

## 3 COMMUNICATION IN POST-DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION

### Guiding Principles for Communication in Reconstruction

- Effective communication in a reconstruction project is not about what governments and project managers “say,” but what beneficiaries “hear.”
- Two-way information flow builds trust, consensus, and active participation, key factors for positive outcomes in development programs, and limits the potential for setbacks and misunderstandings.
- An understanding of people’s perceptions is crucial to designing a communications strategy since these perceptions can dominate behavior, whether or not it seems rational to an outsider.
- The cultural and social context affects communications. Inadequate or improper understanding of this context can create risks to project implementation.
- The largest benefits from communication are realized when it is made an integral part of a development or reconstruction project from the first day.
- Communication experts should be at the table when decisions about reconstruction are made, giving them access to the information they will need to develop the external messages that support the desired outcomes.
- The communication campaign is always a work in progress that will need to be adapted as additional input is received from stakeholders and results on the ground are monitored and evaluated.

### Introduction

The task of rebuilding homes and communities is complex, challenging, and fraught with potential pitfalls. In post-disaster situations the status quo shifts constantly, a challenge that makes strategic communication a crucial element in the response and reconstruction environment. Two-way information flow facilitates recovery and limits the potential for setbacks and misunderstandings. Good communication also helps ensure understanding and buy-in from governments, agencies involved in reconstruction, and the affected population.

The messages that governments and project managers send out to the affected community about reconstruction have less influence over how the community behaves than the messages these communities receive, whether from government or other sources. In other words, if project leaders and communication specialists do not engage stakeholders in the process, they will not be able to formulate messages that will be understood by the people they want to help and the results may be unpredictable.

Strategic communication builds trust, consensus, and active participation, key factors for positive outcomes in development programs. It promotes credibility, transparency, legitimacy, and ownership for the project and ensures that the right messages are reaching all relevant stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> Particularly in a post-disaster situation, good communication is the foundation for acceptance, sustainability, and mutual understanding when rebuilding people’s lives. This chapter shows why communication should be initiated as early as possible in reconstruction projects and provides project managers, partner organizations, and governments with tools and guidelines for development and carrying out a successful communications strategy. The communications strategy used after the 2005 North Pakistan earthquake is used to illustrate many of the points made in the chapter.

### This Chapter Is Especially Useful For:

- Policy makers
- Lead disaster agency
- Communications specialists

1. World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006, *Hazards of Nature, Risks to Development*, (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 116, [http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/naturaldisasters/docs/natural\\_disasters\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/naturaldisasters/docs/natural_disasters_evaluation.pdf).

## Key Terminology

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communication</b> encompasses all forms of human interactions, from the interpersonal to the mediated, and from the one-way linear flow to the two-way dialogic process. <sup>2</sup> For development purposes, communication components include (1) external communication, (2) media relations, (3) grassroots communication, (4) institutional coordination, (5) capacity building, (6) community development, and (7) coordination with program implementation units.
<b>Types of communication assessments</b>	<b>A Communication-Based Assessment (CBA)</b> is an assessment in any sector that uses a variety of communication techniques to detect political risks, contextual issues, and perceptions in that sector that are not easily recognized by a normal assessment. The World Bank emphasizes the need for a CBA at the beginning of the project cycle. Although a CBA can be performed at any stage of the project, its value is highest when conducted early. A CBA uses two-way communication techniques (dialogue, focus groups, open questions, discussion groups) and generally provides qualitative findings. It takes about two weeks to conduct.  <b>A Communication Needs Assessment (CNA)</b> is carried out to analyze the communication sector and understand its capacity and common practices. It focuses only on the media environment, infrastructure, communication policies, capacities, gaps, information flow, and networks. A CNA is part of a CBA.

## Key Decisions

1. **Government** should decide on the lead agency to develop and coordinate the post-disaster communications strategy and assign staff to carry it out. Other **public agencies** and **levels of government** may also designate focal points for communications activities.
2. The **lead communications agency** should decide with the **lead disaster agency** whether there is a need for technical assistance or institutional strengthening in communications, how the communications strategy will be financed, and whether and how to mobilize additional resources.
3. The **lead communications agency** should decide with the **lead disaster agency** whether communications should be included as an element of the initial post-disaster assessment.
4. The **lead communications agency** should decide what assessments will be conducted before defining the communications strategy.
5. The **lead communications agency** should confer with **key stakeholders** and the **local private communications sector** to agree on the role of the community, local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector in defining and carrying out the communications strategy.
6. **Agencies involved in reconstruction** and **other key stakeholders** should agree on the outcomes that are being sought from the community (disaster risk reduction [DRR], changes in construction practices, community participation, etc.) and on the messages and forms of communications that should be used.
7. The **lead communications agency** should collaborate with **agencies involved in reconstruction** and **other stakeholders** to design the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for the project communications strategy and agree on feedback mechanisms to be used during reconstruction.

## Technical Issues

### One-Way versus Two-Way Communication

Although the value of communication in development projects is widely recognized, it remains an underutilized tool that often focuses too narrowly on informing people rather than communicating with them.<sup>3</sup>

Two divergent conceptions of communication predominate in the field.

- One-way communication: the practice of disseminating information. Messages are put out to inform recipients about the reconstruction process.
- Two-way communication: a model that allows project managers, governments, and all other stakeholders to communicate with each other about the reconstruction process.

2. Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 8, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/DevelopmentCommSourcebook.pdf>.

3. Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 8, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/DevelopmentCommSourcebook.pdf>.

These may seem to be opposing approaches, but they're not. In post-disaster situations, the need for information dissemination and dialogue are both pressing. Project managers and government officials should agree as early as possible on a communications strategy that includes—as appropriate to the communications culture of the location—both one-way and two-way elements.

Communication should also be viewed as contributing to other goals of the reconstruction program, including transparency, accountability, good governance, community participation, consensus, and trust-building and as mitigating risks, such as corruption, excess bureaucracy, and political and reputational risks for agencies such as the World Bank and government.<sup>4</sup> The case study on the Nation of the Cree, below, demonstrates how inadequate communications can delay a development project.

## Communication Capacity within Government

Communications are used in various ways by government and the responsibility for communications may be found in various locations within the bureaucracy. The most visible locus for communications may be the public relations function of the Office of the President. Effective post-disaster communications is less about public relations and more about social communications; that is, meant not to simply publicize or create impressions, but to enlist certain groups to cooperate or change behavior. This distinction should be kept in mind when the lead communications agency is designated.

Ideally, the lead communications agency will have the internal expertise to coordinate all communication activities, including assessment, strategy definition, and implementation. However, assistance may be needed. Resource can include staff seconded from international organizations, or experts hired externally. The World Bank has development communication specialists who can help government conduct the CBA or CNA and define the communications strategy.

Communication experts should be part of the reconstruction decision-making process. They should develop protocols for communication with the affected population and should have access to the information that will allow them to develop the external messages that will support the desired outcomes.

The lead communications agency may also have a role in facilitating information flow within government and among government, donors, and other agencies involved in recovery and reconstruction. By developing protocols for government communication with partners and maintaining institutional relationships, the agency can help improve the consistency among institutions of both the messages to the affected community and the actual implementation on the ground.

It is important that government view the communication campaign as a work in progress that will need to be adapted as feedback is received from stakeholders and results are analyzed. The lead community agency should establish a knowledge-management system to process this feedback, which is then used to support timely corrective actions being taken on the ground.

## Case Study: 2005 North Pakistan Earthquake, Pakistan

### Assessing the Cultural Context before Defining Communications Strategy

Communities affected by the North Pakistan earthquake were spread out over 20,000 sq. km. of mountainous and rough terrain. Most communication infrastructure, including radio and television, was damaged or destroyed. Within weeks, the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and the donor community realized that a large communication effort was necessary to start an efficient owner-driven rural housing reconstruction project. A CBA was conducted by ERRA with support from a communication specialist working with the World Bank-administered Water and Sanitation Program in India. The CBA concluded that people would need to be motivated to rebuild their lives and would have to be sensitized to new and safer methods of building homes in this disaster-prone area. Survivors were rooted in a very traditional and—from an outsider's point of view—conservative lifestyle. Traumatized by high levels of mortality and destruction, people feared that their value system was also threatened. The reconstruction strategy, therefore, had to address prejudices and fears over “new ways.”

*Source:* Vandana Mehra, M. Waqas Hanif, and Moncef Bouhafa, 2008, “Strategic Communications and ERRA: Overall Approach,” (Presentation, February 28, 2008) and conversation with Vandana Mehra, May 2009.



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4. Nobuya Inagaki, 2007, “Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development. Recent Trends in Empirical Research,” (working paper No. 120, Washington, DC: World Bank), [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607\\_20070810123306/Rendered/PDF/405430Communic18082137167101PUBLIC1.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607_20070810123306/Rendered/PDF/405430Communic18082137167101PUBLIC1.pdf); and Larry Hass, Leonardo Mazzei, and Donal O’Leary, 2007, “Setting Standards for Communication and Governance. The Example of Infrastructure,” (working paper, No. 121, Washington, DC: World Bank), [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000011823\\_20070810125218/Rendered/PDF/405620Setting018082137169501PUBLIC1.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000011823_20070810125218/Rendered/PDF/405620Setting018082137169501PUBLIC1.pdf).

## Communication-Based Assessments

People will likely be affected by the disaster in many ways: lost homes; injured or dead family members, neighbors, and friends; destroyed livelihoods; food-insecurity and suffering from mental and physical health problems. These experiences will affect people's needs, opinions, and perceptions, which in turn will affect their ability to participate in the programs that will help them recover.

A CBA is used to identify knowledge, perceptions, fears, and expectations of main stakeholders, and contextual and situational knowledge, much of which cannot be easily detected with other forms of assessment. An understanding of stakeholders' perceptions is crucial to designing a communications strategy since these perceptions can dominate behavior, whether it seems rational to an outsider, or not. A CBA captures this qualitative information and can help government and other agencies tailor the communications strategy for the reconstruction program. But more than that, it also provides knowledge that can be used to improve the design of reconstruction projects. Using this type of information helps ensure broader impact and sustainability of interventions and helps mitigate political and reputational risks. See  Annex 2, Culture and Other Contextual Factors in Communication.

The critical areas to analyze and understand in order to develop an effective communications strategy are listed briefly in the following table. For detailed instructions on conducting a CBA, see  Annex 1, How to Do It: Conducting a Communication-Based Assessment.<sup>5</sup>

Area to analyze	Considerations
Political risk, challenges, and opportunities	Includes such issues as perceptions of government's disaster response and plans, and perceptions of how government and other service providers have performed since the disaster
Stakeholder analysis	Inventory and analysis of stakeholders who will be directly and indirectly affected by the reconstruction program
Media, communications channels, and local capacity <sup>6</sup>	Analyzes the range of ways groups communicate formally with one another in the society being assessed, as well as issues related to local capability and acceptability of media institutions
Social and participatory communication	Provides an understanding of informal systems and community communications practices

**Who should conduct the assessment?** A CBA can be conducted by communication specialists within the lead agency, outside consultants (hired locally or internationally), or qualified members of a donor project team. National experts with communications experience in prior emergencies may be available, even if they are no longer acting in an official capacity.

**Timing the assessment.** World Bank research shows clearly that the largest benefit of strategic communication is gained when communication is considered an integral part of the project or program from its inception.<sup>7</sup> Ideally, a CBA is conducted as an integral part of the initial multi-sector damage and loss assessment. When the CBA is conducted at a later stage or separately from the initial assessment, governments and project managers should be prepared to make revisions later so that the recommendations of communication specialists can be implemented. Various assessment methodologies are described in  Chapter 2, Assessing Damage and Setting Reconstruction Policy.

Time pressure will be great and key actors may consider communications a peripheral concern. Be aware that a focus on speed and physical damage can be costly if perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, and expectations are not taken into account.

## Designing the Communications Strategy

Once the CBA is completed, the objectives of a communications strategy should be formulated. The findings of the CBA may produce a numerous objectives that need to be pursued to achieve the project goals. However, they might not all need to be pursued at the same time.

The communications strategy for a program or project should answer the following questions: Which audiences need to be reached and which stakeholders need to be engaged? What is

5. Paul Mitchell and Karla Chaman-Ruiz, 2007, "Communication-Based Assessment for Bank Operations," Working Paper No. 119 (Washington, DC: World Bank), pp. 20-30, [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607\\_20070810124552/Rendered/PDF/405610Communic18082137165701PUBLIC1.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607_20070810124552/Rendered/PDF/405610Communic18082137165701PUBLIC1.pdf).

6. This element of the assessment is the CNA mentioned in the key definitions.

7. Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication*, (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 9, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/DevelopmentCommSourcebook.pdf>.

the required behavior change? What messages are appropriate? Which channels/tools of communication will be most effective? Over what time frame will implementation take place? How will implementation of the communication strategy be monitored and evaluated? Implementation includes all activities necessary to engage stakeholders (for example, design, production, and distribution of communication materials and training and hiring of staff).<sup>8</sup>

**Who should design the strategy?** The communication capacity of the lead communications agency needs to be evaluated and, if necessary, complemented by hiring staff or acquiring additional services, whether of outside consultants or staff on secondment from other agencies. An experienced strategic communication specialist should draft and design the strategy in cooperation with project managers and local counterparts with experience in the disaster field. It is advisable that the communication specialists who conducted the assessment be involved in designing the strategy.

Throughout the design phase, the lead communications agency should consult closely with communities to determine whether the strategy is addressing the right audiences and stakeholders with the right messages. The steps and associated activities and tools in the design of the communications strategy are shown in the following table.

Throughout the design phase, the lead agency should consult closely with communities to determine whether the strategy is addressing the right audiences and stakeholders with the right messages. The basic steps in designing the communications strategy are the following.

- Define and formulate the objectives (SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) and then transform those objectives into outcomes.
- Define primary and secondary stakeholders/audiences.
- Evaluate whether the changes sought are related to awareness, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, mobilization, collaboration, or mediation. See  Chapter 16, Training Requirements in Reconstruction, to understand the importance of communications in builder training programs.
- Define whether the communication approaches/tactics are linear, interactive, or both.
- Select the appropriate media from among those available.
- Design key content/message and determine the most effective way to package it.
- Define realistic results for the strategy and develop a means to monitor and evaluate progress toward their achievement.

**Implementing the communications strategy.** A Communications Action Plan (CAP) guides the implementation of the communications strategy. The CAP covers institutional coordination, media relations, grassroots communication, capacity building, external relations, and coordination with program implementation units (environmental, resettlement unit, etc.). The CAP details the production, training, hiring, budgeting, and timing of all initiatives. The nature of a post-disaster intervention will lead to overlaps and doubling of messages. Lessons learned show that too much communication is better than too little. However, retracting or correcting information can be difficult. “Silence” promotes rumors that can be exploited for political or economic reasons, which can lower community participation levels. The  case study, below, on three earthquakes in Iran shows how a carefully planned community-based communications program overcame public unrest over the perceived lack of information from government.

A system to collect feedback should be implemented as part of the plan. Messaging, audiences, and tools will have to be adapted according to feedback from beneficiaries and implementing agencies. Agencies should also share the feedback they are getting. In the case of the Pakistan earthquake, the need for internal communication was quickly recognized, and a meeting schedule, knowledge management cells, and workshops were held to promote unity and synergies among all partners.

**Who should implement the strategy?** Depending on the institutional situation, a wide set of actors may be involved in implementing the communications strategy and tasks should be distributed to take advantage of the capabilities of various actors while being cost effective. The lead communications agency will be in charge of the overall approach and budget for the campaign. This agency is likely to define scopes of work for any outside services hired and to oversee procurement.

*When task managers were asked what can be done to increase ownership of disaster prevention and mitigation components in natural disaster-related projects, they mentioned “Develop good communication strategies” more often than any other action.*

World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006, Hazards of Nature, Risks to Development.

8. Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 129, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/DevelopmentCommSourcebook.pdf>.

## The Communications Action Plan for the 2005 North Pakistan earthquake<sup>9</sup>

Activity	Details of approach
1. Review and confirm objectives	Motivate and make people aware of available assistance including eligibility Ensure that people build better/earthquake resistant houses Ensure that people know about training and information tools to qualify for assistance
2. Review and confirm primary and secondary audiences	Affected population, households
3. Activities and Approaches <i>What activities are needed (media production, message design, air time booking, translation, etc.)</i>	Advertisement in print media and electronic media Media coverage Media PR Road shows (live programs in affected areas) Billboards, posters, brochures (multilingual) Social mobilization with events at mosques, etc Helpline, website Information kiosks Grievance redress mechanism (helpline numbers -- an excellent two-way communication tool with beneficiaries providing valuable feedback, resulting in resolution turnaround within a week) Village reconstruction committees Workshops and seminars
4. Resources needed (human and material) <i>Experts in audiovisual design and production (experts in training, related materials, etc.)</i>	Post-Earthquake Public Information Campaign: US\$1.8 million (little more than 1% of the housing reconstruction total budget (US\$1.4 billion) as of November 2007 WSP/World Bank communication specialist provided client support to kick start a public information campaign (including hiring firm for design and dissemination) The World Bank communication specialist worked with counterparts of the ERRA the central institution that was tasked with the response Outsourcing versus capacity building. Due to limited time (approaching winter and thousands still without shelter) the implementing agency hired skilled communication staff internally A knowledge management unit was established after about one year, headed by a senior manager and 5-6 researchers and writers Training sessions were held for government communications staff in media relations, interviews, case studies, presentation, and community participation
5. Party responsible (action promoter) <i>Who is the source and initiator for the action?</i>	ERRA established by the Pakistani government
6. Time frame <i>Sequence and time needed for each activity</i>	Phase 1: General messages on policy and rural housing program Phase 2: Motivate and mobilize people to access grants by rebuilding in better ways Phase 3: Advanced messages on training for safe reconstruction and culturally sensitive behavior change
7. Expected results from strategy	Affected Population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New and safer houses</li> <li>■ Adoption of new building behavior</li> <li>■ Feeling informed of reconstruction project</li> <li>■ Developing ownership</li> </ul> Government, partners, donors, etc.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Functioning communication protocol</li> <li>■ Conducting and ongoing communication campaign to support the flagship rural housing program</li> </ul>

9. Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (Washington, DC: World Bank), pp. 129-134, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/DevelopmentCommSourcebook.pdf>.



Depending on the scope of the disaster, the lead communications agency might delegate the distribution of specific messages to local organizations. For example, implementation at the grassroots level could be done by local NGOs partnering with local government or by an advertising agency hired to produce and distribute communications material in specific areas. Communities might be asked to select representatives or form committees that will function as intermediaries with their peers. Religious or tribal leaders may agree to distribute messages in meetings and through social networks.

## Case Study: 2005 North Pakistan Earthquake, Pakistan

### Ad Hoc Communications Precede a Communications Action Plan

In the aftermath of the devastating 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, ERRA and international donors quickly realized the immediate need for communicating with the surviving population, but also recognized that there was little time for developing a proper plan. The level of destruction and the difficult terrain made it hard to disseminate information and to engage with beneficiaries. The lack of information flow in both directions led people to feel frustrated over a perceived slowness in the response.

To bridge this gap, the Pakistani military used helicopters to reach remote areas to distribute information to beneficiaries and to assist with the initial needs assessment. Later, local NGOs partnered with the firm that was hired by ERRA to produce and disseminate information and assisted with implementation at the grassroots level. When radio and television were restored, the firm implemented all mass media aspects of the campaign. Culturally acceptable “heroes” were developed for educational radio shows. These characters were immensely popular. For example, a wise mason was created for posters, and he became a lead figure for “correct construction.” In the early days of the campaign, the radio show addressed concerns of beneficiaries, expressed either to the local authorities or via a help line set up to answer questions.

This case demonstrates how, in some cases, the urgency of a situation does not permit development of a fully sequenced communication action plan. Sometimes initiatives have to be implemented ad hoc, while an actual plan (in this case, mainly the hiring of an advertising firm) is still being developed.

Source: Vandana Mehra, World Bank, 2009, personal conversation.

## Human Resources and Professional Services

One of the most challenging tasks in a post-disaster response is finding qualified staff and support services fast enough. The procurement process recommended for long-term development initiatives might need to be adapted to the post-disaster conditions. Single-source selection and direct purchase of services and personnel might be the only viable option, particularly in the beginning of the project. However, other procurement methods can be introduced at later stages in the communications action plan, when there is more time. Procurement procedures for World Bank projects can be found online and are summarized in  Chapter 23, Procurement in World Bank Reconstruction Projects.<sup>10</sup>

Hiring consultants will be one of the first and most pressing tasks. The terms of references (TOR) must be specific to the disaster and the requirements of the project. Three main guiding principles should apply: (1) the TORs should contain sufficient background information on the project to enable consultants to present responsive proposals, (2) the scope of work should be consistent with the available budget, and (3) the TORs should take into account the organization of the client implementing the communication component and its level of technical expertise and institutional strength.<sup>11</sup> This chapter provides guidance for developing the scope of work.

The very nature of a post-disaster communication project will require personnel to show a high degree of flexibility and willingness to adapt to demanding circumstances. More than in non-disaster projects, the communication specialist to be hired should understand crisis communications, political risk management, and internal communications, and should have coordination skills. Other beneficial skills include stakeholder mapping and engagement, communications for operations, media management, spokesperson/presentation skills, and donor engagement.<sup>12</sup>

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E process should be ongoing and should mirror the project cycle. Communications outputs are best measured if there are constant feedback channels that include quantitative and qualitative indicators. For example, it is important not only to measure how many radio spots have been aired, but whether stakeholders have changed behavior and adopted new technologies. Project managers and government authorities should also pay attention to whether the attitudes, perceptions, and

10. World Bank, 2005, *A Toolkit for Procurement of Communication Activities in World Bank Financed Projects* (Washington, DC: World Bank), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/toolkitENfinal.pdf>.
11. World Bank, 2005, *A Toolkit for Procurement of Communication Activities in World Bank Financed Projects* (Washington, DC: World Bank), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/toolkitENfinal.pdf>.
12. Samples of TORs and RFPs can be found on World Bank, 2005, *A Toolkit for Procurement of Communication Activities in World Bank Financed Projects* (Washington, DC: World Bank), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/toolkitENfinal.pdf>.



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fears that were examined during the assessment have been successfully addressed in the campaign. Practitioners should establish ways to receive periodic feedback from stakeholders to be responsive to the highly contextual nature of the initiative. Often, the lead disaster response agency does not have the capacity to analyze the information it receives. It is important to set up an internal system of information sharing, ranging from an IT system to regular information exchange meetings that allow for vertical and horizontal flow of input. This will help making necessary and meaningful changes to the project and the communications strategy at an early stage and throughout the project cycle.

### **Case Study: 2005 North Pakistan Earthquake, Pakistan Using Beneficiary Feedback for Monitoring and Evaluation**

The challenging environment created by the 2005 North Pakistan earthquake and the need for fast dissemination of information made it difficult to develop complex standards and benchmarks for the evaluation process. However, ERRA realized that it was

important to monitor feedback to detect information gaps and to adapt its information campaign. ERRA focused on analyzing calls it received at its Islamabad offices from the 24-hour help lines that had been established all over the affected area. The feedback, questions, and comments people provided helped ERRA determine the level of understanding on the side of beneficiaries and, indirectly, whether the information campaign and stakeholder engagement had been effective. The communication team at ERRA updated its Web site and other information material accordingly. The results were shared with program managers who were able to address the issues raised by callers. Very often a query or concern that was voiced by several people would be addressed through a very popular interactive radio show. ERRA also set up an internal knowledge management mechanism that allowed for easy access to information at all administrative levels.

*Source:* Raja Rehan Arshad, 2008, "Lessons and Experiences from Disaster Recovery in Pakistan," (presentation for "Workshop on Consultations and Strategic Communications in Water and Sanitation Sector in East and South Asia," Bangkok, March 31-April 7, 2008).

## **Risks and Challenges**

- Missing the full picture in conducting the damage and loss assessment by asking only quantifiable questions and using only one-way communication.
- Government focuses on media relations and overlooks the social aspects of communication.
- Leaving post-disaster communications to a central disaster agency that lacks the capacity and skill to design and execute the communications strategy.
- Project teams believe that they know what the affected population wants without asking, and design reconstruction projects undesirable the affected population.
- Assuming that if the basic goal of a reconstruction program (rebuilding homes) is widely accepted, then all other aspects of the project (management, assistance policies, intended behavior change, and reconstruction approach) are widely accepted as well.
- Not understanding the context and contextual factors and how they affect reconstruction (for example, language barriers, perceptions of corruption, ability of religious groups to work together).
- Attempting to implement a communications strategy inconsistent with normal communications culture (for example, highly dialogue-driven in a country with a history of top-down communication).
- Underfunding communication activities.

## Recommendations

1. See communications in housing reconstruction as a tool that can improve stakeholder participation and ultimately the suitability of the outcomes.
2. At the same time, realize that two-way communication (dialogue) is not only about achieving the project's objectives but also about giving voice and dignity to vulnerable and marginalized people.
3. Don't allow the urgency to implement to shortchange communications.
4. Adopt a multi-track, dialogue-driven communications strategy, which allows beneficiaries to provide input, ideas, and feedback, rather than employing a one-way (information dissemination) approach.
5. In developing the communications strategy, focus first on the messages that will be effective with people, before selecting media.
6. Adapt communication tools to the targeted audience and its preferred and trusted ways of communicating.
7. Tailor the communications strategy to reflect contextual variables.
8. Incorporate communications as early as possible in the process and sustain it throughout the project cycle. Be willing to redefine and adapt the strategy during the project as results are realized.
9. Ensure that communications within government and with other funders is open and results in a unified message to the affected population.
10. Incorporate feedback about the effectiveness of the communications strategy in a timely manner to improve reconstruction outcomes.

## Case Studies

### 2003 Bam Earthquake, 2005 Zarand Earthquake, and 2006 Lorestan Earthquake, Iran Community-Based Information Management and Communication

In the aftermath of the 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, there was a need for an active exchange of information and viewpoints between the affected communities and local authorities. To that end, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported a community-based information management and communications initiative. This initiative became particularly important after people's perception of a lack of information on the distribution of relief items provoked demonstrations in front of public offices early in 2004 in Bam. The aim of the communications initiative was to empower the affected communities through participation and enhanced access to information on recovery and reconstruction using information and communication technologies (ICT). Information on government policies and activities, updated damage reports, entitlements, land status, and rehabilitation schemes was made available, using



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an information Web site in Persian, print and electronic information products, and ICT-based kiosks and information boards located throughout the affected areas. The project produced and published a biweekly newsletter with the help of local volunteers trained as journalists (all of whom have become professional journalists in the area). The Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation supported the initiative, which was replicated later following the Zarand (2005) and Lorestan (2006) earthquakes, with initial support from the UNDP and subsequent support from the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Revolution. Activities in these cases also included information centers and notice boards, and distribution of such products as a pamphlet on “dos” and “don'ts” before, during, and after earthquakes.

Source: Victoria Kianpour, UNDP Iran, 2009, personal communication, <http://www.undp.org.ir/>.

## 2002 Hydro-Quebec vs. Nation of the Cree, Canada

### The Cost of Not Communicating

In the early 1990s, after years of disagreement and diverging views over one of the world's largest energy infrastructure programs, the indigenous Cree population of Northern Quebec forced Hydro-Quebec, a leading company in the energy sector, to halt construction all together. According to John Paul Murdoch, Legal Counsel of the Cree Nation, Hydro-Quebec faced construction delays of almost 20 years and had to spend an additional US\$268 million to adequately address communication gaps, concerns over mercury pollution, and potential loss of livelihoods to the Cree. Murdoch told an audience at a World Bank Energy Week in 2005 that the failure to communicate properly had become costly for the company. In 2002, Hydro-Quebec and the Cree Nation entered a "New Relationship Agreement" that addresses concerns over safety, economic and social benefits, and a mechanism for a permanent standing liaison committee, paving the way for the project to proceed.

*Sources:* Paolo Mefalopulos, 2008, *Development Communication Sourcebook, Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 136; and John Paul Murdoch, "The Value of Communications" (conference presentation, World Bank, March 14, 2005), [http://irispublic.worldbank.org/85257559006C22E9/All+Documents/85257559006C22E985256FFF007255D2/\\$File/Mafia\\_EW05.pdf](http://irispublic.worldbank.org/85257559006C22E9/All+Documents/85257559006C22E985256FFF007255D2/$File/Mafia_EW05.pdf).

## Resources

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World Bank. 2005. "A Toolkit for Procurement of Communication Activities in World Bank Financed Projects." Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/toolkitENfinal.pdf>.

## Key Organizations with Best Practices and Research

Development Communications Evidence Research Network. "Impact of Communications in Development." <http://www.dcern.org/>.

World Bank. "Development Communication." <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/0,,contentMDK:21460410~menuPK:490442~pagePK:34000187~piPK:34000160~theSitePK:423815,00.html>.

## How to Do It: Conducting a Communication-Based Assessment

A Communications-Based Assessment (CBA) for a post-disaster housing reconstruction project will take about two weeks and should be conducted either before or in parallel with other early assessments. Some information relevant to the reconstruction process may be readily available.

To avoid duplicating efforts, cooperate closely with the local and international relief community and government agencies (not only groups working in the shelter field). When the United Nations cluster system has been activated, the Humanitarian Information Centre (<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org>) will be both a source of information and a platform for sharing information that is collected.

The assessment should identify and analyze all relevant aspects of the social context. An open-minded approach at the beginning of the assessment is crucial for grasping the complexity of the entire situation. 🏠 Annex 2, Culture and Other Contextual Factors in Communication, suggests social factors that form part of the context in which communications takes place, and may be important to consider.<sup>1</sup>

The critical areas that must be analyzed and understood to develop an effective communications strategy and use communications to improve the project design include the following.<sup>2</sup>

### Scope of a Communications-Based Assessment

Topic	Issues to analyze
Political risk, challenges, and opportunities	<p>This includes such issues as perceptions of government’s disaster response and plans, perceptions of how government and other service providers have performed since the disaster, mechanisms used by government to communicate with stakeholders in general and since the disaster, and key knowledge gaps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Challenges and risks can include the geography of the affected areas, high mortality, loss of livelihood, large displacement, poverty, resistance to behavior change (introducing new and unknown forms of building techniques), necessity to resettle, unclear land rights, and complex owner-tenant relations.</li> <li>■ Obstacles can include real and perceived corruption and mismanagement, lack of income opportunities, lack of credible communication channels, absence of community representatives, non-existing local fiscal capacity for distribution, lack of building material, and lack of know-how for new techniques.</li> <li>■ Opportunities can arise from the crisis. In disaster-prone environments, beneficiaries might be open to new technologies and improved building approaches.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder analysis <sup>3</sup>	<p>For the communications strategy, an analysis is needed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ primary stakeholders and audiences (the affected population, household and grassroots representatives, government officials, civil servants, national and international media, civil society, academic institutions, professional groups, religious groups, business community, NGOs, partner organizations, donors);</li> <li>■ “hidden” or secondary stakeholders (less-affected non-beneficiaries who might feel overlooked during the project and might act as spoilers);</li> <li>■ vulnerable groups (female-headed households, orphans, disabled, chronically ill, the extremely poor, and socially marginalized);</li> <li>■ public opinion leaders or allies (societies listen best to their own leaders);</li> <li>■ stakeholder perceptions, expectations, attitudes;</li> <li>■ socially relevant topics or controversies related to the reconstruction project (relocation, land rights issues, service delivery in new neighborhood, social/tribal/religious fabric of project area, environmental issues, cultural heritage, customs, and livelihoods); and</li> <li>■ past and ongoing stakeholder behavior in similar situations or projects.</li> </ul>

Topic	Issues to analyze
Media, communications channels, and local capacity <sup>4</sup>	<p>This element of the CBA should encompass the range of ways one group communicates with another in the society being assessed, as well as issues related to local capability and acceptability of each, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ communication channels that stakeholders normally use to receive and disseminate information;</li> <li>■ the degree of trust in each channel;</li> <li>■ the availability of channels or limitations since the emergency;</li> <li>■ looking beyond mass media at alternative communications channels (for example, SMS and social media);</li> <li>■ options for face-to-face communication (particularly for affected population with trust issues and to communicate behavior change messages, for example DRR, environment issues, and new building techniques);</li> <li>■ capability and experience of media organizations and consultants, including any involved in social communications, social marketing, market research, and public relations;</li> <li>■ The nature of the relationship between government and the various media; and</li> <li>■ communications channel, including electronic (TV, radio), road shows (live programs), advertising (billboards, posters, brochures, leaflets), <i>shuras</i>, ceremonial and cultural events, media coverage, and mobile phones (text messaging).</li> </ul>
Social and participatory communication	<p>Not all communications media are formally organized, and an understanding of informal systems and community communications practices is an important element of the assessment. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ existing social communication mechanisms (such as schools, churches, markets, and social interactions);</li> <li>■ networks (such as religious, tribal, neighborhood, professional, and school);</li> <li>■ traditional forms of dialogue (such as meetings with elders, religious leaders);</li> <li>■ formal and informal ways of designating community leaders and representatives;</li> <li>■ decision-making mechanisms at the community level (are they producing communication products that can be used in a communications program?);</li> <li>■ beneficiary consultation mechanisms or involvement in development initiatives (current, past, in other areas during the post-disaster phase);</li> <li>■ prior initiatives to identify interests of or conflicts between community and/or subgroups; existing joint projects or plans of the community; and</li> <li>■ familiarity with help lines, toll-free alert numbers (to report corruption, misuse, problems).</li> </ul>

## Expertise Required

A CBA can be conducted by communication specialists within the lead agency, outside consultants (hired locally or internationally), or qualified members of a donor project team. National experts with communications experience in prior emergencies may be available, even if they are no longer acting in an official capacity.

### Annex 1 Endnotes

1. See  Annex 2, Culture and Other Contextual Factors in Communication.
2. Paul Mitchell and Karla Chaman-Ruiz, 2007, "Communication-Based Assessment for Bank Operations," World Bank Working Paper No. 119 (Washington, DC: World Bank), pp. 20-30, [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607\\_20070810124552/Rendered/PDF/405610Communic18082137165701PUBLIC1.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607_20070810124552/Rendered/PDF/405610Communic18082137165701PUBLIC1.pdf).
3. Stakeholder analysis is also discussed in  Chapter 12, Community Organizing and Participation.
4. This element of the assessment is the CNA mentioned in the Key Definitions section earlier in this chapter.

## Culture and Other Contextual Factors in Communication

Misunderstanding the social and cultural context can create risks in reconstruction. This misunderstanding may cause unintended consequences or make implementation more difficult. As a result, the social and cultural factors take on great importance when the communications strategy is being designed.

Both aid agencies and local people may have trouble identifying contextual factors. For outsiders they are difficult to detect; for insiders they are a “given.” These factors are not problematic per se; problems only arise when assumptions made by

those attempting to communicate with the population or to implement a reconstruction project understand the context to be different than what it really is.

The CBA is the opportunity to identify these factors, evaluate their importance, and understand how they affect both perception and behavior. They should be taken into consideration in communicating with the public and the affected population about recovery and reconstruction. Some of the contextual factors that might be evaluated include the following.

Contextual factors	Examples of how they may affect communications
Peculiarities of the disaster effect, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disproportionate loss of certain social groups</li> <li>■ Affect of disaster on materials availability</li> <li>■ Changes in labor market due to migration</li> <li>■ Disaster history in the region</li> </ul>	If many heads of household are lost in the disaster, non-traditional approaches to reconstruction may need to be promoted.  If common local building materials are damaged, use of alternative materials will have to be explained and promoted.  Repeated disasters may make the population reticent to rebuild, so motivational messages may be needed.
Institutional/governance context, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Local/national government relations</li> <li>■ Degree of sectoral and fiscal decentralization</li> <li>■ Roles and responsibilities of governmental entities, levels of government</li> <li>■ Maturity of community organizations</li> <li>■ Trust in government and perceptions of corruption</li> </ul>	A conflictive relationship between local and national governments could produce contradictory messages that confuse the public.  Local governments may be suspected of corruption, so accountability measures may need to be improved to give assurance to the population.  Newer community-based organizations may not have the credibility in the community to deliver certain information.
Political context, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ History of ongoing violence</li> <li>■ Role of political parties</li> <li>■ Level of social organization or activism</li> </ul>	Concerns about violence may discourage community involvement.  Opposition parties may politicize the disaster and affect the acceptance of messages.  Well-organized communities may move faster than government and perceive later government involvement as “interference.”
Sociological context, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demographic factors</li> <li>■ Relationships of religious groups</li> <li>■ Class, race, and status relationships of those affected</li> <li>■ Gender relationships</li> <li>■ Perception of rights of disabled</li> </ul>	In societies where class, race, and/or status are polarized, communication may need to be tailored to specific groups.  Members of religious groups may prefer that messages come from their religious body, rather than from government.  Men may keep their wives from participating in projects that strongly promote gender equality.
Cultural factors, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cultural practices and values, such as perceptions of time</li> <li>■ Aesthetic value systems, such as Feng Shui</li> <li>■ Place of money in cultural life</li> <li>■ Superstitions</li> <li>■ Language barriers</li> <li>■ Perceptions about social change</li> </ul>	Cultural differences in the perception of time will affect planning efforts.  Relationship to money and beliefs about accepting gifts differ enormously from one culture to another.  Individuals may have beliefs about the orientation of houses, position of doorways, etc. that affect their interest in new houses.  Resident satisfaction surveys may not reveal families’ real opinions.  Social judgments about who deserves assistance may be based on intangibles, such as a family’s history in the community.

Contextual factors	Examples of how they may affect communications
<p>Economic context, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Wealth distribution in disaster area</li> <li>■ Effect of disaster on economic base</li> <li>■ Importance of homestead for livelihood</li> <li>■ Migration and other work/living patterns</li> <li>■ Role of remittances in local economy</li> <li>■ Market culture</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural perceptions about gift-giving may affect rates of participation in assistance programs.</p> <p>Women may be financial decision makers of household, but not be exposed to communications media that are used.</p> <p>The inability for women to reach markets or to go to markets alone may affect use of assistance strategies, such as vouchers.</p>
<p>Territorial/land use issues, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specifics of disaster location (urban/rural)</li> <li>■ Access into/out of disaster location</li> <li>■ Ecological context</li> <li>■ Legal status of land occupancy of affected population</li> </ul>	<p>Expectations about the standard of housing may be quite different in urban and rural communities, even in same country.</p> <p>Messages about land and tenancy need to be fine-tuned to local land-ownership practices.</p> <p>Perceptions about the natural environment vary between cultures, and affect environmental messages.</p>
<p>Housing/community culture, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Household decision maker on housing issues</li> <li>■ Adequacy of housing situation before the disaster</li> <li>■ Role of communal spaces within and around the settlement</li> <li>■ Relationship of housing styles and settlement layout to culture or climate</li> </ul>	<p>Where women don't attend community gatherings, opinions expressed in meetings may not represent the entire household.</p> <p>Perspectives about suitable housing assistance schemes will vary from one location to another.</p> <p>Localities where income segregation in housing is the norm may not be persuaded to relocate in "mixed income" communities.</p> <p>The disaster may change people's perceptions of the value of vernacular housing, in favor or against.</p>

