Imagine a world where disaster-affected communities lead their own emergency response. A world where solutions are locally driven and expertise locally sourced. Imagine a world where communities at risk of disaster build their own resilience and are drivers of innovation and, when faced with disaster, have the capacity and capability to effectively respond.

CDAC Network is the global alliance of many of the world’s biggest humanitarian and media development organisations – including UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, media and specialist communications organisations – committed to putting the power in humanitarian action back in the hands of communities.

We believe that, when communities have the information and the resources to make their own decisions, they have the capacity to find solutions to even the most challenging problems. We work to enable them to do this.

### Our areas of action for more effective participation and accountability using a Communication and Community Engagement approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengthen collaboration for collective action</th>
<th>Reinforce and sustain capacity and surge support</th>
<th>Advocate for systemic change; influence policy and practice</th>
<th>Build the evidence; strengthen learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Convening and collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guidance, tools and good practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community voices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evidence-based research</strong></td>
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<td>At the local, regional and global level, organise and facilitate new fora; create new communities of practice and cross-sector connections; showcase and adopt good practice.</td>
<td>Develop, synthesise and curate evidence-based strategic and operational guidance.</td>
<td>Directly and through better and more inclusive feedback systems, amplify the voices, communication needs and feedback of communities affected by or at risk of crisis to improve policy and practice.</td>
<td>Build the evidence base around: communicating and engaging with communities; the role of communication in crisis; impactful use of appropriate communication technologies; community-led innovation; and effective institutional and policy change.</td>
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<td><strong>Support common services</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capacity development and surge support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Library of resources</strong></td>
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<td>Invest in country-level and inter-agency multi-stakeholder preparedness and response platforms and common services.</td>
<td>Strengthen capacity at the individual and agency level by highlighting and providing training and peer-to-peer learning opportunities around the world, and maintaining a roster of skilled deployable experts.</td>
<td>Strengthen the business and ethical case for providing timely and accurate information, utilising evidence-based advocacy approaches.</td>
<td>Create a searchable, curated library featuring case studies, best practice, and tools in diverse languages.</td>
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<td><strong>Introduce innovation models and tools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mainstream technology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Operational change</strong></td>
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<td>Facilitate better interconnections and co-creativity around innovation processes that involve communities affected by disaster both as the end-user and as the innovator or co-innovator.</td>
<td>Mainstream inclusive technology approaches, and build technological capacity; use digital solutions to better serve communities.</td>
<td>Through evidence-based advocacy to donors and other gatekeepers, and capacity-building direct to implementers, support the trend towards adaptive programming and effective innovation.</td>
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</table>

### Providing coordination services for the humanitarian system

As a global network, CDAC plays an essential role in the sector: it convenes the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI); is an active contributor in the Participation Revolution Workstream and IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion; an official partner of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster; a member of ALNAP; and, works in close cooperation with GSMA, the CHS Alliance, and a number of other humanitarian, development and communication networks. Our extended network comes with connections to the private sector, civil society groups, communities and national governments.
We build a coalition for community engagement

On the ground, in global fora, and across the humanitarian system, we champion closer cooperation with communities affected by disaster and build strong alliances to make this happen. We facilitate collective models of working at the national level and response-wide.

Our annual conferences connect those working on Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) across the humanitarian space, and evolve best practice and drive new thinking. We operate an expert pool of CCE professionals who can be deployed at short notice during the early phase of a humanitarian response to provide technical support and spearhead CCE coordination. We convene the sector-wide Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI), and are one of the driving forces in actualising the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream.

We support countries to be disaster-ready

Preparedness in Bangladesh and the Pacific
The Bangladesh National Platform called Shongjog ('linking'), is a national, multi-stakeholder platform, and has received support from the CDAC Network Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme, funded by UK Aid. As a result of the Shongjog, the Rohingya response was one of the first to integrate Communicating with Communities at the outset of the crisis. Platforms like the Shongjog seek to ensure:
- Affected communities are provided with timely, relevant and actionable life-saving and life-enhancing information in preparedness for and in the event of a disaster.
- Humanitarian actions are informed by the constructive participation of communities throughout the humanitarian programme cycle, including regular feedback solicited from communities on key aspects of humanitarian performance at the strategic decision-making level.
- The most appropriate approaches are used to listen to communities’ needs, feedback and complaints, and assist with rumour tracking and management.
- The collective service augments local capacities so that national responders are better prepared in future responses.
- All humanitarian responders are held to account by affected people through visible and predictable means.

In Fiji and Vanuatu, together with Ground Truth Solutions and funded by Australian DFAT, we have embarked on a localisation programme working with the National Disaster Management authorities to establish national platforms on CCE for more systematic engagement with communities.

Find out more about all our national platforms at http://preparedness-response.cdacnetwork.org.

Building capacity in Communication and Community Engagement once a disaster strikes can be too little, too late. Communities require critical information in languages they understand and channels they are familiar with at the outset; they need to be involved in programme design from the get-go.

Which is why we have facilitated the creation of over 20 national and sub-national CCE platforms in disaster-prone countries – from Syria to Bangladesh, South Sudan to the South Pacific. When a disaster happens, relationships have already been established, roles and responsibilities assigned, translation services have been prepositioned and feedback channels are already operational and embedded in National Disaster Management Agencies, or relevant authorities during times of conflict. We seek to deploy inclusive technology to connect people affected by disaster and responders and promote the Principles for Digital Development.

Innovation to support local leadership
We want innovation to work better for people affected by humanitarian crises. To this end, we co-led the UK Aid’s Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) Innovation programme with Start Network that has seen four innovation labs set up in communities facing or at risk of disaster in Bangladesh, Kenya, Jordan and Philippines. The labs support local, scalable solutions to protect communities living in disaster-prone environments and advance innovation in the sector by involving people in crisis at all stages of the process.

Each lab followed a human- or user-centred design approach. Over 90 groups or individuals progressed through a structured curriculum, accessing specialist expertise in business development, social entrepreneurship and the sectors and markets they were looking to enter. The resulting portfolio is diverse with a strong emphasis on strengthening preparedness among communities hardest hit by disasters. These locally-rooted solutions offer long-term benefits for those communities.

You can find out more about the programme, and access the learning materials that resulted from the project by visiting www.cdacnetwork.org/what-we-do/innovation/.
We strengthen capacity and provide surge

Communication and Community Engagement requires specialist expertise. Our comprehensive curriculum is designed to equip complete beginners with adequate skills and support experts. Our three-hour online Communication is Aid basic training is complemented by our face-to-face day-long Briefing Module, week-long Technical Training and our soon-to-be-launched Advanced Training – a complete programme of studies for those looking to integrate CCE into their humanitarian skillset and to train the next generation of CCE leaders and coordinators. Addressing one of the challenges of social media, we provide guidance on the tracking of rumours and the management of harmful ones. Download our Rumour Management Guide at www.cdacnetwork.org.

There is an urgent need to improve surge capacity for Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian coordination if the sector is to demonstrate tangible improvements in CCE and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). We are embarking on a global programme that aims to boost CCE surge capacity to increase the quality and predictability of response-wide community engagement in disaster management.

We establish an evidence base and shape the debate

The evidence is clear: we are not successfully including communities and people affected by disaster in humanitarian response. A recent perceptions survey on the Grand Bargain commitments by our member Ground Truth Solutions noted only 41% of recipients of aid felt that their opinion had been taken into account by aid providers. Conversely, having tracked and produced independent learning reviews and detailed case studies on the impact of Communication and Community Engagement in every major humanitarian intervention since the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, we have a strong evidence base that demonstrates that embedding CCE into humanitarian programming makes aid more sustainable, equitable and effective.

We influence national and global policy

At the national level, across the UN, and in line with global commitments linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework, and the World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain, we influence policy to ensure that Communication and Community Engagement is at the heart of humanitarian action. We work with national governments to advise them on their national disaster management policy and plans. And through our engagement with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Results Groups and as an official partner of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, we ensure that Communication and Community Engagement is central to global humanitarian policymaking.

Providing thought leadership

Our ongoing policy engagement is complemented each year when CDAC Network brings together its members and diverse strategic partners to discuss critical issues at our global conference. In recent years, the discussions have been focused around the following topics: Accidental and intentional humanitarian innovation: valuing what’s there Hearing the Roar! Digital inclusion and community voices beyond the humanitarian-development divide The Authenticity Challenge to the Participation Revolution: 12 Essentials for Systems Change

Responding in emergencies, learning from the response

CDAC believes that national platforms on Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) provide critical preparedness infrastructure to those countries at risk of disaster.

But where no platform exists, we continue to respond to emergencies, and have provided coordination and technical support to CCE efforts in a number of recent disasters.

During the response to Hurricane Maria in the Caribbean, we flew a CCE coordinator to Dominica to cover the acute phase and put communities at the forefront of decision making. As part of the Cyclone Idai response in Mozambique, we deployed a Portuguese-speaking Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability Coordinator whose work was funded by the H2H Network and hosted by OCHA. More recently, we deployed a CCE expert to Burkina Faso to assess the status of response-wide Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability capabilities.

For all the learning from both of these responses, and many more, visit www.cdacnetwork.org.

Keeping people safe

Working closely with communities brings additional responsibilities and requires a safe space for engagement. The term ‘safeguarding’, while ubiquitous in policymaking, is not fully explained or communicated to crucial audiences unfamiliar with or new to this area - staff, local partners and people accessing aid. Organisations’ policies and procedures can be overwhelmingly complicated and appropriate reporting mechanisms non-existent. As part of our work on innovation, and in coordination with safeguarding experts Safer Edge, we have produced a suite of tools and guidance to make safeguarding clear for everyone. Download them now at: www.cdacnetwork.org.
Has your organisation specialist CCE expertise?

JOIN US as a member, strategic ally or corporate partner in advancing Communication and Community Engagement systematically to ensure people living in crisis situations have the information and resources they need to manage the challenges they face and access assistance.

Members of the CDAC commit to deliver the Network’s agenda by participating in Network activities. Through flexible collaboration, through and beyond our Communities of Practice, members’ capacities are quite literally networked to incubate new approaches and ideas, dramatically magnifying the power and value of those efforts and building greater change than would be possible working alone. The Network also has secretariat capacity to support members’ change agenda and to contribute to delivery.

Download the membership application form, or email CDAC Executive Director, Marian Casey-Maslen (Marian.Casey-Maslen@cdacnetwork.org) for more information.

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BBC Media Action
Community World Service Asia
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First Response Radio
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Ground Truth Solutions
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NORCAP
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United Nations Children’s Fund
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CDAC SECRETARIAT
CDAC’s global secretariat is based in London, in the UK.