Common Services for Communication and Community Engagement

National and Sub-National Platforms

A status update, October 2019
CDAC Network convenes the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI). It was formed in 2017 to promote CCE/A more widely in the sector as a systematic approach. It has participation from CDAC Network, CHS Alliance, IASC Taskteam/RG2; SCHR, Near Network and any other network/alliance that wishes to further the approach.

A CCEI Core Group of UNICEF, OCHA, IFRC and CDAC Secretariat leads the initiative from day to day.

**CDAC Network is composed of the following Member organisations:**

**Full Members**

1. Action Aid International  
2. Anthrologica  
3. BBC Media Action  
4. Community World Service Asia  
5. DAHLIA  
6. Deutsche Welle Akademie  
7. First Response Radio  
8. Fondation Hirondelle  
9. Ground Truth Solutions  
10. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)  
11. International Media Support  
12. InsightShare  
13. Internews  
15. NORCAP  
16. The Peace and Conflict Journalism Network Asia (PECOJON)  
17. Plan International  
18. Smile Again Africa Development Organisation (SAADO)  
19. Save the Children  
20. Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF)  
21. Translators without Borders  
22. United Methodist Communications (UMCOM)  
24. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
26. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)  
27. World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)  
28. World Vision International  
29. World Food Programme (WFP)  
30. World Health Organization (WHO)  

**Affiliate Members**

31. Development Media International  
32. EarthX  
33. Film Aid  
34. InWhatLanguage  
35. Lifeline Energy

This paper is updated twice a year to support the work of the CCEI and the IASC Results Group: Accountability & Inclusion. It is a living document and gives a brief overview of the status of national and sub-national platforms in various disaster-affected-or-prone contexts around the world. See a 10-Year timeline of platform development in the CDAC 2018 Annual Report. For more information on any of the platforms outlined, or to contribute information on another platform or context, please contact Marian Casey-Maslen, CDAC Executive Director: marian.casey-maslen@cdacnetwork.org.

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1 This CDAC paper was originally drafted by Meg Sattler (CDAC Expert Pool) in collaboration with OCHA colleagues Stewart Davies and Rita Maingi, with support from CDAC Secretariat and platform leads as part of a background paper for the CDAC 2019 Annual General Assembly.

2 RG2 is co-chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF

Updated: 31 October 2019
1. What is a national platform?

It has been widely agreed that national platforms for Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) are essential for making progress toward greater participation and accountability in humanitarian response. A policy paper describing this in detail was produced by the CDAC Network in 2016, supported by a recently-developed How-To Guide on Collective Models for organisations interested in establishing such platforms.

By ‘platforms’, the network refers to innovative coordination mechanisms that bring together community engagement activities and sit within, or influence, overall response leadership. These ensure community engagement efforts are coordinated, systemic and locally-led. They are led by Government (where possible), with participation from local NGOs, Red Cross/Crescent Societies,
UN Agencies, INGOs, Media Development agencies, specialist communications entities and private sector.

National platforms on CCE can have the following areas of action and seek to have innovation as an integral part of how they are established and operate:

- ToR for the platform endorsed by government and/or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)
- Coordination meetings as locally-led as possible
- Collaborative actions that may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
  - Mapping: Who is doing What Where When (4Ws) relating to CCE in country
  - Needs assessment survey tools mainstreamed for information and two-way comms
  - Flexible Funding Mechanisms that are as locally led as possible
  - Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for community engagement and community perceptions in a disaster response, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis, dialogue and course correction
  - Common feedback mechanisms
  - Media, Telecommunications and Linguistic landscape guides
  - Message library of pre-approved, contextually appropriate messages, including collating, reviewing, revising and pre-testing
  - Communication products: videos, briefing notes and posters aimed at advocating for CCE and sharing community feedback with key decision makers in an effort to influence decision-making
  - Online platforms or knowledge management systems to support information sharing, advocacy with and collaboration between a broad range of stakeholders
  - Rumour tracking and management
  - Lifeline training for journalists and aid organisations (communication saves lives!)
  - Capacity strengthening for platform participants and practitioners
  - Safeguarding PSEA messaging and engagement – communicating the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse principles and communicating rights and entitlements on feedback, complaints and redress to communities
  - Anthropological studies linked to communication culture, behavioural change, in specific country context
  - Research and learning

2. Afghanistan – A Community Engagement working group

**Context:** The Afghanistan Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) provides technical and coordination support to the integration of community engagement and AAP into the programme cycle, informing decision making and enhancing local participation. This facilitates contextualized application of various commitments to accountability, including the Core Humanitarian Standard; Grand Bargain commitments and the Afghan Government’s Citizens’ Charter National Priority Programme.

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The CEWG was officially inaugurated on 31 July 2018 after preparatory meetings between WFP, UNOPS and IOM. Prior, the CEWG was co-led by UNOPS and WFP with a core consortium of UNHCR, OCHA, IOM, ACBAR UNICEF and NRC. The CEWG reports to and is endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

**Government links:** N/A

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** The interim CEWG chair is Jawad Shahabi jawad.shahabi@wfp.org, Protection and AAP Programme Policy Officer from WFP Afghanistan. A dedicated coordinator may join through a Stand-by partner.


**Donors:** The group has been led by WFP and UNOPS without dedicated funding but through staff time.

**Opportunities and challenges:** The CEWG has conducted a community engagement mapping and survey exercise. The activities seem to be prevalent all provinces, with engagement strong in Kabul and Nangarhar and weaker in hard-to-reach areas in the western and northern regions. Respondents say efforts should focus on: engaging with communities in harder-to-reach areas / locations impacted by high levels of displacement and significant returns; promoting community structures and the incorporation of local capacities; establishing accountability to affected populations (AAP) focal points at local levels; and advocating for dedicated resources (personnel, funds) to support mainstreaming.

3. Bangladesh ‘Shongjog’ (Dhaka)

**Context:** Work towards a systematic approach began in 2013 with the establishment of a Working Group for Communication with Communities in Emergencies (CwCiE). The CwCiE evolved to the Shongjog (‘linking’), a wider national, multi-stakeholder preparedness and response platform led by the Department of Disaster Management - with a mission to improve the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to disaster affected communities in Bangladesh through predictable, coordinated and resourced two-way communication. See its dedicated website at: www.shongjog.org.bd/.

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Government links: Department of Disaster Management endorsement of the ToR
Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs: Chaired by the Bangladesh government’s Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and convened by the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and BBC Media Action.

National and international actors involved: The Core Group of nine members includes the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and one other government agency, two UN agencies, two iNGOs, two National NGOs/CSO working in Bangladesh and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). Secretariat support from BBC Media Action.

Donors: In 2014-2018, the Shongjog was funded through the CDAC Network component of DFID’s Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (2013 - 2018) with a local Flexible Funding Mechanism in place. Individual agency funding.

Opportunities and challenges: As a result of the Shongjog, CCE was a key part of the Cox’s Bazar response from the start. In February 2017 in Cox’s Bazar a CwC coordination group, led by IOM, was proposed for the response to the earlier Rohingya refugee caseload in registered camps (see section below on Cox’s Bazar WG). The CwC coordination structure was established in early September. It has four sub-groups: (1) Info Hubs; (2) Accountability; (3) Radio (4) Emergency Communications. Between 25 and 30 agencies participated in CwC Working Group meetings. While good engagement by international agencies, involvement of Bangladeshi civil society organisations and local authorities was weak with language and culturally different communication styles constraining issues (CwC RTE 2018).

4. Bangladesh Cox’s Bazar – A common service supporting the Rohingya response

Context: The common service for community engagement and accountability (CSCEA) was first developed by BBC Media Action, Internews and Translators without Borders. It integrates community engagement into the humanitarian programme cycle across the Cox’s Bazar response and ensures that community feedback, the provision of information, and participation are continuous and effectively implemented and coordinated. Through research, training, collective analysis of feedback and the production of IPC materials, the service works to ensure the community has access to the information they want and need in the right language and works to assist humanitarians to communicate effectively and respectfully with the Rohingya refugee community. The design was informed by lessons learned from emergencies including Yemen, Nepal, Iraq, South Sudan, the Caribbean and the Philippines.

To complement the thematic work of the common platform actors, CDAC member Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) has been conducting regular systematic large-scale surveys across both Rohingya refugees and host communities. These cross-sectoral survey tools look at how, overall, humanitarian programmes are responding to community needs and are directly linked to the objectives of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) and commitments set out in the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). By ensuring a representative survey sample, GTS can provide all humanitarian agencies on the ground with robust data to inform their programming. The data is also used as the
basis for perceptual indicators to measure progress against the strategic objectives of the JRP. GTS plans to continue to work closely with the CSCEA.

**Government Ministry or Dept links:** The service is independent of government, but coordinates closely with the government-led national CwC platform (Shongjog) and the relevant local government actors in the affected area, including the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** The service supports the activities of the Cox’s Bazar CWC Working Group (hosted by IOM) and leads affiliated groups: BBC Media Action chairs the radio subgroup; TWB and UNHCR co-chair the emergency communications taskforce; Internews formerly chaired the accountability subgroup.

**National and international actors involved:** BBC Media Action, Translators without Borders, Internews (until March 2019) and Ground Truth Solutions (from September 2019). More than 80 other partners are using common tools and services, and/or sharing feedback data for collective analysis; and over 12,000 individuals have accessed common communication tools provided by the service.

**Donors:** Major donors are ECHO, DFID (with funds flowing through UNOPS and IOM). GTS has conducted three survey rounds since July 2018 with funding from SDC and DFID.

**Opportunities and challenges:** Significant progress has been made in terms of the provision of information to affected people. Refugees feel substantially more informed than they did at the beginning of the crisis and say that it has become easier to get information - . While this represents a significant success, some concerning information gaps remain, including in how information is reaching particular audiences as well as gaps related to specific, more complex topics. Similarly, the importance of seeking and acting on feedback has been recognised and agencies are beginning to mainstream accountability mechanisms throughout their work. But the response has not yet achieved the level of systematised accountability desired. There are significant gaps. This is particularly true for women, who are less able to access feedback mechanisms, and for community leaders, who sit at a crucial nexus of information provision, engagement and representation but who are currently detached from the more formal engagement and feedback systems within the institutional response. Both of these challenges require the continuation and evolution of the specialist, technical support provided by the common service to sectors, agencies and informal functions working across the response. The service has recently transitioned to new funding, with an adaptive and more focused design that will fill particular demographic and geographical gaps as well as iterating tools and approaches for the needs of the longer term, protracted crisis.

5. Central African Republic – A working group and a common service
**Context:** In face of the grave humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR), and in order to reinforce accountability towards affected people in CAR, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has created an Inter-Agency Collective Service project (IACS) to operationalise accountability to affected people by supporting organisations working at the frontlines of the response.

The platform became active in June 2019 as a working Group on Accountability to Affected People (AAP WG) to develop a collective approach for IACS. ToR and action plan enclosed and available.

The Inter-Agency Collective service include a range of accountability mechanism such as Information and feedback centers in IDP’s Camps and a humanitarian Hotline managed by DRC( Danish Refugees Council). As part of this joint effort, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) is working with UNICEF, OCHA and the International Organisation for Migration’s (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data collection teams to conduct micro-surveys of people’s perceptions that can help guide the response, measure impact and ensure that the views of affected people are regularly considered and acted upon. A GTS community perception mission deployed in August 2019 to run two data collection pilots. It will further support the HRP workshop (scheduled on 1 October) to develop and feed outcome level indicators for the 2020 HRP.

The goal is that by the end of April 2020, accountability to affected people will have become a central element in designing and tracking humanitarian action in CAR.

**Government links:** Links with the government are being established and it will play a significant role in the establishment of IFC.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** UNICEF and OCHA. The AAP WG reports to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG).

**Contact:** Franklin Moliba-Sese fmoliba@unicef.org.

**National and international actors involved:** The AAP WG has been revamped since June 2019 with monthly meetings. For Members see the ToR attached.

**Donors:** UNICEF received CCEI funding from Sida and Dfid. In addition there is ongoing funding support to the UNICEF AAP project, the S4D project (for ETC cluster), Ligne Verte (DRC) and the MSNA (REACH) by the CAR Humanitarian Fund with a key focus on AAP (indicators, activities, establishments of collective CFM).

**Opportunities and challenges:** Staff turnover and recruitment challenges in CAR continues to hamper the speed with which the collective service has been able to become fully functioning.

**Context:** The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is grappling with the world's second largest Ebola epidemic on record, with more than 2000 lives lost and 3000 confirmed infections since the outbreak was declared on 1 August 2018 (WHO/MoH). The outbreak is occurring in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces.

While significant efforts are being made in terms of overall coordination of the response, work is still ongoing to ensure a more systematic approach to CCE/AAP and having a wider-than health approach.

**Government links:** The Commission Communication de Risque et Engagement Communautaire (CREC) in Goma has a sub-group tasked to coordinate key messages related to the Ebola response. A new CREC taskforce on community feedback has been established. Working in cooperation with the Ministry for Health, WHO convenes a weekly Ebola North Kivu Risk Communication and Community Engagement Partners Call.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Efforts are ongoing by a number of agencies to better harmonise their efforts

**Contact:** WHO Aphaluck Bhatiasevia: bhatiaseviap@who.int;

**National and international actors involved:** Key actors in the CCE/AAP space include: National Red Cross Society and national and local NGOs and CSOs; and many CDAC members including WHO, OCHA, UNICEF, IOM, WFP, UNFPA, Internews, Translators without Borders, Anthrologica, Save the Children among numerous others.

**Donors:** A number of individual agencies have funds for their AAP/CCE projects. H2H Network provided CCE funding to Internews and TWB.

**Opportunities and challenges:** Support for building on the national humanitarian architecture is a put in place by CREC (see above). Ensuring all UN agencies with a coordination mandate play a leadership role in their designated coordination area to apply CCE/AAP good practice. Language gaps continue to impede more effective two-way CCE/AAP efforts. Using the response to leverage the establishment of a National CCE/A Preparedness Platform to address many of the current challenges in a future disaster response.

7. Dominica – A rapid response with lasting potential

**Context:** On 18 September 2017, Hurricane Maria hit the Caribbean island of Dominica. Communications, connectivity and power were severely impacted as vital infrastructure was destroyed. The government set up feedback channels under its Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) with high-level leadership involvement. Channels included a 3-number hotline, an email-address and a help desk in Roseau. The hotlines were designed for the emergency response with the intention that a more robust system would be developed in the future, embedded within the government emergency telecommunications system. Communication from communities was
facilitated by the Dominica Amateur Radio Club (DARCI). The Government initially worked through the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) to re-establish communication. DFID funded CDAC, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), ACAPS and IRIN via H2H to respond. CDAC undertook a rapid assessment in September. It then facilitated the establishment of a CCE working group and organised weekly meetings to support individual and collective agency efforts. To support longer term capacity, three ham radio kits were procured in collaboration with DARCI and after training were handed over to three disaster management committees in Bagatelle, Penville and Laplaine.

**Government links:** Government Information Services, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Emergency Operation Center were involved, specifically with the team that managed the hotline. In the recovery phase this extended to the Office of Disaster Management. Government engagement was further achieved through sectoral coordination with close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Environment (WASH), Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Ministry of Housing, Division of Local Government and the Ministry of Information and Telecommunication (both on CCE coordination).

**Leads / co-chairs:** From October 2017–April 2018, CDAC Secretariat deployed Platform coordinators to the WG. In June 2018, Habitat for Humanity took over leadership to end of 2018.

**National and international actors involved:** Various actors were engaged at different points to different degrees, including the Dominica Red Cross, Caritas Antilles, Samaritans Purse, IsraAid, West Dominica Children’s Federation, Lifeline Ministries, DARCI, Dominica Association of Persons with Disabilities, OCHA, UNDP, IOM, UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA.

**Donors:** DFID H2H via CDAC from Sept 2017 – May 2018.

**Opportunities and challenges:** In May 2018, an independent learning review recommended that the working group should remain part of the coordination system, expanding its membership to local media associations and supporting a future localised handover. In June 2018, Habitat for Humanity took over leadership in support of such efforts. Many international organisations left the island with the exception of IOM, ISRAAID, Samaritan and UNDP and government has taken ownership of the rebuilding efforts. As such no other organisation has actively taken over leadership. The working group still exists in theory, making it easier to re-activate should a new emergency occur, to share work and seek out possible collaborations.

8. Fiji – Government and NGO collaboration to strengthen a cluster

**Context:** Fiji is prone to climate-related disasters. In 2016 Tropical Cyclone Winston demanded an enormous disaster response and recovery operation, led by the Fijian Government. The government has been working with Australia and others on preparedness efforts built on a premise that international assistance can offer a unique and specific supporting role during major disasters. In 2018, as part of a DFAT funded joint CDAC-GTS project, a [CCE scoping mission](#) was undertaken with a gap for collective preparedness action identified. With the approval of the NDMO, work began on setting up a common service leading to the establishment of the Fiji Communication and Community Engagement Working (CCEWG) in May 2019 as a preparedness platform for the coordination of CCE activities in times of disaster. It sits within the

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Communications Cluster and linked closely with the second Cluster working group: the Emergency Telecommunications (ETC) WG. The NDMO has convened three meetings of the multi-stakeholder CCE Working Group to date.

With technical support from CDAC, the WG Terms of Reference and governance structure has been agreed. CDACs joint project partner, Ground Truth Solutions undertook feedback training in Suva in Fiji August 2019 on systematic data collection, analysis & feedback while CDAC, in cooperation with its members, facilitated technical training in CCE/ Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) tailored to the Fiji context in September 2019.

**Government links/ Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** The Ministry of Communications will be responsible for leading the Communications Cluster as a whole. The Department of Information within the Ministry of Communications will lead the CCE Working Group, with the support of the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) and UNICEF as Co-Leads of the CCE Working Group. The Department of Communications within the Ministry of Communications will lead the ETC Working Group, with the support of the Telecommunications Authority of Fiji (TAF) as a Co-Lead of the ETC Working Group. There will be two-way communication and reporting lines between the Working Groups and the overall Cluster.

The CDAC National Coordinator who provides technical support is based at the NDMO with support from a CDAC Regional CCE Advisor based in Suva.

**Contact:** Jacinta Isaacs: jacinta.isaacs@gmail.com and Jacinta.Isaacs@cdacnetwork.org

**National and international actors involved:** NDMO, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Education, Telecom Authority of Fiji, OCHA, UNICEF, FAO, IFRC, the Australian High Commission, Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), Live and Learn Fiji, Plan International Australia, ADRA, FemLink Pacific, Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation, Rainbow Pride Fiji, Partners in Community Development Fiji, Save the Children Fiji, Ground Truth Solutions and CDAC. The NDMO has opened up the membership of the CCE Working Group and interested organisations can submit an expression of interest to NDMO.

**Donors:** Australian DFAT (via a joint CDAC-GTS localisation and participation project)

**Opportunities and challenges:** There are various strong examples of community engagement in Fiji, especially with community leaders, that takes into account young people, women, people with a disability, elderly, pregnant and breastfeeding women, LGBGTI. But engagement often gravitates towards leaders and strengthens existing power structures. It has also been difficult to close the feedback loop.

Collective, coherent and coordinated community engagement which feeds into decision making, using multi– channels (e.g. Common Feedback mechanism incl. hotlines, regular micro surveys on key indicators, rapid assessments, etc.), with a focus on analysis of trends and recommendations and closing the loop presents an immense opportunity to strengthen existing systems. A recent GTS pilot showed promising opportunities to improve programme quality, strengthen community relations and NDMO reputation and create an evidence base for response impact.

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9. Haiti – response platforms with potential for new structure

**Context:** In the immediate aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the CDAC Network undertook its first ever ground initiative. Its work included establishing an overview of the communication environment; working with local media; promoting coordinated messaging to affected populations via mass media; information-sharing and coordination of communication activities; and integrating CDAC Haiti in the existing humanitarian system. The response had distinct phases: a preparatory phase in Jan-May 2010 when representatives of the CDAC Network members on the ground in Haiti (OCHA, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Internews, and International Media Support) helped recruit organisations to join the initiative; from May-September 2010 a CDAC Haiti secretariat was staffed with a Coordinator, an Information Officer, a Media Liaison Officer and an accountant (contracted via host Internews). The secretariat based its operations in the same building as Reporters sans Frontières and closed in November 2011.

The Internews’ Humanitarian Information Service in Haiti, which ran from October 2016 to February 2017, aimed to improve the quality of timely and actionable information exchanges with Haitian communities affected by Hurricane Matthew. Internews’ two-way communication model relied on gathering feedback from affected populations in order to directly address the issues that concern them the most, and to help humanitarian partners integrate their concerns into their programming and interventions. On-the-ground teams conducted data gathering and rumour tracking for feedback-based publications targeted to the affected population and for a humanitarian audience. It partnered with the ETC on radio rehabilitation.

In 2017, Ground Truth Solutions undertook the first round of perception surveys of affected people, humanitarian staff and local partners in Haiti as part of a seven-country study with the OECD to track progress against the goals of the Grand Bargain. This monitoring exercise continued in 2018 when the Humanitarian Country team used the findings in the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2019 to track progress against perceptual indicators, as well as referring to the survey results in the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan’s strategy for Community Engagement and Accountability. In early 2019, a concept for setting up a common feedback platform ‘Mécanisme de Plaintes, Référencement et Feedback’ is being socialised using the latest perception data. This initiative is led by the protection cluster.

**Government links:** In 2010/2011, a GoH representative from the President’s Office attended on occasion and at one meeting was accompanied by a member of the Civil Protection Department (DPC, part of the Ministry of the Interior) who outlined the GoH’s plans and initiatives in relation to emergency messaging for earthquakes and hurricanes.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** N/A

**National and international actors involved:** The Second Phase, May 2010 onwards, saw an increase in the number of attendants at the weekly meetings to approximately 25 to 30 participants. OCHA, Internews, IOM, UNDP, IMS, Helpage, Oxfam and CECOSIDA attended most of the minuted meetings, with at least five humanitarian NGOs, five media and communications organisations, and

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five UN agencies usually attending. The American Embassy or USAID was represented at most meetings (as outlined in CDAC Learning Report).

**Donors:** The 2010-2011 initiative, was funded largely through the OCHA’s ERRF with some additional short-term funding in 2011 from the global CDAC Network and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In total, CDAC Haiti received US $615,000. In 2016 Internews received DFID funding for a common feedback analysis project for about six months in response to Hurricane Matthew. New funding is being sought for the common feedback mechanism.

**Opportunities and challenges:** For 2010/11 see details in the [CDAC Haiti Learning Report](#).

10. **India – Kerala WG and work towards National Platform**

**Context:** Since 2018, engagement has been ongoing between the UNICEF, UN- OCHA ROAP and Sphere India on a possible National Platform to better support Accountability to At-Risk Populations. This is a work in progress at the national level.

At the regional level, in August 2018, Kerala witnessed its worst ever floods and landslides and a communicating with communities working group was established. It forms part of the liaison with the Inter-Agency Group Kerala and works in close collaboration with the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) and Kerala State Planning Board (KSPB) for more effective coordination and strengthened delivery of services and assistance to disaster affected communities. The Working Group also seeks to support and collaborate with the respective District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) in the affected districts.

CDAC provides technical support to the WG and the ongoing discussions at the national level.

**Government links:** National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and local authorities

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** The Kerala WG functions under the leadership of the Government including the NDMA. It is proposed that once the CwC WG is fully functioning, a rotational co-chairmanship from the humanitarian actors within the working group can be introduced.

**National and international actors involved:** NGOs / Sphere Network, INGOs, UN, government

**Donors:** UNICEF and UN-RC support the WG secretariat.

**Opportunities and challenges:** UNICEF India and Sphere India have engaged CDAC as technical support provider. CDAC undertook a technical advisory mission to Kerala in April 2019 funded by Sphere India (via UNICEF funding). It is commendable to see the deliberate attempt to ensure that a CCE/AAP approach can be systematically applied and institutionalised throughout Kerala and more widely, resulting in a more sustainable process. Like most platforms, there are several issues and challenges in the early phase that require attention in order to achieve the full potential.
11. Indonesia – Local working group, national community of practice

**Context:** Partners in the Central Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami response identified a lack of life-saving and life-enhancing information sharing with affected communities, as well as systemically collecting and acting on feedback. A Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) was formed in Palu.

Building on this, a Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action is being planned at the national level. It will leverage the experience of a multi-sector platform that brings together diverse partners providing technical support in coordination, delivery and advocacy of more inclusive community engagement. Plans indicate that this should be operationalised in the second quarter of 2019.

**Government links:** The CEWG has in-principle support from the NDMO; Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNPB) to support clusters on demand. The CoP has yet to be develop an engagement strategy with Government.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Overall technical and coordination leadership of the Sulawesi CEWG has come from IFRC/PMI and UNICEF. OCHA has provided support to both areas with dedicated capacity in Jakarta and remote/surge support from the regional office. Chair is Odie Seumahu: odie.seumahu@gmail.com

The national level CoP design is being led by Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana Indonesia (MPBI), UNICEF and OCHA. MPBI is an association of disaster management experts charged with bringing together practitioners from a variety of sectors including the government, international institutions, national NGOs and academics.

**National and international actors involved:** Sulawesi CEWG: IFRC with PMI, OCHA, WHO, Save the Children, Plan Indonesia, Sulteng Bergerak, Nusantara Jaya Foundation, Nebula Radio, Oxfam, CARE, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNDP COP- UNICEF, OCHA and MPBI.

**Donors:** Sulawesi CEWG - UNICEF is funding a dedicated coordinator and OCHA Regional Office providing on-demand support services.

**Opportunities and challenges:** Lessons from the experience in Palu presented a significant opportunity to build up a national platform. According to the local platform coordinator, INGOS, UN agencies and IFRC bringing in experience implementing feedback mechanisms meant more comprehensive engagement with communities in Central Sulawesi, and the introduction of the CEWG in the humanitarian coordination structure was appreciated. Funding however was a challenge. There was no emergency funding available for CE. It had to be channelled through an agency, which limited the ability to engage other organizations and flexibility for delivery.

12. Kenya – A new working group built on a training

**Context:** The Kenya Communicating with Communities technical group was initiated in 2017 following a CDAC Foundational Training in December 2016. Participants decided to start the group with the aim of sharing information, support one another in community engagement
initiatives and work collaboratively. It is also a sub-working entity of the Interagency Working Group (IAWG).

**Government links:** The Kenya Red Cross is the interlocutor.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Transparency International (Kenya Chapter) and SOS Kenya.

**National and international actors involved:** NGOs, INGOs, UN and the Red Cross movement.

**Donors:** N/A

**Opportunities and challenges:** Regular meetings are difficult due to conflicting priorities, lack of commitment to the group, lack of a clear strategy.

A regional workshop under the auspices of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI) in 2018 resulted in a renewed plan for collective work. The Nairobi workshop and global interest in community engagement and AAP has provided an opportunity to reinvigorate existing plans and activities, however it remains to be seen whether this will be matched by increased funding and clear commitments from overall response leaders.

There is an opportunity for increased engagement pertaining to preparedness in Kenya, due to various overlapping initiatives including the DEPP.

### 13. Mozambique – responding to Cyclone Idai

**Context:** On 14-15 March 2019, Cyclone Idai hit and the National Red Cross activated immediately with direct communication and engagement with communities. On the 19 March, UNOCHA deployed its CCE focal person from the Regional office in Nairobi and a Community Engagement working group (CEWG) was quickly established in Beira. UNICEF, WFP/ETC and Plan increased their CCE support capacity. On 4-6 April CDAC and TwB deployed international support to the CEWG. During March coordination meetings were held daily and later 3 times per week at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), linking to local authorities depending on the activity.

The CEWG Terms of Reference were drafted, with the collaboration of UNICEF and Plan and approved by the CEWG on 29 April, when the group was still holding two meetings per week. A six-month Work Plan was approved by its members in the end of May and the group reduced its meeting to once a week.

In June 2019, as the CEWG and the health engagement working group (created shortly after the cholera outbreak) had a significant cross over of participants, it was decided to merge the two groups, but with the reassurance that CCE was still a priority and that the CEWG workplan would still be implemented.

**Government links:** Since early June, the Provincial Department of Health (PDH) has co-chaired the CEWG; the meetings are held in its office. The-state-run Social Communications Institute (Instituto de Comunicação Social/ICS) and its local-representative has been an active member of the meetings.
**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Initially led by OCHA and supported by a CDAC coordinator. The 06 May 2019 meeting of the CEWG agreed that the group, led by the Government, would be co-chaired by Plan International and UNICEF. Plan International ended up not taking the lead, and UNICEF has been chairing the CEWG with the Provincial Department of Health (PDH) since early June.

**National and international actors involved:** Organisations attending include: IFRC, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), UNICEF, TWB, Plan International, Protection cluster, PSEA rep, UNFPA, WHO, WFP, WVI, UNHCR, IOM.

**Donors:** UNOCHA, CDAC H2H (DFID) project funds

**Opportunities and challenges:** At Maputo level, CCEA is discussed as part of relevant cluster meetings including the Protection, Logistics and Inter-Cluster meetings. Since the first focus of CCE was to get the community radios back broadcasting, coordination includes engagement with radio-related institutions, such as Instituto de Comunicacao Social (ICS) and Forcom (umbrella organizations for community radios), with local authorities at district level, and the INGC.

14. **Nepal – Working group and interagency common feedback project**

**Context:** Immediately after the 2015 earthquake, the Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) was formed, led by UNICEF, building on a Communications Working Group led by the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium. It is an inclusive cross-sectoral coordination and technical support service involving UN, international and local NGOs, private sector media and telecommunications companies, national and local government bodies. It is called together as-needed. The group is one of four technical working groups supporting enhanced coordination the HCT’s Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Plan for Nepal. Under this, a common service platform collects, aggregates, disseminates and advocates for community feedback collected from affected areas, called the Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project (CFP). It is hosted by the RCO and works on behalf of all stakeholders interested in engaging, including I/NGOs, UN agencies, government, media, donors, etc. The CFP has been extended through the reconstruction phase. Pre-earthquake, the Communications Working Group, operating in a preparedness context, had collected agreed generic life-saving and life-enhancing messages from each cluster which could be broadcast by media stakeholders immediately after the quake. The CFP has since been mainstreaming feedback from affected populations through effective engagement, data gathering, analysis and advocacy.

**Government links:** CFP worked closely with Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA) under Ministry of Home Affairs. Community feedback was a part of NRA’s communication workplan.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** The Working Group is chaired by UNICEF with coordination support from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and remote technical support from OCHA’s Regional Office. Contact: Sanju Bhattarai: sbhattarai@unicef.org

Updated: 31 October 2019
**National and international actors involved:** Placement of the project within the UNRCO allows it access and advocacy at higher levels of leadership, including with the HCT, coordination mechanisms and reconstruction coordination fora.

**Donors:** DFID

**Opportunities and challenges:** The absence of government authorities in district level offices proved challenging when district liaison assistance was required to dispense district level survey results and findings.

A change to a federal structure and delays in government endorsement of new population and household level data made sampling difficult, and so CFP’s first survey round was delayed until second quarter 2018.

Frequent changes of the CEO of the Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was challenging. With the appointment of a new CEO in the NRA, advocacy of the objectives of the CFP and the findings of the community perception reports had to re-start.

15. **Papua New Guinea – A Community Engagement working group**

**Context:** On 26 February 2018, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake hit the Highlands Region of Papua New Guinea affecting an estimated 544,000 people in Enga, Gulf, Hela, Southern Highlands and Western provinces. Infrastructure was destroyed, livelihoods lost and thousands displaced. The response launched was jointly led by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), Disaster Management Team (DMT) and the National Disaster Centre (NDC), focusing on Health; Food Security; WASH; Shelter, Non-Food Items and Camp Coordination and Camp Management; Nutrition; Protection; and Education. Considering PNG’s complex cultural environment and the inaccessibility of rural communities, community engagement was necessary to enable a targeted response, limiting resource wastage and saving time. A Community Engagement Working Group was established to facilitate two-way communication between humanitarian responders and affected communities. Meeting on an ad-hoc basis, the group supported organisational and coordinated accountability mechanisms and services to all seven clusters, including a Community Response Map, common messages, mass communication and inter-cluster dialogues facilitating coordination of community engagement activities.

**Government links:** The CE WG is connected to the National Disaster Centre, via the DMT.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Disaster Management Team, Stephanie Laryea, UN Resident Coordinator's Office. Contact: Stephanie.laryea@one.un.org

**National and international actors involved:** Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC), Consultative, Implementing Monitoring Council, Highlands Humanitarian Hub – NGO Consortium, Child Fund; World Vision International; FAO; IOM; UNICEF; UNDP; UNFPA; UN Women; WHO; WFP; OHCHR; Care; Digicel (international, private sector); PNG FM; Caritas; Red Cross; Save the Children.

**Donors:** CERF, through an IOM proposal.

**Opportunities and challenges:** Not being part of the existing humanitarian coordination structure, the group required significant set up and advocacy for buy-in. There was no emergency funding
available for community engagement, so funding had to be channelled through an agency, limiting inter-agency coordination and engagement and flexibility for delivery. Delayed and misinformation from relevant global HQs and CERF secretariat on the feasibility of emergency funding transfers took nearly 2 months to clarify, delaying implementation of some activities. Eg, posters about the response were developed much later than anticipated which limited their utility.

There was limited capacity in-country to sustain the working group. Now that the main earthquake humanitarian response is completed, the Working Group may transition to a Community of Practice but this is not guaranteed and would likely require external support.

16. Philippines – Building on a longstanding Community of Practice

Context: As part of post-typhoon Haiyan preparedness initiatives in 2014, a Community of Practice on Community Engagement (CoPCE) was established by OCHA to support the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and others to mainstream two-way communication in crises. Services provided include improvement of two-way communication platforms, feedback avenues, accountability pathways, closing-the-loop mechanisms, common service partnerships and innovations in the use of technologies for engaging with affected populations. The CoP also provides recommendations, updates and technical assistance to the HCT, ICCG, government agencies and other thematic working groups in preparedness and response.

The group was active during 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), Typhoons Mangkhut and Yutu (2018) and the measles outbreak of 2019. Its activities across these different emergencies have been different per context and have included: Rapid Information Communication and Accountability Assessment (RICAA); initiating regular dialogue/listening exercises between government and the affected population; Learning Reviews; community consultations; use of drone to assist local communities; frontline SMS/Infoboard systems for feedback channels; humanitarian radio programming; social media (through Rappler’s partnership) and ham radio; integration of questions into the ICCG’s 72-hour assessment template pertaining to the information needs and preferred communication channels; infoblast to WHO and UNICEF (part of overall support to the Department of Health (DOH) campaign drive to eradicate measles and improve vaccination rates). In preparedness, activities have included flagship pre-crisis information mapping and consultation (2017) to ensure that aside from each household, the voices of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (women, children, indigenous groups, persons with disability and elderly) are reflected in national and local contingency plans.

Government links: The platform, linked to the Ministry of Information, acts as a service to national and local government.

Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs: OCHA. Contact: Gil Arevalo arevalog@un.org

Updated: 31 October 2019
National and international actors involved: With more than 50 members, the CoPCE provides strategic direction and technical support to any field level working group. Members include UN agencies, international non-government organizations, faith-based groups, private sector, civil society organizations, media networks, academe, government agencies and the in-country Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network (CDAC).

Donors: N/A. In 2017-2018 small Flexible Funding package from CDAC DEPP Programme.

Opportunities and challenges: The Philippines is an increasingly connected society, presenting many opportunities for tech-based systems to engage people en masse. It is also however a country struck by multiple emergencies (both natural and human-made disasters) in different places, and is populated by many different types of communities, meaning nationally-led communications platforms require a significant degree of work and resources to continually support disaster-affected communities. Despite this, the platform remains one of the most successful examples globally and was an early pioneer of a national platform model that has served to inspire the inception and improvement of many others.

17. Syria – Launching a common service across multiple contexts

Context: Current efforts are underway to develop a collective community engagement approach for the Syria response as a whole. The overall approach will have three sections that reflect three different operational areas: the North West, the North East and the rest of the country (which is programmed from Damascus). Each of these three sections will be designed and developed at the hub-level.

The Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019, which included specific questions on community perceptions reported: 28% of communities indicated that the community has access to full information needed to access assistance; 50% of communities reported that a mechanism was in place to provide feedback; 84% of communities reported having no influence on how or what humanitarian agencies were providing in assistance. Face-to-face communication was the preferred method of communication by the majority of communities in Syria, followed by WhatsApp.

Efforts in 2019 will include establishing PSEA Networks, training and awareness raising amongst humanitarian workers, and the roll-out of interagency community-based complaints mechanisms, which will allow beneficiaries to safely and confidentially report SEA concerns using a wide variety of channels.

Government links: N/A

Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs: Communication and Community Engagement Initiative, currently hosted in-country by WFP. Consultant contact is Jon Bugge: jonbugge@yahoo.co.uk

National and international actors involved: Due to the complexities in Syria, a comprehensive platform model is not yet fully-functioning across the hubs, and depending on the design process may reflect a collective service model instead.

Updated: 31 October 2019
Donors: The work is currently being funded by the CCEI pending further funding.

Opportunities and challenges: Direct access by international organisations to affected communities is limited. The concept of community engagement and accountability is not consistently understood or valued by partners and there are wide-ranging approaches. National authorities remain sensitive to the language of engaging the community and accountability, so it is often better framed around good programming or risk management. Discussions about platforms and formal working groups have, or are likely to face resistance. Some pilot projects however can provide some tangible examples of how the collective approach could work within Syria, for example the recent IOM and Ground Truth Solutions perception survey in NW Syria or the WFP hotline managed from Damascus. Direct service delivery organisations, mostly local organisations, are engaging communities and have developed tools and approaches to overcome constraints. Finding ways to collectivises these will be key. The ongoing work around PSEA can provide some concrete examples for collective efforts and also help develop the collaboration between PSEA and the wider community engagement approach.

18. South Sudan – Revitalising a working group for deeper engagement

Context: The CCE Working group was first established in 2014 as the ‘Communicating with Communities’ (CWC) working group, in keeping with a global humanitarian commitment towards accountability to affected populations (IASC, 2012). In 2018 the group was re-established as the Community Communications and Engagement working group (CCE WG), following a regional community engagement conference in Nairobi. This reflected a progression of the humanitarian agenda from ensuring transparency in humanitarian decision-making towards ‘a participation revolution; involving people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives’ (Grand Bargain, 2016).

Working closely with the South Sudan Inter-Cluster Working Group the CCE WG has advocated for this principle to underpin humanitarian action in South Sudan going forward. As is echoed in the South Sudan 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan, only through comprehensive community engagement will it be possible to achieve our humanitarian objectives. It is the mandate of the working group as a common coordinated service to provide strong leadership, technical support and thoughtful guidance to all clusters, working groups and humanitarian initiatives both at the national and subnational level. The CCE WG finds durable solutions for people affected by disaster in South Sudan, requiring the CCE WG to actively integrate and harmonise community engagement practises across all humanitarian clusters and working groups. The CCE WG has also formally agreed to collaborate with the PSEA Task Force, which aims to enable affected communities in high risk areas to assess and influence humanitarian action on sexual exploitation and abuse by strengthening the CBCMs and facilitating clear, direct feedback loops between PSEA actors and the communities themselves.

Updated: 31 October 2019
It is the conviction of the CCE working group that only with a foundation of comprehensive community communication and engagement and PSEA, will durable solutions to returns, resettlement and integration be achieved.

**Government links:** N/A

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** Chair is Internews. Co-chairs are Acted and IOM. It is hoped that a NNGO from the protection cluster will also be added as co-chair.

**National and international actors involved:** Local and international NGOs and media development agencies.

**Donors:** Seed funding was provided under the CDAC DEPP DFID for 2014-2016 via Internews South Sudan.

**Opportunities and challenges:** The 2018 Nairobi Regional CCE Workshop and global interest in community engagement and AAP has provided an opportunity to reinvigorate existing plans and activities, however it remains to be seen whether this will be matched by increased funding and clear commitments from overall response leaders.

As part of the WG, Internews is organising a workshop in Juba with CCE practitioners in October 2019 to develop CCE minimal standards and a road map towards a common feedback platform for South Sudan.

High turnover within organisations in South Sudan makes stable participation in working groups difficult (a problem not limited to community engagement).

19. **Somalia – Potential to embed ongoing initiatives into coordination**

**Context:** A joint community engagement initiative commenced in 2017 initiated by the OCHA Regional Office in an attempt to bring together existing CE initiatives together for common messaging at the HCT level was not ultimately successful. However, this has provided a learning opportunity and coordination actors in Somalia are exploring new ways to meet HCT commitments in AAP. A longstanding humanitarian radio program to amplify key messages and garner feedback and two-way communication on the response has been a highly useful service to both humanitarian actors and the humanitarian community. A Community Engagement working group has been proposed and may start soon.

**Government links:** The Somali Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs is involved in some community engagement activities. Their role is to share information to and from hard-to-reach communities.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** OCHA’s regional office is supporting in identifying a lead agency for this work.

**National and international actors involved:** Local and international NGOs and authorities.
**Donors:** N/A

**Opportunities and challenges:** The Nairobi workshop and global interest in community engagement and AAP has provided an opportunity to reinvigorate existing plans and activities, however it remains to be seen whether this will be matched by increased funding and clear commitments from overall response leaders.

High turnover within organisations in Somalia makes stable participation in working groups difficult (a problem not limited to community engagement).

An opportunity to work on response-wide indicators is being explored by Ground Truth Solutions.

**20. Vanuatu – A new platform integrated into government-led response**

**Context:** Communications shortfalls have hampered many disaster responses in Vanuatu. In 2015, following a request from the government, CDAC provided CCE technical support for the Cyclone Winston response. In 2018, as part of a DFAT funded joint CDAC-GTS project, a CCE scoping mission was undertaken. One outcome was the establishment of a Communications and Community Engagement Sub-Cluster, led by the NDMO and co-led by Vanuatu Red Cross, which was established in February 2019. More than 30 individuals representing sub-cluster organisations provided feedback and subsequently agreed to a TOR for the platform in May 2019. The TOR has been endorsed by the NDMO.

The project facilitates the relevant mapping and consultations required to establish a series of community engagement actions as well as a government-housed platform to be accountable for their implementation in times of emergency.

The sub-cluster membership includes many members of other clusters positioning the CCE Sub-Cluster to be well integrated in the existing humanitarian architecture.

**Government links:** The platform, linked to the Ministry of Information, acts as a service to national and local government.

**Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs:** NDMO and Vanuatu Red Cross. The CCE Sub-Cluster and its National Coordinator hosted by CARE (as part of the joint project), sits at the NDMO and has been invited to review and provide input into several key disaster planning and review processes.

**National and international actors involved:** Membership includes representatives of Vanuatu Government bodies, multilateral organisations, media, telecommunications, NGOs, INGOs, and faith communities, many of whom are also members of other Clusters. The CCE Sub-Cluster is also characterised by an almost fully ni-Vanuatu membership and leadership, ensuring its approaches and activities are locally led and contextually relevant.

**Donors:** Australian DFAT (via joint CDAC-GTS project; CARE Vanuatu provides CDAC secretariat support in Vanuatu and PCDF hosting support in Fiji)
Opportunities and challenges: Since Vanuatu has not yet experienced the onset of a disaster since the CCE Sub-Cluster has been established, it remains to be seen how readily the support received so far will transform behaviours among emergency responders mid-crisis, such as allocating time and resources to collecting systematic community feedback, adapting programming and resource allocation in response to the community feedback, and continuing to progress preparedness work after it has been disrupted by an active response. However, the commitment that the humanitarian community has demonstrated so far in integrating communication and community engagement preparedness efforts into their current work is a promising indication of the sustainability of the gains already achieved.

As part of systematic data collection, analysis and feedback training in August 2019 (led by GTS and co-facilitated by CDAC), CCE Sub-Cluster members outlined key next steps across the four priority areas that were identified during the CCE Sub-Cluster inception workshop (feedback mechanism, training, systems and coordination). The training further enabled the group to make use of the technical advisors present to make progress on several planned activities, including developing a CCE training outline for national, provincial, area and community disaster responders; drafting standardised questions for community engagement in disasters; and outlining key communications and community engagement gaps and inclusions (such as in the SOPs of key roles) for the existing disaster response system.

Following on from an introduction by UNICEF Fiji to the data collection tool Rapid Pro in May 2019 and further learning through the systematic community engagement training in August 2019, the CCE Sub-Cluster’s Feedback Mechanism Working Group has progressively developed and refined plans to conduct a feedback pilot with three disaster affected communities in Vanuatu: Ambae, Ambrym and Pango. In consultation with the NDMO, the working group has decided to trial a set of standardised questions as well as different data collection tools, planning a combination of both SMS-based surveys using Rapid Pro and face-to-face surveys using Kobo from September 2019.

Leveraging existing Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee (CDCCC) training being conducted by CARE and funded by the Australian Government through Disaster Ready, the CCE Sub-Cluster facilitated CCE training in eight communities in Tanna in September 2019. The CCE training component includes a communications session and a community engagement session tailored specifically for communities.

With continued commitment and local ownership, the CCE Sub-Cluster is on track to meaningfully contribute to better disaster preparedness and response in Vanuatu.

21. Venezuela Inter-Agency Platform

Context: In April 2018, a Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform was formed by UNHCR and IOM for these agencies to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. It has a communicating with communities inter-agency platform at the sub-national level involved in the Venezuela Migration Crisis Response. It is part of the R4V – Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.
Government links: TBC

Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs: TBC

National and international actors involved: IFRC, IOM, Plan International, Save the Children, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO and WFP

Donors: TBC

Opportunities and challenges: not known

CDAC Member, Dahlia undertook mission to Colombia and Ecuador and their online report, issued in September 2019, titled: 'Communication, community engagement and migration: Challenges of the crisis in Venezuela' summarises the main conclusions with the objective of contributing to a review of communication, information, feedback and community engagement mechanisms in the response to the Venezuelan migration crisis. It notes that “the responses of the interviewed migrants have shown that information, often inaccurate, rumours and informal communication mechanisms through social networks have contributed significantly to enhancing the phenomenon of migration”. And despite some good work by CCE working groups, it notes that ‘the elements of communication with communities have not been integrated in the architecture of the humanitarian response as yet’.

22. Yemen – A Community Engagement working group

Context: A Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) was established in late 2015 to facilitate and better coordinate system-wide communication and engagement with affected populations in the humanitarian response. The group is chaired by UNICEF, with OCHA providing a secretariat role.

The CEWG works to establish common, shared mechanisms to ensure that affected people have accurate, relevant and timely information to make informed decisions to protect themselves and their families and to ensure that the overall humanitarian response is systematically informed by the views of affected communities. Among its first priorities was to develop a framework for accountability to affected populations (AAP) for inclusion in the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP), based on agency and cluster best practices and to raise the profile of AAP at cluster, inter-cluster and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) levels.

Government Ministry or Dept links: N/A

Leads/Chairs/Co-Chairs: UNICEF and OCHA

National and international actors involved: The CEWG comprises 25 participating agencies with over 100 staff on the mailing list, including from the UN and international and national NGOs.

Donors: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Opportunities and challenges: Communities, authorities and implementing partners are not homogenous stakeholders across Yemen and as a consequence, the operation lacks specific,
tailored approaches to inclusive, gender sensitive participatory approaches, including how information is shared and feedback gathered within different population groups. This requires a more deliberate approach to both informal and formal mechanisms to gathering, analysing, sharing and acting on community feedback through existing and new monitoring processes. In a recent analysis, it was commonly reported by stakeholders that data from the national planning level has not made a significant impact at the operational level. The need to disaggregate data and analysis was frequently identified as an impediment to informing area and issue-based planning and response strategies. This is particularly important for tailored community engagement and communication strategies to different segments of the civilian population. A key limitation was perceived to be a focus on the national-level with significant gaps between national and sub-national coordination.

An OCHA specialist mission recently recommended that a 'Results Group' on Accountability and Inclusion be established to support clusters to proactively eradicate abuse and systematically include feedback and diverse representation into the Yemen response operation. There is an opportunity to consolidate the work of AAP, PSEA, Gender and Inclusion into a more complementary outcome-orientated technical coordination group in support of the Intercluster, to streamline various activities and render them more effective.