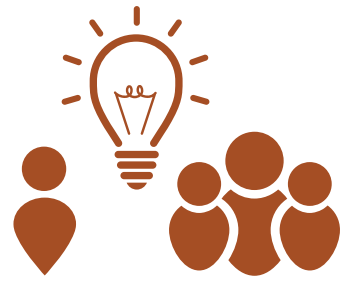


FACILITATOR'S NOTES

How to work with staff to develop a communication plan



Program managers can use these notes to develop or improve a communication plan with field teams, including partner staff. The notes have been adapted from a session that CRS held in Pakistan.

Purpose

By the end of the session, participants will

- understand why communication is important;
- develop a communication plan for their program, building on their experience and knowledge of the program context;
- understand the communication approach that will be used; and
- understand their role in the communication plan.

Duration

You will need 2–3 hours to conduct the session.

Timing

It would be ideal to conduct the session at the beginning of the program. Program managers can also adapt these notes to use after the program has started, allowing teams to review and build on current practice. Other necessary activities

The facilitator should reserve time to

- consult with appropriate communities (for example questions, see WORKSHEET: “Choose which communication methods to use”),
- document the communication plan and
- share the communication plan with appropriate staff.

Preparing for the session

- Read this document and the template, “Develop a communication plan in nine steps.” Identify the parts that are the most relevant to your program.
- Review the program’s information (for example, its budget details and key activities).
- Identify ways that teams currently communicate with program participants and community members. This will enable you to recognize and build on existing good practice and reflect on lessons learned.
- Understand your staff’s attitudes about two-way communication. This will help you to guide the team toward the right mind-set, if necessary.

Conducting the session

1. Set the scene (optional)

To help staff understand the importance of information sharing, you may choose to start the session with 20–30 minutes of discussion about one of the two scenarios below.

Scenario 1: After Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh, one man who was selected as a beneficiary said, *If I know about the items that will be distributed tomorrow then I can decide if I should go to the distribution point or stay and fix my house.*⁴

- What does he mean? How does the lack of information affect him and the program?
- Think about [*insert recent emergency that staff are aware of*]. If you were living in the affected area, what information would you want to know about an emergency relief program?
- What would happen if you and others in the community did not have access to this information? How would you feel? What would you do?

Scenario 2: Can you think of an example in which there was misunderstanding between an NGO and a community? [*Or give a concrete example from your area to start the discussion.*]

- What happened?
- How did the misunderstanding affect the community, the program and the program staff?
- How could the misunderstanding have been prevented?

2. Introduce the purpose of the session and plan

Explain to participants the purpose of the communication plan and describe the nine steps in the template.

3. Create the communication plan for your program

Go through each of the nine steps and answer the questions in the template. You may find it helpful to use a projector to display the questions, and print out relevant parts of the template for discussion.

For each of the template's steps that are relevant to your program, reflect on current practices and the participants' experiences. What works well? What could be improved?

4. Record conclusions and decisions as you go

It is important to put the plan in writing so the team can refer to it throughout the program. Every plan will look different. You can organize your plan by using a combination of tables, text and diagrams.

⁴ Paraphrased from "HAP International," Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, <http://www.hapinternational.org>.