



Terms of Reference

Hurricane Maria Communications and Community Engagement Response Review

Background

On 18 September, Hurricane Maria evolved from a category 1 storm to a category 5 storm in less than 18 hours, just before it slammed the Caribbean island of Dominica (Source: NASA). Six months after Hurricane Maria, the Government and humanitarian actors continue to work together to address the needs of the most affected. Even though the situation is normalizing throughout the country, Dominica remains seriously impacted. Over 80 percent of houses still have inadequate roofing. In the current recovery phase of the response, there is an overwhelming need for information on shelter support from the affected communities. Results from the perception survey conducted by Ground Truth Solutions (Jan, 2018) indicates that 38% of the respondents would like to receive more information on building materials and support, with an additional 21% seeking on housing assistance. 30% of the respondents also indicated building materials/support as one of their unmet needs, while 25% highlighted housing assistance as the other need that is largely unfulfilled.

The CDAC Network as part of the H2H network received funding to provide coordination and technical support to the response on Communications and Community engagement from September 2017 to March 31st 2018.

Hurricane Maria is regarded as the worst natural disaster in the history of Dominica. Given the uniqueness of the hurricane, the impact on the state coupled with the role of the diaspora in information communications this the new operating environment for many humanitarian actors. Many actors on the ground have articulated the need to reflect together on their experiences and create a common narrative of what happened. This includes highlighting examples of good practice, examining where and why challenges arose, and working together to develop goals and strategies for the next disaster response.

It is hoped this review will help build an idea of what a successful communication and community engagement response looks like in this context, and map what is needed from different actors to achieve this. The role of the diaspora is also critical in the communications and information flows and the CDAC network would like to explore this.

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to capture learning on communication with communities and community engagement in the overall hurricane response. More specifically, the review seeks to:

1. Ensure learning related to communications and community engagement from the Hurricane Maria response is captured, shared and used in future disaster responses.
2. Bring key actors together (at field level and global level) to reflect on their experiences and develop goals and strategies for future disaster responses reflecting the uniqueness of small island states.

3. Assess the role of the diaspora in sharing and information and communicating needs to humanitarian responders.

Scope

Learning will need to be captured across a number of different levels of activity:

1. Global level coordination, and collaboration between responders (including CDAC Network Secretariat support at global level) through a communication and community engagement lens.
2. Field level coordination (led by UNOCHA (now UNDP)), and collaboration between responders (including government and non-traditional humanitarian organisations), and how this operated within the broader coordination for a.
3. Specific field-level projects and initiatives (collaborative, community or individual organisation), including community perceptions of these initiatives.

The review will need to cover the various phases of the disaster management cycle, from the initial days of the response and weeks following the hurricane, to the early recovery programmes which are now being implemented.

It is important to ensure the voices and perspectives of communities affected by Hurricane Maria are the starting point to influence planning for the future. Some perspectives will be brought in from relevant existing studies, for example through collaboration with GroundTruth Solutions, but it is expected the consultant may engage with people living in affected areas (as well as concerned government agencies) to understand their experiences regarding access to information, opportunity for dialogue, and connectivity.

Review Approach

The review will use the following approach:

1. Listen to experiences of community members affected by Hurricane Maria, in terms of access to information and opportunity for dialogue with responders; the importance of two-way communication networks within and between communities themselves, and the impact these have had on their own recovery and understanding of the various interventions by humanitarian agencies. This maybe through, or supported by, a GroundTruth Solutions perception study.
2. Examine good practice, challenges and value added in communication and community engagement coordination work at field and global level.
3. Document in-depth case studies of innovative communications initiatives and examples of collaboration during response

Topics specifically requested for inclusion by CDAC Network are:

- Successes and challenges regarding rapid deployment in this context.
- Extent and usefulness of information and communication needs assessment data.
- Hardware distribution and prepositioning (e.g. radio sets and mobile phones).
- Communities' views on perceived choice and effectiveness of feedback mechanisms.
- The level of engagement CCE working groups had with inter cluster coordination and other cross cutting issues.

- Quality and effectiveness of collaboration between humanitarian responders, media development agencies and government responders.
- Specific case studies on engagement between local media, CSOs, telecommunication companies and humanitarian agencies, outlining challenges and best practice.

Methodology

Although the full methodology will be determined by the consultant, it is envisaged the following stages will be included:

1. Preparatory desk study: i. Synthesising relevant learning from agencies' and donors' AARs, RTEs and mid-term evaluations, as well as relevant data from community surveys, assessments and consultations, including with H2H partners.
2. Field visit to three areas affected by Hurricane Maria in Dominica
 - i. Hold a learning workshop with operational field staff, through the CCE Working Group
 - ii. Examine one or more innovative communications initiatives in the area to develop in-depth case studies
 - iii. Interview key stakeholders, including non-communication actors (e.g. cluster leads, government representatives) and non-humanitarian actors (e.g. local media)
 - iv. Hold focus groups with members of the affected population (ensuring groups are representative, and different stakeholder groups are consulted)
3. Conduct interviews with key international surge staff who were present at the beginning of the response.
4. Conduct interviews with media, and key personalities across the Caribbean about how they facilitate the sharing of key information.
5. As appropriate work with GroundTruth Solutions on their diaspora research and identify key communications channels to investigate further.
6. Hold semi structured interviews with key informants to investigate further the diaspora information communication flows across the globe.

The consultant will be supported in organising learning workshops and field meetings by the CDAC Network Secretariat and CDAC Network Members.

Outputs

All outputs should be designed to be accessible and easily usable for field and global level staff. These products will be designed by the consultant, and will depend on the results of the review. Use of accessible and innovative media is encouraged. It is envisaged they will include the following:

- A comprehensive report (max 15 pages), including methodology, key learning under the three levels of activity, and recommendations for the CDAC Network Secretariat, CDAC Network Members and others. Recommendations should be linked to primary and secondary research undertaken as part of the review.
- Two case studies capturing learning from field level initiatives
- Documentation outlining any agreements or plans made by agencies to prepare for the next response
- The complete data set (separate from the report)

Timeline

- Max 20 days with final report completed by March 29th
- Suggested time in country – 7 days
- Zero draft to CDAC Network staff by March 23rd

Person Specification

We are looking for one external consultant to lead on this Learning Review. We aim to involve staff from working group agencies as much as possible, at field and country level. It may be appropriate to work with a local consultant.

We are looking for an external consultant with the following skills and experience:

Essential

- Experience undertaking learning reviews / evaluations of humanitarian initiatives, especially in the Caribbean
- Experience facilitating learning workshops and events
- Experience working in the field of 'communications and community engagement' and accountability
- Experience undertaking qualitative research with communities affected by crises
- Proven ability to present and communicate relevant findings for different audiences, including local operational staff, regional and global level staff and policy makers
- Available to carry out this consultancy by March 31st 2018

Desirable

- Experience undertaking multi-agency evaluations
- Experience of working within a collaborative initiative in the humanitarian sector
- Experience using innovative formats to present and communicate research findings (including working with film and other media)