



Better dialogue. Better information. Better action.

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What is Communicating with Communities?

In the context of humanitarian action, communication with communities (sometimes abbreviated to CwC) refers to activities where the exchange of information is used to save lives, mitigate risk, enable greater accountability and shape the response, as well as support the communication needs of people caught up in conflicts, natural disasters and other crises.

Without the power to communicate, disaster survivors cannot access information. Without information, neither can they access assistance or make the best decisions to ensure their and their families' survival. Nor can they reconnect with their wider family and community networks, ask questions or get answers about the situation they find themselves in, or express their needs and concerns. In circumstances when communities cannot be reached physically, information such as home treatments for disease is literally life-saving.

Communicating with affected communities also benefits disaster responders. It leads to better relationships between humanitarians and survivors, resulting ultimately in a more effective, more equitable, higher quality and more transparent humanitarian response.

But while communicating with, and providing information to, people affected by crisis are two of the most important elements of humanitarian response, they continue to be difficult to implement in practice. Those working on communicating with communities are seeking to change this. On the ground, they help disaster survivors to access the information they need and to communicate with the people assisting them as well as with each other. Examples of communicating with disaster affected communities projects include information needs assessments, humanitarian radio broadcasting, hotlines, newsletters, SMS surveying, and the development of independent feedback systems for disaster survivors.

At the global level, those working on communicating with communities advocate for systematic change and for the importance of communicating with communities to be reflected in everything from standard operating procedures, coordination and humanitarian architecture to staffing, project design and funding. Communicating with communities is an approach and a philosophy that needs to be applied at every stage of the disaster cycle, from preparedness to long-term response.

What is the CDAC Network?

The CDAC Network was founded in 2009 by a group of UN, INGO and media development organisations to facilitate collective work on making communicating with communities an integral part of emergency response. A cross-sector collaboration, today the Network brings together over 30 Member agencies from humanitarian and media development organisations, UN agencies, the Red Cross, faith-based groups, translators, technology providers, and those with expertise in mass marketing-type surveys. This extended network comes with connections to the private sector, civil society groups, communities and national governments. The vision of the Network is of a world in which people affected by crisis are agents of their own response and recover, and the Network seeks to catalyse communities' ability to connect, access information and have a voice.

To achieve this, CDAC Network Members are committed to supporting and implementing the coordinated provision of information and communication with disaster survivors in all humanitarian responses. Members focus on how partnerships, particularly with media development organisations, telecoms companies and technology providers, can deliver effective and appropriate outcomes.

The Network delivers through four pillars: research and learning, capacity strengthening, convening, and advocacy. As part of the research agenda, the Network has carried out learning reviews of collective communication efforts, collated case studies and developed an online library of relevant literature. To support capacity strengthening, the Network organises one-day courses and seminars, has developed a roster of rapidly deployable field experts and advisors in partnership with NORCAP, and has also developed a Foundation Training. Convening is one of the Network's most critical roles: it is unique in its capacity to bring together humanitarian and media development organisations and, increasingly, specialist technology and other service providers. The Network helps 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. Finally, the Network and its Members advocate for the development of communicating with communities as a predictable, consistent and properly funded aspect of preparedness, response and recovery.

The CDAC Network Secretariat is hosted by Internews, and is currently based in London

Current Members

Current Full Members: ActionAid; BBC Media Action; Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action (DAHLIA); Ground Truth Solutions; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Media Support (IMS); Internews; Norwegian Refugee Council (NORCAP); UMCOM (United Methodist Communications); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); Plan International; Save the Children; Social Impact Lab; Thomson Reuters Foundation; Translators without Borders; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Association for Christian Communication (WACC); World Food Programme (WFP); and World Vision International.

Current Affiliate Members: FdL Development; FilmAid; First Response Radio; Freeplay Energy; InsightShare; Pecojon; and HFCC-International Broadcasting Delivery.

For more information please go to www.cdacnetwork.org or contact Martin Dawes, Head of External Communications & Advocacy martin.dawes@cdacnetwork.org. Follow us on Twitter [@CDACN](https://twitter.com/CDACN)