Disaster Recovery Guidance Series: Communications in Disaster Recovery (DRAFT)

CONFERENCE VERSION

FOR CONSULTATION

## Acknowledgments

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**Valuable inputs were provided by (names, titles, organizations)**

## About this Guide

This Guide was commissioned by The World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU).

This Guide provides practical guidance for governments on how to effectively communicate with individuals and communities in the recovery phase following an emergency. The note provides recommendations and practical actions for identifying communication needs and “best fit” communication methods in support of Disaster Recovery Frameworks (DRF). For the purposes of this Guide recovery communications encompass sending, gathering, managing and evaluating information. Past experience demonstrates it is important governments do more than send information out to communities. Governments need to establish and maintain two-way dialogue with communities to ensure recovery activities align with community priorities and needs and lay a foundation for socially inclusive longer-term sustainable development.

This Guide is intended primarily for local and national government officials and key decision makers involved in disaster recovery planning and operations. This is likely to include finance and/or central planning agencies responsible for coordinating the development of a whole-of-government DRF. Other local and national stakeholders including civil society organizations (CSOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector entities also may benefit from the guide.

The Guide is divided into six sections, as follows:

Section 1: Good practice principles for effective communications

Section 2: Practical barriers to effective communications

Section 3: How to identify communication needs in recovery

Section 4: Communication methods to use in recovery planning and operations

Section 5: Developing a communications plan

Section 6: Key take-away messages

This Guides focus is external government communications with individuals and communities, it is not a guide aimed at supporting internal communications within government. There is no geographic focus to this resource. It has been developed to support communications in recovery planning and operations in a range of different contexts. Similarly, this Guide is designed to be applicable to any disaster type, as individuals and communities often require the same types of information, irrespective of the type of disaster. The information contained herein is useful for guiding effective communications in large- to small-scale recovery contexts.

This Guide is accompanied by a list of resources that is available on the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery’s (GFDRR) Recovery Hub website, under the “Communication” section.

For the purpose of this Guide the Disaster Recovery Framework Guide[[1]](#footnote-1) defines “Recovery” as the restoration, and where appropriate, improvement of facilities, livelihoods, and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors. While, “reconstruction” focuses primarily on the construction or replacement of damaged physical structures, and the restoration of local services and infrastructure. The term “recovery” in this Guide encompasses both “recovery” and “reconstruction”.

## Section 1: Good practice principles for effective communications

### Why are communications important in recovery?

Natural disasters can have a life-altering impact on the individuals and communities affected by them. Experience illustrates that access to reliable and timely information in the recovery phase contributes to effective recovery, and individual and community driven self-recovery. Sharing information is critically important for managing community expectations about governments’ role, responsibilities, and capacity to provide recovery assistance. Additionally, it helps to demonstrate government values the inputs of communities in recovery activities. Recovery at its core is a partnership between the affected community, the broader community, governments, aid organisations and the private sector - successful recovery is built on effective communication between these stakeholders.

*“Information is a vital form of aid in itself …..People need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter. Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources”.*

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) World Disasters Report (2005)

Typically, individuals and communities in the recovery phase want to access practical information about what governments intend to do, how to adapt to their new situation, and the long-term challenges they face. They want information that will assist them in making plans and taking decisions about their future, including clear and concise information from government and aid agencies about plans for recovery and preparedness. Communications need to be two-way that allow for: (i) community input into determining recovery priorities and needs; and (2) allow for community feedback on satisfaction levels, concerns and complaints. Information empowers communities, both disaster-affected and non-affected members to understand what’s happened, what government can and will do, and helps to increase social cohesion. Effective communications acts as a valuable form of community development and capacity building.

Despite an increase in international attention to communications in recovery, there is little research or operational tools and guidelines available to help guide government officials and aid organizations. This contrasts with the humanitarian sector that has made various advances including initiatives to encourage collaboration and coordination, particularly the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network, and “Communicating with Communities” working groups[[2]](#footnote-2). The latter have been set up by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) when responding to specific humanitarian responses (e.g. Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines in 2010 and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010).

This resource calls for governments and other key stakeholders to prioritize more systematic and collaborative approaches to communications in recovery. The goal of such approaches is to strengthen the quality, accountability and effectiveness of recovery to ensure planning processes and recovery projects are informed by the views and opinions of affected populations.

**TEXT BOX 1: Three Basic Rules for Effective Communications in Recovery**

There are three basic rules underpinning effective communications in recovery, namely: information should be relevant, clear, and targeted. These terms in the context of communications in the recovery phase post an emergency are explained below.

**Relevant:** Commonly affected communities are often overwhelmed by large volumes of information at a time when they are under stress and unable to retain information. Local governments should ensure all information communicated to the affected community is relevant. People commonly want to know:

* What is happening with the recovery process
* What support is available
* What they need to do to qualify for support
* What they can do if they have questions and concerns or complaints

**Clear:** To support transparency in communications and to empower communities for self-recovery it is important information provided to communities is presented in ways that is easy to understand. If technical information needs to be communicated it should be communicated using non-technical language where possible. Additionally, it is important to ensure information is provided in formats that is accessible for people with a sensory impairment or culturally and linguistically diverse background e.g. communications products may need to be produced in different languages; and sign language interpreters may be needed at community meetings.

**Targeted:** The method of communication used should fit the audience. This means it is important to understand the communication culture (i.e. beliefs, language and value systems that influence and drive communication and related behavior) of the communities targeted, and the best way to reach them.

*Source: Adapted from “Communicating in Recovery” Australian Red Cross, (2010)*

### Guiding principles for effective communications in recovery

People affected by disaster are often overwhelmed by large amounts of information and as a result their ability to take in information is significantly impacted. During recovery, standard communication principles will apply but there will be additional considerations, key principles include:

**Ensure communications are well targeted and utilize appropriate methods of communication for all audiences.** Adapt communications strategies and approaches to the audience. Work in conjunction with the community and utilize existing community networks and strengths (i.e. trusted communication conduits such as community leaders and community hubs e.g. schools, churches, and women’s groups). Respect the community by ensuring communication is culturally appropriate.

**Reiterate key messages and re-communicate regularly.** After and during an emergency people can have trouble remembering information. It is important to reiterate and re-communicate information periodically throughout the recovery process.

**Acknowledge the impact to help validate people’s experiences**. Allowing people affected by a disaster to acknowledge and validate their experiences is important.

**Ensure that information is accessible to audiences in diverse situational contexts (including persons living in remote and hard to reach areas; socially and economically vulnerable persons; and persons displaced by the disaster).** Many individuals and communities may experience barriers to accessing information. It is important barriers to access are carefully assessed, and where necessary strategies devised to overcome these. For example, to bring information to persons with mobility disabilities or disseminate from an accessible location, or providing sign language interpreters, CART, materials in accessible formats (e.g. Braille, large print).

**Establish mechanisms for coordinated and consistent communications between all service providers, organisations and individuals and the community.** It is important to harmonise effort with the aim of leveraging whole-of-government efficiencies, and to reduce risks of contradictory and confusing information being released to external stakeholders.

**Provide information that helps individuals and communities make decisions about their future and supports self-recovery.** Consider what critical information is needed at each step of the recovery process that will assist the affected community to take charge of their own recovery efforts.

**Recognise communication needs to be two way, and that community input and feedback should be encouraged.** Two-way dialogue is important for governments to ensure recovery investments are creating the right outcomes, and to identify any emerging issues and manage them before they become significant. Additionally, it is important to ensure those affected have an opportunity to communicate their feedback to government about recovery actions being taken, including complaints and grievances.

**Do not forget the “unaffected”.**  It is important that individuals and communities not directly affected by a disaster are not forgotten as they often experience significant stress following a disaster. Governments need to ensure they do not alienate communities by differentiating between the affected and unaffected in recovery.

**Leverage appropriate technology and connectivity.** Government should leverage and prioritize the use of appropriate and digital technologies that will support individual, community and inter-community communication as part of recovery.

**Manage rumors and false information** **- this includes tracking and managing rumors and false information that can cause community disunity and conflict.** It is important to recognize conflicting knowledge, values and priorities among individuals, the community and organizations may also create tensions. This will be particularly important when there is an existing internal conflict within the affected area/country.

**Public information, not public relations**. Effective communications are not public relations campaigns promoting particular organizations or political parties. It is important communications are fundamentally about assisting the community to recover.

**Be flexible, taking into account changes in community needs or stakeholder expectations as they relate to communications.** Community needs and stakeholder expectations will often change over the course of the recovery phase. It is important to monitor emerging needs and expectations, and to adjust a communications plan accordingly to reflect any changed circumstances. For example, new needs and expectations may mean communication methods deployed, and key messages may need to be altered.

## Section 2: Practical barriers to effective communications

Governments will often confront practical barriers to effective information dissemination and two-way dialogue with communities. It is important to identify what barriers may exist and how to overcome them during the development of a communications plan. Additionally, it is important to monitor any barriers that may emerge over the course of recovery operations, and adjust a communications plan accordingly to address these. Examples of practical barriers that may exist are outlined below.

**Physical breakdown of telecommunications:** Communications infrastructure may be damaged during the disaster and it may take longer than the emergency response phase to re-establish critical communications infrastructure. There are technical options available for temporary communications infrastructure to ensure communications can be provided asap to support recovery objectives.

**Lack of access to communications:** Community members may not have access to mass communication channels such as radio, mobile phones, newspapers etc., particularly vulnerable people, such as those living with disability, and people living in remote communities. Additionally, for similar reasons, community members may not be able to participate in community meetings without financial and logistical support to travel to those meetings.

**Public information is not always trusted by communities:** Not all individuals and communities trust official communications. Trust issues can be a big challenge for government agencies managing public information campaigns, and community consultation processes. It will be important in some country contexts for government to put substantial efforts into building community trust in the official information.

**Limited capacity to coordinate communications and produce joint messages:** A key challenge is coordinating communications across government agencies and between different levels of government. Often government agencies do not have resources and/or existing capacity to effectively coordinate on communications.

**Communities are not empowered to act and communicate:** Recognizing community-based communication systems are important for recovery, often community-based leaders do not have the information from governments they need to provide their community with reliable and timely recovery information.

**Communications in fragile, conflict, violence affected countries/areas are often difficult due to pre-existing community tensions:** Communicating in fragile, conflict, and violence (FCV) affected countries/areas can be highly challenging given existing tensions, and distrust between individuals and communities making clear, transparent and non-politicized information and communications critically important. It is important communication plans developed for FCV contexts are informed by a conflict analysis, and best efforts are made to deploy communications methods that incentivize positive connections between individuals and communities. A ‘do no harm’ approach needs to be adopted for communications in FCV contexts.

## Section 3: How to identify communication needs in recovery

Before commencing public information campaigns, and community consultation processes it is important to identify and understand the audience for communications. One way of doing this systematically is to complete a communication needs assessment (CAN). A CNA is a way of gathering information about a community’s opinions, needs, challenges, and assets. This information will help determine local needs and ensure that recovery reflects these, and thereby enhances community capacity and resilience. Included below is a basic outline of a CNA that can be used or adapted for use.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Questions to ask** |
| **Situational context** | What is the context to the emergency?  How is the recovery proceeding?  What government and non-government actors are engaged in recovery?  Has the disaster impacted housing and/or essential services?  Is there disaster related violence or pre-existing fragility and conflict conditions?  What resources – human and financial – does the government (national and local levels) have to support the development and implementation of a communications plan? |
| **Audience (Stakeholders)** | Who is the audience (include the range of different stakeholders[[3]](#footnote-3))?  Do they have specific needs?  What communications channels and processes already exist that can be used?  What are the issues/problems confronting the audience?  Are there existing geographic, cultural, socio-economic, political barriers to engaging with the audience? |
| **Objectives** | What is it you are trying to achieve by communicating?  What information are you trying to communicate? |
| **Communications Methods** | What communication methods is best suited to the audience and what you are trying to achieve? |
| **Feedback** | What strategies or actions can be deployed to ensure community views and opinions (positive and negative) are fed back into the recovery process?  Are there existing grievance mechanisms that can be built upon? |

Governments already do extensive planning and have a range of data which can be drawn upon to inform the CNA. For example, useful information products/data sources include: National or Local development plans; population data; poverty and vulnerability analysis; gender analysis; Emergency Risk Management Plans; and conflict analysis in FCV contexts.

See Appendix A for a Communications Needs Assessment template.

## Section 4: Communication methods that can be used in recovery planning and operations

There are a range of different methods that can be used to send out and exchange information and establish two-way dialogue. This resource presents communication methods commonly used by governments and aid organizations in recovery planning and operations. There are other methods available that are less commonly used, so be aware this is not an exhaustive presentation of all communication methods.

It is important to ascertain which communication method is the most suitable for the audience and for helping to achieve the recovery outcomes envisaged by the DRF. Different communication methods will need to be deployed depending on size and geographic location of audience; information needs of audience; government budget; desired level of community input/feedback; and special needs of audience segments that may have barriers to access information (i.e. elderly; children & youth; persons with disability; displaced people; poor literary, language, religion etc.). It is important public information campaigns and two-way dialogue are socially inclusive respecting all community members have a right to information. The table below presents communication methods commonly deployed to support effective recovery; strengthens and weaknesses of each method; and suitability of each method for the different stages of recovery (early to longer term recovery and reconstruction).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Strengthens** | **Weakness** | **Most suitable for** |
| **Community meetings** are a core part of communication and community recovery, in all phases of recovery from planning to operations and evaluating recovery efforts. | * Provides a platform for community members to have face-to-face contact with decision makers. * Facilitates immediate feedback loop between decision makers and community members. * Offers an opportunity for community members to connect with one another and helps create a sense partnership between government and community. * Actively builds social cohesion * Can give community a sense of ownership over the recovery process * Allows government agencies to gain vital data and information about what is happening in the community in terms of self-recovery. * Can have translators/sign language resource available at the meeting to facilitate communication for all. | * Requires individuals are aware of, and can physically access meetings. * Meetings can be politicised by individuals. | * Early stages of recovery planning. * Keeping the community updated and getting their immediate feedback. * Effective way of consultation on particular recovery activities – including hosting focus groups at community meetings. |
| **Face-to-face**  Face-to-face communication consistently ranks as the most influential  form of getting information across to people. | * Creates a perceived trustworthiness of information * Creates a sense of participation/ownership of the recovery by affected people * There is an ability to tailor information to suit an individuals’ specific needs | * Limited in the number of people that can be reached. | * Face-to-face is a core part of communication and community recovery, in all phases of recovery from planning to operations and evaluating recovery efforts |
| **Word of mouth**  Word of mouth is the most common and strongest forms of communication, but it has the most risks attached as individuals can circulate false information and rumours. | * Highly trusted form of communication. * Communications occur quickly through established networks and new networks that may emerge during recovery. * People can inform others in their networks about services they can access or ways to participate recovery. | * People can easy spread misinformation and rumours, which may require new communications to be developed to combat misinformation that is spread through word of mouth. | * Simple messages (informing people of meetings, events, calls to action) * If done correctly, community members can become agents for government communications, disseminating them through their networks. This can potentially be done by giving clear messages to people they can easily pass on through their networks. |
| **Newspapers**  Newspapers can be a highly effective and trusted method of sending information out to a large number of people. | * Existing level of trust and respect within the community as seen as a key source of information. May need to check community perceptions of the newspaper before using it. | * Requires literacy and access to newspaper distribution network. * Newspaper can be biased towards one group or political view. * Unless purchasing advertising space, you may not have control over what is printed. * One-way information exchange. | * Early stages of recovery planning. * Keeping the community updated on recovery progress. |
| **Radio**  A very well-known and commonly used method of communication in emergencies and recovery operations. | * Communities often have pre-existing local radio stations * Offers a low tech and cheap method of communication * Messages can be transmitted across long distances depending on transmitter strength. * Individuals with no access to electricity can use wind up or solar powered radios to access. * Enables two-way communication between the public, host, guests and audience. * Can cater for different language or religious groups. * In some country contexts can access radio through websites and podcasts. * Interviews can be conducted with decision-makers with questions from the public. | * Requires station to be operational following the emergency. * Ineffective for people with impaired hearing. * Almost no ability to know who has heard the information * Radio shows or interviews are usually only presented once, meaning there is only one opportunity for people to hear the information (unless podcasted). | * Early stages of recovery planning. * Disseminating detailed information on specific services and events. * Broad and general information updates on recovery efforts. * Getting community feedback on recovery progress. |
| **Notice boards** are an important method of communication. They are cheap to erect and use, and provide a public (and anonymous) voice to the community. | * Low cost and good for localised information exchange. * May already exist in the area and if not, can be set up quickly after an emergency. * Can facilitate a local meeting place or area * Allows community members to update and provide feedback * Allows anonymous contributions * Community members or businesses can advertise recovery services * Effective method for directing people to other points/information sources | * Difficult to target information. * Can quickly become covered in unnecessary information if not regulated. * No control over, or knowledge of, who receives or does not receive the information. * Geographical scope might be limited unless invest in dispersed number of notice boards. | * Disseminating broad, general information in all phases of recovery from planning to operations. |
| **Website** increasingly people view websites as a primary method of obtaining information, but costly and need to be maintained and regularly updated. | * Can effectively deliver information to the broad general public. * Provides very detailed information people may be looking for * People can be directed to website by, for example, receiving simple messages via SMS and noticeboards. | * Can be difficult to relay and retain quality and timely information from the field. * Requires web and reading literacy. May not be appropriate for the visually impaired, people with a cognitive disability, or those who are injured. * Requires access to computers, electricity and internet. * High cost/resources need to keep it updated that need to be managed. | * Disseminating information in all phases of recovery from planning, public engagements, operations to evaluating and reporting on recovery efforts |
| **Television** increasingly people view television in many country/local contexts as a primary method of obtaining information. | * Communities often have pre-existing television stations (although not in every household) * Messages can be transmitted across long distances depending on transmitter strength. * Enables two-way communication between the public, host, guests and audience. * Can cater for different language or religious groups. * Can establish relationships with trusted tv news agencies before disaster strikes. | * Requires television station to be operational post disaster. * Requires access to tv, and electricity. * May not be appropriate for the visually or hearing impaired, people with a cognitive disability. * Decision-makers can be interviewed on television and respond to public queries. | * Disseminating information in all phases of recovery from planning, public engagements, operations to evaluating and reporting on recovery efforts |
| **Mobile phone (SMS)**  commonly used low cost communication method | * Large number of people with access to mobile phones * Direct access to people everywhere (assuming network connectivity) * Effective for reaching people who have left the area. * Good and effective for simple messaging. | * Requires electricity and phone reception * May have difficulty getting people’s phone numbers * Cannot be sure that people have received messages * Messages must be short and succinct usually * There may be privacy legislation or issues regarding contacting people | * Early stages of recovery planning notifying people of events and meetings. * Keeping the community updated. Directing people to more detailed sources of information (e.g. websites). |
| **Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Badges and widgets and Blogs.** Social media can help alert people to upcoming events, such as community meetings and they provide a forum for expression of feelings. | * Good for quick information updates out to the public (e.g. Twitter) * Provides a forum for users to give opinions, identify community needs, and raise issues (e.g. Facebook crisis response tool). * Enables those with a physical disability and those who are socially isolated to connect with others. * Effective for alerting people to events * Good way of getting quick responses and thoughts from the community * Allows the community to see visual proof of recovery efforts (e.g. Instagram) * Blogs can provide space for written contributions from partners | * Requires computer access, internet access, electricity and computer/reading literacy * Limited control over content so inability to control opinions or views expressed in posting. * Not conducive to conveying large amounts of dense information although an established Facebook page may offer regular updates. | * Suitable for all phases of recovery from planning to operations and evaluating recovery efforts. Particularly suitable for information that can be communicated simply and easily. |

**Case Study: Differences in information needs and preferred sources between men and women following the 2015 Nepal earthquake**

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.

*Source: Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action.*

*How to Guide for leaders and responders. CDAC Network (2019)/ 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/20160811085949-qjzug*](http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/20160811085949-qjzug)

## Section 5: Developing a communications plan

Aligned with a Recovery Framework or Strategy – including recovery vision and principles - a communication plan is highly valuable in bridging the communications needs assessment and implementation of information and communications activities. A communications plan at its core should be designed to support government/community partnership, and self-recovery. It is important a lead government agency is designated as the ‘owner’ of the communications plan to ensure it is updated as needed, and it continues to be implemented over the entire course of recovery (from early to longer-term recovery).

*“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.”*

Source: How to Establish and Manage a Systematic Community

Feedback Mechanism, IFRC and Ground Truth Solutions

(2018)

https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/

sites/5/2018/06/IFRCfeedback-mechanism-with communities\_

ok\_web.pdf

There is no “one way” of developing a communications plan. There are lots of different ways of approaching the task depending on the disaster context, and the expected outputs and outcomes of the DRF. It is important the communications plan is developed in such a way as to align with the vision and approach of the DRF. The advice provided below is only a guide.

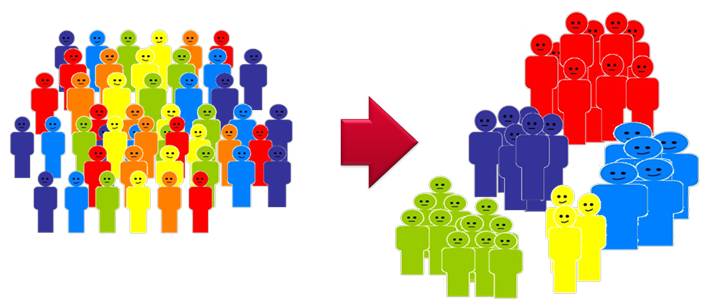
Most recovery communication plans include the following elements:

* Aim and objectives
* Audience (**Who** is the audience)
* Key messages (**What** are the key messages)
* Communication methods and activities (**HOW** - What communication methods will be used)
* Key actors and their responsibilities
* Resources (financial and human) and timescales
* Evaluation and amendment

**Aim and objectives:** It is important to clearly articulate the purpose of the Communications Plan. In most cases the purpose of the Communication Plan is to provide timely and useful information to the community and restore community confidence in the recovery process. Additionally, it is important to set SMART Objectives. SMART refers to realistic, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives. The objectives set should be able to be evaluated to check implementation progress of the plan i.e. it is on track towards achieving expected results. A communications plan should not be an end in itself, it exists to support the DRF. Clear and well thought through links between the Communications Plan and DRF vision and approach will help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications, and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communication activities.

**Audience (Stakeholders)**: Ensure key stakeholders in the DRF are identified. From this list of key stakeholders it is important to broadly identify and prioritise the target audience for each core service sector in the DRF, e.g. health, education, community development, land, law and justice, infrastructure (e.g. road and bridges, water and sanitation, electricity) recovery activities. As a next step, it is helpful to break the large audience down into smaller groups or segments who have similar needs, values or characteristics. Segmentation recognizes that different groups will respond differently to key messages and interventions. If it makes sense to segment there are lots of ways of segmenting an audience, and plenty of advice is available on doing so. The most common criteria used are demographics (age, level of education, income, ethnicity, gender) and geography (region, district, community/ urban, rural, peri-urban). Since an audience segment that is derived exclusively from demographics such as African youths constitutes a large group that still has varied beliefs, values and behavior, demographics may not be sufficient as segmentation criteria. More sophisticated segmentation strategies use psychosocial, behavioral and psychographics (personality, values, attitudes, interests, level of readiness for change and lifestyles) as variables to categorize audience subgroups. Once the audience has been divided into segments based on selected criteria, campaigns are then designed and communication channels are selected to reach their intended audience effectively.

**Image: Audience Segmentation Process**



**Key Messages:** Key messages need to be clear and succinct statements the audience can understand. A lead government agency/ministry responsible for development of a Communications Plan may need to get agreement across core ministries/stakeholders on key messages.

**Communication methods and activities:** It is important toidentify communication methods and activities that are most appropriate to communicating key messages to the audience. Ensure communication methods and activities are aligned with the time, human and financial resources available. As outlined in Section 4 of this Guide there are a wide range of different communication methods governments can deploy, including:

1. mainstream media (e.g. radio, tv, newspapers) with wide geographic reach;
2. localized information exchange through noticeboards, community meetings, and word of mouth; and
3. websites, sms via mobile phones, and social media’ (facebook, twitter, blogs etc).

These different communication methods can be effective channels for both large- and small- scale public information campaigns, and community consultations.

**Key actors and their responsibilities:** It is important to identifycore ministries/stakeholders who will be involved in communications activities, and to agree on who is responsible for different activities. A communications coordinator should be appointed (if the position doesn’t already exist) to undertake a communications assessment that will directly inform the development of a communications plan. A Communication Spokesperson(s) should also be identified to help provide consistency of resource to the communication activities. Key communication coordination mechanism for core ministries/stakeholders also need to be agreed and set up.

**Typhoon Yolanda “Haiyan” Philippines:**

*“We all know that a successful post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery is beyond the control of one person. But an effective communications strategy would have helped the government manage expectations and shape people’s perception about the Typhoon Yolanda rehabilitation and recovery efforts”.*

*Atty. Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero, former Undersecretary Office of the President (Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery) Source: X*

**Resources and timescales:** Use resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and outline the case for more dedicated resources.

**Evaluation and amendment:** A communications plan should be evaluated to assess its effectiveness with both internal and external audiences and amended as needed. A particular focus should be checking that key messages are being picked up by the audiences and that the approach is supporting the objectives of the Communications Plan, and the DRF.

See Appendix B for a basic Recovery Communications Plan Template.

## Section 5: Key take-away messages

The key take-away messages from this resource tool are as follows:

* **Successful recovery is built on effective communication**. Communication between governments, individuals and communities is critically important to all phases of recovery (from early recovery planning to longer-term recovery and reconstruction) to ensure recovery needs are effectively and efficiently identified and prioritized, and quality and timely recovery outcomes are achieved.
* **Governments need to prioritize the information needs of affected populations** as central to recovery planning, DRFs’, and implementation of recovery activities. Core ministries/sectoral agencies should commit financial and human resources for communications.
* **Government are encouraged to build budget lines into recovery funding for communications.** National governments should provide dedicated funding and technical support to bodies that may need to produce citizen focused outreach campaigns but lack the expertise, such as local governments.
* Governments need to ensure they **communicate with all stakeholders during recovery** – affected populations and not affected.
* It is important to **identify the audience for recovery communications and their communications culture**, and be conscious and responsive to the audiences changing needs over time.
* **Information demands relate to individuals’ social, physical and socio-economic vulnerability,** therefore there is a need to know what is happening in different geographical areas.
* **Provide information that individuals and communities want** to support their capacity to make plans and take decisions about their recovery and longer-term future. Information needs to be clear, concise and honest (i.e., acknowledge uncertainties) to enable communities to deal with emerging issues.
* **Use existing grievance and feedback mechanisms to support transparency and accountability, and where they don’t exist establish them.**
* Recovery is a partnership between the affected community, the broader community, governments, aid organisations and the private sector. **Information flows and interaction between all stakeholders’ needs to be both top-down and bottom up, and the participatory process should start early.**
* **Establish mechanisms for coordinated and consistent communications between all government service providers, and aid organisations** to ensure maximum impact and minimum confusion caused by contradictory messages from different sectoral agencies.
* **Utilize existing communication platforms and community networks and assets, opposed to developing new ones.** Schools are useful entry points and hubs for community engagement and action. Governments should work with existing groups in the community – schools, churches, sports groups (i.e. groups that meet regularly).
* **Access to information is vital at all stages of recovery and that information must be accessible to all in the community.** Communications methods deployed by government during recovery planning and operations need to be socially inclusive (i.e., address the different information needs of poor and vulnerable individuals and groups within the community).
* It is **important to evaluate communications** to see they are reaching the target audience and meeting the information needs of the community. Evaluating communications may seem difficult because it appears hard to measure the impact of community meetings etc. However, there are ways to measure communications and tools/resources available.

## Resources

**Australian Red Cross, (2010)**: Communicating in Recovery

**BBC Media Action Policy briefing: Still left in the dark: How people in emergencies use communication to survive – and how humanitarian agencies can help** www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publicationsandpress/policy\_still\_left\_in\_the\_dark.html • www.infoasaid.org

**BBC Media Action(2015):** Humanitarian Broadcasting in Emergencies

Based on evaluations of four crises interventions, this research report assesses the effectiveness of mass media interventions in enabling people to survive and recover from disasters

[*http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/humanitarian-broadcasting-in-emergencies-2015-report.pdf*](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/research/humanitarian-broadcasting-in-emergencies-2015-report.pdf)

**BBC Media Action (2016):** What role does Lifeline Preparedness play in enabling effective communication in crisis?

This report evaluates to what extent BBC Media Action’s preparedness work has built its own capacity and that of its partners to produce Lifeline broadcasts that meet audience information and communication needs in a crisis.

[*http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research/lifeline-evaluation.pdf*](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research/lifeline-evaluation.pdf)

Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (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.

<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/>

**CDAC Network (2019)** Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action: How to Guide for leaders and responders

**CDAC (2014):** Typhoon Haiyan Learning Review

A review of communication initiatives in the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines

[*http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/7825ae17-8f9b-4a05-bfbd-7eb9da6ea8c1/attachedFile2*](http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/7825ae17-8f9b-4a05-bfbd-7eb9da6ea8c1/attachedFile2)

**CDAC (2012):**Ann Kite Yo Pale – Let them speak

Best practice and lessons learned in communication with disaster affected communities – Haiti 2010:

[*http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/9 40adbcd-d86a-4e5a-9d3f-05003ce3ba28/attachedFile*](http://www.cdacnetwork.org/contentAsset/raw-data/9%2040adbcd-d86a-4e5a-9d3f-05003ce3ba28/attachedFile)

**CDAC (2016):** Are you Listening Now? The challenge to humanitarian aid of communicating with people affected by disaster

A briefing paper that considers whether, in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquakes in April and May 2015, people were getting information that was useful and relevant to their needs.

[*http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Are%2Byou%2BListening%2BNow%2BBriefing%2BPaper\_LR.pdf*](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Are%2Byou%2BListening%2BNow%2BBriefing%2BPaper_LR.pdf)

**Humanitarianism in the Network Age:** [www.unocha.org/hina](http://www.unocha.org/hina)

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2005):** World Disasters Report – Focus on Information in Disasters

Winstanley, A.; Cronin, K.; Daly, M. 2011. Supporting communication around the Canterbury earthquakes and other risks: A learning workshop 7th April 2011, *GNS Miscellaneous Series* 37. 39 p.

**Appendix A - Communication Needs Assessment Template**

**Blank template**

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| **ISSUE** | **NOTES** |
| **Situational** |  |
| **Stakeholders** |  |
| **Objectives** |  |
| **Methods** |  |
| **Feedback** |  |

**Appendix B - Recovery Communications Plan Template**

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| **AIM** | **What is the purpose of the Communication Plan?**  In most cases the purpose of the Communication Plan is to provide timely and useful information to the community and restore public confidence in the recovery process. |
| **OBJECTIVES** | **S**pecific |
| **M**easurable |
| **A**chievable |
| **R**ealistic |
| **T**imely |

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| **WHO** | **WHAT** | **HOW** | **WHEN** |
| **Who is the audience?**  Identify and prioritise target audience | **What are the key messages?**  These should be clear and succinct statements you want the target audience to receive | **How are the messages going to be delivered?**  Select methods that meet the community need and use existing resources | **When are the messages going to be delivered?**  These need to be timely and appropriate |
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| **Ref#** | **AGREED ACTIONS** | **PRIORITY** | **GOVT MIN/STAKEHOLDER** | **RESPONSIBILITY** | **TIMING/RESOURCES REQUIRED** |
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1. GFDRR, EU, UNDP: The Disaster Recovery Framework Guide, 2015 <file:///C:/Users/WB491002/Downloads/DRF-Guide%20(1).pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Communications with Communities (CwC) is an emerging field of humanitarian response that helps to meet the information and communications needs of people affected by crisis. CwC is based on the principle that information and communications are critical forms of aid, without which disaster survivors cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities. OCHA advocates CwC approaches and services as a central component of disaster response. It coordinates and supports CwC actors where necessary, and ensures CwC principles and approaches are integrated into OCHA’s work. OCHA is also a founding member of the Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC) Network. (source: OCHA on Message: Communications with Communities, January 2014 at* [*https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OOM-CommunicationwithCommunities\_eng\_311013.pdf*](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OOM-CommunicationwithCommunities_eng_311013.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stakeholders may include the disaster-affected population; unaffected population; private sector; non-government organisations; community groups; international organisations; academia institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)