



The CDAC Capacity Bridging Initiative

**Facilitating inclusion and maximising
collaboration in CCE/AAP**

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There is an urgent need to improve technical ability and surge capacity for communication and community engagement (CCE) in humanitarian response if the sector is to make tangible improvements in accountability to affected people (AAP) in crises. CCE requires cross-cutting expertise to ensure the participation and intentional inclusion of communities in humanitarian decision-making, coordination and the design and delivery of preparedness and response programmes.

Building on a decade of developing, testing and applying locally led CCE/AAP models of working, **the CDAC Capacity Bridging Initiative (CCBI)** was designed in 2021 to ensure improved technical capability and surge capacity for coordinated CCE/AAP systems change in disaster preparedness and response. It will focus on four outcome areas: improved in-country CCE/AAP systems support; bridging the gap between local and international actors; national leadership on CCEA/AAP; and enhanced surge capacity.

In 2022–2027, the initiative will prioritise five areas of action:

1. **CCE/AAP coordination systems strengthening:** Fostering networks, pre-positioning relationships and partnerships for coordinated in-country CCE/AAP.
2. **CCE/AAP technical training:** Bridging knowledge and skills across diverse actors through design and delivery of specialised CDAC training modules. This includes the introduction of a new module on user-centred design of digital CCE strategies.
3. **Technology and innovation for learning:** Maximising engagement in training through immersive learning experiences.
4. **Surge capacity support:** Strengthening the operational and high-level coordination skills of national and international surge staff to plan and implement CCE/AAP initiatives.
5. **Mentoring and accompaniment to deepen expertise:** Enabling on-the-job exchange of CCE/AAP knowledge and skills, as well as networking and relationship-building at the country level.

The CCBI seeks lasting systemic change by exploring and co-creating responses to opportunities to strengthen relationships, systems and networks. Supporting the development of existing national CCE platforms and well embedded CCE knowledge and skills across the system will increase the quality and predictability of response-wide CCE and enable both leaders and practitioners to meet their global and programmatic AAP commitments. It will further enable disaster management systems to consider CCE/AAP effectively in their day-to-day work.

What is capacity bridging?

Capacity bridging is the **equitable, two-way sharing of knowledge and skills across individuals and institutions** to enable optimal CCE/AAP competence and capabilities at scale throughout the humanitarian system. It is a shift away from concepts like ‘capacity building/development’ towards a more inclusive and less hierarchal concept that recognises and values the existing capacities of local and national response actors and their related national humanitarian architecture.

The people and place in each country context are the foundational building blocks for CDAC’s CCE/AAP work. CDAC therefore works to ‘bridge’ capacities between those within the country and international actors to fill critical gaps in CCE/AAP knowledge and skills, and supports this process through providing training and coordination.

CDAC pioneered the first platform models of in-country CCE/AAP coordination, starting with the 2010 Haiti earthquake response, and has adapted more than 20 preparedness and response models over the past decade in medium- to large-scale responses. Maximising impact for CCE system strengthening has relied on effective collaboration and relationship-building, much of which is dependent on combining depth of knowledge on culture and national systems with a breadth of experience in global CCE/AAP policy and practice.

This is why *who* we target and *how* is central to the CCBI, to go beyond training to learning, exchange, inclusion and embedding changes in existing systems. CDAC supports this by ensuring surge capacity is available to bridge temporary gaps in collaboration during acute phases of a crisis, and by transitioning as soon as possible to providing remote technical mentoring and accompaniment support to senior nationally appointed experts.

The CCBI theory of change (Figure 1) is underpinned by CDAC’s comprehensive technical training offer on CCE/AAP (see Table 1), which combines guided learning with simulations, gaming and other means to promote and embed adult learning. Since the start of 2021, more than 400 CCE/AAP practitioners, non-traditional actors, national leadership, surge staff and high-level decision-makers from across the world have engaged in the initiative. Indeed, CDAC and its members has been developing, testing and delivering CCE/AAP training for more than a decade, training thousands of actors responding to disasters.

The updated CCE/AAP technical training turns the tables on traditional capacity-building by prioritising learning and practice that bridges the knowledge gap of international agencies on CCE/AAP with local contextual perspective and expertise. The comprehensive training package is particularly flexible to the diverse needs around CCE/AAP for experienced humanitarians, technical experts, senior management and practitioners in non-CCE/AAP areas. We provide a full range of technical training as well as expert modules, which allows us to tailor training to specific participant groups dependent on experience, focus and intention.

Figure 1 **CDAC Capacity Bridging Initiative theory of change**

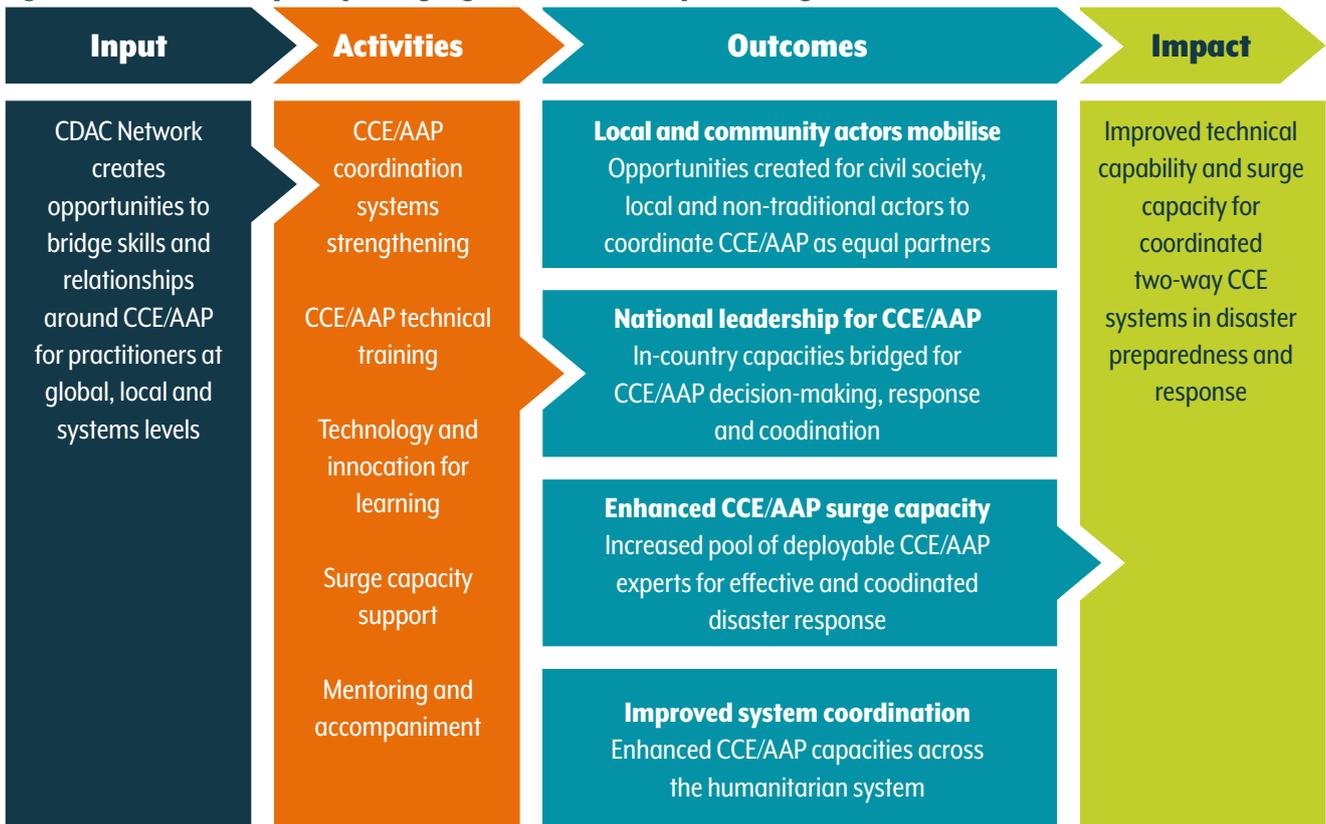


Table 1 CDAC's four-part training offer

Training	Level	Description
Coordinator Training for CCE/AAP	Advanced	Facilitated online or in-person. Designed for senior people who will work in CCE/AAP coordination or surge personnel who need to do so at short notice; gives them the key skills they will need when acting as coordinators, so that they can build more resilient, cooperative, embedded partnerships in CCE/AAP.
Technical Training for CCE/AAP Practitioners	Intermediate	Online or in-person. Designed for in-country and technical staff who already have a basic understanding of CCE/AAP concepts. Participants are likely to be involved in designing and implementing CCE/AAP programmes.
Bespoke training on CCE/AAP	Needs-based	Online or in-person. We develop and deliver training for organisations or rosters looking for training tailored specifically to their needs. Examples include creating CCE/AAP training tailored for work involving: public health, cash, climate resilience and sector-focused work.
Communication is Aid	Introductory	Online, self-guided. An introductory, three-hour e-learning course that introduces the concept of 'communication as aid'. It takes participants through interactive scenarios to teach the basic elements of how to engage and provide information for affected communities and establish communication mechanisms for dialogue. This course can be taken on its own or as a precursor to other courses.

Why CDAC Network

CDAC Network is the global alliance of many of the world's biggest organisations prioritising **communication with and the engagement of communities** to reverse the focus of humanitarian and development decision-making – moving from global to local. Our membership comprises media development organisations, UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs and specialist communications entities.

The CCBI builds on CDAC Network's extensive experience in CCE/AAP capacity strengthening as well as deployments of CCE/AAP experts for organisational and collective surge purposes in a growing number of crises. Individual members of CDAC, and the Network as a collective, have been deploying CCE/AAP expertise, facilitated by both national and international experts, for more than a decade. After large-scale crises, CDAC has undertaken detailed learning reviews, the outcomes of which have contributed to the design of the training programmes.

For more information on the initiative or if you are interested in supporting us, please contact:

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