit.ly/2HgkNhL

A guide for CAFOD staff to accompany partner organisations to set up CHM within international programme activities, CAFOD (2010)
http://bit.ly/2FGVmU1

PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook, CHS Alliance (2017)
http://bit.ly/2Fzpa5J

"We do not have a radio right now. It got damaged a few months ago. There are others who also do not have radios. […] Throughout these months I think it would have been better if there had been weekly meetings to give information and let officials know what we needed and what was worrying us."

Kumari B.K. of Fulpingkot Village Development Committee, Sindhupalchowk, Nepal [5]

OCHA/GEMMA CORTES

Women from the Muslim community in Bambari, Central African Republic, listening to Radio Lego Ti la Ouaka (The voice of Ouaka). The community radio was launched in February 2015 and it broadcasts social cohesion messages, humanitarian public service announcements, community messaging and music.

Working across language, dialects, culture and customs

Often communication and community engagement efforts fail because aid workers and the people affected do not speak the same language. In a study on the 2017 Rohingya refugee response, 62% of people reported they were unable to speak to humanitarian providers.[45]

Responders often communicate in international, official or majority languages, but use translation and interpreting by national staff, volunteers or community members, external translation, or face-to-face information gathering. This is risky. Information can get lost in translation. Confidentiality can be lost, community tensions amplified, messages skewed by power dynamics, vulnerabilities exacerbated. Whole sections of the population could remain unheard. Interpreters can suffer poor mental health after what they are exposed to if they are not properly supported.

There are various factors that make working with language challenging, including multi-national response and management teams, timeliness, and lack of information about languages people speak. Organisations are increasingly working with experts (like Translators without Borders), but this is an issue that needs more attention in preparedness and response. Organisations like Handicap International provide support for communicating through those that have communication disabilities.

Communicating with people in the right language[46] improves participation, dialogue, needs assessment, inclusion, accountability and helps to better identify minority and marginalised groups.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- Outline how **preparedness** work will integrate local language and cultural interpretation.
- Include questions on language in needs assessment to **gather information on languages spoken, understood and read by disaster-affected people**.[49] This will flag where intentional efforts are needed. Make language data accessible to organisations through maps.
- When communicating with communities **work in people's mother tongue**. Work with professional interpreters and translators to ensure accuracy (see Key Resources on opposite page).
- **Test comprehension** of information by mother tongue, gender, and age to determine the best means by which to communicate with any given target group. Remember that words can carry different meanings in different locations, and new meanings can emerge. It is important to understand what words and phrases mean in local context.
- Do not use different translations of the same term across sectors. **Develop a glossary of multilingual, consistent terminology** for translators, interpreters, and field staff when translating technical terms. Often literal translation doesn't work (see Key Resources below). Work with local speakers to find precise and useful translations for the target audience and test them.
- **Provide training** for bilinguals to become translators or interpreters if professionals aren't available, especially for minority languages and responders on working with many languages.
- Create **peer support and mental health care for interpreters and translators** to help them cope with what their work exposes them to.

CASE STUDY

Understanding and working with culture and customs

A defining feature of the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa that killed over 11,000 was that many people, fearful and suspicious, resisted treatment by foreign and national aid workers or refused to hand over bodies for safe burial. Whole communities refused medical teams and in some cases attacked those who tried.

Treatment and prevention measures had not been designed with an anthropological perspective, taking into account an understanding of the cultural, historical and political context. After missteps early in the response, medical teams changed their approach by communicating through local mobilisers with the right language skills, educating people to reduce stigma, working with survivors, and amending burial practices to pay respect to traditions and beliefs.

Information shared in the early stages was in English and French, although people in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea speak over 90 languages. An early shortage of information for non-literate audiences and local language speakers left swathes of the population in deadly ignorance. After missteps early in the response, medical teams changed their approach by communicating with through local mobilisers with the right language skills and educating people to reduce stigma, working with survivors, and burial practices were amended to pay respect to traditions and beliefs.[47]

"The unprecedented Ebola epidemic in West Africa is not just a health crisis. It is also an information crisis. It has exposed not only failures in the local and international response to a deadly epidemic, but the ineffectiveness of using top down messages to reach communities that exist largely in an information blackout. As we develop strategies to address this catastrophe and others like it, more attention needs to be spent understanding how to deliver credible and trustworthy information to populations in crisis."
Anne Bennett, Boston Globe [48]

KEY RESOURCES

Field guide to humanitarian interpreting and cultural mediation
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/field-guide-humanitarian-interpreting-cultural-mediation/

Translators without Borders (2017)
Interpreters and cultural mediators are key to those affected by disaster to receive and share information in their own language. This guide supports humanitarian field managers, interpreters and cultural mediators in their daily interactions and responsibilities. Developed in partnership with Save the Children.

Working with a translator or an interpreter.
From: Developing a participatory approach to involve crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response. The Participation Handbook
http://bit.ly/2SMDZV1

ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009)
Section III.2 (pages 88-93) provides guidelines for choosing and working with an interpreter or translator, as well as tips for listening and taking into account what is said.

Communications Dashboard: Internally Displaced People in Northeast Nigeria
http://bit.ly/2SYV6n5

Translators without Borders and International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (2018)
The dashboard is an example of how to display language data collected from key informants at specific sites to help organisations make data-informed decisions to communicate with and support the crisis-affected population more effectively.

Language profile of five IDP sites in Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Language-profile-of-five-IDP-sites-in-Maiduguri.pdf

Translators without Borders (2017)
An example of a comprehension study of internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities at different sites in the Maiduguri area of Borno, Nigeria.

Glossary for North-East Nigeria
http://www.translatorswithoutborders.org/twb-glossary-north-east-nigeria

Glossary for Bangladesh
http://www.translatorswithoutborders.org/twb-glossary-bangladesh

Both Translators without Borders (2017)
Glossaries for field workers and interpreters working across the response in Nigeria in English, Hausa, and Kanuri and in English, Bangla, Chittagonian, Rohingya and Burmese for those working on the Rohingya humanitarian response in Bangladesh. Terminology includes protection, housing, land and protection, and mental health and psychosocial support is available.

Module 09 - Why language matters. Technical training on communication and community engagement in humanitarian response
This module takes participants through the importance of language in humanitarian preparedness and response. Commission the training from CDAC Network or download the training materials.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/learning-centre/foundation-training/

Communication with Communities during the First Six Weeks of an Emergency.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141024163109-7l3v8

IASC Emergency Response Preparedness guidelines.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/reference-group-risk-early-warning-and-preparedness/documents/iasc-emergency-response-preparedness

> *"Our staff generally speak Hausa, not Kanuri or Shuwa. That means we can talk to the host communities, but not the IDPs."*
>
> **NGO worker, Maiduguri, Nigeria** [6]

6. Working with media

Mass media such as local and national radio and television broadcasters, newspapers, cinema, advertisers and mobile network operators play a critical role in helping populations in crisis. They can:

- Reach thousands, if not millions, of people very quickly;
- Reach areas that are physically difficult to access, provide life-saving and life-sustaining information to help people help themselves;
- Restore calm, inspire hope and give people the space to express themselves, sharing solutions to the new problems and asking questions;
- Provide two-way communication between aid workers and affected communities, for example, through call-in shows, interviews, mobile or via online platforms;
- Expertly develop, test and broadcast content across various formats to ensure information is relevant, understood and actionable, using multiple formats; and
- Help hold relief providers to account.

Responders sometimes buy airtime to broadcast a health radio programme or blast early warning SMS but may lack expertise to develop engaging or actionable content. Media businesses may lack the expertise to develop appropriate humanitarian content. A collaborative approach to **humanitarian broadcasting** can ensure information reaches people fast and at scale. Setting up a partnership, defining actions and collaborating on simulations as preparedness actions will help to ensure that the response goes well.

MEDIA AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONDERS: A PERSPECTIVE FROM INTERNEWS

When donors and humanitarian responders involve local media in their response they build local capacity, strengthen local accountability and reduce tensions between humanitarian organisations and the population they are trying to serve.

Local media generally have well-established, positive trust relationships with their audiences and communities, who tend to see it as being independent from the humanitarian response and therefore a channel for them to talk freely about sensitive issues, such as corruption.

Local media can act as a counterbalance to information channels that the community may perceive as reflecting social hierarchies and associated power imbalances.

Building on capacities of local media is just as valuable as building capacity in any other part of the community during a crisis response (e.g. health workers, local government or civil society organisations); arguably more so, owing to the cross-cutting nature and wide societal reach of the information that media can provide. Such investment enhances the ability of local journalists and media outlets to play a crucial role during disaster, which is vital for the transition to recovery.

Adapted with permission from Internews (2017). Communication with Communities: Walking the Talk. https://www.internews.org/resource/communication-communities-walking-talk

Young men learn to assemble mobile phones as part of a UNICEF-supported vocational training programme - Bossaso, Puntland, June 2013

UN SOMALIA/F. JUEZ

CASE STUDY

Radyo Abante

After Typhoon Haiyan in the **Philippines**, radio was used to provide critical information and support, and act as a communication channel between communities, local and international humanitarian responders and the government. Radyo Abante ('move forward') was on air just six days after the typhoon, staffed with experienced local journalists and producers previously employed in commercial media outlets that had been destroyed.

Funded collectively by World Vision International, Misereor and UNFPA to improve uptake of services and knowledge about relief efforts, PECOJON, First Response Radio and Internews provided radio equipment and training in humanitarian broadcasting.

The station provided news, entertainment and psychosocial support through sessions like karaoke or comedy,[50] and an 'Accountability Hour' where listeners called in to ask questions of humanitarian agencies or government representatives. Radyo Abante was one of the main sources of information for affected communities, particularly those living in bunkhouses who tended to listen to the radio in groups.

The relationships between local media, government and humanitarian responders took time to build, reinforcing the need for collaboration at preparedness phase, but ultimately it provided an invaluable service.

The volume of SMS received – 40,964 over a seven-month period from a listenership of 230,000 people – showed just how interactive the station was. Station reporters explained, "What is very interesting is that people started giving us food and gifts to say thank you. We can feel they appreciate it, from what they say and the gifts they bring." [51]

TEN PREPAREDNESS STEPS FOR WORKING WITH MEDIA IN EMERGENCIES (COURTESY OF BBC MEDIA ACTION) [51]

1. **Appoint a member of staff as the media focal point**. This person should have a programmes role, rather than someone who interacts with media requests and handling journalists.
2. **Understand the local media landscape**: find out how communities vulnerable to humanitarian crises normally receive news and information, and what channels they use to communicate.
3. **Establish contacts** within the identified media channels and institutions and keep them 'warm'.
4. **Include details of working with local and national media in the organisation's preparedness plans**, such as which channels you would work with, how and what resources would be needed.
5. **Ensure a budget for working with media is available**, e.g. by including it within project proposals for the response. Don't forget the potential needs of funding for generator fuel or solar power.
6. **Coordinate.** Ensure media work is integrated into the wider Communication and Community Engagement effort. Find out what other agencies are planning and look out for synergies, overlaps and ways to streamline communication with media representatives who will likely be overwhelmed.
7. **Ensure that you have trained your operations and technical staff** to provide clear local language interviews containing actionable information on different humanitarian issues. It may be useful to support local media entities to undertake Lifeline Programming training.[53]
8. **Prepare and pre-test key information** likely to be useful in the critical stages of an emergency. Adapt it for use in different media channels.
9. **Preposition communications platforms that partners are likely to need in a crisis**. Train people to operate them. Identify suppliers who can deliver broadcast equipment and services rapidly.[54]
10. **Stay prepared:** Hold refresher training and simulations with staff and partners. Keep abreast of changes in the media landscape. Regularly update preparedness plans and contact databases.

KEY RESOURCES

Radyo Abante: A Collaborative Commitment to CwC & Accountability
Case study on the use of radio in response.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141124131123-z7io0

Lifeline - working with broadcasters in humanitarian crises
https://www.bbcmediaactionilearn.com/mod/page/view.php?id=798

Jacqueline Dalton, BBC Media Action (2016)
Booklet for humanitarians on working with local media as part of community engagement efforts.

Lifeline programming section
https://www.bbcmediaactionilearn.com/course/view.php?id=187

BBC Media Action
Lifeline programming resources: about Lifeline, tools for media and aid agencies, online training.

WORKING WITH MOBILE NETWORK OPERATORS

Mobile connectivity is a lifeline for people affected by disaster. Mobile networks play a vital role in keeping people connected to each other, facilitating access to information and assistance within affected populations and among Governments, NGOs and the international humanitarian community.

In 2015 a Humanitarian Connectivity Charter was launched, since signed by 148 mobile network operators in 106 countries. Signatories commit to improving access to communication and information for those affected by crisis to reduce the loss of life and positively contribute to humanitarian response.

The Charter provides scope to work with mobile network operators more closely. In the Philippines, for example, the operator SMART is a member of the Community Engagement Community of Practice.

http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/mobile-for-humanitarian-innovation/humanitarian-connectivity-charter

7. Opportunities for disaster-affected people to play an active role in decision-making and leadership

Community engagement must go beyond passive participation, whereby the affected population is simply kept informed. People must be able to participate in decisions that affect them (see diagram). They need opportunities to determine and shape services, including during preparedness, and perform leadership roles (e.g., serving on management communities).

Commitment 4 of the Core Humanitarian Standard includes a performance indicator assessing whether "Communities and people affected by crisis are satisfied with the opportunities they have to influence the response".

Test contextually relevant initiatives that equip local communities to drive responses, acknowledging their capacities and making their own assessments. Communities should be actively engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of responses. All stages of the cycle should be focused on enabling communities to take full responsibility for resources and responses, giving voice to those who would typically be disempowered or disenfranchised (women, children, youth, disabled, elderly).

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS[55]

- **Make sure communities are adequately informed in order to be able to participate in decision-making.** Local populations are the first to react in a disaster. Their ideas on how to respond appropriately to the crisis and programme design must be sought on an ongoing basis. Engaging **early** saves a lot more time trying to fix inappropriate decisions later on. Bear in mind that the physical and psychological impact of a disaster or conflict on communities, social breakdown and previous experience of aid influences how engagement efforts may be met.
- **Who participates?** Ensure representation of the community is inclusive, engaging people at all stages of the work. You may need to work with existing structures, advocate for them to be restructured if they are not representative or develop new or complementary ones so that people, including the most marginalised and vulnerable, are fairly represented.
- **Children also have a right to participation.** There are specialist organisations (such as Save the Children) with whom you can partner so that any work undertaken with children is done so appropriately and with the right safeguarding measures in place.
- Determine whether **direct participation or participation by representation** (i.e. through community representatives, committees or community-based organisations) is appropriate, bearing in mind power dynamics and biases.
- **Adopt quick approaches** to promote community engagement and **monitor participation and community leadership**. Different levels of participation may be appropriate at different times. For example, in the early stages of a response, consultation might only be possible with limited numbers of people, but over time there will be more opportunities for deeper engagement.
- As a result of the context or pre-existing differences in power (e.g. based upon gender, race, class, caste, or other characteristics), participation will not usually occur spontaneously. **Foster a process of mutual learning and dialogue** to stimulate greater participation.
- **Pay particular attention to groups or individuals traditionally excluded** from power and decision-making processes.
- **Assess risk** to both the community and staff in engaging communities and ensure that no harm is done. Take into account safety, security, cultural and societal factors.
- **Gain informed consent**, whereby permission is granted in full knowledge of the possible consequences, risks and benefits.
- **Final decisions and action taken needs to be reported back to communities.** These activities need to be repeated and seeing how their input is being used will create trust in the process and lead to further engagement of communities.

A TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

TYPE OF PARTICIPATION	DESCRIPTION
Passive participation	The affected population is informed of what is going to happen or what has occurred. While this is a fundamental right of the people concerned, it is not one that is always respected.
Participation through the supply of information	The affected population provides information in response to questions, but it has no influence over the process, since survey results are not shared and their accuracy is not verified.
Participation by consultation	The affected population is asked for its perspective on a given subject, but it has no decision-making powers, and no guarantee that its views will be taken into consideration
Participation through material incentives	The affected population supplies some of the materials and/or labour needed to conduct an operation, in exchange for payment in cash or in kind from the aid organisation.
Participation through the supply of materials, cash or labour	The affected population supplies some of the materials and/or labour needed for an intervention. This includes cost-recovery mechanisms.
Interactive participation	The affected population participates in the analysis of needs and in programme conception, and has decision-making powers.
Local initiatives	The affected population takes the initiative, acting independently of external organisations or institutions. Although it may call on external bodies to support its initiatives, the project is conceived and run by the community; it is the aid organisation that participates in the people's projects.

Alternative systems of inquiry for a sustainable agriculture, in the Institute of Development Studies Bulletin, vol 25, (Brighton Institute of Development Studies, 1994), pp. 37-48. Adapted from Pretty, J.

KEY RESOURCES

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators

Both Core Humanitarian Standard (2014)
The Core Humanitarian Standard sets out Nine Commitments to improve the quality and effectiveness of a response. The CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators provide Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities with indicators and guiding questions to promote measurement of progress towards meeting the standard and drive continuous learning and improvement. Multiple languages available.

Developing a participatory approach to involve crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response. The Participation Handbook
https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/alnap-groupe-urd-participation-handbook-2009.pdf

ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009)
In-depth resource for developing and implementing a participatory approach to involve crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response.

The Community Score Card (CSC): A generic guide for implementing CARE's CSC process to improve quality of services
http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/FP-2013-CARE_CommunityScoreCardToolkit.pdf

CARE Malawi / Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. (2013)
A toolkit for engaging the community in feedback on services and projects, where indicators of success are co-developed by the community and responder.

Keeping people connected

People staying connected to each other is paramount in emergency response. On arrival in Greece, many refugees asked for Wi-Fi or charging services ahead of food, water, or shelter[56]. Dadaab Refugee Complex in Kenya is host to 235,269 registered refugees and asylum seekers and three of its mobile phone towers are among its ten most profitable for mobile network operator Safaricom[57].

Open lines of communication between responders and communities are needed but often communities' own networks are more important to their survival, recovery and wellbeing. Connectivity is often listed as an unmet need in disaster response, because although it is critical to finding family members, receiving critical safety information, transferring funds and mobilising a response, it is treated as 'outside' the remit of humanitarian responders. This needs to change.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- Ensure that damage to telecommunications infrastructure is included in multi sector needs analysis, and overlay findings with information on communications preferences to inform assessment of projected connectivity gaps requiring rapid response.
- Engage with connectivity providers in country pre-crisis and during response. These include mobile network operators, local media organisations, emergency power providers, etc.
- Engage with the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster and ensure that relevant technical NGOs (e.g. NetHope or Télécoms Sans Frontières) are included in coordination structures
- Engage with telecommunications regulatory bodies and associated government departments to advocate for increased access for communities
- As part of coordination efforts, ensure MNOs are not overwhelmed by requests from all humanitarian actors. Advocate for a single humanitarian focal point (generally sitting with the coordination body).
- Advocate for funding to address known connectivity needs, such as charging or emergency satellite connectivity support.
- Gather evidence on the positive impacts of increased connectivity in humanitarian response.

9. Monitoring and evaluating communication and community engagement

Success of the national platform will be achieved through providing the right information at the right time, having incentives and infrastructure in place for communities to share views, collaborating with various communities as equal partners where communities have a direct say in decisions and control over future planning, service delivery, evaluation and policy development.

The range of services and activities should be assessed against a sliding scale of community engagement, and efforts made towards ensuring community leadership whilst recognising the 'good enough' [58] principle (see diagram on page 54).

KEY RESOURCES

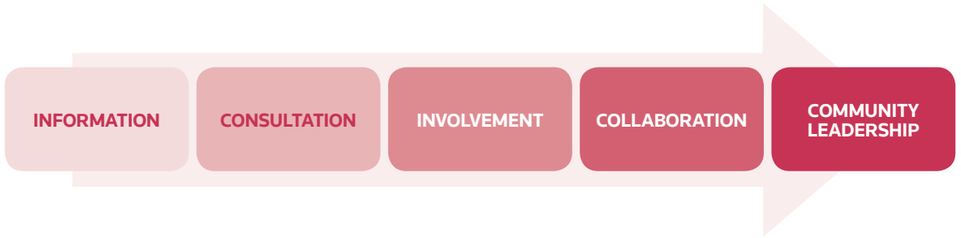
Your phone is now a refugee's phone
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1BLsySgsHM

BBC Media Action (2016)
Best watched on Smartphone, this short, immersive film helps the viewer to experience with immediacy the confusion and fear facing refugees making a perilous journey by boat. Your phone is now a refugee's phone. Text messages arrive from your family. Suddenly someone contacts you on WhatsApp warning you to turn back. But are they right? Your lifeline is a phone with no signal that's rapidly running out of battery.

The Importance of Mobile for Refugees: A Landscape of New Services and Approaches
http://bit.ly/2QOqIhy

GSMA (2017)
Current research and activities on refugees' use of mobile technology on the themes of connectivity, digital tools and platforms, family reconnection, education, and livelihoods and mobile money.

SLIDING SCALE OF COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Monitoring and evaluating the collective approach

Collective approaches should be monitored on outcomes not just activities. It is important to ensure indicators on communication and community engagement are included in response planning approaches, whether government-led or via the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). This ensures there is accountability for communication and community engagement activities in the same way there is for any others.

Response-wide indicators based upon community perceptions can be included and tracked through systematic feedback collection (for example: per cent of people who are satisfied with the aid effort, variations of which are currently being tested via HRPs for Chad and Syria). This enables the HCT and agencies to take a 'pulse check' to see if programmes are going in the right direction or whether changes are needed.

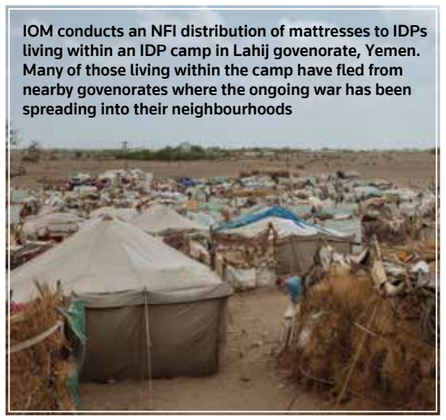
This should be part of ongoing performance monitoring and not a one-off, trends tracked and verified to identify gaps in the overall response. It is essential that feedback results in adaptive programmes and that the response is best aligned with the needs of and feedback from the community.

CASE STUDY

Evaluations and measuring community engagement in humanitarian emergencies[63]

In Yemen, Oxfam WASH and Protection coordinators together with the Communicating with Communities (CwC) working group developed a survey on perceptions of assistance and community engagement. The survey (https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/enhancing-informed-engagement-conflict-affected-communities-yemen) highlighted large gaps in knowledge on assistance provision and access as well as poor perceptions of the humanitarian assistance.

The working group identified **five key questions on perceptions of assistance** which were shared among humanitarian actors. Through the systematic collection of evidence to assess the challenges, gaps and successes in how agencies are engaging with communities the team could evaluate not only the provision of assistance but how accountable we are to affected populations through our engagement processes.
If agencies working in crises included the same (or similar) five questions on how transparent and accountable we are to communities and measured their feedback on engagement; we could measure changes and improvements or identify whether the quality of engagement declines. This will help hold not only individual organisations but the overall response accountable to better engage with communities.



IOM conducts an NFI distribution of mattresses to IDPs living within an IDP camp in Lahij govenorate, Yemen. Many of those living within the camp have fled from nearby govenorates where the ongoing war has been spreading into their neighbourhoods

MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

> *"Expressing feedback would be useful not just to express problems, but if NGOs would ask what project do we really want to have, what project is needed in the bunkhouse."*
>
> **Palo Bunkhouse Resident, Leyte, the Philippines** [7]

Using a communication and community engagement approach in monitoring and evaluation

Community feedback should be systematically used to determine the success or not of any given response. The extent to which communities have been involved in response decisions should be monitored so that agencies and coordinators are held to account for Grand Bargain and ethical commitments.

Evaluations are conducted after – and sometimes during - humanitarian responses to determine the success of interventions. These typically focus on whether agencies have satisfactorily implemented their planned projects. This is insufficient. It omits the question of whether the right things were done, or whether the response adapted to evolving needs and/or community feedback.

There are several good examples of evaluators engaging disaster affected populations.[59] In the Philippines[60] and Haiti,[61] evaluators listened to affected people about their experience of agencies' efforts to be accountable to them. From 2015-17 Dan Church Aid, Save the Children and Ground Truth Solutions piloted a quality and accountability project in four countries (Mali, Nepal, Ethiopia and Lebanon) funded by ECHO, reinforcing the roll-out of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Include indicators on collective community engagement in humanitarian response plans**[62]. These should be linked to both specific activities and overall results.

- Use community perception data as a means for monitoring, and then evaluating, a response. This shouldn't be the only way a response is monitored but should serve as a check and balance on other forms of monitoring. Budget for this in your collective service planning.

- Advocate for cyclical response monitoring that overlays evolving situations with community perceptions and programme progress, rather than after-action activity monitoring.

- It is critical that monitoring of and including community engagement is strengthened, especially at the collective level. Don't rely on precedents to inform a stronger approach. Put in place, or advocate for, bold, accountable monitoring and evaluation that best supports your collective approach.

KEY RESOURCES

Our work: Response wide
http://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/response-wide-programmes/

Ground Truth Solutions
Ground Truth Solutions' approach offers the humanitarian community a sense of how affected people see the actions undertaken, providing a regularly updated set of benchmarks linked to the goals of the country humanitarian response plan against which individual agencies or sectors can measure and, importantly, adjust their performance.

infoasaid Generic M&E framework
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141104141123-zdqxj/

infoasaid and International Federation of the Red Cross (2012)
This framework allows you to assess the impact of communications interventions. Indicators cover key components of a communication project including: information provision, dialogue, analysis and verification of feedback, and response.

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[23] *What do we know about Communicating with Communities following an Earthquake?* CDAC Network (2015).
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20150427141213-vrsfn

[24] See e.g. Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities (2018).
http://www.helpage.org/download/5a7ad49b81cf8

[25] *Assessing Information and Communication Needs: A Quick and Easy Guide for Those Working in Humanitarian Response* and *Pocket Guide: Information & Communication Questions in Rapid Needs Assessments*. Both CDAC Network & ACAPS (2014)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20140721173332-ihw5g

[26] See e.g. *What do we know about Communicating with Communities following an Earthquake?* CDAC Network (2015).
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20150427141213-vrsfn

[27] Adapted from *Are you Listening Now? Community Perspectives on Communication with Communities* during the Nepal earthquake. Margie Buchanan-Smith, Subindra Bogati and Sarah Routley, with Srijana Nepal, Sweta Khadka, Yamima Bomjan and Neha Uprety for CDAC Network (2016)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20160811085949-qjzug

[28] E.g. BBC Media Action, International Media Support, Internews, Fondation Hirondelle and Search for Common Ground

[29] E.g. UNICEF as part of its Communication for Development Programmes (C4D) or WHO through its risk communication programmes.

[30] *The IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM)*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2018).
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iasc-gender-age-marker-gam-2018

[31] A strategic response plan typically includes an overview of the context and crisis; population affected; immediate, medium and longer-term needs; likely scenarios; response so far; response objectives, sectors of intervention and activities; budget; coordination and partnership; monitoring and evaluation; and exist strategy. Cross-cutting issues and accountability to affected communities will likely also be included. communication and community engagement should also be included. For information on the United Nation's Humanitarian Response Plans see
http://bit.ly/2Fytp1x

[32] *Republic Of Vanuatu Country Preparedness Package*. Government of the Republic of Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (2017)
http://bit.ly/2DfwNvM

[33] *JRP for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis: March - December 2018.* Strategic Executive Group and partners (2018)
http://bit.ly/2Er9vVP

[34] *Inter-Agency Collective Service for Community Engagement, project proposal for Central African Republic. September 2017 – December 2018*. Implementing agencies: OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, Internews, Danish Refugee Council, Search for Common Ground, Ground Truth Solutions.

[35] *See What Matters?* BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders (2018)
https://www.internews.org/resource/what-matters

[36] A radio programme could be two-way, for example, if it is based on audience research to inform its content or includes a radio call-in option for questions and comments. A poster, developed with representatives of the intended audience, could be used to share brief health information, but could be used in conjunction with a community meeting for dialogue.

[37] Adapted from OCHA Think Brief: *Building Data Responsibility into Humanitarian Action.* Nathaniel A. Raymond (2016)
https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/TB18_Data%20Responsibility_Online.pdf

[38] Perception surveys can be used as a feedback mechanism in a response, often designed as a common service across responders. It is a systematic approach to gathering the perceptions of affected people on the relevance and effectiveness of services, the quality of relationships with aid providers, the extent to which people feel enabled to cope independently. It also gathers non-beneficiary communities' view of the situation. The data is analysed and used by humanitarian actors to adapt their response to specific circumstances and concerns in real-time. Regular perception reviews can act as an important tool to guide the response, measure impact and ensure the views of affected populations are regularly considered.

[39] Bonino, F. with Jean, I. and Knox Clarke, P. (2014) Humanitarian feedback mechanisms: research, evidence and guidance. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI
http://bit.ly/2SMEuOT

[40] Briefing note. The Grand Bargain: Perspectives from the field. Ground Truth Solutions and OECD (2018).
http://bit.ly/2PzOcST

[41] Iraqi woman displaced to Suleymaniyah quoted in *Iraq's displaced people need information, not only food, water and shelter.* CDAC Network (2014)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20140917162422-moeda

[42] *Typhoon Haiyan Learning Review.* Austin, C. and Bailey, N. for CDAC Network (2014).
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141124131123-z7io0

[43] *We should've said, expect a tsunami.* Rappler (November 2013).
http://www.rappler.com/nation/43731-we-should-have-said-tsunami-haiyan

[44] *The Power of Speech.* Translators without Borders (2017).
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/twb-response-nigeria/

[45] *Rohingya Zuban: A Translators without Borders rapid assessment of language barriers in the Cox's Bazar Refugee Response*. Translators without Borders (2017).
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/rohingya-zuban/

[46] Excerpt from *Language barriers in the humanitarian response in north-eastern Nigeria*. Translators without Borders (2017).
http://bit.ly/2RRRUcE

[47] *Ebola: a crisis of language.* Nadia Berger and Grace Tang (2015)
http://bit.ly/2Ca3YQN
Ebola outbreak, Liberia: Communication challenges and good practices. ACAPS (2015)
http://bit.ly/2rvxn1Y *Ebola outbreak, Sierra Leone: Communication challenges and good practices.* ACAPS (2015)
http://bit.ly/2SLkgFf

[48] *Toxic information and the fight against Ebola.* Anne Bennett (2014). Boston Globe.
http://bit.ly/2El9DVZ

[49] A 2017 study by Translators without Borders showed that Hausa is the primary language of displaced populations in 47 percent of IDP sites in north-east Nigeria, but humanitarian organisations are using it as the primary language of communication at 81 percent of sites. Being aware of this disconnect is the first step to addressing it. *The Power of Speech*. Translators without Borders (2017).
https://translatorswithoutborders.org/twb-response-nigeria/

[50] Feeling a sense of normalcy is a critical component in dealing with trauma.

[51] Case study – Radyo Abante: A Collaborative Commitment to CwC & Accountability. CDAC Network (2014)
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20141124131123-z7io0

[52] Extract adapted from *Lifeline - working with broadcasters in humanitarian crises.* Jacqueline Dalton, BBC Media Action (2016)
https://www.bbcmediaactionilearn.com/mod/page/view.php?id=798

[53] Lifeline programming is special media programming for communities affected by humanitarian crises. It aims to provide people with timely, relevant and practical information to alleviate their suffering and assist with their recovery. Lifeline programming also aims to give affected people the opportunity to voice their concerns, express their needs, share their stories and hold humanitarian aid providers to account. BBC Media Action offers training in this and an online version is also available.

[54] Such as First Response Radio

[55] Adapted from *Commitment 4 of the CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators*. Core Humanitarian Standard (2014). https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators, and *Developing a participatory approach to involve crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response*. The Participation Handbook. ALNAP & Groupe URD (2009).
http://bit.ly/2SMDZV1

[56] *The Importance of Mobile for Refugees: A Landscape of New Services and Approaches.* GSMA (2017).
http://bit.ly/2QOqIhy

[57] *The Importance of Mobile for Refugees: A Landscape of New Services and Approaches.* GSMA (2017).
http://bit.ly/2QOqIhy

[58] In an emergency response, adopting quick and simple approaches may be the only practical possibility. 'Good enough' does not mean second best, but rather it means recognising and acknowledging limitations in terms of capacity and time, prioritising appropriately, taking steps to anticipate and fill gaps and, as the situation changes, review and revise accordingly. Excerpt from *Impact Measurement in Emergencies: the Good Enough Guide*. Emergency Capacity Building Project (2007). Available at
http://bit.ly/2eCTThG

[59] *Evaluating Humanitarian Action Guide* (2016). John Cosgrave and Margie Buchanan-Smith for ALNAP. Available at
https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-guide

[60] *The Pamati Kita project: an experiment in the provision of common services and in promoting a collective approach to AAP*. CDAC Network (2015).
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20150223152703-nheak

[61] The evaluation team trained 30 national staff from the participating agencies to conduct the focus group discussions. These teams asked open-ended, non-agency focused questions. Report and terms of reference available at
https://www.alnap.org/help-library/independent-joint-evaluation-of-humanitarian-response-in-haiti

[62] Examples of these can be provided by OCHA.

[63] Contributed by Simone E. Carter

Section Four: Establishing a national platform for communication and community engagement

In this section

- Establishing a national platform
- Drawing on global support

Establishing a national platform

Government agencies, organisations and clusters have set up initiatives to engage affected people, but this needs to be done more systematically, collaboratively and in a way that informs real-time decisions.

A nationally-led approach to communication and community engagement (working group or similar) may already exist. In some cases it may be necessary to establish one.

The structure and functions of national platforms will vary according to context, based on needs and capacities, but all act as a complementary coordination service to existing and emerging humanitarian architecture.

They may take the shape of a technical **working group** like the government-led multi-stakeholder platform Shongjog[64] in Bangladesh, a **community of practice** like the one OCHA leads one in the Philippines[65] or a common service such as the Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project[66] in Nepal (see case study on page 16).

Platforms should undertake preparedness actions to ensure that response actors are well-placed to pivot communication and community engagement into response-mode when required.

Leadership of the platform should be agreed early and could be provided by a government, NGO or a UN body, a member of the International Red Cross Red and Crescent Movement or a media development organisation, depending on which entity has the best local knowledge, capacity and expertise. Several platforms are led by a government body with a national and international agency as co-chairs, though this is not appropriate for all contexts.

There are a few recommended options for where the platform should sit in humanitarian architecture:

- Within the **government**, providing cross-ministry and -sector services (this may not be appropriate in a conflict).
- If a cluster system is activated, at **inter-cluster** level. The same applies for a 'sectoral' approach; i.e. it would sit with the inter-sector coordination group. In this case a cross-sector Technical Working Group (TWG) in support of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and Inter-Cluster Coordination (ICC). With clear Terms of Reference, the TWG would seek to bring together actors and provide technical guidance to clusters, agency partners, and government. This is an inclusive approach that ensures those who would not normally engage through clusters actively participate in coordination.
- A Community Engagement Coordinator position is created to link efforts across the response with **leadership**, sitting in the HC or RC's office and supported by a project team.

Regardless of where it sits the service must be linked to the relevant national coordination structures and humanitarian architecture and convene the relevant government agencies and diverse actors. **It is recommended that it does not sit under any individual cluster** but is strategically supported by those clusters with specific expertise, eg. CCCM and Protection.

Government agencies and humanitarian organisations should integrate collective actions on communication and community engagement into preparedness.

ERIC DELUCA/TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Yahaya Tijani (TWB Kanuri Team Lead) conducting comprehension research. GGSS camp, Monguno, Borno State, Nigeria

POTENTIAL FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FORM	FUNCTION
National platforms exist in a number of forms. • Working group • Community of practice • Common service e.g. common feedback mechanism or hotline • Task team or sub-group to a task team • Cluster • Network	Platforms have different combinations of functions, as relevant to the context. • Convening, relationship building, coordinating and collaborating • Directly implementing and supporting humanitarian action and strategies • Amplification and advocacy that extends the reach of individuals • Supporting policy-making and policy implementation • Mobilising resources • Setting rules, norms and standards for operational response • Innovating practice and approaches • Agenda setting and developing usable knowledge

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Define roles and responsibilities of the platform, as well as of its members**. Use the minimum actions and services for communication and community engagement (on page 19) as a checklist and establish a terms of reference (template under Key Resources on page 62) with a context analysis showing the rationale for setting up the platform alongside its aim and objectives, composition and how it relates to and influences other bodies in the humanitarian architecture.
- **Develop an action plan** based on the minimum actions that sets out priority actions and services to be undertaken, with a designated lead for each element, timeframe and budget.
- **Seek endorsement of both the terms of reference and action plan** by platform members as well as the ICC, HCT and relevant government bodies.
- While overall **leadership** of the national platform should come from the Humanitarian / Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Country Team in line with IASC responsibilities, the platform can be established by any organisation appropriate to the context. Leadership roles should be pre-agreed as part of operational readiness.
- **Resource the national platform through appropriate staffing**.
- **Conduct a mapping exercise** of who is doing what, where, when ('4Ws'; template under Key Resources) to know which agencies are working on communication and community engagement and their focal points. Share this with other actors and update to keep it current. Mapping should inform analysis of opportunities and needs[67] integrated into overall coordination.
- **Identify a named focal point** and alternate for each participating organisation who will participate in the platform. This focal point should be sufficiently senior that they are able to make decisions on behalf of their organisation.
- **Involve diverse groups.** Different disasters will call for different skill sets and capacities. Community engagement experts are not often 'traditional' humanitarian actors. Cast the net wider to include civil society organisations, media, language experts, anthropologists, telecommunications providers and other private sector bodies, local networks, minority activist groups and community members.
- Moving from preparedness to response mode will require adapting objectives and activities to the evolving context. Ensure this is acknowledged in the platform's terms of reference or **Standard Operating Procedures** (see Key Resources on page 62) and endorsed by members.
- Ensure people **meet regularly** to maintain momentum on the actions and services are adapted based on feedback, discuss what activities partners have implemented, see how other actors can contribute and how communication and community engagement can be integrated into programmes and response-wide activities.
- In situations where there is a Humanitarian/ Resident Coordinator, HCT and/or Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, communication and community engagement should be a standing item on meeting agendas, specifically discussing:
  - Critical community information needs
  - Community feedback trends and plans for response
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Define how, where and when info will be shared and analysed – ensuring adequate capacity for analysing and appropriate mechanisms for using the feedback both within the national platform, clusters and inter-cluster
  - Feedback to communities to close loop
- Liaise closely with PSEA networks to ensure that PSEA activities include systematic community engagement.
- Determine **budget** requirements. Funding should be an integrated and a predictable part of systematic humanitarian financing.
- Use and adapt existing **tools, good practice,**[68] **lessons learned and evidence**, while also documenting and sharing the new.
- Undertake **capacity building** with response actors on how to both participate in and benefit from collective community engagement.
- **Advocate** to continually ensure there is pressure on leadership to strengthen community participation both at programmatic and strategic levels.
- **Request global support**, for example on advocacy or technical support if it is needed.
- **Periodically review the national platform** to ensure it is fit for purpose, for example by undertaking an after action review or learning review, and making adjustments as need be.

Drawing on global support

Communication and community engagement is best managed locally but global support can be accessed through the CDAC Network, the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative,[69] the IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (AAP/PSEA[70]) and OCHA if it is required. Key support functions provided by these and other global actors include:

- **Advocating**, with organisational leaders, donors and coordination bodies, for the benefits of collective and systematic communication and engagement with communities.
- **Integrating** communication and community engagement into existing global humanitarian coordination processes, policies, structures and financing norms.
- **Fundraising** for national platform.
- **Assessing** whether communication and community engagement efforts in a response have been adequate and whether responses were adapted to the expressed needs of affected populations.
- Providing **technical support** to national platform such as advice on decision-making to determine appropriate forms of country level collective platform, and the provision of guidance and training to help build national and local capacity.
- Making accessible a minimum set of simple **tools based on good practice** that can be adapted as contextually appropriate, and providing an overview of what each tool should be used for and how it links into existing frameworks (such as the CHS and Grand Bargain).
- **Facilitating cross-country learning** and helping to grow communities of practice.
- Maintaining **standby capacity** with trained experts available for deployment.
- Documenting **best practices, lessons learned and evidence** from different initiatives, ensuring these are appropriately shared from context to context.
- **Identifying gaps** in global capacity, tools, guidance or technical support and working to overcome them.

Learning from multi-stakeholder platforms

Check out recent work on a number of national multi-stakeholder platforms, including Bangladesh (Shongjog), Philippines, South Sudan, Vanuatu and Fiji on the CDAC website: http://preparedness-response.cdacnetwork.org

The 2018 evaluation report on national platforms in Bangladesh, Philippines and South Sudan, *Strengthening information sharing and two way communication preparedness capacity for better dialogue, better information and better action*, summarises many of the key features of these platforms. This evaluation was commissioned by CDAC Network as part of its Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme.

Read now: http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20180430115942-c8457

KEY RESOURCES

CDAC Network Preparedness and Response site
Details of national platforms in Bangladesh, Philippines, South Sudan and elsewhere, including an overview of the platform, tools and guidance and learning and evaluations.
http://preparedness-response.cdacnetwork.org

4Ws template
Template to facilitate a mapping exercise of who is doing what, where and when (a '4Ws') to capture which agencies are working on communication and community engagement and who their focal points are.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20171215154835-zu2cd

Establishing a common platform for communication and community engagement: examples of terms of reference
Examples of terms of reference from national platforms the Philippines and South Sudan, as well as the national and sub-national platforms in Bangladesh.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20171215165316-jd7ng

Operations Protocol: Minimum Preparedness and Response Actions of the CoP on Community Engagement
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/philippines/document/minimum-response-and-preparedness-operations-protocolversion

Philippines Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement: Communication, Accountability, Community Participation and Common Service Partnerships (2016)
Standard operating procedures that provide an example of how the CoP deals with emergencies and remains proactive on preparedness to ensure consistency and clarity in providing wide access to information and empowering affected communities to have more meaningful participation.

Policy Paper: The Role of Collective Platforms, Services and Tools to support Communication and Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action.
This paper makes the case for communication and community engagement in humanitarian response at global and national levels, and describes the shape and functions of collective platforms, services and tools and describes minimum actions for collective efforts. An annex lists potential national and global services and activities for preparedness and response.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20170531072915-3fs0r

SECTION REFERENCES

[64] http://www.shongjog.org.bd

[65] https://www.unocha.org/philippines/community-engagement

[66] http://www.cfp.org.np

[67] See e.g. *South Sudan Communication with Communities in South Sudan; Gaps and Needs Analysis – Baseline Study*. Forcier Consulting (2015) http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20160805101517-2zjwp

[68] See e.g. Annex 3: Good practice in multi-stakeholder Collective Platforms. *Policy Paper: The Role of Collective Platforms, Services and Tools to support Communication and Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action.* CDAC Network (2017) http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20170531072915-3fs0r

[69] The Communication and Community Engagement Initiative aims to help improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian responses, through a harmonised, timely, systematic and predictable collective service for communication and community engagement with affected communities throughout all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle.

[70] See helpdesk: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse

CASE STUDY

The Philippines community engagement community of practice

As part of post-typhoon Haiyan preparedness initiatives in 2014, a national platform, the Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement (CE), was established by OCHA to support the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) to mainstream two-way communication in the event of a major disaster.

With more than 50 members, the CoP provides strategic direction and technical support on community engagement in preparedness and response to sub-national working groups. Members include UN agencies, international non-government organisations, faith-based groups, private sector, civil society organisations, media networks, academia, government agencies and in-country member organisations of the CDAC Network.

Capacities and resources provided include improvement of two-way communication platforms, feedback avenues, accountability pathways, closing-the-communication-loop mechanisms, partnerships and the use of various technologies for communicating with the affected population. The CoP also provides recommendations, updates and relevant technical assistance to the HCT, ICCG, government agencies (including local government) and other thematic working groups in preparedness and response.

To date, the CoP has successfully managed to initiate interventions in the following humanitarian responses, largely delivered though sub-national platforms:

- Armed-conflict in Zamboanga City (2014-2017)
- Armed-conflict in Marawi (2017-Present)
- Typhoon Hagupit (2015) & Typhoon Koppu (2016)
- Typhoon Knockten (2017) and Mayon Volcano eruption (2018)

Successes include the development and use of the Rapid Information Communication and Accountability Assessments (RICAA); the standard inclusion of two questions pertaining to information needs and preferred communication channels in the first phase of the HCT rapid assessment used by clusters; regular dialogue/listening exercise between the government, responders and the affected population; support to the Protection and

Camp Coordination/Camp Management clusters; the Zamboanga Learning Review on Post-Conflict Community Engagement (which can be found here: http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/philippines/document/philippines-zamboanga-learning-review-post-conflict-community); and expansion of membership to incorporate humanitarian radio programming, social media (through a partnership with news network Rappler) and ham radio.

The CoP has also undertaken some innovative activities: the use of drones to assist the local community; a Frontline SMS (http://www.frontlinesms.com)/Infoboard system for feedback channels, and humanitarian radio programming for in-depth community consultation.

The CoP has extended its work on preparedness to undertake pre-crisis information mapping in line with contingency planning scenarios of a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Manila, a super-typhoon (Haiyan-type) in the Northern Luzon and Visayas Region and an eruption of Mayon volcano, Albay Province (see Key Resources). It was the first time community engagement had fed into initiatives to ensure that, aside from each household, the voices of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (women, children, persons with disability and elderly) were reflected in government and HCT contingency plans.

More information on this case study at: http://bit.ly/2CqpWhz. This case study was adapted from Case Study: *The Philippines' Community Engagement Community Of Practice*. OCHA-Philippines/Humanitarian Country Team's Community of Practice on Community Engagement (2018)

A UN inter-agency mission meets with displaced families in their settlement near Mokolo, in northern Cameroon. The IDPs have received some food and household items, distributed by both the authorities and humanitarian partners

OCHA/IVO BRANDAU

Section Five: Leadership and advocacy for communication and community engagement

Collective leadership

The Grand Bargain, Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse all lay out commitments to ensure communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and play an active role in decisions that affect them, and can raise complaints that will be welcomed and addressed, including sexual exploitation and abuse-related complaints. National frameworks, like Vanuatu's Country Preparedness Package[71], also lay out preparedness and collaboration between national and international actors in disaster response with regard to communication and community engagement.

A collective leadership approach amongst governments, humanitarian responders and other actors is required to ensure these commitments are met. The establishment of collective approaches to and coordination of communication and community engagement is both a Grand Bargain commitment[72] and has significant support in the sector[73]. Such approaches have demonstrated their ability to improve efforts to engage crisis-affected communities in various humanitarian responses. What this means in practice – the establishment of national platforms and implementation of minimum actions and services – are described in detail in earlier sections, as is the reasons why a collective approach is appropriate.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Community input and feedback should directly inform all humanitarian response operations. Take leadership decisions on the basis of an analysis of the dialogue** with affected people, including those most vulnerable and those most at risk, and act on systematic feedback on the response. Advocate for collective mechanisms for dialogue, feedback and complaints to be set up where they aren't in place. Decisions within all levels of the humanitarian architecture (e.g. in clusters, where they exist) are similarly informed on the basis of dialogue and feedback. It is also important to collaborate across humanitarian organisations and local media networks and other existing communication channels to ensure that affected communities are well informed about developments affecting their daily lives and their future.

In this section

- Collective leadership
- Tips for organisational leaders: pave the way
- Tips for individuals: be a champion for change

- Where it does not already exist, **advocate for and provide the leadership to create and resource a national platform** that enables a range of actors to convene, coordinate and collaborate to provide services for affected communities and the humanitarian architecture on communication and community engagement. Annex 1 outlines the national and international commitments and standards as well as donor requirements that can be referenced to support advocacy efforts.

- **Agree the roles of the platform and ensure it sits appropriately within the humanitarian architecture.** The platform will likely play several roles, such as coordination, direct implementation of response activities or advocacy to support policy-making and policy implementation.

- **Agree leadership arrangements, responsibilities and accountabilities early on.** In every 'at risk' country, this means the National Disaster Management Unit or the Humanitarian Country Team agreeing in advance on governance, leadership arrangements, responsibilities and accountabilities as well as standard operating procedures (including feedback and complaints mechanisms). Where not led by the government, leadership could be provided by an NGO, CBO, UN agency, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement representative, media development organisation or other, depending on who has the best local knowledge, capacity and expertise. Leading or co-leading the collective platform does not replace responders respecting their own responsibilities, including their accountability to affected people.

CASE STUDY

Governments taking the lead

Governments have primary responsibility for addressing the needs and priorities of affected communities when responding to a crisis. The Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, the UN and humanitarian organisations should be secondary responders, supporting where the government's capacities to respond are overwhelmed.

In **Dominica**, following the hurricanes in 2017, the Prime Minister's daily press releases included some details about humanitarian activities, often focusing on what had been achieved or broad plans for the response. Amateur radio operators shared information at the national and community level, with the support of a wider network of associations overseas and linkages to Facebook.

Once physical access had improved, more information was shared through face-to-face meetings and visits. Community stakeholders began to play a more active role in disseminating information. Some agencies established field teams to facilitate community meetings, which served to circulate project and other relevant information, answer people's questions, collect feedback and close the feedback loop by letting people know what action had been taken with previous feedback.

Social media, phone and WhatsApp became increasingly important as connectivity improved

SARAH MACE/CDAC NETWORK

and soon after the hurricane hit Dominica, Kairi FM started broadcasting essential and life-saving news about the availability of aid. The diaspora played a crucial role, passing on humanitarian information targeted specifically to the needs of family and friends.[74]

Ground Truth Solutions was specifically tasked in this response to collect and measure the views of affected communities on the response and recovery efforts in Dominica, as well as in Antigua and Barbuda. This was done through a series of surveys and focus group discussions and shared with authorities as well as humanitarian actors.[75] A CDAC deployment supported coordination efforts on communication and community engagement.[76]

"If anything is clear, it is that adding and empowering voices that have been muted or overlooked makes us a stronger organization that is better at what it does, as well as a better organization."

The Hewlett Foundation[8]

Sri Lanka has faced severe drought, floods and landslides in recent years, leaving thousands of women and girls of reproductive age vulnerable during and after emergencies. UNFPA in Sri Lanka works closely with the government and local partners to ensure that reproductive health is integrated into emergency response

UNFPA/CHRISTIAN HUTTER

- **Ensure that staff participating in the national platform are able to make decisions on behalf of the organisations they represent** so that decisions can be made quickly and any issues resolved in an effective and timely manner. This is important to maintaining the momentum of the platform.

- Promote efforts to set common communication and community engagement **norms and standards** to which all participating agencies adhere.

- **Advocate with donors for communication and community engagement to become a compliance issue**. They should demand evidence of participation (assessing levels of participation obtained) and whether responses evolved based on community feedback, rather than merely whether mechanisms were in place or not.

- Use the united voice of the national platform to advocate to governments and donors to meet their commitments on communication and community engagement by **committing funding** specifically for this, cemented in response plans.

Tips for organisational leaders: pave the way

Leaders of organisations are critical to ensuring that community engagement is timely and sustainable. Only they can ensure that teams have the human capacity, time, funding and space needed to properly mainstream it. Strong leadership is required to ensure that communication and community engagement evolves from an 'add on' to a non-negotiable part of how we work.

There also needs to be a commitment for maintaining organisational engagement in collective platforms beyond the interest of individual champions.[77]

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS AS A SENIOR MANAGER

- **Lead your teams** toward improved integration of communication and community engagement by prioritising staff time and allocation of funds towards this work.
- **Plan, and write things down:** Include action-oriented communication and community engagement components in **response strategies and plans**, including those for preparedness and **contingency planning**. At minimum, include:
  - Mechanisms for ensuring that disaster-affected people have access to the information they need in order to make decisions about their safety, health, aid entitlements and access, and rights;
  - A system for people to provide feedback (including complaints and sensitive issues), in which response-wide, feedback data is collated, analysed, linked into individual and collective referral mechanisms. Community feedback information must be used to inform corrective action, and strategic and programmatic decisions;
  - Opportunities for disaster-affected people to play an active role in decision-making processes;
  - Coordination of and advocacy for humanitarian activities that restore or provide means for various communities to remain connected, working with media and telecommunication actors.
- Advocate with peers and donors for the inclusion of coordinated communication and community engagement in response-wide plans and protocols.
- **Ensure standard operating procedures, templates and tools** are updated to incorporate communication and community engagement throughout the full programme cycle, beyond needs assessment and evaluation.
- **Take leadership decisions on the basis of community feedback.**
- **Designate a focal point** and ensure **staffing is appropriate**, both in terms of number and skills, to be able to implement communication and community engagement activities. Ensure this is written into job descriptions and that staff are given the time they need to do the work properly. People shouldn't 'double-hat'.
- Ensure that your organisation participates in **external forums and national platforms** to coordinate preparedness and response activities, exchange experience and learning, and collaborate on capacity strengthening and fundraising, including for preparedness.
- Humanitarian organisations are expected to reach out to local media networks and other existing communication channels to ensure that affected communities are well informed about developments affecting their daily lives and their future.

> *"Iraq's population is educated and literacy rates are high. We expect humanitarian organisations to reach out to local media networks and other existing communication channels to ensure that affected communities are well informed about developments affecting their daily lives and their future."*
>
> **Kevin Kennedy, Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq** [9]

CASE STUDY

News that moves

At the height of large-scale refugee relocation in 2015 to Greece, **Internews launched 'News that Moves'** to provide migrants and refugees with reliable, verified information about asylum, EU regulations, freedom of movement and aid services. Refugee Liaison Officers gathered rumours circulating in formal camps, informal sites and along the migration routes into the Balkans and Western Europe.

A key aspect of the project was that information was made available in languages and formats that people understood.

The website (https://www.internews.org/updates/news-moves-mediterranean-rumor-tracker) and Facebook pages in Arabic and Farsi were used to identify and debunk rumours, whilst rumour-tracking bulletins were distributed to aid organisations to share with community contacts. More than 300,000 people accessed the information online and offline.

Shiekh Bashir Ahmed, 80, listens to his radio at Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. Ahmed told Internews that he takes his radio with him everywhere, and especially likes to listen to the prayer broadcasts

OCHA

People charge their phones wherever they can in Nepal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

- **Budget** for communication and community engagement activities and lobby for budgeting of external forums and national platforms to enable the implementation of common services.

- **Report** back to communities, staff and donors on how you are evolving your programming based on community input.

- **Share** your community engagement work with your peers via the HCT (or equivalent) or in more informal exchanges.

Tips for individuals: be a champion for change

Everyone can be a leader for communication and community engagement. You do not have to be 'the boss' or a manager – everyone can guide and enlist the help of others to achieve response strategies and plans that include meaningful community engagement.

HOW YOU CAN DO THIS

- **Identify the framework.** Identify existing policies, guidance, plans and values in your organisation that are enablers for communication and community engagement and use these as frameworks for suggesting new approaches and activities. Lobby for inclusion where they are missing from policies, guidance and protocols.
- **Create awareness.** Start a conversation with colleagues and collaborators about what more could be done to champion community participation.
- **Share information with colleagues and collaborators.** What are the benefits? How does it help to implement commitments like the Core Humanitarian Standard? What has interested you in doing more about communication and community engagement? You could do this in meetings, in newsletters or by hosting an event or training.
- **Share success stories** that demonstrate why communication and community engagement are beneficial to the organisation as well as the collective humanitarian response.
- **Make it an agenda item.** Ask for community engagement to be included as a standing agenda item for meetings, strategic and operational planning, and reviews.
- **Enlist the help of others.** Get your manager and colleagues on board and convey shared messages.
- **Be the change you want to see.** Set an example by trying something new in your work and take calculated risks (if it works out, great; if not learn from it).

KEY RESOURCES

Organisational self-assessment and alignment for communication and community engagement
For leaders wishing to refresh their leadership skills and explore changes in their organisation at a deeper level a tool is available to undertake an organisational audit, based on the McKinsey 7s Model. This looks at seven organisation dimensions and how they can be adapted to mainstream communication and community engagement: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff and skills.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20181201141931-5rzij

Toolkit for mainstreaming Communications with Communities in Humanitarian Response
The overall objective of this toolkit is to guide policy actors and practitioners of national and international humanitarian agencies, donor communities, private sector entities, government ministries and departments to adapt communications and community engagement for the development of an appropriate disaster affected community-centered communication strategy throughout the project cycle and integrate it into policies, priorities and practices.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20180604150741-86pef

Scoping Study: Engaging the Private Sector in Mainstreaming Communications with Communities
This scoping study looks at engaging the private sector in mainstreaming communication and community engagement in Bangladesh. It discusses what activities are being carried out by private sector organisations in Bangladesh as part of their CSR, including those responding to disaster appeals, and tries to understand the scope for mainstreaming communication and community engagement in their disaster response design.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20180604150741-86pef

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Annex: Commitments, standards and donor requirements

Earthquake and landslide-affected family in Shangla, Pakistan

COMMUNITY WORLD SERVICE ASIA/KHALID RASHEED.

National commitments and standards

The primary role and responsibility to provide timely assistance to those affected, ensure people's protection and security and provide support for their recovery is that of the affected state. Many governments have policies and regulative frameworks in place for this, which include information management and communication systems for rapid and coordinated flow of information to communities, as well as the gathering of feedback on community concerns.

Fiji's National Humanitarian Policy for Disaster Risk Management, for example, includes a priority on national information management and communication systems between duty bearers to enable the production of National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) situation reports and public messaging.

It seeks to ensure that national warning and communication systems, update and communication systems to communities are in place to build community awareness on disaster risk management and humanitarian action, and gather feedback on community concerns.

The policy provides for strong national leadership during disaster response and recognises the need to work across NDMO, Ministries, Divisions and the Fiji Cluster System as well as non-government agencies, media, a national Public Emergency Broadcast system, and community messaging networks.

Increasingly, governments are leading or working with collective platforms to provide services to communities, such as in Bangladesh where the Department for Disaster Management leads the Shongjog platform and in the Philippines where the Philippine Information Agency plays an active role in the Community Engagement Community of Practice.

In countries with a failed state or affected by armed conflict national governments will unlikely lead on this area of work. It would instead be led by an international agency with a transition and exit strategy for longer term leadership.

International commitments and standards

The **World Humanitarian Summit** and the resulting commitments, in particular the **Participation Revolution**, gave renewed momentum to the **centrality of affected people** through ensuring collective and systematic participation, shaping aid priorities and programme design to render humanitarian assistance accountable, relevant and adaptive to needs. Key global commitments and standards on communication and community engagement are detailed below.

The Grand Bargain

https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861

An outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain is a shared commitment between more than 30 donors and aid providers that aims to get more aid into the hands of people in need. The **commitment of signatories to listen more to and include affected people in decisions that affect them** (the 'Participation Revolution') requires humanitarian actors to:

- **Dialogue** with affected people and communities, including to those most vulnerable and those most at risk, and receive feedback on our response work;
- **Act and adapt** our action based on what we've heard and give feedback on the decisions and the action we've taken; and

- **Provide information** that is accessible, timely and relevant.

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

The Core Humanitarian Standard sets out nine commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of their assistance. These ensure that communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information in an accessible format and language, participate in decisions that affect them, and can raise complaints that will be welcomed and addressed.

IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-56

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse commit responders to:

- Establish appropriate management systems to **solicit, hear and act upon the voices and priorities of affected people** in a coordinated manner, including for sexual exploitation and abuse, before, during and after an emergency;
- Adopt agency mechanisms that **enable disaster-affected people to participate in and play an active role in decisions** that will impact their lives, well-being, dignity and protection; and
- Adopt approaches that **inform and listen to communities, address feedback and lead to corrective action**, including sexual exploitation and abuse-related complaints.

Other frameworks
Several other frameworks and commitments have components specific to communication and community engagement. These are summarised in the document, Global frameworks and commitments on communication and community engagement (see Key Resources opposite for list).

Donor requirements

A number of government donors have mandatory requirements, including for example:

Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia requires its partners to have accountability frameworks.

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Canadian government asks that the perspectives, needs and priorities of impoverished and marginalised groups in communities are integrated into development and humanitarian action.

Department for International Development (DFID), UK asks partners to ensure that mechanisms are in place for obtaining regular, accurate feedback covering people's views on assistance received and the organisations providing it. Partners need to show how feedback is collected and acted upon to improve relevance, appropriateness, equity, effectiveness and value for money. DFID also have Enhanced Due Diligence requirements for Safeguarding.

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) highlights community participation as a central part of humanitarian assistance specifying that engagement with crisis affected people is a right.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) supports efforts that enhance the capacity of affected populations to demand accountability from local and national authorities, institutions and humanitarian organisations.

Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), USA has a funding requirement for partners to have a framework in place that takes recipient feedback into account. This has been a legal requirement since 2016.

KEY RESOURCES

Global frameworks and commitments on communication and community engagement
An overview of the various global level frameworks and commitments that have components specific to communication and community engagement.
http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20180412152101-obmjy

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If you are reading the printed version of this document, you can find all of the hyperlinks referred to in the online version of the How to Guide, which can be downloaded at www.cdacnetwork.org

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