



Briefing Note

About the CDAC Network

Who we are, what we do, how you can join

www.cdacnetwork.org - @CDACN

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Supporting policy, practice and systems-level change on **communication and community engagement** to better meet the needs of crisis-affected populations

1. About CDAC Network

Established in 2009, the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network, CDAC Network (CDAC-N) 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. The Network focuses on the critical interface between humanitarian aid and those in crisis. Members represent bodies which have considerable experience, involving a wide range of communication activities such as translation, messaging, connectivity, community based market research and feedback. As such they operate in an area beyond provision, and act to create understanding and information that can be used by all. The aim is to strengthen community and aid interaction to make humanitarian response more effective, empower communities, and build resilience.

The CDAC-N philosophy is grounded in the rights to information, freedom of expression and participation with information exchange and communication being a vital part of emergency assistance. Implicit to the CDAC-N model is a change from a top-down approach to a way of working that respects the *principle of subsidiarity*.¹ An overarching aim is to ensure that those affected by crisis have a genuine voice throughout humanitarian emergencies, they are actively engaged in the response, and that their perspectives are recognised as valuable and valued sources of information.

Such an approach is reflected in the Grand Bargain commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit, and is a precondition for the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The positive impact of the approaches to humanitarian aid we advocate for has been demonstrated in emergencies as diverse as the Haiti earthquake, the West African Ebola outbreak, and the European refugee migration emergency. There is a significant and growing body of evidence that community engagement enhances the effectiveness of aid; fosters greater accountability, transparency, and trust; and improves the outcomes for affected people.²

¹ The principle that decisions should always be taken at the level closest to where they will have effect – in CDAC-N members operational work, this implies at the level of the affected population

² The CDAC member InfosAid Project, which ended in 2013, has laid a strong foundation for the case for communicating with those most affected by disaster to improve effectiveness. At: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20140728102420-genh0>.

In situations of violence and armed conflict, a growing body of research has shown that communities at risk still want to be consulted and that community feedback mechanisms can play a key role in getting access and ensuring effectiveness.

2. Our common values

As independent organisations, each of our members has its own unique brand and organisational values. As a Network, a number of common CDAC values guide our behaviour and bind us together beyond our individual brands. These values define what is important to us and how we work together to achieve our vision and strategic aims.

Collaboration – we work together *globally* to ensure consistency of approach and message across the network and partner together *locally* to enable communities to have the most effective and appropriate solutions.

Empowerment – we demonstrate by our work practice that we are *supporting and enabling government and civil society leadership and decision-making in-country*, recognising community members as critical first responders.

Partnership – we broker relationships and work together constructively in accordance with the Principles of Partnership³ in pursuit of the CDAC Network’s vision and purpose. The principles encourage behaviours that promote: *Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity*

Innovation – we explore and engage with *new information and communication technologies*, taking risks when needed, being creative and adding value to our work.

3. Our core areas of work

CDAC-N’s work centres on the following core areas for 2016 - 2021:⁴

- i) **Promoting and supporting a “collective platform model” for the delivery and coordination of key communication and community engagement activities in preparedness for and during humanitarian emergencies – with a focus on the national and local level.** Since the Haiti earthquake in 2010, CDAC-N members have been testing common models of working on communication and community engagement, and there is a growing evidence base on the value and challenges. This is especially so for common feedback mechanisms, common messaging and rumour management in humanitarian emergencies, such as in Nepal, Iraq, the Philippines, Haiti and during the recent Ebola and migration responses. Despite this, each time a disaster strikes, agencies scramble to get resources and align strategies.

³ The Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) adopted Principles of Partnership (PoP) in 2007. The GHP was originally set up in 2006 by leaders of 40 humanitarian organisations including NGOs, UN agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Source: <https://icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment>).

⁴ This is further articulated in the new CDAC Strategic Plan 2016–2021.

CDAC-N's goal is to facilitate the creation of a common platform enabling diverse agencies to come together around shared tools and services. In every 'at risk' country, this would mean the humanitarian country team agreeing in advance on which agency should take the lead in coordinating or leading community engagement activities. This could be a UN, Red Cross/Crescent or NGO entity depending on who has best local knowledge, capacity and expertise, among other criteria. Agencies will, of course, have to continue to respect their global responsibilities and commitments on communication and accountability to affected people (e.g. their individual UN mandate, the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations or NGO Core Humanitarian Standard commitments) but the collective platform model would ensure these efforts will be better coordinated, timely and effective while making a significant contribution to efforts to achieve greater participation and ownership as envisaged by the Grand Bargain commitments.

- ii) **Providing timely, accurate, and reliable information to people preparing for, or affected by, disasters.** This gives people *news they can use* – the necessary information to look after themselves, their families, and their communities to help them mitigate risk and shape their own responses. This area of work further supports ongoing adaptation of messaging and communication needs as the crisis unfolds and changes. This means strengthening the capacity of humanitarian staff to focus on communication and community engagement while supporting the actions and approaches of technical working groups on the ground.
- iii) **Working with affected communities to improve their capacity for effective internal communication and with the humanitarian response system.** This goes beyond simply providing lifesaving messages or information about where aid is available to give people in crisis an effective platform for dialogue. It's about two-way communication between humanitarian actors and the people they seek to serve, allowing discussion about what people in crisis have heard so that rumours, misinformation, and disinformation can be tracked and managed. It's about helping communities to help themselves by engaging with each other more effectively (including through provision of the means to connect, such as enabling mobile networks and the internet). Critically, it is also about supporting a community's role in promoting genuine accountability through the provision of "*ground-truthing*" feedback.
- iv) **Developing good practice with communities and humanitarian response organisations to affect policy and systems change.** This involves assessing communication and community engagement efforts and learning from each crisis through engagement with communities, local authorities and national governments and local, national and international humanitarian organisations. This includes ongoing evidence-based research on communication and community engagement and related advocacy.
- v) **Using the creativity of non-traditional partners that have different operating cultures to bring about effective change on the ground.** CDAC-N does this by bringing actors together that would not traditionally collaborate, to collectively catalyse the ability of communities to connect, access information, and be actively engaged in their own disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

- vi) **Supporting and promoting cross-sector collaboration to enable effective mainstreaming of information and communication efforts across the response.** This includes innovative collaborations across diverse entities and linking with cluster and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms, taking advantage of CDAC's unique convening potential that cuts across UN, NGO and private sector divides.

4. Our five pillars of action

The CDAC-N approach is operationalised through five pillars of action:

- Convening and collaboration
- Research and learning
- Capacity strengthening
- Advocacy
- Innovation.

5. Our members and partners

Among our members are seven United Nations agencies (IOM, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, and WHO); the International Committee of the Red Cross (also representing the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies); media development and translation agencies, such as Internews, BBC Media Action, International Media Support, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Development Media International, International Media Support and Translators Without Borders; Networks such as PECOJON Journalists Network in the Philippines and First Response Radio Network in Asia; private sector entities, such as Free Play Energy and Lifeline Energy who manufacture innovative communications technologies; and international NGOs such as Action Aid, Ground Truth Solutions, Plan International, Save the Children, and World Vision International. Many of our members are networks themselves, most of which have a global reach, working with more than 10,000 local and national partners.⁵

CDAC also works in close cooperation with partners such as the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC); the Global Mobile Network Association (GSMA); the International Telecommunications Union (ITU); CHS Alliance; the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Accountability to Affected Populations Task-Team; the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream group; the Start Network, and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, among others.

6. Participation in international and local coordination efforts

CDAC-N works at the local level by communicating and community engagement working groups, where local and national leadership is enabled. Many of CDAC-N's members co-lead and/or are active participants in **clusters** at local and national level and have significant influence to trigger mindset change in how they and other actors engage with communities. All UN agency members of CDAC-N have a direct link with **National Governments** and **local**

⁵ See full list of members at <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/about-the-network/members/>

authorities, as do many of the NGOs. We link with **ACAPS** to ensure that communication and information dimensions are an integral part of needs assessments.

As part of its work on the Grand Bargain, CDAC-N coordinates with like-minded agencies under the **Participation Revolution Commitment**. CDAC-N will contribute actively in this workstream and other Grand Bargain workstreams throughout the strategic timeframe.

CDAC-N is an active participant in the **IASC Task-Team on Accountability to Affected Populations** and the **Quality and Accountability Group**. It recently joined the **CHS Alliance** Community of Practice so that it can promote synergies between the two networks and, especially, support the roll-out of participation and communication standard benchmarks.

CDAC-N is a member of the **Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI)** to bring CDAC-N's expertise on communicating with affected people and communities to HQAI's membership and influence its way of assessing work on the ground.

7. Governance, management and implementation approach

The Network has two governance organs: the **General Assembly (GA)** and the **Governing Board**. The GA meets annually. The board is responsible for overseeing CDAC's mission and fiscal integrity, and for oversight of the secretariat.

The Network has a small secretariat, led by the director and currently supported by a team of five. Six additional staff are hosted by member organisations as part of the CDAC DFID-funded component of the Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) which focuses largely on Bangladesh and South Sudan with further support for capacity development components in states such as Kenya, Myanmar, Jordan and the Philippines.

Members actively contribute to the implementation of the CDAC Strategy through two **Communities of Practice on Communication and Community Engagement**:

- i) Field Response, Chair: OCHA
- ii) Innovation, Chair: UNHCR

8. Our key achievements so far

The following are some of our key achievements since 2009.

We have led and driven successful collaboration models that better structure programmes for the benefit of communities: The Network has helped Members step out of silos and collaborate to identify opportunities for partnership, bring about innovative and effective field practice, and increase mutual understanding of the challenges they face. This has been achieved over the past five years both at the global and local level in crisis-hit Haiti, Iraq, Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh and South Sudan, among others. Two recent examples are: the establishment of a Common service project on communicating with communities and

securing investment for this project in the aftermath of the Nepal Earthquake 2015; and the establishment of the Iraq Call Centre for Internally Displaced People 2015.

We have made a significant contribution to making the case for the communicating with communities and community engagement for more effective preparedness and response:

As part of the research agenda we have carried out learning reviews of collective communication efforts, collated case studies, and developed an online library of relevant literature. There has been wide uptake of the research we have undertaken and published, which includes: Report on “Media, Information Systems and Communities: Lessons from Haiti”, 2011; The Haiti Earthquake Learning Review 2012; Learning from Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines 2014 and Typhoon Bopha in Mindanao; Nepal earthquake report 2015, “Are You Listening Now”; and the 2016 Report on “Voices of Refugees”, which helps a better understanding of the information and communication needs of refugees in Greece and Germany. Through this work and our members’ previous InfosAid Project, we have set the foundations for making the case for communicating with those most affected by disaster.

We have strengthened systems and capacity for implementation: CDAC developed guidance and tools for Members and their partners, as well as the wider humanitarian sector through the production of assessment guidelines and “How to” guides. We tested and developed a communicating with communities Foundation Training and related syllabus, and facilitated training which is in high demand across the sector. We have organised five-day and one-day courses and seminars, and have developed a roster of rapidly deployable field experts and advisors in partnership with NORCAP.⁶ Guidance has been developed on how to Assess Information and Communication Needs. Our Media Landscape Guides are online guides which provide detailed information on the media and telecommunications landscape in a variety of countries. They are a useful preparedness and response tools.

We have advanced the argument for community voices to be recognised as a primary and authentic knowledge source: The Network and its individual Members have systematically advocated for the development of community engagement as a predictable, consistent and properly funded aspect of preparedness, response and recovery. This enables communities to have the information, means and technologies to advocate for their own role, needs and rights in emergency preparedness and response.

We have drawn from on our own research and that of other agencies in the sector as well as from academia to make this argument and influence policy and donor funding decisions. The recognition and influence of the Network has increased, which in part has led to this more favourable environment for community engagement. The Network has also, for example, been active in ensuring community engagement is integrated into the Core

⁶ The Norwegian Refugee Council's expert deployment capacity

Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability and in providing advocacy submissions to the World Humanitarian Summit, among other international fora.

9. How your membership benefits the sector as well as the network

Your voice is critical so that our collective platform can address common issues using proven and innovative collaborative models. Together, we can:

- Advocate for information sharing and communication with communities to be a **predictable, coordinated and resourced component** of humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery.
- Champion systemic change **on information and communication** so that they can be reflected in everything from standard operating procedures, coordination and humanitarian architecture to staffing, project design and funding.
- Be at the forefront of greater use of **media development, telecommunications and digital and emerging technology tools** to support better action on the ground.
- Influence the sector to move beyond the collection and analysis of the needs of those in crisis, to also having collective, timely, and accurate information from diverse sources **for their benefit**, enabling them to make their own decisions based on a better understanding of the situation.
- Serve as a **neutral and safe platform for open and honest dialogue** between diverse small, medium and large organisations working towards the same information and communication goals.

10. How membership benefits your organisation

Membership of the CDAC Network provides your organisation with...

- The opportunity to engage with diverse organisations that are not your traditional response partners but who are united through their work on enabling communities to better **connect, access information and have a voice** in humanitarian emergencies.
- The capacity to quickly **convene and mobilise key players** around an issue to illustrate the importance of communication and community engagement.
- The opportunity to **invest in national or locally-led multi-stakeholder platforms** that enable **new collaborative models** of common services for communication and community engagement.
- Practical help through **capacity strengthening** to implement good and promising practices.

- A powerful way to **influence the reputation and acceptance** of your organisation in the sector through greater connectedness with communities, while at the same time better meeting their information and communication needs.
- The **evidence to advocate for budget allocations and funding** for communication and community engagement in your global and country programme.
- **CDAC Events, Fora, Communities of Practice and online platforms** that provide a valuable opportunity to exchange with your peers and the private sector all-year round.

11. Membership Categories

CDAC Network has two membership categories:

- Full Members
- Affiliate Members

All CDAC member organisations are approved by the Governing Board following a recommendation from the CDAC Membership and Nominations Committee.

12. Organisations eligible for Full Membership

An organisation is eligible to be made a full member if it is:

- an organisation whose core activities, or whose members core activities, work towards promoting and supporting the information and communication needs of people living in disaster prone areas or those affected by crisis.
- The organisation can be a United Nations (UN) Agency, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a National Non-Governmental Organisation (NNGO), an International NGO (INGO), an NGO network, an NGO-UN consortium, or an Academic or Research Institute.

13. Organisations eligible for Affiliate Membership

An entity is eligible to be made an affiliate member if it is:

- an organisation or institution that is unable to fulfill Full Member criteria but whose mission and strategy supports CDAC's vision and mission.
- a Government Donor, a Governmental Department, such as a Disaster Management Unit, Communications Department, among others.
- a private sector organisation that meets special criteria

14. Rights of Members

Full members are:

- a) Entitled to attend and speak at CDAC Network Member Council meetings
- b) Entitled to vote at Network meetings
- c) Eligible for election to the Governing Board of the CDAC Network
- d) Entitled to nominate persons to stand for election to the Board
- e) Able to participate in committees and working groups of the Network
- f) Entitled to propose agenda items for consideration at Member Council meetings
- g) Entitled to preferential access to events and support services

Affiliate members are:

- a) Entitled to attend and speak at CDAC Network Member Council meetings
- b) Able to participate in committees and working groups of the Network
- c) Entitled to nominate persons to stand for election to the Board
- d) May be co-opted on to the Board if their area of expertise is unique to CDAC.
- e) Entitled to preferential access to events and support services at reduced cost

Affiliate members are:

- f) Not entitled to vote at general meetings.
- g) Not eligible for election to the Board.

15. Member responsibilities

Full members

- a) Take the lead in identifying and prioritising the CDAC Network's strategic direction and activities, and determining the annual work-plan
- b) Chair and/or actively participate in CDAC Network Communities of Practice, Working Groups, and Task Teams
- c) Work in collaborative partnerships with other Full Member organisations
- d) Pay an annual membership fee as approved by the Board which provides core funding for the Network and supports the Secretariat
- e) Actively input into strategic decisions on behalf of the wider CDAC Network
- f) Engage with the secretariat team on global and local policy issues as related to CDACs work.
- g) Promote CDAC externally and fundraise for joint projects where there are synergies

Affiliate members

- a) Bring issues of common concern to the Network, and encourage discussion on and support to initiatives that improve communication with crisis-affected populations and community engagement.

16. How to apply for membership

An Application for Membership of the CDAC Network should be completed in English and sent to the Secretariat along with the following documents:

- a) A document that demonstrates legal registered or recognition in the country where it has its Headquarters (statutes, constitution, Statutes of Incorporation, Articles of Association or similar document)
- b) Two most recent annual reports, including audited financial statements and donors
- c) Names of Board of Directors, Trustees or equivalent
- d) Demonstrate in its application its commitment:
 - to actively participate in CDAC activities as outlined in the CDAC Strategic Plan.
 - Make no adverse distinction in its work on the basis of nationality, race, gender, diversity, religious belief, sexual orientation, class, political opinion or any such distinction.
 - uphold the four CDAC Network common values of: Collaboration; Empowerment; Partnership; and, Innovation.
 - adhere to and/or support of the principles and commitments as enshrined in the: Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability; Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response; Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Commitments on Accountability to Affected Population.
 - the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse as guided by the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel.
 - that it is not listed on any UN or Government Watch List.

17. Application Approval Process

The CDAC Network Secretariat will:

- a) Review the application against the membership eligibility criteria and requirements, and seek additional information if required.
- b) Send for review to the CDAC Network Membership and Nominations Committee.

The Membership and Nominations Committee will:

- c) Undertake preliminary review of all new membership applications
- d) Provide recommendation to the Governing Board.

The Board will:

- e) Consider the application at one of its quarterly meetings.
- f) Be mindful of its responsibility to uphold the CDAC Network mission and strategic mandates and the potential contribution of the applicant organisation to strengthen the work of the Network.
- g) Approve, reject or defer the application based on a majority vote.
- h) The board decision is final.

The CDCA Network Secretariat will:

- i) Inform the applicant organisation of the board's decision and if applicable the reasons why the application was rejected or deferred.

- j) If the membership is approved, send a formal acknowledgment to the applicant with a membership package
- k) Invoice the successful applicant organisation for membership fee in line with the Membership Fees Structure.

18. Membership Fees

The following membership fee structure was approved by the 2017 Members Council for 2018 – 2020:

Full Members

Tier Level	Annual Contribution UK£	Based on estimated annual turnover/Income or Revenue
1.	8,500	Above 50 million
2.	6,500	20 - 50 million
3.	5,000	5 - 20 million
4.	2,500	2 - 5 million
5.	500	Less than 2 million

Affiliate members (Af): (including private sector)

1. (Af)	20,000	Above 20 million
2. (Af)	5,000	2 – 20 million
3. (Af)	1,000	Less than 2 million

For more information on membership, or to seek an application, please email: marian.casey-maslen@cdacnetwork.org