Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement
Terms of Reference (ToR)

1.) Background

Since typhoon Bopha in 2012, the Philippines have been a pilot country by most humanitarian agencies in mainstreaming an integrated and coordinated approach on two-way communication, accountability and community participation. The first field level technical working group (TWG) on community engagement was created during Bopha's response to address the information needs, preferred communication channels and accessibility to meaningful participation of the affected communities.

By around 2013, community engagement has been a core humanitarian activity by various agencies and some members of the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network (CDAC-N) in the Philippines[1]. The said initiative was part of responding to series of emergencies in 2013 such as the Zamboanga siege (September 2013), Bohol earthquake (2013) and the typhoon Haiyan in Visayas regions (November 2013).

As part of post-Haiyan and preparedness initiative in 2014, the Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement was created in Manila. The CoP is expected to provide strategic advice and technical support to the existing field level TWGs including improving two-way communication platforms, feedback avenues and closing the communication loop mechanisms.

For preparedness, the CoP will facilitate continuous learning and capacity building on communications as aid, support the conduct of simulation exercise on coordinated communication strategy across all-inclusive sectors and provide the platform for documentation and sharing of good practices. The CoP will provide recommendations, updates and relevant reports to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), as needed and required, both in preparedness and response.

2.) Key Objectives

- Bring together key actors to develop an effective and coordinated mechanism for accessible sharing of information with people before, during and after emergencies and ensure communities' meaningful participation in the process. These actors are government including the Philippines Information Agency (PIA), UN agencies, local and international NGOs, telecommunications companies, traditional and other emerging media actors (both national and local), faith-based groups and the network of the nationwide Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on community engagement before and during humanitarian crises.

- Institutionalize the CoP as the inclusive platform for multi-sector and multi-purpose community engagement coordination and learning related to preparedness and response.

- Ensure the sustainability of the CoP for the strategic and some operational undertakings on community engagement in the country, including during emergencies as well as

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[1] The CDAC-N is a global network that aims to ensure that communities affected by, and prone to, crisis are able to withstand and recover from humanitarian emergencies, and are actively engaged in decisions about the relief and recovery efforts in their country.

preparedness for harmonization of learning tools, better strategic coordination, cohesive reporting and advocacy to decision-makers (from Inter-Cluster Coordination to HCT).

- Facilitate innovations within CoP through cross sector/multi sector learning, information/knowledge sharing on good initiatives and good practices, lessons learned, common tools and strategic coordination.

- Provide tools and technical support to humanitarian actors and government where required, to strengthen their capacity on information exchange, improve available feedback mechanism and enhance the level of participation of the community and accountability to them.

- Ensure consistency and clarity in providing information and advice to affected communities by working with relevant government agencies and clusters, to ensure the voices of affected communities are accessible to policy and decision makers.

3.) The Community of Practice (CoP)

a.) Composition

It is currently chaired by OCHA with technical support from the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network (CDAC-N) and other humanitarian organizations in the country that were involved in the mainstreaming of communication, accountability and community participation since 2012. OCHA serves as the overall secretariat of the CoP for Community Engagement.

The CoP is an inclusive cross-sector coordination and technical support group that brings together all those working on community engagement such as UN agencies, international and local NGOs, private sector (specifically the telecommunication companies and online media networks), national and local government agency like the PIA, CSOs, faith-based groups, academe and the traditional media including mainstream and the humanitarian press.

b.) Core Group

A Core Group, composed of 12 organizations, was created to provide overall guidance and advisory recommendations on the plans, strategies and initiatives of the overall CoP. As part of preparedness, it will provide advice on behalf of the CoP, as appropriate and necessary, to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on prepositioning minimum resources and capacities to ensure major components of community engagements are ready and operational during the actual response.

Member organizations of the CoP should appoint at least two persons to act as the official representatives in all meetings. The first will act as the lead while the second as the alternate focal point.

c.) Chairmanship

It was agreed to have a rotational chairmanship within the CoP. The chair organization will be responsible for calling the meeting, organizing venue and facilitating discussions.

OCHA will chair the CoP in the first three months but will maintain the overall secretariat support once a new organization or agency is identified to take the lead. An agenda would be created and agreed before each meeting by the CoP and chair organizations. Chairmanship will be on a three-month rotation. The Core Group, in consultation with the CoP, will determine the next chair.

In an event of an emergency, OCHA will take the overall coordination lead and will be responsible, in consultation with the members, to propose priority agenda and activities in an emergency including the possible creation or activation of the field level TWG.

d.) Frequency of the meetings

Emergency	Core Group members will convene series of meetings during emergencies as required.	Special and more frequent meetings, including meetings on the necessary coordination that may be needed in establishing the field level TWG, can be called for the whole CoP during emergencies as required.
Non-Emergency (Preparedness)	Core Group members of the CoP will meet once a month unless important session is needed for the members to convene.	All CoP members will meet on a quarterly basis unless the whole members are required to convene in certain important sessions.

e.) Types of meetings

Aside from the face to face regular meeting (once a month for the Core Group and quarterly for the whole CoP), setting up a skype meeting conference among all identified members was suggested, especially in the event of an emergency.

If necessary and needed, establishing a Facebook page and using other social media platforms, including the use of Twitter and LinkedIn, can be explored by the CoP as well.

The CoP will maintain an up to date directory of all members including mobile numbers, email addresses and other contact details. Most members of the CoP are now registered to the Humanitarian ID.

4.) Core functions and deliverables

Considering the diversity and inclusivity of the membership of the CoP, in terms of roles, responsibilities and functions, most members are expected as much as possible to support and complement each other such as on:

a.) Effective coordination

Emergency	• Support the establishment of the field level TWG for community engagement, if needed and necessary, to back the ICC mechanism and provide advice to the HCT. • Support the conduct of joint/coordinated Rapid Information Communication Accountability Assessment (RICAA) to understand and analyze the information needs and preferred communication channels of the affected communities, identify gaps in relation to accountability and community participation, and assess impacts on local media/communications infrastructure, and document the communications environment/landscape. • Members should provide inputs to the regular situations reports produced for Community Engagement that summarise the activities of group members and share it for inclusion in the response wide situation reports. • Support the joint/coordinated conduct of community consultations through the use of the Community Feedback Form, Closing the Communication Loop Template, and activation of the Common Service Project tool[2].
Non-Emergency (Preparedness)	• Members should participate and attend meetings to identify key coordinated preparedness activities as part of mainstreaming coherent system before an emergency. Members should: a.) agree on the system and arrangements for coordination at the national (CoP) and field level (TWG), and work with the HCT, ICC and other technical working groups b.) identify level of cooperation in the collation of relevant pre-crisis information and agree on arrangements for multi-sectoral rapid assessments c.) identify and agree on arrangements for preparedness/response planning including but not limited to coming up with the preparedness plan, Who Does What or 3W mapping and stockpiling of resources such as emergency radio facility, solar/crank radios and surge staff d.) share information both to members and potentially disaster affected communities, including but not limited to early warning systems, communication protocols and evacuation procedures.

b.) Technical support

Emergency	• Members should identify and prioritize support mechanisms in which humanitarian responders and field level TWG can listen and provide the necessary action points to the needs and concerns of the affected communities especially on access to information, reliable feedback mechanism and trusted channel for participation. • Members should work together to use the common service tools (via the TWG and ICC) through which those affected by the disaster can access the information they need and provide the necessary and urgent feedback including but not limited to available aid or assistance from all humanitarian actors.

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[2] CSP is a collaborative initiative of Plan International, World Vision and IOM that is supported by OCHA to ensure meaningful and inclusive participation of the affected communities by providing complaints and response mechanisms (CRM), establishing or maintaining feedback platforms and closing the feedback loop as part of follow-up activities and response

Non-Emergency (Preparedness)	• Members should agree and identify strategies on how to provide agencies or clusters with the technical information needed to design effective communication, accountability and community participation activities before and at the height of an emergency. • Members should support a joint/coordinated training on basic communication, accountability and community participation activities for agencies or clusters as part of capacity building. • Members should source and share existing good initiatives, best practices and research undertakings on communications, accountability and community participation (like learning reviews and case studies)[3]. • Aside from identifying innovations within the CoP, members should promote core tools such as the Message Library of the CDAC Network and other resources or tools coming from CoP members and partners. • Aside from developing partnerships, members should implement a joint exit/transition strategy focusing on sustainability and preparedness activities especially with the field level TWGs.

c.) Advocacy

Emergency	• CoP should work with the Humanitarian Communications Group (HCG) for wide coverage and delivery of the key messages, and expand channels for feedback to ensure voices of the affected communities are integrated into public information, response-wide advocacy materials and action points from the HCT. • Members should agree on and identify direct humanitarian support to local media and other communication actors affected by a crisis.
Non-Emergency (Preparedness)	• Members should agree and identify local champions on community engagement in various agencies to help mainstream and replicate good practices on communication, accountability and community participation for future emergency response. • Members should agree and identify ways to advocate across preparedness and response phase for more systematic and well-designed two-way communication and feedback platforms with those affected and considered as at-risk or vulnerable communities.

5.) Expected Results:

• Information about the response, particularly concerning available services, resources and good initiatives that can be replicated, is shared systematically with affected communities through

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3 These may include social media forum, frontline SMS and the Digital Humanitarian Network, humanitarian reporting, community-based preparedness and disaster risk reduction management training; communication is aid training, Protection against Sexually Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) training.

appropriate channels; while in preparedness, life-saving information related to early warning and community-based preparedness are supported if not enhanced in various means.

- Information needs and preferred communication channels of affected communities are systematically and regularly identified and met during emergency response; while in preparedness, coordinated mechanism among CoP members and partners should be strategically prepositioned as part of minimum preparedness actions.[4]

- Feedback from affected communities are systematically collected and shared not only with responders but up to top level decision makers as well (from ICC to HCT), thereby influencing project design, humanitarian policy and overall response programming.[5]

- The capacity of individual agencies (including government) to deliver quality communication, accountability and community participation work as an integral part of both preparedness and response is improved.

- Beneficiaries, including persons with specific needs, take part in decision-making process through various two way communication channels and series of participation or engagement in transparency forum.

- The needs of local communications actors, including but not limited to local media and non-traditional sectors, are met and their capacity to deliver information services to the affected community is supported and, where possible, enhanced.

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[4] In terms of preparedness, it was proven effective days before typhoon Hagupit in 2014.

[5] It was one of the major recommendations from the 2014 CDAC Learning Review of Communicating with Communities during typhoon Haiyan response.