

# THE CDAC NETWORK: TYPHOON HAIYAN LEARNING REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

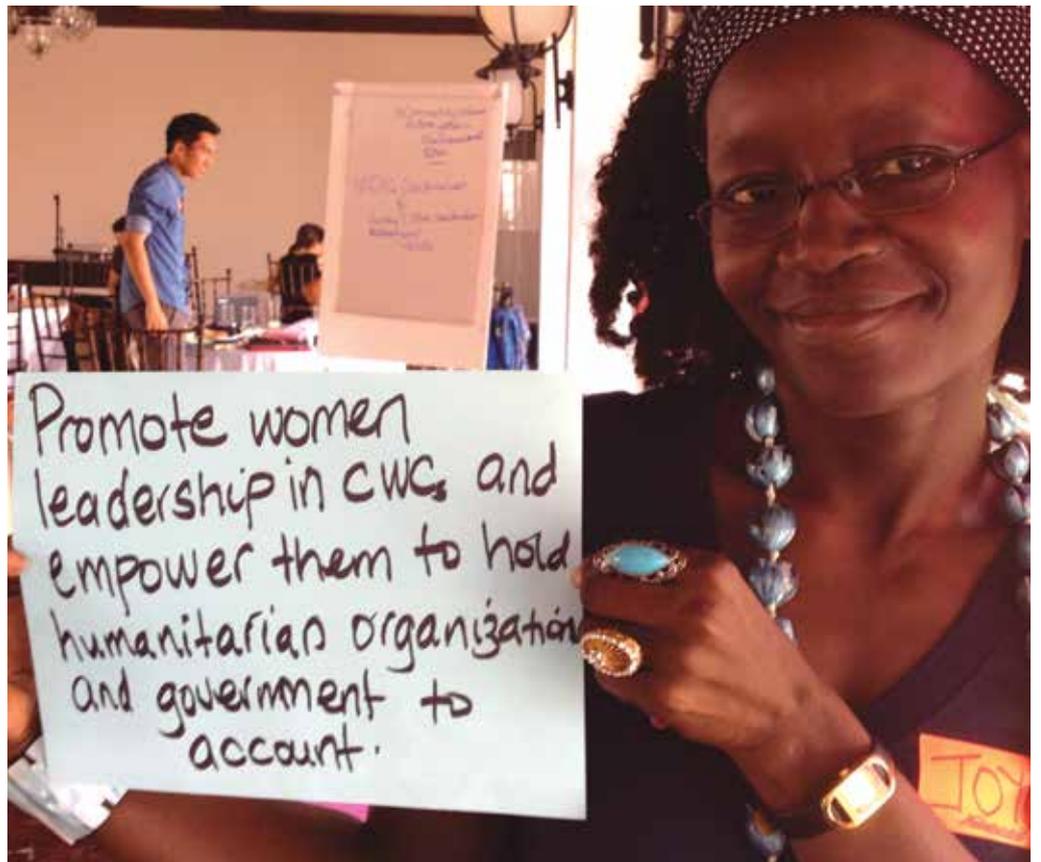
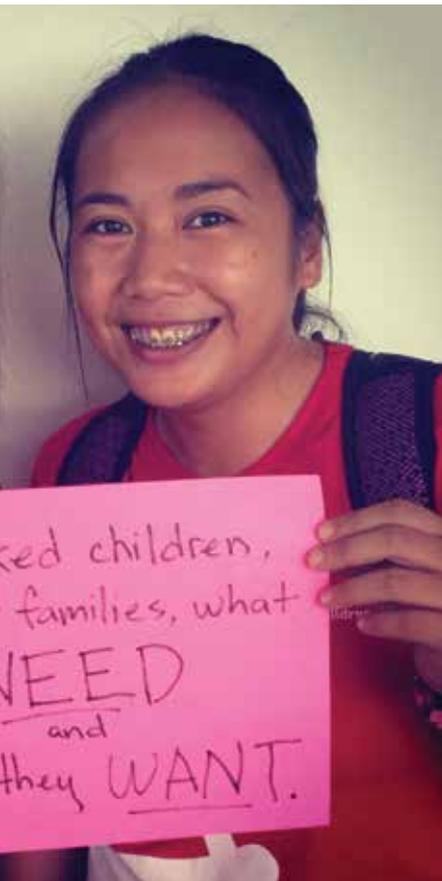


A Review of  
Communicating  
with Communities  
Initiatives and  
Coordination in the  
Response to Typhoon  
Haiyan in the  
Philippines

**NOVEMBER 2014**



Photo credit: Learning Review workshop participants share their views on future CwC needs.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CDAC Network's Typhoon Haiyan Learning Review was made possible through the generous support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Special thanks go to the OCHA Regional Communications with Communities (CwC) Coordinator Stewart Davies, as well as OCHA CwC / AAP staff for their administrative support during fieldwork. Thanks to CDAC Network Members Action Aid and World Vision International for support in organising community visits, and colleagues from PECOJON and Radyo Abante for organising an on-air discussion with listeners.

The authors would also like to extend sincere thanks to individuals from all the organisations who gave up their time to participate in interviews and attend learning workshops, and provide their insights and suggestions. For further information on the outputs of this review, including the learning workshops, case studies, article and learning review report, contact Nicki Bailey, Research and Learning Officer, The CDAC Network Secretariat: [nicki.bailey@cdacnetwork.org](mailto:nicki.bailey@cdacnetwork.org).

Any opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors, Caroline Austin and Nicki Bailey, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of OCHA, the CDAC Network Secretariat, or CDAC Network Members.

## ABOUT THE CDAC NETWORK

The CDAC Network promotes the coordinated provision of information as well as two-way communication with crisis affected communities as key humanitarian deliverables. Network Members seek to ensure that communities affected by or prone to crises are supported to better withstand, and recover from, humanitarian emergencies, through active engagement in decisions about the relief and recovery efforts in their country.

To achieve this, CDAC Network Members are committed to mainstreaming two-way communication approaches into emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

The CDAC Network is unique in terms of who it convenes: humanitarian and media development organisations as well as technology and other service providers. By collaborating across traditional boundaries, CDAC Network Members increase mutual understanding of the challenges they face and identify opportunities for partnership in order to bring about innovative and effective field practice.

Current Full Members of the CDAC Network are: ActionAid; BBC Media Action; Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action (DAHLIA); the ICRC; International Media Support (IMS); Internews Europe; IOM; Merlin; OCHA; Plan UK; Save the Children; Thomson Reuters Foundation; Translators without Borders; UNFPA; UNHCR; UNICEF; United Methodist Communications; WFP; and World Vision International. Current Affiliate Members are: FdL Development; FilmAid; First Response Radio; Freeplay Energy; Ground Truth; PECOJON International; Social Impact Lab and HFCC-International Broadcasting Delivery.

For more information and for other Network resources please go to [www.cdacnetwork.org](http://www.cdacnetwork.org) or follow @CDACN #commisaid.

## FOREWORD

When the most severe typhoon ever recorded struck the central region of the Philippines on 8 November 2013, the world rushed to support the Philippines with offers of assistance. With over 14 million people affected and 6,140 people killed, the damage caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) was devastating. Within hours of making landfall, it destroyed almost all existing media and communication infrastructure, leaving little or no access to radio, television, newspapers or internet for those who survived.

Traditional community networks also broke down, exacerbating challenges and resulting in an information vacuum never seen before in the region. Survivors were left struggling to receive and share information they needed most - critical lifesaving information, news of the welfare of families and friends, protection and health issues and evacuation and recovery planning.

Local media, mobile operators and emerging technology partners worked together to restore communication networks. Over time, communication needs not only evolved but became more complex. What people wanted to know, how they wanted to communicate with the humanitarian community and within and between communities presented new and ongoing challenges. Building on experience, humanitarians further developed their capacity to listen to the needs of survivors and feed this back into the response. In one particular instance, while humanitarian workers were busy running around to get assistance to people, a group of women came up to say:

“All we need is for you to fix that bridge. We’ll then be able to get ourselves what we need.”

The global response to Super Typhoon Haiyan demonstrated how far we have come in communicating with communities while demonstrating where critical gaps still exist and where we can improve. As a founding member of the CDAC Network, OCHA is pleased to support the Typhoon Haiyan Learning Review.

The report examines initiatives aimed at improving communication with disaster affected communities, and the coordination of these initiatives during the response to Typhoon Haiyan. It aims to capture good practice, gaps and suggestions for improvements in programming and coordination in order to better inform the development of advocacy, policy and forward planning, both at an operational and strategic level.

In today’s interconnected world, responding to crises quickly and effectively is everybody’s business. I believe this report will inspire an active commitment from organisations, donors and the private sector to put disaster survivors where they belong - at the centre of a response. As a programmatic area of work, two-way communications strengthens the ability of affected people to actively engage in their own preparedness, response and recovery. Ultimately, communicating with communities makes humanitarian action more effective.

There is no doubt that we have learned much from the incredible resilience and spirit of volunteerism of Filipinos. As we head towards the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, we are hearing loud and clear how we need to listen better to people affected by crises and learn from them. By bringing together key stakeholders to share best practices, this report will help contribute to building a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system.



**Gwi-Yeop Son**

**Director, Corporate Programmes Division**

**United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**

**November 2014**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective humanitarian response requires good two-way communication that provides useful information and engages communities in dialogue. Good communication supports the participation and dignity of communities affected by crisis, as well as greater transparency and accountability of the aid effort.

Following Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated large areas of central Philippines in November 2013, information and communication access was severely impeded for weeks with 90% of affected people having no access to electricity, equating to no access to communication channels of print media, TV or the Internet.<sup>1</sup> Telecommunications networks were down meaning most people were unable to contact their families to tell them they were alive.

This CDAC Network Learning Review examines initiatives aimed at improving communication with disaster affected communities, and the coordination of these initiatives, during the response to Typhoon Haiyan. Data collection in this review built strongly on existing evaluative data, as well as, interviews with key informants, two learning workshops and focus group discussions with communities. Communicating with communities initiatives, and the coordination of these initiatives, were reviewed against well-established criteria and thematic frameworks that considered the relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness and coverage of approaches at sub-national, national and global levels.

This review aims to capture good practice, gaps and suggestions for improvements in communication with communities programming and coordination in order to inform the development of advocacy, policy and forward planning, both at an operational and strategic level, for this area of work.

The executive summary synthesises the findings from the review, focusing first on good practice from communicating with communities initiatives, and then on coordination of communication with communities work across the response. Recommendations are provided for OCHA, for the CDAC Network and its Members and for donors.

## COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES

Communicating with disaster affected communities continues to be an emerging field of humanitarian response that aims to meet the information and communications needs of people affected by crisis. There are various different terms in use to describe this area of work, the current most common being communicating with communities – or CwC. This is the term adopted in this report and is also the name adopted for a number of technical working groups in the affected areas.<sup>2</sup>

Overall this report finds the case for more relevant, appropriate and effective two-way communication initiatives to support people affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Findings suggest that communities affected by Typhoon Haiyan felt they needed information to be provided via multiple channels from humanitarian agencies, with face-to-face communication the strongest preference. The importance of communicating via locally preferred and well-understood channels was highlighted. Communication solely via elected community officials was not acceptable to many community members. The opportunity to remain anonymous was valued by community members when giving feedback, as communities expressed concerns around losing support or assistance if they complained to humanitarian or government agencies. Being able to express concerns or ask for information or support that was outside the boundaries of agencies established programming was highlighted as very important.

*‘Expressing feedback would be useful not just to express problems, but if NGOs would ask what project do we really want to have, what project is needed in the bunkhouse’*

*– Palo Bunkhouse Resident, Leyte*

In terms of giving feedback to humanitarian agencies, inviting communities to give feedback and having clear processes which led to a response by agencies was identified as important by community members, and was not always clear to communities in some affected areas. Communities only gave feedback where they felt they were being listened to and received a response.

Communication between communities themselves was emphasized as important by community members with many affected people relying on family or friends to obtain information, particularly those living in the capital with better access to information. Community members used mobile phones to contact family and friends, predominantly via Facebook and SMS. The importance and impact of communication between communities, was not highlighted as a priority by humanitarian organisations.

1. Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Typhoon Haiyan Response, 2013.

2. Communicating with disaster affected communities is based on the principle that information and communication are critical forms of aid, without which disaster survivors cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities. According to OCHA on Message, What is Communication with Communities, 2013 ‘People working on CwC help disaster survivors to access the information they need and communicate with people assisting them. CwC is an operational field of work distinct from conventional public information/advocacy’.

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

*- Dulag Resident, Leyte*

Findings highlight that ownership or access to information via communication technologies alone does not ensure communities' preparedness for disasters. This was demonstrated by the fact that, as the typhoon approached, people were receiving early warning information via text blasts, TV, radio and social media but did not evacuate. This is because there was a lack of familiarity with the terminology of 'storm surge'. More work on preparedness programmes to sensitise communities to terminology could lead to behaviour change in the future and potentially save lives.

Radio also featured as a key source of information and discussion in the affected areas, particularly where humanitarian broadcasting stations were operating. However, in reality, the reach and resourcing of humanitarian broadcasting stations was small compared with commercial stations, and requires greater investment and focus from donors and agencies.

*'The programmes we listen to the most are where the DJ discusses the upcoming project activities that organisations will be holding'*

*- Dulag Resident, Leyte*

It was evident that the increasing focus by humanitarian agencies to address information and communication needs of people affected by crisis was one factor which raised awareness of these approaches within the response to local and national government partners. Another factor was advocacy by communities themselves, who relied heavily on social and state structures after Typhoon Haiyan to receive and provide information and support.

Much of the progress in putting an emphasis on information and two-way communication can be attributed to the strong existing capacity and experience of government and local actors (NGOs, media agencies and telecommunications providers), as well as dedicated resourcing and experience of CwC by humanitarian agencies and media development agencies, in the immediate aftermath of the typhoon. The presence and proximity of some agencies with longstanding relationships meant communication and information campaigns were established more quickly than in previous responses. National humanitarian staff built on experience of developing CwC initiatives during previous disasters in the Philippines, such as Typhoons Bopha<sup>3</sup> and Washi. The deployment of specialised INGO and UN surge staff

and technology providers supported the finding that effective communication with communities requires adequate, varied and competent staff resources. This should be supported and nurtured in future responses through good planning, adequate resourcing around staff and budgeting for CwC.

Much of the learning and 'good practice' identified in individual agencies' CwC initiatives reflect already established principles of good CwC programming practice. This indicates a broader awareness and investment in CwC from previous responses in the Philippines, and demonstrates the advances made in promoting the importance of dialogue and two-way communication with communities by the wider sector.



Picture courtesy of IRIN

3. CDAC Network Typhoon Bopha Learning Review, 2013. Available at [www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/evaluations-and-learning-reviews/](http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/evaluations-and-learning-reviews/)

## COORDINATION OF COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

More than ever, with multiple large-scale crises taking place around the world, engaging affected people requires coordinated and collaborative approaches to provide for an efficient response and good management of global resources. All respondents involved in the review acknowledged a coordinated and collaborative approach to CwC is important, often noting benefits such as avoiding duplication, circumventing conflicting information, addressing information gaps, and ensuring community feedback is addressed.<sup>4</sup> However, considering how CwC coordination should be undertaken in future responses provoked diverse viewpoints from those interviewed.

The deployment of dedicated interagency CwC and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)<sup>5</sup> personnel to support inter-cluster coordination, and the creation of AAP/CwC Technical Working Groups, raised awareness of CwC and AAP approaches in the response to Typhoon Haiyan that was positively highlighted in various sector evaluations and reviews.<sup>6</sup>

The Technical Working Groups were generally recognised as credible and inclusive. The regular interaction and transparent leadership in many of the Technical Working Groups built on existing relationships from previous disasters or networks, or formed effective new ones. These fora allowed a history to be built over time between members of the Technical Working Group that moderated some issues of power, and gave context to CwC approaches, language and mandate of organisations. Giving context to CwC approaches and understanding CwC language used by agencies increased understanding, ultimately fostering cohesion and in some cases collaboration. Likewise, shared technical goals or project based activities in CwC increased the likelihood of collaboration in certain hubs where the working groups were operational.

While CwC and AAP were strong features in the coordination of the Typhoon Haiyan humanitarian response, the initial creation of separate CwC and AAP Technical Working Groups and roles created unnecessary silos. In practice, there was significant overlap between the activities, and also the staff who attended the CwC and AAP Technical Working Groups, leading to them eventually merging. During certain phases of the response there was a high level of integration between the two 'fields', resulting in several well-appreciated joint initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

At field level, members of the AAP and CwC Technical Working Groups in Tacloban and Roxas identified complementarity around transparency, information provision, participation, and feedback and complaints. Both AAP and CwC Technical Working Groups focused their efforts on mutually reinforcing each other's approaches to delivering technical advice to

clusters or agencies, as well as operational activities related to direct CwC programme implementation.

Findings indicate that in future, entry points for the Technical Working Groups to programme or cluster-led activities should be clarified to ensure that information reaches decision-makers in a timely manner. Tools such as the consolidated Community Feedback Form (CFF), which involved feedback collected by agencies being consolidated in Technical Working Groups, were praised as good first initiatives. However, raising awareness of communication approaches and how they enable greater accountability, participation and transparency to communities remains a priority. Comprehensive data was unavailable on how information collected through the consolidated Community Feedback Form process was used and many respondents spoke of a need for more comprehensive data on information and communication needs from assessments such as MIRA. Information from this process did lead to some specific initiatives, including communication campaigns about the 40 metre exclusion zone and allocation of hurricane straps to affected people as a result of communication initiatives of the group.

Effective coordination and engagement between communities, humanitarian responders and governments, whether local or international, is critical. Central to this is the investment in partnerships, both international and local, public and private, to build on existing capacities at a local level and engage with local actors in humanitarian efforts. The knowledge and experience brought by national partners in this response was key to the effectiveness of the coordinated communications response.

A commitment to the provision of sufficient resources for effective and consistent communication with, and meaningful engagement of, crisis affected people in their own response and recovery is necessary. Links also must be made between humanitarian communications work, and development and preparedness efforts to achieve sustainable solutions. Putting in place agreements and building relationships between stakeholders to understand ways of working before the next disaster, will help build on existing ways of working from this response.

Success in responding to future disasters is contingent on how we approach these findings and integrate and invest in local capacities to establish strong coordinated CwC approaches for the future.

4. 106 organisations were connected to two types of coordination mechanisms in the response to Typhoon Haiyan: Communicating with Communities and Accountability to Affected Populations Technical Working Groups in various locations in the Philippines as of 25 November 2013. See Network Map on page 26.

5. Accountability to Affected Populations is the term used by OCHA to denote accountability staff and initiatives.

6. After Action Review for Typhoon Haiyan, OCHA, 2014; ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB and Tearfund 2014., Missed Again – making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response; OCHA, Operational Peer Review and the Draft report of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, 2014.

7. These included the development of the Rapid Information Communication and Accountability Assessment (RICA), joint community 'conversations' projects, consolidation of community feedback through the Consolidated Community Feedback Form (CFF), and circulation of AAP and CwC issues papers on actions and suggestions for clusters.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AND CWC

### FOR OCHA (GLOBAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL)

#### Assessment and Programme Cycle

1. Lead the development of assessment methodologies to capture outputs, outcomes and early impact of CwC coordination initiatives on affected people.
2. Consolidate MIRA 1 and 2, undertaking one MIRA assessment within the programme cycle, aimed at a household level analysis, ensuring information and communication needs questions are included.
3. In lieu of MIRA 1, develop a comprehensive contextual analysis brief for responders in the response phase based on secondary data analysis of community profiles and data from previous responses to provide more indepth data on information and communication needs.
4. Resource and train teams to undertake this secondary data analysis and development of comprehensive contextual analysis brief for the response phase for information and communication needs. Pilot this initiative in the Philippines. Partnerships with agencies collecting and consolidating information in this area could be explored.
5. The Community Feedback Form and Rapid Information Communication and Accountability Assessment (RICAA) should be streamlined and systematised within the programme cycle to balance the demands of different CwC and accountability standards with the compressed timeframes of the emergency response. Guidance on monitoring how information collected from these tools is used in the programme cycle to influence decisions should be developed.
6. Review the Community Feedback Form to ensure results collected are disaggregated by sex, socioeconomic status and ethnicity, and that staff have adequate understanding to undertake such assessments and use the data. Cost staff time to undertake consolidation of disaggregated results using re-developed assessment forms.
7. Develop guidance on entry points in the programme cycle for CwC initiatives. This could include clarity on how consolidated information and communication data might support decision making and example briefs of how information was used.
3. Develop clear guidance and ToRs on the staffing, structure and functions of CwC and AAP for future response coordination.
4. Explore the potential of integrating people centred approaches such as gender, CwC, and AAP into a single consolidated function when resources are limited or cross-cutting issues are already well resourced within the broader inter-cluster coordination fora.
5. Based on themes from this study and current competency frameworks, develop training on CwC and disseminate to relevant standby partners or CwC rosters to train staff.<sup>8</sup>
6. Develop a series of induction training materials for CwC coordination or integrate into existing coordination training materials and processes, including for standby partners. Given the increasingly varied settings in which OCHA and the CDAC Network Members work, the guidance should be less prescriptive to allow context-specific solutions to coordination, while recognising the need for simple guidance in this area.

#### Information Management and Decision-making

1. Lead the development of a 'decision-making matrix' that identifies by sector decision-making points across the humanitarian programme cycle, as well as decision makers within stakeholders such as Government of Philippines. This will aim to clarify when information could be generated to influence programme decisions. This matrix should be trialled.
2. Develop an 'engagement' matrix which clearly articulates what agencies' principles, minimum capacities, mandates and type of engagement are within CwC in the Philippines as part of a standard information package for CwC coordination activities. This would clarify mandate, engagement and communication approaches of agencies working within the Philippines and could be translated and disseminated to local partners, including media.
3. Build into the National CwC Preparedness Strategy, which is being led by OCHA Philippines, additional activities aimed at sensitising relevant media actors to the humanitarian programme cycle and develop clear information management and data protocols for use by technical working groups. The information management and data standards should clearly identify information flow, decision making levels and reporting lines.

#### Resourcing

1. Deploying skilled CwC surge personnel, as well as local staff, to support CwC coordination in the initial instance was essential to the effective coordination and should be resourced and advocated for in the future to support broader inter-cluster coordination needs.
2. Develop clear guidance on the activation of the CwC/AAP Technical Working Groups, making clear their mandate and how they are engaged and led by the inter-cluster coordination mechanism.

#### Funding

Where appropriate, establish a flexible emergency field-level funding mechanism that provides funding for collaborative or coordinated 'common service' CwC projects. The mechanism should aim to be flexible in responding quickly to field-level needs and could act as an incentive for collaboration.

8. The CDAC Network is currently piloting its CwC foundation training, which OCHA staff will be able to benefit from, alongside CDAC Network Roster personnel.

## FOR CDAC NETWORK MEMBERS AND SECRETARIAT

### Preparedness Activities

1. Joint needs assessment and response collaboration protocols to be developed between agencies within the CDAC Network.
2. Advocate and provide training for inclusion of CwC across the programme cycle, including but not limited to the including of questions on information and communication in all early stage Interagency Rapid Needs Assessments, including UNDAC, the MIRA and REACH.
3. Lead a pilot study that examines how CwC initiatives or approaches could better support communications with and between communities in the Philippines.
4. Continue to build understanding between humanitarian actors and local media in preparedness activities.
5. Develop protocols to moderate and manage information in future CDAC Network communication platforms.<sup>9</sup>

### Resourcing

1. Map how various CDAC Network agencies responding in the Philippines reward or require staff within their roles to coordinate with the wider sector. Advocate for agencies to include collaboration on CwC within staff job descriptions.
2. Develop guidance for CwC coordinators that covers information on CwC activities and mandates of agencies working in CwC, relevant humanitarian standards such as Sphere Standards or the Core Humanitarian Standards that are soon to be released, and monitoring and assessment methodologies for CwC.

### Funding

1. CDAC Network agencies should develop collaboration protocols for future responses that could cover joint applications to funding pools such as the Rapid Response Fund (RRF) or funding for common activities, including supporting learning.
2. CDAC Network Secretariat could map common CwC initiatives in the programme cycle and provide indications of their cost for budgeting of CwC activities.<sup>10</sup> Advocate to donors for common financial reporting structures for CwC initiatives.
3. Consolidate advocacy to donors and stakeholders on funding detailed information and communication needs assessments at different stages of a response.
4. Where appropriate, establish a flexible emergency field-level funding mechanism that provides funding for collaborative or coordinated 'common service' CwC projects, which aims to be flexible in responding quickly to field-level needs. This could include an agreement of larger agencies channelling

funding to smaller agencies with innovative proposals.

## FOR DONORS

1. Related to recommendations above, support the establishment of a flexible emergency field-level funding mechanism that provides funding for collaborative or coordinated 'common service projects' or joint assessments within the CwC arena. Suggestions for common service projects is included in this report.
2. Fund the development of assessment methodologies to capture outputs, outcomes and early impact of CwC coordination initiatives on affected people.
3. Support the consolidation of rapid interagency needs assessments such as MIRA assessments by funding pilots that will train teams to develop secondary data briefing notes for the response phase.

9. CDAC Network and other agencies used Skype to communicate during Typhoon Haiyan.

10. This is currently being undertaken by the CDAC Network Secretariat



