- Discuss **how best to get information out** to affected communities, and to **ensure communities can communicate easily** with your agency. This may involve working with local media stations, community leaders, volunteer networks and other trusted sources of information. [Note, check beforehand who runs the station and if a partnership with them could threaten or contradict humanitarian principles.]

- If a **communication coordination mechanism** exists (e.g. working group), ensure you share your communication data and activities through regular meetings and other info-sharing methods.

- Investigate the possibility of being part of a **common service project** or a **communication coordination mechanism** with other actors to ensure effective coordination of communication activities and to avoid duplication or contradiction of messages, which can lead to confusion. Examples include a telephone hotline, inter-agency community consultations, or collaborating to sponsor a radio or TV programme for affected communities.

Phase 3 (3-4 weeks)

Phase 3 is often when more detailed assessments are carried out, usually by individual organisations or by multiple agencies or clusters. This enables humanitarian responders to design effective programmes based on the needs identified and, in sudden onset disasters, to move from response to recovery.

As with other sectors, approaches to two-way communication will evolve along with changes in the situation on the ground. In some humanitarian contexts, the communication infrastructure can be restored relatively quickly; in other contexts, such as conflict situations, it may take much longer. It is therefore essential to continuously check what is working and trusted, and what is not.

Funds and capacity permitting, media development agencies such as BBC Media Action, Fondation Hirondelle, International Media Support and Internews can conduct a more comprehensive communication needs assessments.

The media development agencies who are part of the CDAC Network have agreed to use common assessment tools which are available on the CDAC Network website. These tools, or questions from them, can be used by any humanitarian agency.

For information on these tools or to find out more about conducting in depth communications assessments, visit the CDAC Network website: www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources

CDAC NETWORK
communicating with disaster affected communities

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Information & Communication Questions in Rapid Needs Assessments

Phase 1 (first 72 hours)

To determine how best to communicate with communities, find out:

- Areas which have lost coverage of phone, radio and TV
- Mobile phone networks, radio and TV stations which are still operational
- Areas which have lost power
- How people are currently receiving and sharing information

Information about the impact of a crisis on existing media channels can be obtained from a range of sources:

- If on the ground, **direct observation** can give an idea of the damage (e.g. looking out for damaged telecom towers; tuning in to radio stations to check which are still on air; checking mobile phone signal).
- Calling national regulatory bodies, mobile phone companies, journalist networks (e.g. unions), popular radio and TV stations in the affected area and any media development agencies in country. Contact details can be found in the infoasaid Media Landscape Guides (for the 20 countries covered): www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/media-landscape-guides
- Calling NGOs who have programmes in the affected area and asking about people's access to information and communications channels.
- For information on mobile phone connectivity, contact the Emergency Telecommunication Cluster or national/international associations of telecommunications companies (e.g. GSMA: www.gsma.com)

What could be done with this data?

- Consider how your agency will communicate with the crisis-affected population, given how the communication infrastructure has been impacted
- Ensure the information you have collected on communication channels and infrastructure is shared with relevant humanitarian structures/mechanisms in country (national and international)

Phase 2 (first 2 weeks)

Include these five questions in agency/inter-agency rapid needs assessments:

1. A. What are the main channels of communication available to your community now? [Rank top 3 only, 1=most used]
   B. What channels did you use before? [Rank top 3 only, 1=most used]

☐Television	☐Social Media	☐Word of mouth	☐Music
☐Radio	☐Internet	☐Community leaders	☐Film
☐Newspapers	☐Mobile phone call	☐Religious leaders	☐Theatre
☐Magazine	☐Mobile phone SMS	☐Government	☐Other
☐Billboards	☐Leaflets	☐Friends & family	☐Don't know
☐Posters	☐Loudspeakers (mobile /fixed)	☐Health professionals	☐Refused

2. A: What is preventing you getting the information you need now?
   B: Are there groups within the community who have more difficulty accessing information and why? [Open ended question – note alongside]

☐ No access to electricity	☐ I don't trust where the information is coming from
My device is damaged / lost: ☐ TV ☐ Radio ☐ Computer ☐ Mobile phone	☐ TV/radio station is no longer running (specify what happened)
	☐ Mobile networks are down
	☐ I can't buy credit
☐ Information is in wrong language	☐Other (write in)
☐ Information is written but I can't read	☐ Don't know

3. A: Which sources of information do people trust the **most**? [Rank top 3 only]
   B: Which sources do people trust the **least**? [Rank top 3 only]
   C: Are there any groups who trust different sources of information (e.g. Men/women, young/older people, disabled people) [Open ended question – note alongside]

☐ Television (specify channel)	☐ Government	☐ Aid worker
☐ Radio (specify station)	☐ Community leader	☐ UN staff
☐ Print media (specify)	☐ Other community members	☐ Other (WRITE IN)
☐ Internet (specify site)	☐ Religious leader	☐ Don't know
☐ Social Media (specify)	☐ Armed forces	☐ Refused
☐ Health professional	☐ Police	

4. What would the community like more information on at the moment? What do you need to know more about? [WARNING: This question is often misinterpreted to mean general needs rather than information needs, and may need more explanation]

☐ News on what is happening here	☐ The weather
☐ News on what is happening at home	☐ How to get healthcare/medical attention
☐ Finding missing people	☐ How to get help after attack or harassment
☐ The security situation here	☐ How to stay safe to prevent attack/harassment
☐ The security situation at home	☐ How to replace personal documentation (e.g. ID, birth certificate)
☐ Communicating with people who are in a different place	☐ How to get access to education
☐ How to register for aid	☐ How to find work
☐ How to get water	☐ How to get transport
☐ How to get food	☐ How to get money/financial support
☐ How to get shelter/accommodation or shelter materials	☐ Information about possible return to place of origin
☐ Information about nutrition	☐ Information about relocation
☐ Food prices	☐ Other (write in)
☐ Local crop/livestock prices	☐ Don't Know
☐ How to get cooking fuel/firewood	☐ Refused

5. How would you most like to communicate with aid agencies? (e.g. to ask a question, to complain or to make a suggestion) [Rank top 3 only]

☐ Face to face (at home)	☐ SMS	☐ Social Media (specify site)	☐ Tweet
☐ Face to face (office/desk)	☐ Email	☐ Suggestion box	☐ Other
☐ Phone call	☐ Letter	☐ Radio/TV show	☐ Don't know

What could be done with this data?

- Based on the information collected, **develop a communication strategy** in line with your humanitarian programmes that identifies aims, objectives, target audiences, key messages, communication methods and feedback channels. This will help to integrate communication activities into your overall response and ensure the content, audience and method/channel are appropriate.

  A useful resource for developing messages is the infoasaid message library (www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/message-library)

- Explore ways to **more effectively use the communication channel(s) identified** by the community.