The CDAC Network
Communications and Community Engagement in Humanitarian Response
Syllabus

Background
When a disaster strikes, people need food, shelter, water and safety. They also need information and they need to be able to communicate – with each other and with those trying to help them. Meeting the information and two way communication needs of people affected by crisis, is critical for effective emergency response.

As part of its strategy to build capacity in the sector in Communications and Community Engagement the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network has developed and piloted a face to face training to strengthen the knowledge, understanding and skills of humanitarian practitioners and managers through enhanced community engagement, which ultimately serves to improve the outcomes for disaster affected people.

Course Aim and Objectives

Aim
To strengthen the capacity of practitioners, team leaders and managers so that communications and community engagement is part of normal operational practice, and becomes a predictable, consistent and resourced element of emergency preparedness and response.

Objectives
The training is an introductory course on how to ensure that people affected by crisis have the information they need and that they are able to communicate with each other and with those trying to help them.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the core elements of communications and community engagement in a humanitarian response.
2. Practical skills in how to apply this knowledge to information needs assessments, advocacy for communication and community engagement, and supporting partnerships / coordination.
3. Understand the different channels of communication and the advantages and challenges related to disseminating information in different humanitarian contexts.
The CDAC Network Foundation Training Syllabus

4. Practical skills on ways of engaging active participation with affected communities.
5. Practical skills needed to engage in two way conversations with communities through consultation and feedback mechanisms.

Who is the Training Intended For?

The Foundation Training has been designed primarily for humanitarian programme staff, team leaders and managers with limited or no experience of communications and community engagement. These may come from national and international NGOs, UN agencies, governments, donors and private sector actors involved in or planning to be involved in regular contact with field staff. Participation is encouraged from staff from all sectors (eg WASH / protection), programme managers, programme officers, proposal development officers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and communications colleagues. It is also suitable for emergency deployment roster / surge staff.

Participant selection

The target number for each course is 20-25 participants in order to achieve effective learning. Potential participants are asked to complete an online application form which examines their motivation for applying, current knowledge and skill level, and their perceived learning needs to enable tailoring of the content.

Participants should have:

- A profile that corresponds to the intended audience as outlined above
- A commitment to communications and community engagement and willingness to learn and implement learning in their role
- The support of their line manager to release the participant from their normal duties to attend the course and to implement learning after the course
- Verbal and written skills in the language of delivery of the training.

Course Structure and Methodologies

The training is a 3-day intensive training course, held face-to-face. It blends theory and practice to develop participants’ knowledge, understanding and skills. The course has a modular design, enabling it to be run as a complete course or as specific sessions over shorter periods. Each session has predefined objectives and content materials, with detailed session plans to guide the facilitators. These are adapted to both the context the course is being run in and its participants. Participants are however required to attend for all three days.

The trainers for the course are a mix of staff from member organisations of the CDAC Network and external consultants. All have significant expertise in communications and community engagement, in humanitarian response and in humanitarian organisations. They also have significant experience as trainers and use engaging, interactive approaches appropriate for adult learning.

There is no pre-reading for the course, although participants may wish to explore information in preparation of the course on the CDAC Network website.

The learning journey

Potential participants undertake a self-assessment as part of their application which is both a self-reflective practice for the participant and informs the tailoring of the course to the cohort of participants. The participant’s line manager is asked to sign off on participation in the course to ensure that both the
participant and their manager are committed to the training and the application of new knowledge and skills afterwards.

The training itself uses a mixed methodology approach including discussion, group work, lecture, role-play and self-reflection methods. Participants are expected to learn from their peers, facilitators and their own experience and reflections during the course. Participants are encouraged to keep a learning log to record their reflections and learning as they proceed through the course and to leave with a plan of how they want to use their learning which they should discuss with their line manager.

Participants completing the course receive a certificate and will discuss practical ways of implementing communications and community engagement in their programmes and between partners.

Coordinating the Programme

The facilitation team is responsible for the assessment of participants learning needs, the training content, contextualisation of materials to the cohort, the delivery of the training and the evaluation.

The Foundation Training will normally be hosted by a CDAC Network Member organisation which will support the logistics and administration for the course, and will work with the facilitation team to coordinate it.

Sample Agenda for three day training

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<th>AGENDA</th>
<th>Communication and Community Engagement Training</th>
<th>11/12/13 December - Tentative Agenda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
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<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
<td>Information needs assessments</td>
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<td>Why communicate with disaster-affected people?</td>
<td>Communication Channels</td>
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<td>Information for or information about a community?</td>
<td>Message Development</td>
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<td>Guest speaker</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Enhancing participation for communication with communities</td>
<td>Combating rumours and managing expectations</td>
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<td>Enhancing feedback and complaints</td>
<td>Engaging and working with Partners</td>
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<td>Simulation</td>
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<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Simulation review</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
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Alternative Delivery Options

The Foundation Training can be replicated by single or multiple agencies for their staff, and can be replicated as a full course or as individual modules. Modules have been designed to flow from one into another, so some adaptation will be required if they are to be replicated as stand-alone modules or a smaller selection of modules.

About the CDAC Network

The CDAC Network convenes over 30 humanitarian and media development agencies, technology and other service providers, as well as research-oriented organisations which believe that communication in crises can save lives, help communities to rebuild their networks and support structures, and make humanitarian response far more effective and accountable by bringing the voices of affected people to decision makers. www.cdacnetwork.org

Acknowledgements

The material has been drawn from experience and lessons captured from across the CDAC Network and its Members, and wider, through field-level deployments, learning reviews, Member and stakeholder consultations and secondary data reviews. The identified core components have been designed to address common gaps and challenges at field level and build on identified good practice.

Key writers and compilers of the material

Katie Drew, Angela Rouse, John Tuckey and Sarah Mace (CDAC Network Secretariat) and Jacqueline Dalton (BBC Media Action).

Principle contributors during pilot

Lisa Robinson (BBC Media Action), Stewart Davies (UN OCHA) and Beatrice Spadacini (Internews).

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