

Introduction

Effective two-way communication is a critical part of Accountability to Beneficiaries (which is sometimes more easily understood by agencies as the responsible use of power). The principles underpinning two-way communication in disaster response include ensuring that the response is locally relevant, participatory and owned. Communication with Communities seeks to:

- Establish communities' needs to develop context-appropriate approaches which increase the quality and scope of the response
- Promote community engagement throughout the response to ensure that crisis-affected people are equal partners in, and agents of, their own recovery
- Ensure that the voices of communities – including the marginalised and vulnerable – are identified and amplified through consultation and dialogue
- Identify and build upon local capacities, to ensure that existing information and communication channels are complemented, promoting community recovery and resilience
- Forge partnerships to improve the quality and effectiveness of a response through the pooling of resources and experiences
- Generate evidence and learning to inform future programming, preparedness and response.

The most common communication needs that appear in any disaster response include:

- What are government and agency plans for assisting communities? And timeframes?
- How can communities tell agencies and government what they need?
- How can communities access assistance?
- What is the criteria for assistance?
- What materials are safe for rebuilding?
- How can beneficiaries build safe temporary shelters?
- How can beneficiaries use materials they have been given better?
- How can communities build back safer?

During all phases of the earthquake response it will be important to ensure that effective, and timely, communications between affected communities and Shelter Cluster partners is well facilitated. A variety of communication channels need to be utilised, including, but not limited to:

- Face-to-Face – direct community engagement
- Print – Informational materials (flyers, posters etc.)
- Radio – local community radio stations are back up and running in many areas.
- Social Media – Facebook is extremely popular in Nepal and still accessible in many areas.
- SMS/Phones – Geographically targeted SMS systems can be used for both individual and blanket communication.
- Practical demonstrations – demonstration construction, shake table demonstrations, etc.

When communicating with communities on shelter and housing, it is important that participative approaches, practical demonstrations, and face-to-face two way communications are prioritised as communicating construction / technical concepts is not effective using printed materials alone¹.

¹ <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/752898/26141328/1429718340770/extending-impact-2015.pdf?token=pPpmmNUp6LoGu6TYoH0kA15MPrE%3D>

It is essential to plan and prepare communication activities in advance in order to have adequate time to prepare and train staff, to field trial communications materials, and to ensure that communications on key issues are delivered in a timely manner. In order to achieve this a communications plan should be prepared that outlines key communications activities over the course of the phases of the response.

Targeting

In past responses agencies have targeted different groups with different communication activities. For example:

- Children
- Households
- Female Headed Households
- Key service groups such as: taxi drivers, porters)
- Religious leaders
- Community leaders
- Local hardware stores (e.g. posters at local hardware stores and training sessions for hardware store staff)
- Local rotary club

Assessments and planning for communication activities should include discussion with different target groups concerning what communication they would like and how they want to be communicated with.

Sample Communications Plan

A sample communications plan is provided below, based on three phases of the response:

- 1) Pre-monsoon temporary shelter
- 2) Monsoon temporary shelter support
- 3) Post Monsoon reconstruction support

Phase	Key Information	Communications Activities
Pre-Monsoon Phase April to mid-June	<p>What is the shelter strategy? What are the GON/shelter cluster partners planning to do, what can people expect from them, and when can they expect it? How can people best engage in this planned process?</p> <p>How to stay sheltered safely during the monsoon.</p> <p>Traditional construction materials can build safe homes but need to be used in the right way. Salvage your materials and keep them safe – support for permanent reconstruction will come after the monsoon.</p> <p>What preparations can people make now for the monsoon and afterwards?</p> <p>How to use materials being distributed.</p>	<p><u>Print Materials</u> Temporary shelter leaflet</p> <p>What materials to salvage and how? How to use CGI? Roofing tips.</p> <p><u>Radio</u> Work with local media partners on programme explaining the response and what support people can expect and when. Make sure this is broadcast in priority areas. Try to arrange additional broadcasts. Can also commission production for 15min short packages on the same, including FAQs from the public and relevant answers. Short PSAs (30secs or less) can also be commissioned.</p> <p><u>Face-to-Face</u> Ensure volunteers and staff of SC partners are all able to deliver the same consistent</p>

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	<p>What will GON/SC partners be doing during the Monsoon?</p> <p>FAQs from affected communities.</p>	<p>information about shelter activities – consider how this information will be shared and disseminated by hubs and at district level. Face-to-Face is key for finding out what it is people want to know. They know it is going to rain, this happens every year, but do they have specific new information needs this year because of the earthquake? What are these? How to collect this information from the ground and ensure it informs the shelter response?</p> <p><u>Social Media</u> Pictures and captions featuring FAQs, key information, success stories and good/bad practice can be shared for posting to social media by partners.</p> <p><u>SMS/Phones</u> Any scope for SMS alerts for distributions? Geographically targeted SMS systems could support this.</p>
<p>Monsoon Phase Temporary Shelter Improvement + Preparation for Reconstruction Mid-June- August</p>	<p>What will the GoN and Shelter Cluster partners be doing during the monsoon?</p> <p>Will people be able to access additional services/materials during this period?</p> <p>What will GON/SC Agencies be doing after the Monsoon?</p> <p>What is the most useful thing people can do to prepare for permanent reconstruction?</p> <p>When you do start permanent reconstruction it's important to build back better. It is possible to build an earthquake safer home using traditional methods as long as you incorporate specific technical measures.</p> <p>What support can people expect and in what form? (keep updating this as required as the response evolves)</p>	<p><u>Print Materials</u> Improving temporary shelters</p> <p>Safe permanent construction</p> <p>How to engage with and what to expect from Shelter hubs.</p> <p><u>Radio</u> Work with local media partners on programme explaining the strategy and what people can expect from SC agencies over the monsoon period. Make sure this is broadcast in priority areas. Try to arrange additional broadcasts. Consider whether you may want two programmes one for the “monsoon response” and one to tee-up permanent reconstruction towards the anticipated end of the monsoon season. Can also commission production for 15min short packages on the same, including FAQs from the public and relevant answers. Again, make sure this is broadcast regularly in the priority areas.</p>

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		<p>Short PSAs (30secs or less) can also be commissioned and played more regularly on the same stations. Look at more engaging/emotional ways to promote safer housing, not just reading out safety messages. Soap Opera style PSAs for example.</p> <p>In past responses radio shows have also consisted of a panel of humanitarian agency staff being interviewed about their programmes, the challenges they see people facing and how people can overcome these challenges, with the radio show having a phone number listeners can text questions in on.</p> <p><u>Face-to-Face</u> Ensure volunteers and staff of SC agencies are all able to deliver the same consistent information about shelter activities. Also consider how the information they collect from the community (FAQs, complaints, concerns etc.) are fed back into the system and addressed.</p> <p><u>Social Media</u> Pictures and captions featuring FAQs, key information, success stories and good/bad practice can be shared for posting to social media by partners. Ideally in Nepali.</p> <p><u>SMS/Phones</u> Any scope for SMS alerts for distributions? Geographically targeted SMS systems could support this. Also possible for weather/storm/flood/landslide warnings.</p>
<p>Post-Monsoon Reconstruction Support September onwards</p>	<p>What level of support can people expect? What is the timescale? How can people engage with these activities?</p> <p>When you do start permanent reconstruction it's important to build back better. It is possible to build an earthquake safer home using traditional methods as long as you incorporate</p>	<p><u>Print Materials</u></p> <p>How to engage with reconstruction support.</p> <p>Safe permanent construction/ How to check your mason is doing a good job</p>

Phase	Key Information	Communications Activities
	<p>specific technical measures.</p> <p>Your family rely on the house you build for their safety – take care of your loved ones, ensure the house you build is safe</p> <p>Your home is an investment for the future – it only costs x% more to build a safe house.</p>	<p>Guidance for masons</p> <p><u>Radio</u> Work with local media partners on programme explaining the strategy and what people can expect from SC agencies over the monsoon period. Make sure this is broadcast in priority areas. Try to arrange additional broadcasts. Consider whether you may want two programmes one for the “monsoon response” and one to tee-up permanent reconstruction towards the anticipated end of the monsoon season. Can also commission production for 15min short packages on the same, including FAQs from the public and relevant answers. Again, make sure this is broadcast regularly in the priority areas. Short PSAs (30secs or less) can also be commissioned and played more regularly on the same stations – look at more engaging/emotional ways to promote safer housing, not just reading out safety messages. Soap Opera style PSAs for example.</p> <p><u>Face-to-Face</u> Ensure volunteers and staff of SC agencies are all able to deliver the same consistent information about reconstruction activities. Also consider how the information they collect from the community (FAQs, complaints, concerns etc.) are fed back into the system and addressed. This will be far more complex as you have larger numbers of more active people in the communities – work out ways of collating and responding to this information at local and national level.</p> <p><u>Social Media</u> Pictures and captions featuring FAQs, key information, success stories and good/bad practice can be shared for posting to social media by partners. Ideally in Nepali.</p>

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		<p>SMS/Phones As activities become more programmatic with a (potentially) deeper relationship with communities, the use of SMS or calls to contact people directly to inform them of and discuss activities, and for community members to contact Hubs directly for questions and feedback will grow.</p>

Note that some communication plans may have additional columns to separate communication activities based on target audience.

Ideas for Participative Approaches for Two-Way Communication

The learning cycle (developed by many, including Kolb 1975²) highlights the impact of participative approaches when communicating messages. In past disaster responses agencies have used a range of participative approaches including:

- 3 pile sorting for safer shelter (taking photos of good, ok and bad examples of construction in the district your agency is working in and running workshops in schools and communities)
- Community walking tours of buildings in the community discussing what has failed and stood up and why
- Workshops where communities sketch what they see as solutions to reduce their risk to a future hazard (e.g. timber banding for earthquakes on rural stone houses) and plot the measures the communities have come up with on a flipchart/tarpaulin graph of Effectiveness vs. Difficulty, and discuss in the group.
- Workshops with children to create songs or plays or dances related to key messages around build back safer.
- Community builds small scale models of elements of the houses and then shake or pushes them to destruction to see how things fail or how changing/adding different elements can make a difference.

Some of the above ideas can be found in the PASSA manual which can be found here:

<https://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95526/publications/305400-PASSA%20manual-EN-LR.pdf>

A short video of some of these ideas being used in a past disaster response by World Vision can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPPYCy5VJc>

A short video on the use of PASSA by Habitat for Humanity (the main user and trainer in PASSA) can be seen here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSCVJJZr2xY&list=UUoCL_xVzgSI1YQ9ZptAHffg&ind

The Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECBP) produced guide to 'Shelter Accountability Resources' can be found here:

<http://www.ecbproject.org/resource/18358>

Communicating with Communities Working Group

The Shelter Cluster has benefitted greatly from the support of the Communicating with Communities Working Group (CwC WG) - <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nepal/cwc-working-group> - on the planning and development of common communications materials. The CwC WG collects and stores a large number of common communications materials in the CwC WG dropbox -

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s1h9zispziowk0/AAC4wEIMwPKQQ73ZtzIVetExa?dl=0>. Further documents can also be found on the Shelter Cluster website - <http://sheltercluster.org/library/communicating-communities>.

² Kolb, David A.; Fry, Ronald E. (1975). "Towards an applied theory of experiential learning". In Cooper, Cary L. Theories of group processes. Wiley series on individuals, groups, and organizations. London; New York: Wiley. pp. 33–58