



Communicating with Communities
Good Practice Checklist

Based on UNHCR’s own and inter-agency experience, this checklist has been developed to support operations to identify areas which may require additional focus to strengthen Communication with Communities and meet the Core Actions outlined in [UNHCR’s Age Gender and Diversity Policy](#)

While each operational context will have its own unique set of challenges, this checklist outlines the foundational elements needed for systematic and sustained community engagement, and builds on good practice from a number of UNHCR operations:

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS:

- 1. Have you conducted an assessment of the communities’ communication practices – ideally through an information and communications needs assessment – to determine information needs, trusted sources, and preferred channels?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/information-ecosystems/>

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/information-and-communication-needs-tool/>

Communication and Transparency

At a minimum, all country-level protection and solutions strategies will detail the operation’s approach to communicating with women, men, girls, and boys of diverse backgrounds, through means that are appropriate and accessible to all groups in a community.

COORDINATION:

- 2. Do you have **clear internal roles/responsibilities** defined for:

- Who generates ‘messages’ and content to be shared with PoCs?
- Who is responsible for the management of and response to community feedback (including sensitive, confidential complaints)?
- Liaison with local media organizations, mobile network operators, and other stakeholders who can help you establish and strengthen communication channels with PoCs?

- 3. is there an established interagency forum for coordinating community communication initiatives? (Under the Refugee Coordination Model this will sit within/report to Protection Working Group).

- 4. Have clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been established at inter-agency level which clearly indicate agreed commitments, timeframe and follow-up for referred feedback/complaints (this should complement and not duplicate existing established referral pathways)?

- 5. Are local media, mobile network operators, and other relevant local stakeholders playing an active role in CwC coordination structures?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-steps-to-setting-up-an-effective-feedback-mechanism/>

PROVIDE FACTUAL, OBJECTIVE & ACTIONABLE INFORMATION

- 6. Have you defined and produced the key information to be shared for each sector (based on the information gaps highlighted through the assessment process)?

- 7. Is this information proactively shared with field colleagues and partners – with key concepts explained?

- 8. Have you determined how and when this information will be updated to keep it relevant to the communities’ evolving information needs, based on feedback received?



PROMOTE INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE CHANNELS

- 9. Have you established/strengthened two-way communication channels that target all groups within your community (based on the preferences expressed during assessments)?
- 10. Are you regularly soliciting feedback from the community on effectiveness of these channels (this should include two-way information sharing and the confidence community members have to voice a concern/raise a complaint)?
- 11. Are you monitoring how information is being cascaded within the community (i.e. is information being passed onwards, or are there 'gate-keepers')?
- 12. Have you identified and engaged relevant external stakeholders (e.g. Mobile Network Operators/local media) who can help you diversify the communication channels you establish/strengthen?
- 13. Have you developed contingency channels for maintaining two-way information should the preferred channels fail?
- 14. Have you worked with specific groups within the community - such as the youth, disabled groups, women's associations - to brainstorm solutions which would overcome information and communication challenges?
- 15. Have you identified existing activities/initiatives that can be leveraged to support communications activities (including refugee-led activities, such as radio-groups/musicians etc)?

Feedback and Response
At a minimum, all UNHCR operations will establish and promote feedback and response systems, including for confidential complaints.

BE OPEN TO LISTENING

- 16. Is there an opportunity for 'response' and feedback from communities when 'outbound' information is shared – even for large scale initiatives (for example, can communities reply to SMSs they receive)?
- 17. Have you established platforms for dialogue and debate (i.e. town hall meetings or online discussions)?

Further resources:
<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-considerations-for-sms/>

RUMOR MANAGEMENT

- 18. Are you monitoring rumors and mis-information being shared within the community?
- 19. Are you updating the information you share with communities in order to respond to and correct rumors and misinformation?
- 20. Have you provided opportunities for communities to discuss and verify information to help devalue rumors?

Further resources:
<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20170613105104-5v7pb>

RESOURCES

- 21. Have you identified the resourcing requirements for your CwC initiatives (this may include Direct Implementation budget, human resourcing, external expertise etc.)?
- 22. Have you considered the sustainability/exit strategy for current CwC initiatives?

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you've identified 'blanks' in this checklist, please visit the Communicating with Communities micro-site on the UNHCR Innovation Service's website for further information, tools and guidance: <http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/communicating-with-communities/>

If you have further questions or need additional support please contact UNHCR Innovation Service: innovation@unhcr.org