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Communication and Complex  
Emergencies:

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**A Resource Guide**





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# Contents

<b>The Communication and Complex Emergencies Project</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Communication phases</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Situational assessment</b>	<b>13</b>
Rapid-onset disasters case study   Typhoon Bopha (Philippines): NetHope	17
Rapid-onset disasters case study   Uttarakhand Floods (India): DHNetwork	18
Rapid-onset disasters case study   Mahasen cyclonic storm (Bangladesh): BBC Media Action	20
Open conflict case study   Centre Lokolé (Democratic Republic of Congo): Search for Common Ground	23
Open conflict case study   Radio Erena (Eritrea): Reporters Without Borders	24
Open conflict case study   Radio for Peacebuilding Africa: Search for Common Ground	26
Civil unrest case study   Radio Abyei (South Sudan): Internews and USAID	29
Civil unrest case study   Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World: BBC Media Action and Misr International Films	30
Civil unrest case study   Salam Shabab (Iraq): US Institute of Peace	32
Civil unrest case study   Speak-to-Tweet (Egypt): Google, Twitter and SayNow	34
Recovery case study   Sada Voice Players (Afghanistan): Voice for Humanity	37
Recovery case study   Radio Okapi (Democratic Republic of Congo): MONUSCO and the Hirondelle Foundation	38
Recovery case study   Open Jirga (Afghanistan): BBC Media Action	40
Recovery case study   PakVotes (Pakistan): Byte for All	41
<b>4. Core communication principles</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>5. Conclusion</b>	<b>57</b>

# The Communication and Complex Emergencies Project

The Communication and Complex Emergencies Project is a collaboration between the University of Adelaide's Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit (ACCRU) and the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC). The main objectives of the project are to highlight the role of communication — including new and social media — in complex emergencies and in support of humanitarian assistance.

The work focuses on 'what we know', mapping out a broad array of knowledge while examining the functions, strengths and limitations of various forms of media, from social networking and social media to radio, television, print and video. The project has resulted in several outputs that are designed to support each other:

- a social networking and social media annotated bibliography
- a social networking and social media issues paper
- a communication and complex emergencies resource guide

These publications are available at the ACMC and ACCRU websites.

## The Australian Civil-Military Centre

The Australian Civil-Military Centre (formerly the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence) was established in November 2008 in recognition of the growing importance of civil-military interaction. It is evidence of Australia's commitment to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The ACMC's mission is to support the development of national civil-military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas. At its core is a multi-agency approach, and it has staff from a number of Australian government departments and agencies, the New Zealand Government and the non-government sector. Applying this collaborative approach to working with various organisations, including the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders, the ACMC aims to improve civil-military education and training and develop civil-military doctrine and guiding principles.

Through its research program, the ACMC seeks to identify best-practice responses to lessons learned (important for developing doctrine and facilitating training programs) and so contribute directly to the Australian Government's ability to develop

a more effective civil–military capacity for conflict prevention and disaster management overseas.

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## The Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit

The Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit is dedicated to understanding and promoting the role of information, communication and new communication technologies in processes of development and change. It draws together a group of internationally regarded specialists and emerging researchers in a consortium dedicated to supporting the program, evaluation and research needs of a variety of organisations that have a role in promoting communication initiatives across a wide range of development themes and country contexts.

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## Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge Kelisiana Thynne of the Australian Civil-Military Centre; she provided research support, critical feedback and additional resources. Bonita Maywald (ACMC) initiated the project, while Karene Melloul (ACMC) provided

additional material on social networking and media, as well as advice on the scope of new media initiatives in humanitarian assistance.

The focus and findings of this guide were refined as a result of a workshop held in Canberra on 2 July 2013. Here, a number of people made valuable contributions — Tony Aldred (Australian Defence Force), Olivia Cribb (ACMC), Stephen Collins (Acidlabs), Sanchi Davis (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Peter Donaldson (ADF), Elaine Elemani (ACMC), Mary French (DFAT), Daniel Gleeson (Attorney-General’s Department), Erica Hanisch (Australian Federal Police), Amra Lee (World Vision), Shannon Mathias (ACMC), Phil Pyke (ADF) and Jeff Squire (ADF). At the University of Adelaide, Simon Ladd was instrumental in developing the initial collaboration between the Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit and the Australian Civil-Military Centre.

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this guide are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Australian Civil–Military Centre or the Australian Government.

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ISBN 978-1-921933-06-6

Published June 2014

# 1. Introduction

This guide examines the broad topic of communication and its role in a range of different humanitarian and complex emergency situations. Such situations demand communication initiatives that support and promote humanitarian relief efforts, conflict reduction processes, and post-conflict transition and recovery. Without question, communication is playing an increasingly important role within complex emergencies. New information and communication technologies and burgeoning social media use are combining with the extensive reach and use of traditional media to provide crucial lifeline information resources for vulnerable people. This guide covers a range of important communication of relevance to a wide range of emergency situations. Wherever possible, it points readers to more detailed, high-quality, practical guidance and additional resource material.

## Aims and approach

The main aim of this guide is to assess the broad role and use of communication in complex emergencies. This is done in a number of ways:

- › discussion of emergency communication phases
- › examination of four communication frameworks that are designed to facilitate identification of communication activities relevant to context
- › discussion of a range of communication principles and practical steps that can be taken to increase the effectiveness of communication
- › collation of relevant case study material and identification of useful external resources
- › provision of supporting audio-visual resource and web links for case study material.

A companion annotated bibliography and an issues paper, both of which focus on social networking, social media and complex emergencies, support this paper. They discuss the emergent role of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and focus on social media as a channel for political expression and social action, as well as on the evolving use of ICTs to crowdsource data and in crisis

mapping. These new communication tools support and guide fairer democratic processes and more effective responses to emergencies such as natural disasters.<sup>1</sup>

- › national and international media organisations partnering with the humanitarian sector.

## Audience

In the first instance, this guide should be useful to Australian government agencies with a stake in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Among these agencies are the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (including the Australian Civilian Corps and the Aid Program), the Department of Defence, the Australian Federal Police and the Attorney-General's Department (including Emergency Management Australia). In addition, it is of relevance to multilateral, non-government and civil society organisations delivering humanitarian assistance at the national, regional and international levels.

In setting out a range of best practice examples and core communication principles, this guide can assist the following individuals and organisations:

- › desk officers of national and multilateral organisations charged with assessing the relevance and appropriateness of crisis communication initiatives
- › communication practitioners working to support humanitarian and conflict transformation and recovery processes
- › policy-makers and legislators concerned with humanitarian support and development

## Thematic scope

This guide details a range of humanitarian and conflict situations in which communication can play a role in providing lifeline information. Such information can help at-risk populations mitigate the effects of conflict, violence, civil unrest, health crises, natural disasters, and human-induced emergencies such as terrorist events. At-risk populations can be information poor or routinely exposed to biased information designed to inflame conflict — hate media, for example. For such populations, reliable, relevant and unbiased information can play an important role in increasing their self-reliance at times when the delivery of services (such as health services and education) might be severely disrupted.

For the purpose of this guide, 'complex emergencies' covers both complex situations (often driven by conflict or civil unrest, or both) and natural and human-induced disasters (ACMC/ACFID, 2012).<sup>2</sup> Emergencies can be short-term and acute, such as during a natural disaster, or long-term, such as during periods of civil unrest or post-disaster reconstruction. Further, there is often a connection between the two; that is, conflict can promote natural disasters (for example, famine as an instrument of war) and natural disasters can promote conflict (for example, a breakdown in the rule of law). Acute situations can also develop into

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1 The guide also draws on work previously written by the lead author, notably *Working with the Media in Conflict and Other Emergencies* (2000), funded and published by the UK Department for International Development, and *Communication for Development Interventions in Fragile States: A systematic review* (2013), funded by AusAID and published by the Joanna Briggs Institute.

2 See ACMC/ACFID 2012, *Same Space – Different Mandates: A Civil-Military Guide to Australian Stakeholders in International Disaster and Conflict Response*, Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) and Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Canberra.

long-term problems and vice versa. Emergencies are inherently complex, and the aim of this guide is to provide clear and simple advice to help inform the decision-making of communication practitioners and agencies providing humanitarian assistance.

## Two basic categories of communication

This guide proposes two basic categories of communication — *acute* and *long term*. During acute emergencies there might be a need for rapid communication of lifeline information, such as that focused on disaster preparedness and response. Long-term communication might focus on situations of civil unrest, on peacebuilding in a post-conflict period or on post-disaster reconstruction. Because of this, the focus of communication activities during emergencies can be markedly different and can seek to achieve different outcomes. To facilitate identification of potential communication responses during emergencies, this guide subdivides acute responses into *rapid-onset disasters* and *open conflict*. Long-term responses are divided into *civil unrest* and *recovery*. Each of these is presented as a communication framework that is supported by a number of case studies designed to highlight the scope of communication activities and potential outcomes.

Although the four communication frameworks allow for a degree of rapid identification, this guide is not designed to be a prescriptive ‘how to’ guide to crisis communication. This is because the potential range of communication initiatives in conflict or disaster situations is determined by numerous contextual factors, including the availability and popularity of particular media and media formats, the extent of communications infrastructure and levels of destruction, the presence and availability of local media and communications capacity, the strength of community and civil society organisations, and the

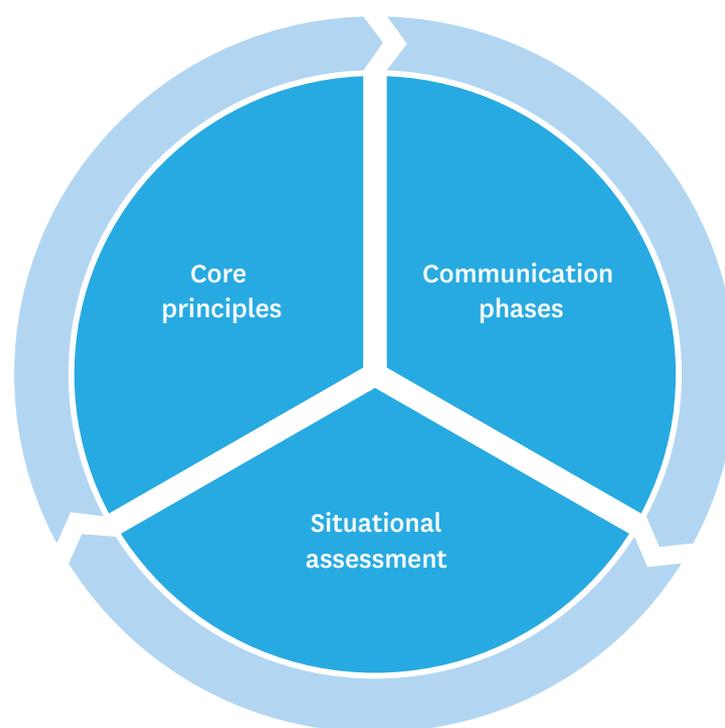
relative ability of agencies providing humanitarian assistance to operate freely and effectively. It is crucial that, whenever possible, communication initiatives are determined by evidence that defines a clear need, the target audience and the objective.

Finally, this guide focuses on communication with people and communities that are at risk and vulnerable, and it cuts across all forms of communication — from interpersonal to mass media to new communication technologies. It does not deal with the internal communications of the various organisations concerned; nor does it deal with communication that falls into the category of public relations — that is, activity that promotes organisations and their successes. These areas are important, but they are excluded to enhance the focus within this guide on communication for vulnerability and risk reduction, as well as on the building of resilience and reconciliation. Finally, in keeping with the mandate of the Australian Civil-Military Centre, the focus of this guide and the case studies provided concerns conflict, post-conflict and recovering situations.

## How to use this guide

This guide provides a range of examples of situations in which communication supports humanitarian relief, conflict reduction and recovery. It also highlights a number of guiding principles that are designed to ensure communication effectiveness in crisis situations and offers links to high-quality external resources developed by bilateral and multilateral agencies that provide additional depth and breadth. Many of these resources encompass a ‘how to’ element and cover matters such as crisis messaging in considerable depth. A central goal of the guide is to direct desk officers and communicators to high quality ‘how to’ resources that can be used to further inform decision-making and practice.

Figure 1: The primary focus areas



The 'Communication phases' section examines two phases or cycles that are commonly associated with acute and longer term communication responses. In the case of acute responses, resolution of the crisis tends to lead to the rapid culmination of communication activity. Where problems are longer term and more deep seated in nature, a different communication cycle is evident. This short section on phases helps to highlight the differing nature of communication during complex emergencies.

The 'Situational assessment' section is designed to help desk officers and communication practitioners quickly identify a range of context-related factors, threats or situations that vulnerable people face. It also highlights some of the communication and information needs of communities and the range of communication initiatives or activities that can help in responding to those needs. Within the distinction

that is drawn between acute and long-term communication initiatives, four communication frameworks — *rapid-onset disasters*, *civil unrest*, *open conflict and recovery* — are discussed in detail. Each of these frameworks is supported by case studies that reflect different geographical contexts and reveal the varied use of communication approaches, from interpersonal to participatory to mass communication. Each case study details the background to the initiative, the scope of activities, the associated outcomes, and the limitations of the initiative, as well as providing links to further information.

The 'Core communication principles' section looks at a number of fundamental practice principles of relevance to ensuring effective communication in crisis situations. These principles point to areas of practice that are known to help communication

initiatives target audiences through the most viable (and popular) media and mediums. They help us identify what an ideal communication planning, design, implementation and evaluation process might look like. Implementing communication initiatives in crisis situations challenges this process, however, and many of the case studies reveal how creativity has helped communicators overcome constraints. Where possible, potential constraints to effective communication practice are identified and options for offsetting them are suggested. The section also looks at the scope of crisis communication messaging and examines the differences between messaging in acute crisis or conflict situations and in longer term situations. Additionally, it looks at how to ensure the development of content that targets behavioural or social change.

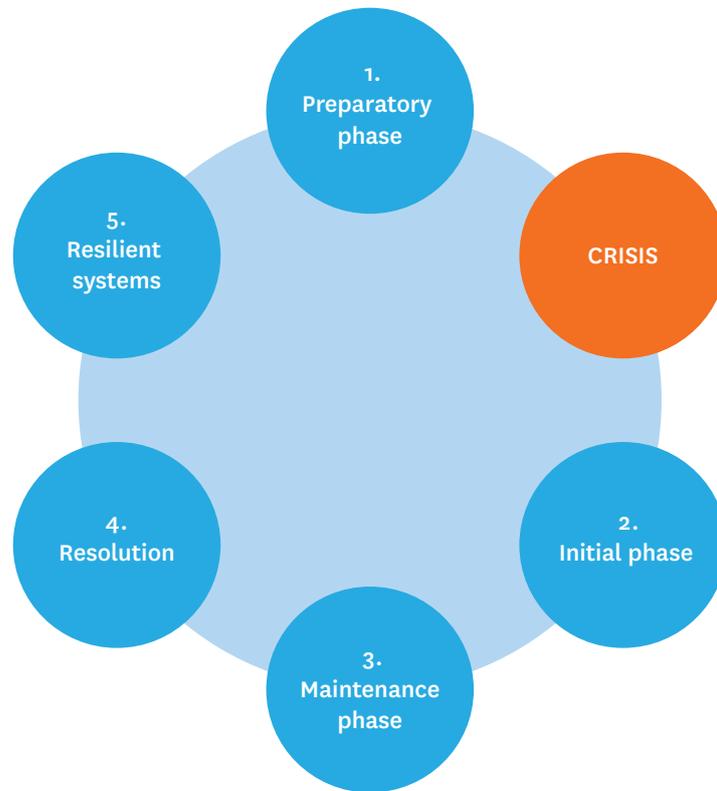
## 2. Communication phases

Emergencies and their aftermaths are complex but, typically, communication responses tend to be short-term or long-term in nature. During acute emergencies such as natural disasters the type of communication differs from that characterising long-term periods of civil unrest or periods of recovery, when peacebuilding comes to the fore. An acute communication response can last a matter of weeks or months; a long-term response can last years. Acute communication responses are concerned with saturating the communications environment to raise mass awareness of risk and suitable forms of risk reduction. Long-term communication initiatives are often concerned with fostering dialogue; building responsible media and journalism standards through capacity development; regulating mass media; and promoting peace, reconciliation and the rule of law. All acute situations have the potential to become long-term crises (and vice versa), and communication responses need to be adaptable to the situation. Each form of communication, be it in response to an acute emergency or a long-term problem, has a number of typical communication phases.

### Acute communication implementation phases

Communication during periods of acute crisis is often portrayed in terms of a number of distinct phases. Understanding such phases helps with the allocation of resources and with the planning and design of initiatives.

Figure 2: Emergency, or acute, communication phases



A clearly defined preparatory phase typically occurs in contexts that routinely experience natural or human-induced disasters. During this period essential groundwork is carried out in order to understand the communications environment, to develop important messages, to decide what channels of communication are best used, and to determine whether communication organisations are willing and ready to respond, whether they have enough capacity to handle significant increases in communication demand and which groups need targeting. Such preparatory work often forms the basis of national emergency management or disaster response plans. In the developing world, such plans, where they exist, are often outdated or are not implemented effectively.

In the initial phase the aim is to immediately mobilise communication plans and saturate the environment

with information and messages explaining both the nature of the crisis and the risk. This phase is also concerned with rapidly gathering and verifying information, which allows accurate updates to be communicated to the public. Messages concerning actions that need to be taken by target audiences so as to reduce risk and vulnerability are rapidly communicated. Effective coordination with other agencies providing humanitarian assistance and key communication partners is crucial: it ensures that information is shared and communication efforts are not duplicated.

In the maintenance phase the aim is to ensure that the information needs of all stakeholders are being adequately and effectively met and that communication responses are able to adapt to potentially changing needs. Continued monitoring of the situation occurs, and assessment of whether

communication activities need to be scaled up or down is done. Assessment of the resources available to sustain emergency communication is also vital — especially when a crisis extends into an ongoing commitment. Finally, continued collaboration and dialogue across the communication, government and non-government sectors can help ensure that communication responses remain relevant, are well supported and are appropriately resourced.

In time, a crisis can move to *resolution*, when the worst of the crisis is over. The thirst for information can wane as the situation reverts to normality. During this phase it is important that lessons are learned about how the crisis was handled from a communication perspective and how communication contributed to reducing risk and vulnerability. It is also important to remind stakeholders about how to act should a similar crisis be faced in the future.

Following resolution, *resilient systems* capable of responding to future crises need to be established. This can necessitate infrastructure changes — to make sure that communication systems and methods are appropriate and will not fail. Having robust and sustainable systems also means ensuring that the policy and legislative environments are supportive of widespread communications access at reasonable cost and that the media are free and fair. Similarly, amending emergency plans to take account of new procedures and practices might also be necessary.

## Resources

### ***Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response, United Nations, 2008***

[http://www.unisdr.org/files/2909\\_](http://www.unisdr.org/files/2909_)

[Disasterpreparednessforeffectiveresponse.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/2909_Disasterpreparednessforeffectiveresponse.pdf)

## Long-term communication implementation phases

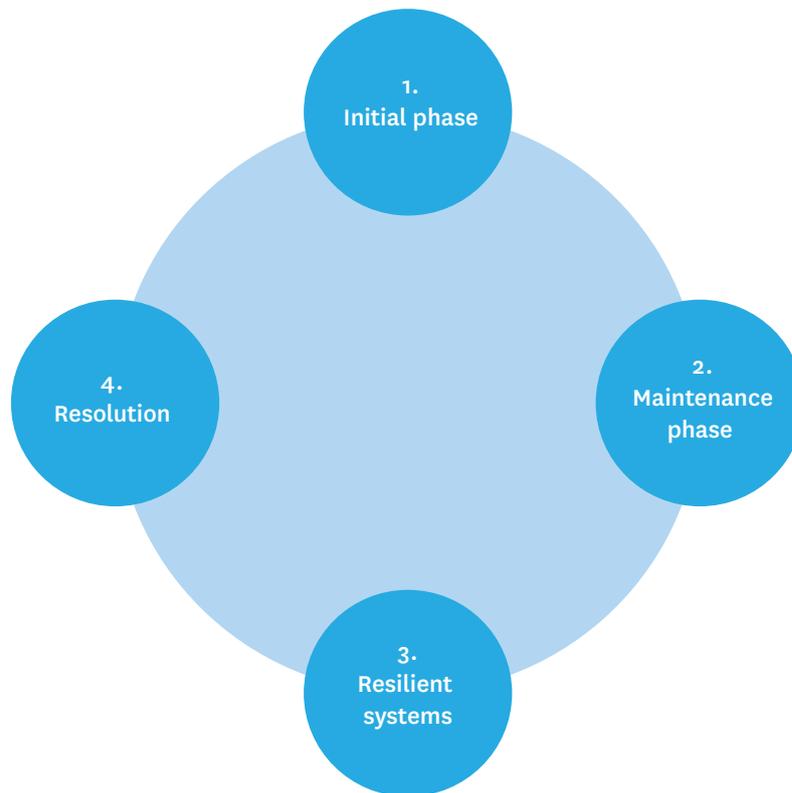
Long-term communication initiatives to respond to aspects of civil unrest or recovery tend to have a less complex communication cycle. In such circumstances there is greater potential to conduct formative research and work with community groups and service providers. The factors dealt with during long-term communication initiatives are complex and can focus not only on behaviour change and social action but also on building human resource capacity and effective policy and legislative environments. Reducing ethnic or political bias, or both, in mass media reporting in post-conflict situations is an example of the type of complex communication initiative typical of such a circumstance. Initiatives of this kind can span years or decades.

Where there is lower risk, a more typical communication cycle can be adhered to, one that is led by the 12 guiding principles outlined in Section 4. During the *initial phase* a strong focus on formative research identifying target groups and suitable communication channels, developing messages, and working with local partners to develop suitable content is typical. In the *maintenance phase* a longer cycle of producing content, conveying it, evaluating it and adapting it takes precedence. An emphasis on monitoring helps to ensure that initiatives are responsive to changing information needs and a changing situation. In long-term initiatives establishing *resilient systems* — that is, a responsible and unbiased media sector, as well as greater communication access — is a crucial precursor to *resolution*. Here, ‘resolution’ implies the effective functioning of communication systems in an environment formerly characterised by conflict or fragility. Due to the short-term funding cycles

of many communication-focused development initiatives, resilient systems and resolution are often not adequately attained, leaving fragile

environments susceptible to abuse of media or certain populations excluded from effective media and communications access.

Figure 3: Long-term communication phases



Although communication in complex emergency situations has clearly identifiable phases, a central challenge organisations and individuals face in developing communication initiatives concerns focus. Section 3 looks at how to assess the situation and outlines a wide range of potential communication initiatives that support humanitarian and development objectives.

### Resources

***Emergency Communications System Life Cycle Planning Guide, US Department of Homeland Security, 2011***

[http://www.safecomprogram.gov/oec/oec\\_system\\_life\\_cycle\\_planning\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/oec/oec_system_life_cycle_planning_guide_final.pdf)

***Communication Toolbox: practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members, Catholic Relief Services, 2013***

<http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/general/communication-toolbox.pdf>

## 3. Situational assessment

During an emergency, communication practitioners and the staff of agencies seeking to provide humanitarian assistance need to rapidly determine what kind of crisis they face and make decisions about the communications response. If they have already been prepared for emergencies such as natural disasters, this is the point at which national and local disaster management plans and their communication components are implemented. Some emergencies are well prepared for, but many are not, so agencies providing humanitarian assistance need to ask some important questions that will help them quickly identify potential responses, especially in connection with situational assessment. Among these initial questions are the following:

- › What is the nature of the emergency?
- › What is the expected duration — that is, is it a short-term or a long-term problem?
- › What contextual factors can be quickly identified that are known to be causing the emergency?
- › What are the likely or obvious information needs of at-risk populations?
- › What initiatives can be taken in response to these information needs?
- › How do we gather the information necessary to plan the initiative?
- › What other initiatives — policy, regulation, capacity development, and so on — will positively affect the information environment?
- › Who can we partner with?

Figure 4: A framework for assessing communication options

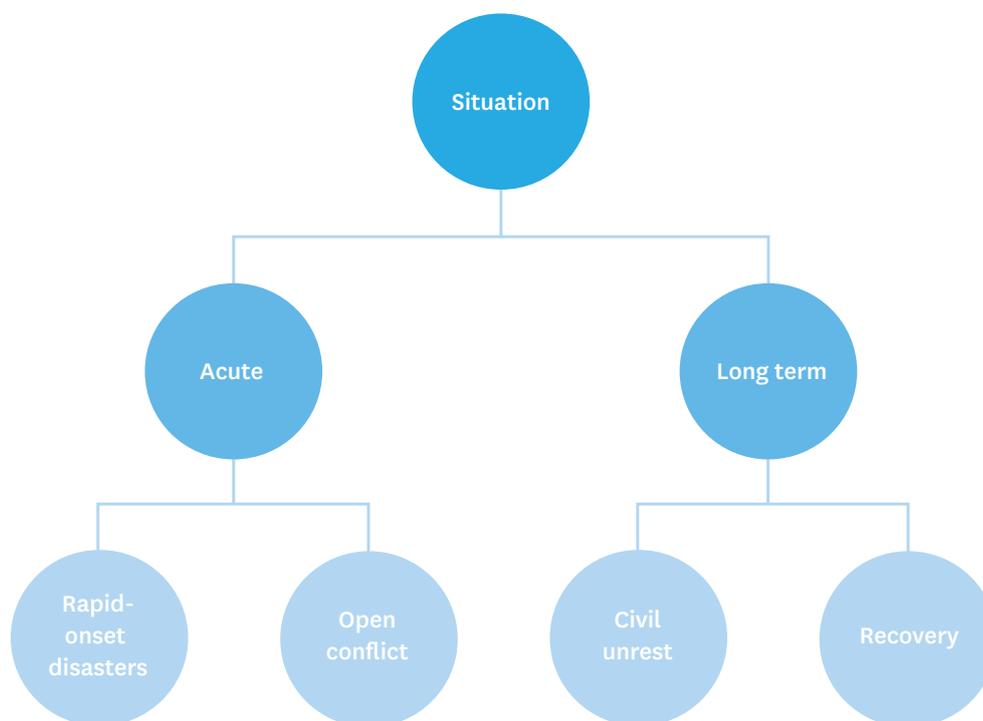


Figure 4 shows a simple flow chart that identifies two broad categories of emergency situation — acute and long-term. Out of this, four distinct situational sub-categories emerge:

- *Rapid-onset disasters* are acute events such as natural disasters or human-induced disasters. A rapid communication response is required, and the public needs information immediately. Constant provision of accurate and verified updates needs to occur until the emergency has passed.
- *Open conflict* is characterised by widespread inter- or intra-national conflict and kinetic military operations, posing a high risk to civilians. During periods of open conflict high levels of social dislocation and displacement can occur. Lifeline communication about

conflict avoidance, service provision and risk mitigation is essential.

- *Civil unrest* is characterised by social polarisation that can lead to tension, an increase in animosity between groups, periods of civil dissent and localised outbreaks of conflict. The media’s response during such periods is of vital importance, as is the need to build capacity to reduce media bias and defamation and promote reconciliation. Civil unrest can lead to periods of open conflict, which would necessitate a change in the communication response.
- *Recovery* is characterised by the cessation of open conflict, processes of stabilisation, peacebuilding, a return to the rule of law, and dialogue about reconciliation. Efforts

might be made to strengthen media systems, especially in relation to their responsibility and accountability. In addition, large-scale civic education campaigns can highlight the roles and responsibilities of government officers, the police and the judiciary, and aspects of electoral practice

and anti-corruption initiatives. Ensuring that sustainable systems, policies and regulations are established in connection with communication is a central goal of long-term communication work in the recovery context.

**Figure 5: Situation identification**



Figure 5 shows some common emergency, conflict and recovery situations that come within the four headings of rapid-onset disasters, civil unrest, open conflict, and recovery. In the sections that follow each of these is developed further into the tabular communication frameworks. The frameworks are designed to help the staff of humanitarian and development organisations in quickly identifying the range of contextual factors, the potential communication and information needs of vulnerable people, and the scope of potential initiatives. The final column in each framework highlights a number

of relevant case studies, which are presented after each communication framework.

Rapid assessment of the situation is an essential precursor to designing the communication initiatives that will be implemented. Rapid assessment can point us in a likely direction, but it cannot replace a robust communication design process that adheres to the principles known to contribute to effectiveness. Section 4 outlines a number of basic communication principles that are known to increase effectiveness.

## Resources

### **Communication for Development Rapid Assessment Tool, UNICEF, 2011**

<http://www.unicef emergencies.com/downloads/eresource/docs/Communication%20for%20Development/C4D-RapidAssessmentTool.docx>

### **Accountability to Affected Populations, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013**

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf)

**Table 1: Rapid-onset disasters communication framework**

<b>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Known susceptibility to natural disasters</li> <li>› Widespread social dislocation</li> <li>› Disruption of government services</li> <li>› Rapid deterioration of public health environment caused by spike in communicable and waterborne diseases</li> <li>› Failure or destruction of communication infrastructure</li> <li>› Increased crime and violence</li> <li>› Internal displacement</li> <li>› Increasing food insecurity</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION NEEDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Early warning communication — for example, SMS alerts for tsunami — and information on immediate course of action and how to mitigate or protect against effects</li> <li>› Impartial and accurate instructions on where to seek help and from whom</li> <li>› Accurate and verified information on infrastructure damage, disruption of services, scope of the emergency — for example, how long until typhoon will pass — and instructions on mitigating ongoing impacts</li> <li>› Targeted information on health, food availability, shelter, mitigation, humanitarian aid activities, civic roles and responsibilities, rule of law, safe haven locations</li> <li>› Mapping scope of disaster — that is, crisis mapping</li> </ul>
<b>SCOPE OF INTERVENTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Rapid assessment of media and communications damage and availability</li> <li>› Promotion of disaster preparedness</li> <li>› Provision of emergency communication response — for example, rapid-deployment radio broadcasting, emergency repairs to telecommunications infrastructure</li> <li>› Provision of media — for example, radios — to dislocated populations</li> <li>› Crisis mapping by volunteer communities</li> <li>› SMS feeds, registration with embassies via SMS</li> </ul>
<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Typhoon Bopha (Philippines): Nethope</li> <li>› Uttarakhand floods (India): DHNetwork</li> <li>› Mahasen cyclonic storm (Bangladesh): BBC Media Action</li> </ul>

## Rapid-onset disasters case study | Typhoon Bopha (Philippines): NetHope

### Background

NetHope acts as a catalyst for collaboration by bringing together leading international and humanitarian organisations. It operates on a model that fosters public-private relationships to deliver ICT solutions to the developing world, currently working with 37 member organisations in over 180 countries.<sup>3</sup> NetHope's emergency response program aims to facilitate faster and better coordinated responses to disaster and has contributed to disaster responses after the Haiti and Japan earthquakes and the Pakistan floods. Through its emergency response program NetHope enables humanitarian organisations to improve the coordination of relief efforts through the use of smarter technologies and collaboration between responders and private sector partners.

Typhoon Bopha hit Mindanao, the largest island in the south of the Philippines, in December 2012. A thousand people died and approximately 200,000 homes were destroyed or severely damaged. It is estimated that 6.2 million people were affected by the disaster, and up to 850,000 people displaced.

The worst affected were people living in rural farming and fishing areas along the eastern coast of the island, and there was major devastation of agricultural livelihoods.

### Activities

NetHope's response to Typhoon Bopha began with the coordination of meetings with member organisations on the ground and an evaluation of damage to ICT infrastructure in the two worst affected provinces, with a view to restoring ICT services.<sup>4</sup> NetHope obtained support from private sector partners to facilitate the provision of laptops, BGANs (satellite-based internet terminals) and satellite phones. These private sector relationships allowed for resources to be committed to members operating on the ground, as well as the deployment of a two-person emergency response team to conduct a field assessment of ICT needs and provide training and equipment to members. Satellite phones with air-time credit and BGAN terminals with prepaid bandwidth were placed in three of the worst affected towns, where they acted as non-government organisation hotspots and were subsequently shared through wireless network equipment. NetHope also facilitated the donation and transportation of 110 laptops and software to local partners and staff to ensure effective communication and coordination of the relief effort. Furthermore, 50 donated high-definition video cameras were shipped to members for use in video advocacy work. As the recovery effort progressed and communications infrastructure was restored, member organisations transitioned from satellite-based systems to mobile networks.

<sup>3</sup> <http://nethope.org/disaster-response/typhoon-bopha>

<sup>4</sup> <http://disasterphilanthropy.org/news/march-1-2013-typhoon-bopha>

## Outcomes and limitations

- › Damage to telecommunications infrastructure was evaluated.
- › Satellite technologies were used in the absence of mobile networks.
- › Public-private relationships were used to secure the donation, transportation and distribution of ICT to non-government organisations on the ground.
- › The damage to livelihoods and agricultural resources necessitated a continued, long-term recovery effort beyond the immediate disaster response.

## Links

***The Role of Information and Communication Technology in the Response to Typhoon Bopha 2012***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJUKNmjClw>

**Nethope website**

<http://nethope.org>

## Rapid-onset disasters case study | Uttarakhand Floods (India): DHNetwork

## Background

The Digital Humanitarian Network, or DHNetwork, makes use of digital networks in support of a humanitarian response with the aim of forming a consortium of volunteers and technical communities and providing a point of contact between formal humanitarian organisations and informal volunteer organisations.<sup>5</sup> DHNetwork facilitates service requests from organisations and arranges volunteer and technical community response teams. Organisations can activate DHNetwork online through its website or by email, at which point the review team will decide within 24 hours whether to accept or defer the request. Once a request is accepted it is forwarded throughout DHNetwork. DHNetwork offers real-time media monitoring of both mainstream and social media, rapid geo-location of event and infrastructure data, creation of live crisis maps, data development and cleaning, satellite imagery tagging and tracing, and web-based research.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://digitalhumanitarians.com/profiles/blogs/dhn-deployment-uttarakhand-flood>

In June 2013 severe rainfall and glacier melts caused flooding and landslides in the north Indian state of Uttarakhand. It is estimated that 5,700 people died and 100,000 pilgrims and tourists were trapped in valleys near popular pilgrimage sites in the state.

## Activities

In July 2013 DHNetwork received a request for activation in response to the flooding; this was subsequently supplemented by a request from SEEDS India to support its work and provide maps and data for organisations responding in the field. This request was rapidly assessed, distributed to all DHNetwork solutions members, and responded to by a number of teams. The Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team, or HOT, responded with a situation assessment and mapping of the major highways and remote villages. Through this remote mapping, HOT was able to provide the base layer for the OpenStreetMap. Local teams were then invited to collect geo-located data to further characterise the map with road and village names and structures to improve the data's usefulness to responders. HOT was also responsible for a wiki coordination page that presented tools and services such as map renderings, spatial analysis, and field data collection tools for participants. The Humanity Road team contributed its digital 3W (who, what, where) report, which outlined who was responding, where they were rendering assistance, and what that assistance was. The MapAction team provided remote data management and mapping support through DHNetwork. MapAction used its field experience to advise teams on the ground about methods for creating standardised lists of affected locations and categories of need for populations. It also offered advice on the organisation of digital spatial data and templates for a variety of mapping

applications. A two-person MapAction team joined local responders on the ground to provide support and training for field mapping efforts. A Translators Without Borders team also responded to the activation request by assisting with translations for monitoring and reporting purposes.

## Outcomes and limitations

- More than 4,000 villages were identified and mapped by the HOT support team.
- A 3W report compiled by the Humanity Road team identified digital and relief responders, their locations, and the nature of the assistance and relief work provided.

## Links

### DHNetwork website

<http://digitalhumanitarians.com>

### 2013 North India floods wiki coordination page

[http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/2013\\_North\\_India\\_floods](http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/2013_North_India_floods)

### Humanity Road 3W report

<http://www.humanityroad.org/India3W>

## Rapid-onset disasters case study | Mahasen cyclonic storm (Bangladesh): BBC Media Action

### Background

BBC Media Action uses various forms of media and communication for poverty reduction. Among other things, its work involves engagement with traditional mass media and interpersonal communication alongside online and social media in order to increase communities' resilience and improve humanitarian responses, especially in disaster situations. In particular, BBC Media Action aims to increase food and water security, improve economic security, reduce disaster risk, and increase strength in the face of disaster through the provision of information and the supporting of dialogue to facilitate change. In Bangladesh, a country with a high propensity for and vulnerability to natural disasters, BBC Media Action works with partners to help the public prepare adequately for future disasters and ensure that disaster-affected populations receive accurate and useful information.

In May 2013 cyclonic storm Mahasen, a relatively weak tropical cyclone, struck Bangladesh before

moving over eastern India. By the time the storm reached Bangladesh it was weaker than initially anticipated, although it still resulted in moderate to severe damage. It is estimated that as many as 95,000 huts (many of which were considered poorly constructed) were damaged or destroyed. Seventeen people died and more than 1.3 million people were affected.

### Activities

BBC Media Action's Bangladesh office responded to news of the impending cyclone by developing, recording and distributing a range of disaster-response messages.<sup>6</sup> It initially responded by coordinating emergency meetings with the Disaster Management Department of the Bangladesh Government, non-government organisations, and state and community broadcasters.<sup>7</sup> Aware of the likelihood of internet loss once the cyclone arrived, BBC Media Action operated under a mandate of producing and distributing content as quickly as possible before communications technologies were compromised. Within 24 hours, it had developed radio scripts aiming to provide clear advice to those in the impact zone, consistent with information distributed by the Disaster Management Department. These scripts were recorded, and the first eight radio public service announcements were aired by both independent and state broadcasters, as well as six community radio stations. These initial announcements detailed the location of shelters, what to take during evacuations, and how to safeguard livestock. In subsequent days a further five announcements were recorded and distributed; they provided information about water purification,

6 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcmmediaaction/posts/Responding-to-Cyclone-Mahasen->

7 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/asia/bangladesh/humanitarian\\_work.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/asia/bangladesh/humanitarian_work.html)

first aid and other important aspects of disaster response. Messages designed to be broadcast on loudspeakers inside Rohingya refugee camps were also prepared. In addition to radio public service announcements, BBC Media Action developed a concept for a 90-second television piece telling the stories of three people in a rural area subjected to a cyclone. The purpose was to demonstrate the implications of ignoring disaster warnings, and the piece was aired by the state broadcaster as well as some cable and satellite channels. This TV public service announcement had been filmed, edited and distributed to broadcasters within 48 hours.

## Outcomes and limitations

- › Thirty-eight radio public service announcements were produced in three languages.
- › The televised public service announcement was watched by millions across the country.

## Links

### **BBC Media Action website**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction>

**Table 2: Open conflict communication framework**

<p><b>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Open conflict between clearly defined combatants driven by specific causes and goals</li> <li>› Widespread human rights abuses</li> <li>› Violations of international humanitarian law</li> <li>› Forced migration and internal displacement</li> <li>› Destruction of infrastructure, including media and communications</li> <li>› Increasing food insecurity</li> <li>› Rapid deterioration of the public health environment</li> <li>› A high degree of censorship and regulation of media and communications</li> <li>› Complete breakdown of the rule of law</li> <li>› Exclusion of foreign nationals — for example, journalists, development workers</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION NEEDS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Impartial and accurate media, especially news media</li> <li>› Targeted information on health, food availability, shelter, conflict avoidance and mitigation, land-mine awareness, human rights and international humanitarian law, humanitarian aid activities, peacekeeping roles and responsibilities</li> <li>› Identification of credible information providers</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCOPE OF INTERVENTIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Rapid assessment of media and communications availability, uses and preferences to guide implementation strategy and options</li> <li>› Support to community, national and international media for dissemination of balanced news and humanitarian information</li> <li>› Support for the production of peacebuilding programming at all levels</li> <li>› Training for objective political and conflict reporting, humanitarian reporting and peacebuilding programming</li> <li>› Provision of emergency media and communication response — for example, rapid-deployment radio broadcasting</li> <li>› Support to citizen media</li> <li>› Re-establishment and maintenance of telecommunications infrastructure</li> <li>› Provision of broadcasting and communications infrastructure</li> <li>› Provision of media (that is, radios) to dislocated populations</li> <li>› Direct (face-to-face) liaison with key influencers if required</li> </ul>
<p><b>CASE STUDIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Centre Lokolé (Democratic Republic of Congo): Search for Common Ground</li> <li>› Radio Erena (Eritrea): Reporters without Borders</li> <li>› Radio for Peacebuilding (Africa): Search for Common Ground</li> </ul>

## Open conflict case study | Centre Lokolé (Democratic Republic of Congo): Search for Common Ground

### Background

The Democratic Republic of Congo — particularly in the areas of South Kivu and Katanga — has been plagued by ethnic tensions and violence as well as large-scale displacement and repatriation. Since 2006 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been funding Search for Common Ground programming in the nation.

### Activities

Search for Common Ground's work in the Democratic Republic of Congo uses radio programming and interactive theatre under the name Centre Lokolé to decrease conflict among repatriated refugees as well as provide to communities conflict resolution tools. A 2008 UNHCR evaluation of Centre Lokolé's

radio and theatre projects found that exposure to such programming had an extremely positive impact on people's information seeking habits and their knowledge.<sup>8</sup> The data for the evaluation were gathered by surveying Search for Common Ground participants in the territories of Uvira, Fizi and Moba, through interviews with community leaders and partner organisations and through ethnographic observations. The UNHCR report also highlighted, however, that Centre Lokolé's theatre programming was much more likely to have a negative effect on viewers' tolerance levels, whereas radio programming was more likely to have a positive impact or no impact on listeners' tolerance levels. This demonstrates that different media forms can have varying effects that need to be accounted for during project design. In view of the negative impacts of theatre, Centre Lokolé must carefully examine the content of its theatre programming and continue to evaluate its effectiveness. In addition to radio and theatre productions, Centre Lokolé also produces comic books that deal with important aspects of Congolese society in an accessible and entertaining way. One such comic, written by former militant Joseph Muhaya, features a corrupt officer character named Captain January. The popular and long-running *Mopila* series has tackled subjects such as police brutality and sexual harassment as seen through the experiences of a Congolese taxi driver.

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8 Gordon, G 2008, *A UNHCR Evaluation of Search for Common Ground Programming in the DRC*, UNHCR & Search for Common Ground, pp. 1–51; Brown, V 2010, 'Foundations for repatriation and peace in DRC', *Forced Migration Review*, vol. 36, pp. 54–55, <http://www.fmreview.org/en/DR Congo/54-55.pdf>; [http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/drcongo/drcongo\\_comics.html](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/drcongo/drcongo_comics.html); <http://www.thecommongroundblog.com/2013/04/15/former-militant-turned-peacebuilder-brings-comic-relief-to-congo>

## Outcomes and limitations

- › Exposure to Centre Lokolé programming correlates with positive behaviour change and increases in knowledge about non-violent reconciliation tools.
- › Listeners to and viewers of Centre Lokolé programs are more likely to dismiss rumours and obtain information from the radio, local non-government organisations and the government.
- › Half a million comic books have been distributed.
- › Increased communication between the UNHCR and Search for Common Ground would lead to greater project success and create more opportunities for collaboration.
- › A lack of baseline information made it difficult to assess fully the impact of Centre Lokolé's radio and theatre programming.

## Links

### Centre Lokolé mid-term evaluation

<http://www.comminit.com/governance-africa/content/mid-term-evaluation-search-common-ground-centre-lokol%C3%A9-supporting-congos-transition-towa>

## Open conflict case study | Radio Erena (Eritrea): Reporters Without Borders

### Background

A 2013 Reporters Without Borders submission to the UN Human Rights Council highlighted the status of media freedom in Eritrea. In the past six years Eritrea has ranked last out of 173 countries in Reporters Without Borders' press freedom index. The submission outlined the closing down of all privately owned media by the government in 2001, alongside the regular jamming of independent broadcast media based abroad. Furthermore, it noted that foreign correspondents have not been based in the country since 2010. Eritrea was named Africa's biggest prison for journalists, the current number of journalists detained being estimated at about 30. The submission also noted that, of 11 journalists arrested in 2001, only four remain in detention, the remaining seven having taken their own lives or died as a result of their living conditions. Thirty-four Eritrean journalists living in exile have contacted Reporters Without Borders requesting assistance; many of them continue to fear for their safety.

## Activities

In view of these continuing concerns, Reporters Without Borders provided support for the establishment in June 2009 of Radio Erena, a Paris-based radio station run by Eritrean journalists in exile.<sup>9</sup> Radio Erena offers freely reported, independent news and information to counter the heavily censored state narrative. It also offers cultural programs, music and entertainment, drawing on a combination of contributors from within the country and in exile. Radio Erena is broadcast by satellite and short wave into Eritrea and on the internet to the diaspora community. After receiving considerable attention from the international media, it has been the subject of a number of attacks by the Eritrean Government. In August 2012 its satellite signal was jammed and its website hacked. It was able to resume broadcasting in September, only to suspend broadcasts again a few days later as a result of further jamming. In November 2012 Reporters Without Borders filed a complaint with the public prosecutor in Paris, accusing unknown persons of acts of piracy. Geo-location data show that the transmission jamming the signal originated in Eritrea. Damage to the website has been repaired, but it has not been possible to resume satellite transmission, which means broadcasts are not received in Eritrea.

## Outcomes and limitations

- An independent news and information service has been established.
- Transmission jamming and interruptions to broadcasts continue.

## Links

### Radio Erena website

<http://www.eren.org>

### Video: *Radio Erena*

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcitim\\_radio-eren-english-version\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcitim_radio-eren-english-version_news)

### Video: *Radio Erena Gives a Voice to Its People*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWR-n4dUuFU>

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9 <http://en.rsf.org/erythree-reporters-without-borders-provides-25-06-2013,44850.html>; <http://en.rsf.org/eritrea-radio-eren-a-independent-news-16-03-2010,36687.html>; <http://en.rsf.org/eritrea-complaint-filed-in-paris-about-08-11-2012,43657.html>

## Open conflict case study | Radio for Peacebuilding Africa: Search for Common Ground

### Background

In January 2003 Search for Common Ground launched the Radio for Peacebuilding Africa, or RFPA, project with the aim of providing resources so that African journalists can produce radio programs for peacebuilding. A large-scale collaborative project designed to help broadcasters use radio as a tool for peace, RFPA highlights a variety of peacebuilding techniques such as avoidance of language that inflames tension, equal treatment of news from both sides, and the humanising of parties to conflict through drama. The project has led to production of more than seven guidebooks, 4,800 downloads, 90 workshops and a wide range of other resources for radio journalists in Africa. It is now in its third phase and operates in more than 100 countries to improve access to information. Throughout its work RFPA has fostered cooperation between government, the media and civil society, increased the capacity of radio stations to accurately cover conflict and war, raised governments' commitment to strategic communication, and expanded citizens' access to information.

### Activities

In 2005 RFPA released a two-part manual, *Manual on Producing Radio Soap Opera for Conflict Prevention*, focusing on the use of radio soap opera to tackle violent conflict positively, reduce tensions and bring people together.<sup>10</sup> The first part of the manual provides an introduction to and discussion of practicalities such as preparation, budgets, contracts and production. The second part serves as a training guide for writers of soap operas, including discussing social change, conflict transformation, audience research, plots and characters, and script outlines. In 2011 RFPA released *Responsible Media Coverage of Elections: A training guide*, produced to encourage good journalistic practice before, during and after elections in Africa. Additionally, in 2013 RFPA released its *Audio Guide on Media and Conflict Coverage*; this was developed for journalists working in conflict and post-conflict areas and was designed to complement previous training modules. The guide is structured around three main topics — conflict analysis, the role of media professionals, and journalists' attitudes as agents of positive change. Descriptions of these three topics are accompanied by practical examples for journalists to integrate into their work.

### Outcomes and limitations

- Materials, training guides and resources have been produced for journalists working in conflict zones.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.comminit.com/media-development/content/audio-guide-media-and-conflict-coverage>; [http://www.eldis.org/go/display&id=7948&type=Organisation&more=yes#.UjavGOAWy\\_s](http://www.eldis.org/go/display&id=7948&type=Organisation&more=yes#.UjavGOAWy_s)

## Links

***How to Produce a Radio Soap Opera for Conflict Prevention/Resolution: Part 1***

[http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/manual\\_o1\\_part1\\_en.pdf](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/manual_o1_part1_en.pdf)

***How to Produce a Radio Soap Opera for Conflict Prevention/Resolution: Part 2***

[http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/manual\\_o1\\_part2\\_en.pdf](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/manual_o1_part2_en.pdf)

***Responsible Media Coverage of Elections: a training guide***

[http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/2011-Responsible\\_Media\\_Elections\\_Color\\_EN.pdf](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/pdf/2011-Responsible_Media_Elections_Color_EN.pdf)

***Audio Guide on Media and Conflict Coverage***

[http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/audio/guides/AUDIO\\_MODULE\\_MEDIA\\_AND\\_CONFLICT.mp3](http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/audio/guides/AUDIO_MODULE_MEDIA_AND_CONFLICT.mp3)

**Radio for Peacebuilding Africa website**

[www.radiopeaceafrica.org](http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org)

**Table 3: Civil unrest communication framework**

<p><b>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Breakdown in social cohesion</li> <li>› Political, economic and ethnic tensions</li> <li>› Local civil unrest</li> <li>› Weak state and local authority capacity</li> <li>› Increasing rights infringements</li> <li>› Increasing press and media censorship</li> <li>› Harassment of journalists and media professionals</li> <li>› Suppression of dissent and public expression</li> <li>› Challenges for the rule of law</li> <li>› Price spikes for commodities (food staples)</li> <li>› Groups with disproportionate access to economic, military and/or political power</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION NEEDS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Access to timely, accurate and impartial reporting and news media</li> <li>› Increased communication between rival groups and factions</li> <li>› Increased dialogue between government and the public</li> <li>› Increased flow of information about human rights</li> <li>› Awareness of conflict mediation and resolution mechanisms</li> <li>› Promotion of access to humanitarian support</li> <li>› Promotion of information on available basic services — for example, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCOPE OF INTERVENTIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Research on and analysis of existing information and communication sources</li> <li>› Research on the information needs of people affected by conflict and their key sources of communication</li> <li>› Support for more balanced news and media coverage through national and international channels</li> <li>› Support for community media to develop conflict-reducing and dialogue-creating communication that helps bring rivals together to defuse tensions</li> <li>› Support for communication interventions at all levels that promote inter-ethnic understanding and tolerance</li> <li>› Support for communication that promotes awareness of and adherence to human rights</li> <li>› Support for citizen media</li> <li>› Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring the content being produced by media to ensure it does not incite conflict</li> <li>› Increased media monitoring</li> </ul>
<p><b>CASE STUDIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Radio Abyei (South Sudan): Internews and USAID</li> <li>› Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World: BBC Media Action and Misr International Films</li> <li>› Salam Shabab (Iraq): US Institute of Peace</li> <li>› Speak-to-Tweet (Egypt): Google, Twitter and SayNow</li> </ul>

## Civil unrest case study | Radio Abyei (South Sudan): Internews and USAID

### Background

Rich in oil, the area of Abyei is controlled by the Sudanese government but is claimed by South Sudan. At the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) it was afforded ‘special administrative status’ through the Abyei Protocol, under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. As part of the protocol, the area of Abyei was declared part of the states of South Kordofan and Northern Bahr el Ghazal until the time of the Abyei Area Referendum. The referendum was scheduled for early 2011 but did not occur. The region has been plagued by conflict, and it is estimated that as many as 40,000 people remain displaced. In 2006 Internews, with USAID funding, began the Radio for Peace, Democracy and Development in South Sudan project with a view to stimulating independent media.<sup>11</sup> The objectives of the project were to improve the physical security of people living in Abyei and other contested territories of Yirol and Akobo through the provision of news and information in local languages. This involved the construction, legalisation and staffing of a number

of community radio stations, the building of transmission towers, securing frequency allocations, and provision of technical equipment through a mixture of ‘old’ and ‘new’ technologies. Electricity is unavailable in many areas, so generators and solar and wind power are used to run a number of the radio stations.

### Activities

As part of the Radio for Peace, Democracy and Development in South Sudan project, Internews established five community FM radio stations in South Sudan — Radio al Mujtama fi Kurmuk (2008), Voice of Community Kauda (2006), Naath FM (2006), Nhomlaau FM (2006) and Mayardit FM (2009). The locations of Kurmuk, Kauda, Leer, Maluakon and Turalei respectively were chosen for their ability to effectively cover the largest broadcast footprint. The Turalei station, Mayardit FM, broadcasts into the disputed region of Abyei. The broadcast offers a mix of locally produced programs, partner-produced programs on democracy and education, broadcasts by non-government and civil society organisations, and music. Content is chosen to raise awareness of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and associated protocols; to provide information about education, health, culture, gender and agriculture; and to open up a forum for dialogue and debate, particularly in relation to tribal conflict. In addition to this programming, in August 2013 Internews launched a new program, *Abyei This Week*, to be run weekly on Mayardit FM. *Abyei This Week* is coordinated by local journalists and a team of young people from Abyei and provides news, information features and entertainment for people in the region. The program

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/new-radio-program-abyei-informs-and-inspires>;  
[http://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/Sudan\\_LightintheDarkness2011-08Main.pdf](http://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/Sudan_LightintheDarkness2011-08Main.pdf);  
<http://www.internews.org/our-stories/news/local-radio-rebuilds-society-south-sudan>

first aired shortly after a paramount chief (the leader of the Ngok Dinka tribe was killed and tensions once again became inflamed throughout the region. The *Abyei This Week* team responded to this with rapid distribution of news, essential reporting and exclusive interviews (including with the US Ambassador to South Sudan). The program is also aired on Eye Radio in Juba, meaning residents of the capital can listen alongside displaced Abyei people residing in the capital city.

## Outcomes and limitations

- › Five community radio stations have been established in South Sudan.
- › A weekly Abyei-focused radio program is produced.
- › The project is hampered by technical limitations, an unreliable electricity supply and transmitter malfunctions.
- › Broadcast reach is limited by the small footprint and comparatively large size of the country.
- › Economic barriers can make it difficult for people to gain access to radios.

## Links

**Republic of South Sudan — community radio provides a voice for the voiceless**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o1CreZj77g>

## Civil unrest case study | Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World: BBC Media Action and Misr International Films

### Background

In 2009 BBC Media Action began collaborating with Egypt's Misr International Films for the Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World project. Rolled out in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Iraq and Yemen, the project focused on the development and production of three television drama series — *Dawaran Shoubra* in 2011, *Sa'at Hissab* in 2012 and *Zaat* in 2013 — and a web-based drama, *Shankaboot*.<sup>12</sup> The roll-out occurred against the backdrop of the 2011 Arab Spring and as a consequence the programs acted to give expression to the audience's anger and resentment, as well as facilitating dialogue and helping people make informed decisions. The project also involved collaboration with partners throughout target countries to ensure socially responsible programming in local media environments. The programs received mainstream and critical acclaim.

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12 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/middle\\_east/egypt/dawaran\\_shoubra.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/middle_east/egypt/dawaran_shoubra.html);  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcmiaaction/posts/A-Girl-Called-Zaat-a-TV-drama-for-a-turbulent-Egypt>

## Activities

The 30-episode *Dawaran Shoubra* (Shoubra Roundabout) was aired during Ramadan of 2011. Based on the lives of the residents of Shoubra (an inner city neighbourhood in Cairo), the drama explores the diverse make-up of a Muslim and Coptic Christian neighbourhood, and the themes include poverty, lack of opportunity, corruption, social injustice, radicalisation and youth alienation. The drama was widely watched in Egypt and subsequently broadcast on a number of pan-Arab channels as well as being available via YouTube. BBC Media Action research on the completion of the program showed that 55 per cent of people who had seen the series were prompted to talk about the concerns it dealt with among family and friends. The second production as part of the project, *Sa'at Hissab*, takes place in Libya, Jordan, Tunisia, Egypt and Iraq and gives audiences in these countries an opportunity to question their leaders about things that concern them. Like the other productions in the series, *Sa'at Hissab* offers individuals a chance to examine and question the achievements and consequences of the Arab Spring. The first season of the show aired in the months preceding the Cairo uprising; the second series seeks to build on this momentum, with audiences raising questions on topics such as disarmament, transitional justice, and free and fair elections. Satellite links enable participants from multiple points in a country to ask questions simultaneously.

The third TV drama series created as part of the project is the series *A Girl Called Zaat*, an adaptation of a popular novel. Through the life of the main character the audience is able to explore Egypt's historical political turmoil, social change and cultural transformation, from the Nasser revolution in 1952 to the 2011 presidential elections. Using a female protagonist allows the series to deal with some gender-related aspects of society — female genital mutilation, girls' education, relationships between

husbands and wives, the wearing of a headscarf, and so on. By August 2013 the show had just completed its first Ramadan run on the Dream TV channel and was scheduled for second and third runs on other Egyptian and Arabic channels.

The final element of the Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World project saw the development of the first Arabic-language web drama, *Shankaboot*. This Lebanese series deals with subjects that cannot be covered by mainstream media — such as drug addiction, domestic workers, corruption, human trafficking and class inequalities — and is particularly popular among young people throughout the Arab region. It tells stories of street life in Beirut through the eyes of a 15-year-old boy and is now in its fifth season. Audiences can engage in discussions through Facebook and other web forums, and *Shankaboot* has also begun video production workshops for young bloggers and activists based on particular themes from the series. The format of the show — five-minute episodes — allows audiences to swiftly download the content in the face of slow and unreliable internet connections.

## Outcomes and limitations

- Three television dramas have been developed, produced and broadcast.
- One web-based drama has been developed, produced and broadcast.
- BBC Media Action provided training for broadcasters and journalists in the target countries.
- Critics have expressed concern about the use of an 'edutainment' platform to trivialise socio-political matters.

- › The events of the 2011 Arab Spring resulted in numerous disruptions to filming and broadcasting of programs and the imprisonment of key media personnel; they also led to the redistribution of broadcast rights away from the state broadcaster and associated censorship.

## Links

**Video: Socially Responsible Media Platforms for the Arab World**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/middle\\_east/egypt](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/middle_east/egypt)

**Video: Sa'at Hissab**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/middle\\_east/egypt/questiontime.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/middle_east/egypt/questiontime.html)

**Video: Shankaboot Overview**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/middle\\_east/lebanon/shankaboot.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/middle_east/lebanon/shankaboot.html)

**Shankaboot website**

<http://www.shankaboot.com>

## Civil unrest case study | Salam Shabab (Iraq): US Institute of Peace

## Background

The US Institute of Peace's Center of Innovation focuses on the use of media for conflict reduction and peacebuilding, seeking to develop new strategies for harnessing the power of the media as a means of peacebuilding, as well as to counter the abuse of media during conflict. The centre aims to bridge gaps in understanding of how to integrate media into conflict management strategies by conducting research, developing media programming, and promoting cooperation and information sharing among stakeholders. In the case of Iraq, the centre engages with media by working with local partners, maintaining a particular focus on the role of young people as participants in the peacebuilding process because of the country's large population of young people and widespread political disengagement.

## Activities

In Iraq the US Institute of Peace has produced *Salam Shabab* (Peace Youth), a multimedia TV special. The reality-style program began in 2009, filming 30 young people from around the country as they competed in a series of peacebuilding

challenges.<sup>13</sup> The 30-minute pilot documentary was broadcast on a number of Iraqi channels in 2010 and was subsequently built on by a nine-episode TV series that aired on four channels (including the state broadcaster) in October to December 2011. For the series, over 50 young people from six regions, representing a mix of ethnicity, religion and gender, came together for four weeks to exchange their views on conflict and peace. After forming teams, the participants competed in sporting, mental and team-building challenges in the hope of becoming 'Ambassadors of Peace'. Two more seasons have since been developed. The US Institute of Peace consulted with local educators and media experts to develop a peacebuilding curriculum that would serve as the foundation for the series. This curriculum focuses on four areas: self-confidence, shared community, awareness of civil rights, and respect for diversity.

As a multimedia program, the documentary and subsequent series were supported by a social networking site to facilitate the involvement of young people and the sharing of personal experiences. About 400 to 600 young people engage with the website each week. An independent evaluation of the program in 2011 highlighted the enthusiasm with which participants engaged in the production process and the series' ability to act as a forum for young people to give them a voice in political discussions. Furthermore, audiences watching *Salam Shabab* demonstrated an increased understanding of the collective and cross-cultural nature of the peacebuilding process and respect for the country's ethnic and religious diversity. It is envisaged that *Salam Shabab* will become a channel for the development of a participation

culture to nurture empowered, rather than disenfranchised, young people who are enthusiastic about participating in the political sphere as a new generation of Iraqi leaders.

## Outcomes and limitations

- A 30-minute documentary-style TV special has been produced.
- Three seasons of a TV series have been produced.
- A complementary social networking site has been developed, providing a forum for discussion.
- Young Iraqis' understanding of peacebuilding has been improved.

## Links

### Salam Shabab online

<http://salamshabab.com/about-salam-shabab>

### Video: Salam Shabab season promotion

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9o76ljlps8&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLAE110EB3163ED17E>

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13 <http://www.usip.org/publications/salam-shabab-peace-media-iraqi-youth>; <http://www.usip.org/publications/salam-shabab-demonstrating-the-value-diversity-among-iraqi-youth>; <http://www.usip.org/publications/salam-shabab-views-and-voices-of-iraqi-youth>

## Civil unrest case study | Speak-to-Tweet (Egypt): Google, Twitter and SayNow

### Background

During the Egyptian uprising of 2011 internet and social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook played an instrumental role as tools of communication and mobilisation for protesters. In response to the escalating protests in Cairo, the Egyptian government heavily censored and later shut down internet pathways throughout the country. This was done by withdrawing over 3,500 Border Gateway Protocol routes from Egyptian internet service providers. Once the BGP routes had been withdrawn, customers could not gain access to internet sites, send or receive emails, or use internet voice services such as Skype, and users from other countries could no longer exchange internet traffic with Egypt's service providers. Before this crackdown the Egyptian Government had already cut off Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. This was the first internet shutdown of such a scale and was an attempt to suppress protesters' communication

and to impede their ability to organise. Such was the hue and cry that internet access was restored after about a week.

### Activities

In January 2011, a matter of days after the Egyptian Government's internet crackdown, Google, in partnership with Twitter and a recently acquired company, SayNow, developed a speak-to-tweet service that enabled people to post a tweet through voice without an internet connection.<sup>14</sup> Individuals could call one of three international phone numbers and leave a voicemail. The speak-to-tweet service would then tweet the message with the hashtag #egypt. Similarly, individuals could listen to messages by dialling the same phone numbers. In February the speak-to-tweet service was expanded to enable detection of the approximate geographic origin of a message so as to attach a country-specific hashtag to the tweet. The messages sent through the service ranged from a few seconds to several minutes and featured citizen witnesses' descriptions of events occurring in various parts of the country. Within 24 hours of the service being launched messages were being received every few minutes. The speak-to-tweet service persisted despite the government's threats that it would shut down mobile phone services. It served as a valuable communication tool for protesters and allowed activists to persist in their mobilisation efforts.

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14 <http://googleblog.blogspot.com.au/2011/01/some-weekend-work-that-will-hopefully.html>; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/8295219/Egypt-crisis-Google-launches-speak-to-tweet-service.html>; [http://news.cnet.com/8301-30684\\_3-20030144-265.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-30684_3-20030144-265.html); <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/8288163/How-Egypt-shut-down-the-internet.html>

## Outcomes and limitations

- › State internet censorship and suspension were circumvented.
- › Multi-platform technology adaptation enabled access to social media platforms through landline or mobile telephones.
- › Disruptions to telephone services presented problems for universal access to the speak-to-tweet platform.

## Links

### **Speak-to-Tweet service on Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/speak2tweet>

**Table 4: Recovery communication framework**

<p><b>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Transitional status often associated with a move towards democracy</li> <li>› Relaxing of media censorship</li> <li>› Relaxing of media and telecommunications regulation</li> <li>› Renewal and expansion of media and communication infrastructure</li> <li>› Non-government and civil society organisations expanding</li> <li>› Gradual return to the rule of law</li> <li>› Return to separation of powers — civilian and military</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION NEEDS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Development of media and communications capacity</li> <li>› Maintenance of peacebuilding dialogue between formerly opposed groups through media</li> <li>› Increased transparency between governments and the public, with an increased focus on information sharing to improve accountability</li> <li>› Maintained focus on human rights observance and responding to previous human rights abuses</li> <li>› Focus on civic education and the roles and responsibilities of governments and citizens — for example, during elections</li> <li>› Promotion of access to basic services</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCOPE OF INTERVENTIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Increased emphasis on capacity strengthening of media and communications personnel, especially in news reporting and peacebuilding</li> <li>› Support for revision of media and communications policy and regulation to enhance plurality and reduce access costs</li> <li>› Development of local communication for development capacity and specialisation within national and local non-government and civil society organisations</li> <li>› Support for citizen media</li> <li>› Support for civic education and monitoring of transition to democracy</li> </ul>
<p><b>CASE STUDIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Sada Voice Players (Afghanistan): Voice for Humanity</li> <li>› Radio Okapi (Democratic Republic of Congo): MONUSCO and the Hironnelle Foundation</li> <li>› Open Jirga (Afghanistan): BBC Media Action</li> <li>› PakVotes (Pakistan): Byte for All and US Institute of Peace</li> </ul>

## Recovery case study | Sada Voice Players (Afghanistan): Voice for Humanity

### Background

Voice for Humanity is a non-government organisation based in Kentucky in the United States; its aim is to improve the lives of vulnerable groups — in particular non- and semi-literate people — by disseminating audio devices called ‘voice players’. These players are programmed with audio content dealing with specific local concerns such as maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS education and civic education. The content can be listened to individually or in groups using a player’s inbuilt speakers. The voice players, which are intended to be portable, easy to use and hard to break, have been distributed in numerous countries — for example, Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, and countries in East Africa. They can be powered in a variety of ways, such as AC power, hand crank, and rechargeable solar-powered batteries, and are designed to overcome tough environmental conditions such as desert winds and lack of electricity. Wherever they are used the players are referred to using the local term for ‘voice’; for example, in India the player is called the *araz*.

### Activities

In the lead-up to the Afghanistan parliamentary elections in 2005, Voice for Humanity distributed 41,000 voice players, or *sadas*, in 21 provinces, each containing a chip with 15 hours of civic education material designed to promote peace, national unity, democracy and engagement in the coming election.<sup>15</sup> The content was produced by Afghans in Afghanistan and included songs, round table discussions and ‘frequently asked questions’ about the election. Content chips were available in both Dari and Pashto. Women were a particular focus of this initiative because of their lack of access to alternative communication technologies, and half of the distributed *sadas* were coloured pink in order to appeal to women and to deter men from taking the voice players away from women. The *sada* became a vehicle for collective listening and engagement between neighbours and communities. This was seen as a valuable avenue for promoting community dialogue and discussion.

### Outcomes and limitations

- › Forty-one thousand voice players were distributed in 21 provinces.
- › The device helped foster opportunities for learning about and discussing human and civic rights — in particular, increased awareness of women’s rights such as the right to vote and to education and work.
- › Listeners’ understanding of the electoral process and their role in it was improved.

<sup>15</sup> Sengupta, A, Long, E, Singhal, A and Shefner-Rogers, C 2007, ‘The sada says “We Women Have Our Rights”’: A gender analysis of an ICT initiative in Afghanistan’, *International Communication Gazette*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 335–53.

- › Record numbers of women voted in the 2005 elections, and female candidates contested the elections for the first time. It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to isolate the role the *sada* initiative had in this.

## Links

### Voice for Humanity website

<http://www.voiceforhumanity.org/projects/iraq>

## Recovery case study | Radio Okapi (Democratic Republic of Congo): MONUSCO and the Hironnelle Foundation

### Background

Since the mid 1990s civil war and ethnic strife in the Democratic Republic of Congo have claimed the lives of millions of people and displaced many more. The media sector has played a role in the continuing conflict; in particular, radio has often been used to incite ethnic hatred and disseminate political propaganda. The division of the country into different zones run by competing political and military factions has contributed to the problem since local media are increasingly controlled and access to nationwide news is restricted.

Radio Okapi was established to provide national media coverage and contribute to the peacebuilding process. Launched in 2002, it is a radio network, not a single radio station, with 28 partner stations broadcasting to the most inaccessible parts of the country. Radio Okapi is a joint project of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly MONUC, now MONUSCO) and the Hironnelle Foundation, a Swiss non-government

organisation. The Hironnelle Foundation aims to create and support independent media in conflict, post-conflict and crisis zones, and Radio Okapi reflects this mission through its emphasis on press freedom, journalistic responsibility, civic education, good governance and development. Radio Okapi broadcasts in five languages — French, Lingala, Swahili, Tshiluba and Kikongo — and is also heard internationally, particularly among the Congolese diaspora, via online streaming.

## Activities

The Radio Okapi network played an important part in the 2006 electoral process by providing an avenue for all parties to express themselves while also taking care to broadcast verified facts.<sup>16</sup> Dutch non-government organisation La Benevolencija used Radio Okapi as part of a broader campaign to promote reconciliation and prevent future violence. In the lead-up to the second round of the 2006 elections a series of four weekly programs were broadcast on the network in an effort to counter hate speech.<sup>17</sup> The programs featured questions gathered through interviews with listeners around the country that were answered by La Benevolencija experts. The questions dealt with things such as how to define, distinguish and counteract hate speech.

## Outcomes and limitations

- Radio Okapi produces national news coverage while maintaining high standards of professionalism and impartiality.
- The network is a trusted and credible news source.
- Radio Okapi has played a central role in supporting the Democratic Republic of Congo's transition period, including the electoral process.
- The lack of resources available in English makes it difficult to assess the impact of the network.

## Links

**Documentary *Radio Okapi, radio de la vie, 2006*, P Guyot, France**

<http://vimeo.com/groups/82472/videos/20197657>  
(French)

**Hironnelle Foundation website**

<http://www.hironnelle.org>

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16 Betz, M 2004, 'Radio as a peacebuilder: a case study of Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *The Great Lakes Research Journal*, vol. 1, December, <http://www.hironnelle.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/RadioOkapiasapeacebuilder.pdf>; Vollhardt, J, Coutin, M, Staub, E, Weiss, G and Deflander, J 2006, 'Deconstructing hate speech in the DRC: a psychological media sensitization campaign', *Journal of Hate Studies*, vol. 5, issue 1, pp. 15–35.

17 [http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Selected\\_projects/Radio\\_Okapi](http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects/Selected_projects/Radio_Okapi); <http://www.hironnelle.org/radio-okapi-3/radio-okapi/?lang=en>.

## Recovery case study | Open Jirga (Afghanistan): BBC Media Action

### Background

After more than 30 years of war Afghanistan continues to experience conflict and political and social difficulties. Research conducted by BBC Media Action in 2012, in seven provinces throughout the country and with varied ethnic groups and minority communities, investigated individual attitudes to governance, the media and accountability. Most of the people surveyed nominated corruption and lack of accountability as major concerns and said that as a result they preferred to refer problems and conflicts to traditional elders rather than to more formal government channels. The research found that many Afghans have experienced negative interaction with government, and this has resulted in a devalued sense of democracy. For BBC Media Action the results of this research meant there was a need to improve public deliberation and interaction between citizens and their political leaders.

### Activities

With funding from the UK Department for International Development, BBC Media Action works in Afghanistan to deliver a multimedia platform for political debate and discussion.<sup>18</sup> The program *Open Jirga* (*jirga* meaning ‘assembly’ in Pashto) is broadcast on television, radio and online in partnership with the state broadcaster Radio Television Afghanistan to ensure a national reach and access by the diaspora via satellite; the aim is to increase accountability between citizens and the government during the country’s transition. Hosted by a well-known Afghan BBC journalist, the program is broadcast in both Pashto and Dari. The first *Open Jirga* episode was broadcast in December 2012 and focused on the state of security post-2014. The panel, featuring the Minister of the Interior, the Chief of Operations at the Ministry of Defence, and the former head of the National Directorate of Security, received questions from a 70-strong audience made up of individuals from eight provinces. Audience members asked about topics such as the impending military withdrawal in 2014 and women’s role in public life. A subsequent episode, in March 2013, saw the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, receive questions from the audience on his government’s performance to date, the country’s relationship with the international community, infrastructure, and peace processes with the Taliban. The program is also supported by particular governance-related scenes in the existing radio drama *New Home, New Life*, as well as specific educational radio features.

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18 <http://www.cominit.com/fragile-contexts/content/open-jirga-exploring-governance-afghanistan>;  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publicationsandpress/research\\_afghanistan\\_governance\\_page.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publicationsandpress/research_afghanistan_governance_page.html);  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where\\_we\\_work/asia/afghanistan/afghanistan\\_open\\_jirga.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/asia/afghanistan/afghanistan_open_jirga.html)

## Outcomes and limitations

- › Formative, qualitative research led to the production of *Open Jirga*, a political debate and discussion program.
- › The program facilitates greater citizen engagement with political leaders.

## Links

### **Video: *Open Jirga 1 on Security***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iTOP--FY2k>

### **Video: *Open Jirga 5 with Afghan President on Governance***

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=vFlzHqtKu-o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vFlzHqtKu-o)

## Recovery case study | PakVotes (Pakistan): Byte for All

## Background

Elections in Pakistan have a history of violence, and perhaps the most memorable is the December 2007 election, when candidate Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. The May 2013 election was of particular significance because it marked the first constitutional transfer of power from one civilian government to another in Pakistan's history. It also constituted the first time that digital and social media had been used to communicate, collaborate, monitor and report on elections in the country. Byte for All, or B4A, is a Pakistani technology and human rights group with a focus on information and communication technologies. It has a particular interest in capacity building for human rights defenders, especially in the areas of digital security, online safety and privacy, working on a number of projects and campaigning against internet censorship and surveillance in Pakistan, with an emphasis on the use of internet rights in the struggle for democracy.

## Activities

With seed funding from the US Institute of Peace, Byte for All implemented a pilot project, PakVotes, during the 2013 election, seeking to bring openness and inclusion to the political process.<sup>19</sup> PakVotes engaged the public in election monitoring in order to identify election-related violence and procedural misconduct. Overall, the project documented intimidation attempts, voter fraud, assassination attempts and kidnappings. Information and documentation from field monitors were sent to the PakVotes team for verification and then posted through different social media and on the PakVotes website. The project was based around a network of 40 social media reporters in 10 districts that had been chosen because of their propensity for violence, citizens' limited access to information, and limited air time in the mainstream media. The 40 monitors were equipped with high-end smart phones embedded with social media tools that enabled them to video or photograph election violations and share them in real time. A code of ethics was developed to govern how data were collected, verified and shared on social media. The PakVotes Twitter handle gained 700 followers in 36 hours, the hashtag #PakVotes trended for the duration of the election, and the Facebook site generated 11,000 likes during its first month. In addition to posting information through social media and its own website, the project hosted a blog featuring over 20 writers, columnists and citizen journalists and mapped data on allegations of violence and misconduct. Information published online by PakVotes was heavily drawn on by international media and government officials.

## Outcomes and limitations

- Citizens connected with social media through Twitter and Facebook.
- Information was published through the PakVotes website.
- Field monitors provided data for mapping.
- The project was a source of information for mainstream and international media.
- The internet is still an emerging platform in Pakistan, and marginalised and rural populations have little to no access.

## Links

### **PakVotes map website**

<http://www.pakvotesmap.pk>

### ***PakVotes — people stand up to the elections that were anything but free and fair***

<http://www.carbonated.tv/news/pak-votes-people-stand-up-to-the-elections-that-were-anything-but-free-and-fair-video>

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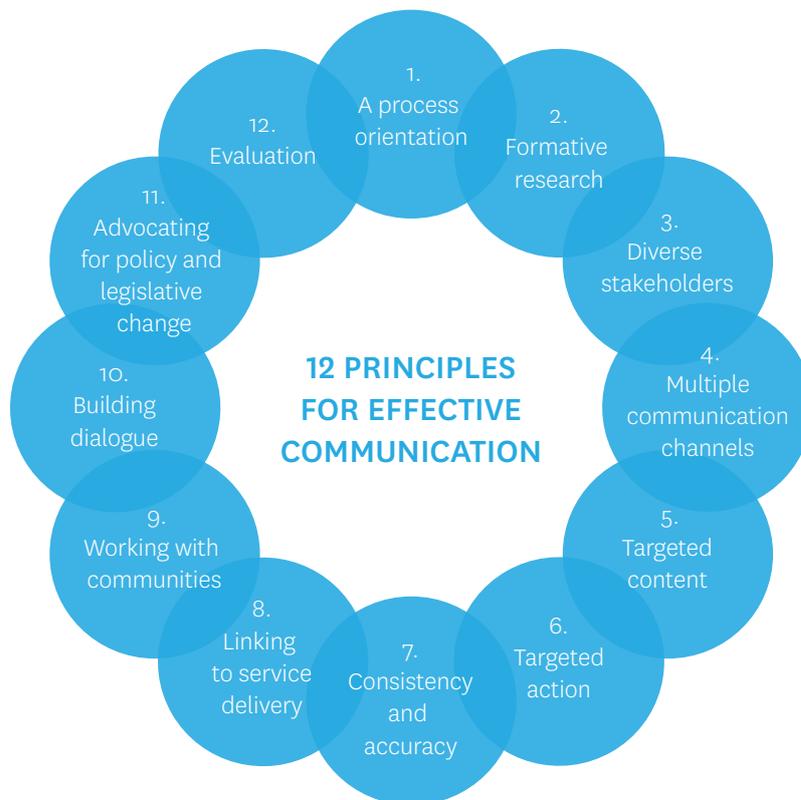
19 <http://www.usip.org/olivebranch/adding-the-election-fervor-in-pakistan-pakvotes-wields-facebook-web-and-twitter/>; <http://internationalpoliticalforum.com/pak-votes-2013-pakistans-online-battle-against-political-violence/>; [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hammad-moses-khan/pakvotes-a-new-kind-of-el\\_b\\_3283564.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hammad-moses-khan/pakvotes-a-new-kind-of-el_b_3283564.html)

## 4. Core communication principles

Communication during acute emergencies and in longer term crises is more likely to have an impact if a number of principles that are known to improve

effectiveness are adopted. Figure 6 summarises these principles.

**Figure 6: Communication design, 12 principles**



## 1. Be process orientated

Well-designed, well-implemented communication initiatives, even those that aim to respond to acute situations, tend to be process oriented. They adhere to principles such as those outlined here and follow specific processes or steps relating to formative research, the identification of target groups, the design and testing of messages, the monitoring of implementation, and impact evaluation. Being process oriented helps communicators avoid common errors and maximises the chance of effectiveness and impact. A number of detailed 'how to' guides, online resources and practical tools exist that allow practitioners to objectively work through central elements of emergency communication in a systematic way. The Australian Emergency Management website is one such resource, as is the Catholic Relief Service's *Develop a Communication Plan in Nine Steps*.

### Resources

#### **Emergency Management Australia website**

<http://www.em.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

#### ***Develop a Communication Plan in Nine Steps, Catholic Relief Service, 2013***

<http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/general/communication-toolbox-template-develop-a-communication-plan.pdf>

#### ***Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication, US Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control, 2012***

[http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/pdf/CERC\\_2012edition.pdf](http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/pdf/CERC_2012edition.pdf)

## 2. Formative research

Initial situational assessment can highlight what communication activities could be developed in any particular context (see Section 3). It is important that assumptions about what could be developed are tested, wherever possible, by using a formative research process. Formative research examines knowledge, attitudes, practices and the information needs of at-risk and vulnerable populations. It is also important to understand the local communications environment, the range of communication channels available for use, and existing communication and media policy, legislation and regulation. This increases understanding of the vulnerabilities faced by target groups and which communication channels to use; it also helps with establishing an ongoing research and evaluation link to affected communities.

Never make assumptions about what vulnerable groups need to know or how best to communicate with them. It is important that decisions are based on evidence and that dialogue through communication is established whenever possible. Field research has its own risks, and where field-based formative research is not possible (often in acute conflict or disaster situations) alternative sources of data can be sought — for example, through crisis-mapping communities or social media dialogue with affected communities. A rigorous risk assessment process should be adopted at all times to ensure that the safety of field staff is maximised. The following resources highlight a number of research and evaluation approaches and options for securing data in complex emergencies.

## Resources

### **Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development Programmes, UK Department for International Development, 2005**

<http://www.oecd.org/dev/devcom/46388330.pdf>

### **Emergency Journalism Toolkit for Better and Accurate Reporting: data sources, European Journalism Centre, 2013**

<http://emergencyjournalism.net/useful-links-official-data-sources/>

## 3. Diverse stakeholders

When communicating during a crisis or in response to a long-term situation such as post-conflict recovery, formative research will reveal that diverse stakeholders exist and that these groups might need very different forms of information communicated through differing channels if they are to be reached effectively. Although the focus of many emergency communication initiatives is the broad general public who can be targeted with crucial messages, many initiatives are aimed at specific groups — for example, combatants or law enforcement officers. Diverse stakeholders have different needs based on factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and occupational category. In the broad field of conflict, humanitarianism and emergency communication, target audiences for communication can include the following:

- › at-risk groups — for example, children, ethnic groups and occupational groups
- › staff of humanitarian agencies
- › police and military personnel
- › government employees — for example, service providers

- › mass media managers
- › journalists
- › politicians — for advocacy
- › the general public.

Understanding that different stakeholders exist and that they might need different kinds of engagement and information helps humanitarian and development organisations increase their effectiveness and accountability. The more the patchwork of stakeholders in any given situation is included and reached with effective communication that builds productive dialogue, the greater the level of accountability. The Australian Red Cross resource *Communicating in Recovery* provides a comprehensive overview of potential stakeholders in emergency situations.

## Resources

### **Communicating in Recovery, Australian Red Cross, 2010 (Section 3)**

[http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Communicating\\_in\\_recovery\\_resource.pdf](http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Communicating_in_recovery_resource.pdf)

### **Accountability to Affected Populations: the operational framework, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013**

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf)

## 4. Multiple communication channels

There is strong evidence that communication impacts rise exponentially when high-quality messages, dialogue and mobilisation target specific stakeholder groups via multiple communication channels. This helps ensure the widest possible exposure to relevant information. Communicating face to face and through peers, as well as by using new media (social and mobile) and traditional media (print, radio and television), can help deliver broad coverage and wide access. The range of communication channels used should be determined as a result of formative research or previous preparation in the context of disaster planning. The aim should always be to use the most effective communication channel to reach the specified group. Often such channels are the most popular when communicating emergency messages broadly to the general public. When seeking to communicate to narrower target groups, such as community leaders or politicians, face-to-face communication might be more effective. Potential communication channels can include the following:

- › interpersonal — face-to-face, meetings, counselling, peer communication, and so on
- › participatory — street theatre, participatory video, dance, and so on
- › print material — newspapers, posters, leaflets, flyers, newsletters, and so on
- › radio — community, national and international, across all genres from drama to news

- › television — community, national and international, across all genres from drama to news
- › film and video — focusing on detailed analysis
- › internet-based — crisis mapping, citizen media, blogs, social media and networking, data collecting
- › mobile phone based — SMS warnings, SMS-based data gathering mechanisms.

The Australian Red Cross resource *Communicating in Recovery* discusses in detail the range of communication channels that can be used during emergencies. When infrastructure damage has occurred as a result of conflict or disaster a limited number of national communication channels might be available, and international communication and media organisations have occasionally stepped in to fill crucial information gaps; a notable example is BBC Media Action, which draws extensively on the international broadcasting channels of the BBC World Service to provide both humanitarian- and development-focused information to a wide range of stakeholders.

### Resources

#### **Communicating in Recovery, Australian Red Cross, 2010 (Section 2)**

[http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Communicating\\_in\\_recovery\\_resource.pdf](http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Communicating_in_recovery_resource.pdf)

#### **BBC Media Action website**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/>

## 5. Targeted content

Diverse audiences need information that is aimed specifically at them. Targeted content using popular media channels and formats is central to creating the right sort of impact and, where possible, a dialogue with key stakeholders. Understanding which channels and formats are popular and appealing is a vital step towards creating an impact, and assumptions should never be made about communication preferences on an audience's behalf. Targeted content contains tailored messages that have been developed in conjunction with affected communities and are known to provide relevant or needed information. Such content contains messages that can cover a wide range of topics, such as the following:

- › general awareness and other information designed to protect
- › the psychological impacts of disaster or conflict
- › specific vulnerable groups
- › protection from violence, rights abuses and abuse of power
- › child protection
- › environmental hazards
- › evacuation, humanitarian aid and/or government service delivery.

Initial situational assessment and formative research will help to identify the type of initiative and the kind of information stakeholders require. Nevertheless, understanding these variables does not necessarily equate with successful communication. A rigorous process of testing the proposed communication materials and messages should be adhered to if conditions allow. This testing takes place before the communication occurs and is often called 'pre-testing'. The ability to pre-test communication

materials and messages is strongly dependent on context and the related safety factors and risk assessment. In emergency situations — such as those routinely experienced with natural disasters — good preparedness work can help offset such concerns. In acute conflict situations both formative research and the pre-testing of communication materials and messages might not be possible, although efforts can be made to connect with affected populations or diaspora populations (through crisis-mapping organisations, community groups and social media) in order to obtain a degree of feedback. Figure 7 shows the main pre-testing steps; Table 5 shows the primary values pre-testing assesses.

Figure 7: Pre-testing steps



Table 5: Values assessed in pre-testing

<b>RELEVANCE</b>
It is essential that communication materials and messages are relevant to the groups targeted. If irrelevant messages are targeted at inappropriate groups there will be little impact. Understanding if an output is relevant and, if not, why not is important. If the necessary formative research is done the relevance of outputs can be assessed at the design stage. Asking about the relevance of communication outputs remains a priority and helps to ensure that initiatives have a better chance of creating an impact.
<b>COMPREHENSION</b>
Understanding materials and messages is essential to acceptance and then to behaviour change among target groups. Comprehension measures the clarity of the content and the messages being communicated. Complicated or technical vocabulary can result in failure to understand the message. Images can also be confusing and can be misinterpreted.
<b>ATTRACTIVENESS</b>
Mass media and print materials should be attractive. If outputs are not attractive, target groups might not pay much attention to them. Attractiveness can be achieved through the use of sounds (music, tone) in the case of radio, visuals (colour and illustrations) in the case of graphics, and movement, action, illumination and animation in the case of video.
<b>ACCEPTANCE</b>
The outputs and messages must be acceptable to the target population. If outputs contain something offensive or messages that are not believable, or if they cause arguments, the group will reject the message.
<b>INVOLVEMENT</b>
The target group should be able to identify with the communication outputs. They should recognise that the message is directed to them. Target groups will not pay attention to messages they think do not involve them. Representations, illustrations, symbols and language should ideally reflect the characteristics of the target group.
<b>ENCOURAGEMENT</b>
Communication outputs should explain what the intervention wants the target audience to do. Most emergency communication promotes messages that ask a group to do something. Successful communication outputs transmit a message about something that can be done by the target group.

The resources that follow set out the potential range of messages that can be communicated in an emergency situation, as well as how to develop and frame the messages provided. The Australian Government's *Emergency Warnings: choosing your words* is a comprehensive guide to emergency messaging.

## Resources

### ***Quick Guide to Communication on Protection in Emergencies and Sample Key Messages for Protection, Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, 2012***

[http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/\\_assets/files/field\\_protection\\_clusters/South\\_Pacific/files/PHPC\\_Quick\\_Guide\\_Communication\\_Key\\_Protection\\_Communication\\_Messages\\_EN.pdf](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/field_protection_clusters/South_Pacific/files/PHPC_Quick_Guide_Communication_Key_Protection_Communication_Messages_EN.pdf)

### ***Emergency Warnings: choosing your words, Australian Government, 2008***

<http://www.em.gov.au/Emergency-Warnings/Documents/EmergencyWarningsChoosingYourWordsEdition2.pdf>

## 6. Targeted action

Different kinds of communication require different kinds of messaging strategies. Acute situations demand that target groups take action 'now'. Long-term initiatives typically target positive changes in social norms, attitudes, practices and behaviour. For example, reducing tension by creating dialogue between groups that are opposed to each other can be vital to limiting conflict and animosity. Such dialogue also helps 'humanise' opposing groups by changing negative attitudes and perceptions. Initial planning and communication design of the initiative — and especially the formative research work done in order to define the information needs of the target groups — will ultimately dictate what specific message or information is provided.

Messages during acute emergencies tend to focus on the following:

- information giving
- raising awareness
- prevention
- taking protective measures
- risk reduction
- evacuation
- harm reduction
- service availability
- conflict proximity
- early warning of disasters
- post-disaster recovery
- observing human rights
- taking steps to avoid violence
- ensuring the safety of others
- taking steps to prevent disease outbreaks
- maintaining hygiene and good sanitation practices.

Long-term communication initiatives tend to focus their messages on the following:

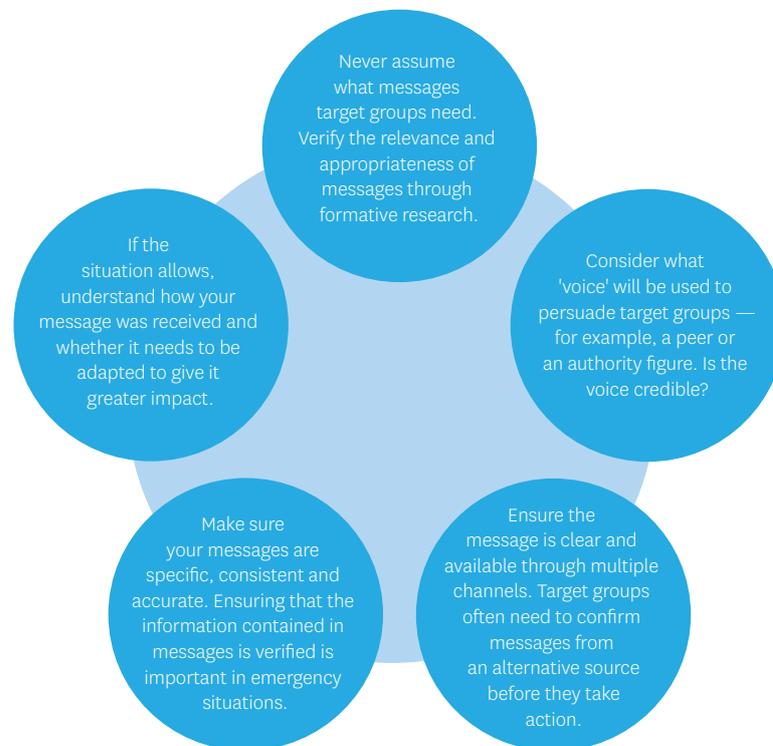
- preparing
- raising awareness
- creating inter-group dialogue
- improving the quality of information by reducing bias
- strengthening civic responsibility
- promoting services

- › promoting the rule of law, reconciliation and peacebuilding
- › changing behaviour and attitudes.

Messages that advocate action or some form of social or behavioural change need to be carefully crafted if communicators are to maximise the messages' impact. It is important that the messages provided in any emergency or conflict situation are well researched, targeted, clear, credible and actionable. Ideally, they should be communicated

through multiple channels, using formats and genres preferred by the target group. Different messaging approaches can be needed to reach different target groups — for example, the general public as opposed to specific risk groups such as children. The aim of messaging might be to provide clear and actionable information, but it can also be to create a dialogue. The style of messaging depends on the context, although Figure 8 sets out some important broad principles associated with how messages are framed.

**Figure 8: Tips for developing messages**



The resources that follow highlight how messages that target action can be systematically developed and communicated. The UNICEF publication *Behaviour Change Communication in Emergencies: a toolkit* provides guidance on how to develop

communication designed to change behaviour. It focuses on a number of considerations that affect children during emergencies, many of them to do with health.

## Resources

### ***Quick Guide to Communication on Protection in Emergencies and Sample Key Messages for Protection, Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, 2012***

[http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/\\_assets/files/field\\_protection\\_clusters/South\\_Pacific/files/PHPC\\_Quick\\_Guide\\_Communication\\_Key\\_Protection\\_Communication\\_Messages\\_EN.pdf](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/field_protection_clusters/South_Pacific/files/PHPC_Quick_Guide_Communication_Key_Protection_Communication_Messages_EN.pdf)

### ***Behaviour Change Communication in Emergencies: a toolkit, UNICEF, 2006***

[http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/BCC\\_full.pdf.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/BCC_full.pdf.pdf)

## 7. Consistency and accuracy

Communication during both crisis situations and longer term complex emergencies calls for consistency and accuracy. Messages must not contradict each other and must contain accurate and, where appropriate, actionable information. It is important that steps to verify information are taken before its communication to audiences and stakeholders. Conveying inaccurate information can be very damaging and can destroy the trust the public has in organisations such as humanitarian agencies and media outlets. Both the general public and specific target audiences are critical judges of information. Typically, they assess the following:

- the factual content and accuracy of the communication
- whether information can be independently verified — for example, using another communication source
- whether the information has come from a credible and trusted source. Audiences perceive trusted sources as displaying empathy, competence, honesty, openness and commitment.

The resources that follow provide a comprehensive assessment of how to improve the consistency and accuracy of communication. The recent emergence of citizen journalism, crowdsourcing and crisis mapping as new tools of humanitarian and crisis communication is allowing for the rapid collection and verification of data that are crucial to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, monitoring of electoral processes and observance of human rights. The role of new information and communication technologies in promoting consistency and accuracy in humanitarian communication is dealt with in *Emergency Journalism Toolkit for Better and Accurate Reporting: verification tools*, by the European Journalism Centre.

## Resources

### ***Emergency Warnings: choosing your words, Australian Government, 2008***

<http://www.em.gov.au/Emergency-Warnings/Documents/EmergencyWarningsChoosingYourWordsEdition2.pdf>

### ***Emergency Journalism Toolkit for Better and Accurate Reporting: verification tools, European Journalism Centre, 2013***

<http://emergencyjournalism.net/useful-links-verification-tools/>

## 8. Link to service delivery

Emergency communication tends to link to service delivery in a very immediate way, but longer term initiatives can also target or promote a service — for example, weapon collection or security services. If messages are advocating an action that links to a service (say, weapon collection) it is essential that communities can gain access to that service and make effective use of it. Advocating an action without the necessary service being there to support it can damage the reputation of agencies

involved in humanitarian assistance, the media and communication sector, and service providers. This can lead to a loss of trust in any future information that is provided. Communication initiatives can link to numerous forms of service delivery, depending on the nature of the emergency (acute or longer term), and can include the following:

- › emergency relief services following natural disasters
- › humanitarian relief for the displaced — for example, as a result of conflict
- › education services
- › health services
- › programs that promote reconciliation — for example, truth and reconciliation
- › weapon collection services
- › police and the judiciary — for example, service standards
- › public works
- › ordinance and land-mine clearance.

When communication is linked with service delivery, at-risk populations and other stakeholders have the best opportunity to take action.

## Resources

### ***Service Delivery in Fragile Situations: key concepts, findings and lessons, OECD, 2008***

<http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/40886707.pdf>

## 9. Working with communities

Good communication that is capable of creating real dialogue tends to involve working with communities through community structures and local organisations. It is widely understood that community participation builds inclusion and ownership of communication initiatives and that this helps to deliver greater impacts for communicators and communities alike. Lasting change is often delivered only through working at the community rather than the individual level because community-held norms can deter individuals from changing their behaviours and practices. Working with community leaders and obtaining broad community engagement can be difficult in acute conflict situations, but it is an essential component of preparing for natural disasters. In situations characterised by civil unrest or recovery from conflict, practical steps need to be taken to ensure that communication occurs at the community level. Mobilising communities for peace, reconciliation, recovery and reconstruction is essential if a resilient and sustainable peace or resolution is to be achieved. Community-based communication can include the following:

- › holding community meetings
- › working with community leaders — political, traditional, religious, ethnic, and so on
- › mobilising communities through community events and performances
- › encouraging participation in communication design (through formative research) and participatory evaluation.

Numerous resources deal with the role of community participation in communication. The UNESCO Policy Brief listed here provides a specific focus on the promotion of community participation in education in conflict situations.

## Resources

### ***Promoting Participation: community contributions to education in conflict situations, UNESCO Policy Brief, 2008***

[http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Research\\_Highlights\\_Emergencies/pdf/PB\\_PromotingParticipation.pdf](http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Research_Highlights_Emergencies/pdf/PB_PromotingParticipation.pdf)

### ***Accountability to Affected Populations, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013***

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/IASC%20AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20March%202013.pdf)

## 10. Building dialogue

Dialogue is essential to dealing with all forms of crisis. Communication that can build dialogue at the community and national levels offers the best chance of promoting conflict reduction, peace and reconciliation. Numerous communication initiatives during periods of civil unrest and recovery focus on bringing opposing groups together through dialogue and debate, which must be well managed and responsible if it is to be effective and does not inflame conflict or animosity. Promoting community dialogue about whether change can be implemented is important because beliefs and norms are held collectively. Effective dialogue has four important characteristics:

- It is inclusive and reflects multiple voices within communities.
- It is about learning and change.
- It allows opponents to recognise each other's right to exist and have a different opinion.

- It occurs over the longer term and requires ongoing commitments from funders, implementers, communities and interest groups.

The United Nations Development Programme resource that follows outlines the important role of dialogue in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The Rockefeller Foundation resource looks at how communities communicate and accept or reject social change. This general resource is of value to those seeking a better understanding of some of the opportunities and constraints associated with communication practice at the community level.

## Resources

### ***Why Dialogue Matters for conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, United Nations Development Programme, 2009***

[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/dialogue\\_conflict.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/dialogue_conflict.pdf)

### ***Communication for Social Change: an integrated model for measuring the process and its outcomes, Rockefeller Foundation, 2002***

<http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf>

## 11. Advocating for policy and legislative change

Policy and legislation — as well as regulation in the case of the media and communications sector — can have a strong bearing on the information and communication environment in any particular circumstance. During acute emergencies changes in how the media and communications sector is organised and governed might be required to maximise the communication response — for example, through the waiving of licensing requirements for emergency humanitarian radio broadcasting. More typically, however, policy and legislation are the focus of longer term

communication initiatives that seek to influence stakeholders and help build a supportive communications environment conducive to change, conflict reduction and reconciliation. In post-conflict situations such work is termed 'media development', and it constitutes a central plank of the work of organisations such as UNESCO, BBC Media Action and ABC International Development. Robust policy and legislative and regulatory environments can help the media and communications sector be more responsive during periods of civil unrest or recovery, as well as opening communication channels to voices previously silenced or discredited. Policy and legislative changes can achieve several objectives:

- › help to regulate the media and communications sector, encouraging restraint and responsibility
- › lead to improvements in the quality of journalism and reduce bias and defamation
- › help to increase the diversity of voices in the media
- › open channels of communication for the excluded and vulnerable
- › increase the preparedness of communicators and improve their response to disaster.

The resources that follow provide detailed insights into how the media and communications sector can be assessed, developed and benchmarked using the criteria of increased openness, freedom and responsibility.

## Resources

### ***Media Development Indicators: a framework for assessing media development, UNESCO, 2008***

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163102e.pdf>

### ***Between Radicalisation and Democratisation in an Unfolding Conflict: media in Pakistan, International Media Support, 2009***

<http://www.i-m-s.dk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-media-pakistan-radicalisation-2009.pdf>

## 12. Evaluation

It is vitally important that the progress and impacts of all communication initiatives are evaluated. Evaluation is learning centred and feeds back into program delivery. It allows for impacts to be understood and helps to highlight problems with program delivery — including aspects of communication that are not working or that cause confusion. For example, a misunderstood message can cause panic, can be harmful if advocating a certain type of action or can inflame an existing conflict. As with formative research, both ongoing and summative evaluation might be difficult to carry out in emergency situations where risks are imposed on the evaluators. It is important to ensure that risks are assessed before field-based evaluation begins. If the constraints are severe, alternatives to field-sourced data can be sought or it might be possible to connect with organisations that have become expert in remotely obtaining data from affected areas. The high levels of new media access and ownership mean that new ways of linking to affected populations have been developed, among them crowdsourcing and crisis mapping. Recent years have seen the emergence of numerous crisis mapping networks that crowdsource information directly from a disaster or conflict zone. Such organisations are now at the forefront of the

information and communication response during emergencies and offer new means of monitoring and evaluating implementation and progress. Ongoing and summative evaluations do the following:

- enable errors and miscommunication to be identified
- allow for changes to be made to communication design and messaging
- enable impacts on knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviour to be understood
- provide evidence for the continuation of activities or indicate a successful resolution
- provide content for advocacy with funders, partner implementers and other stakeholders.

The resources that follow deal with a range of research and evaluation tools employable in the context of communication initiatives, as well as material that discusses the rapidly growing practice of crowdsourcing data.

## Resources

***Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development (ICD) Programmes***, UK Department for International Development, 2005.

<http://www.oecd.org/dev/devcom/46388330.pdf>

***Emergency Journalism Toolkit for Better and Accurate Reporting: crowdsourcing networks***, European Journalism Centre, 2013

<http://emergencyjournalism.net/maps>

## 5. Conclusion

This resource guide assesses the broad role of information and communication in disaster situations and complex emergencies. It highlights a number of distinct communication phases or cycles associated with emergency or crisis communication, as well as defining the broad range and diversity of initiatives associated with communication in such situations. The guide defines a number of frameworks for use in rapidly assessing a situation, the resultant information needs and the contextual constraints. It also defines a number of important principles associated with effective crisis communication and provides links to 'best-practice' resources that offer additional detail. The principles described are important and are process oriented. While significant risk can make it difficult to adhere to a rigorous communication design process in an emergency, the processes, frameworks and principles elaborated here highlight the importance of developing evidence-based communication initiatives. Evidence-based initiatives that truly link to communities affected by disaster and conflict and that seek to build meaningful dialogue offer the best potential for delivering social impacts.



