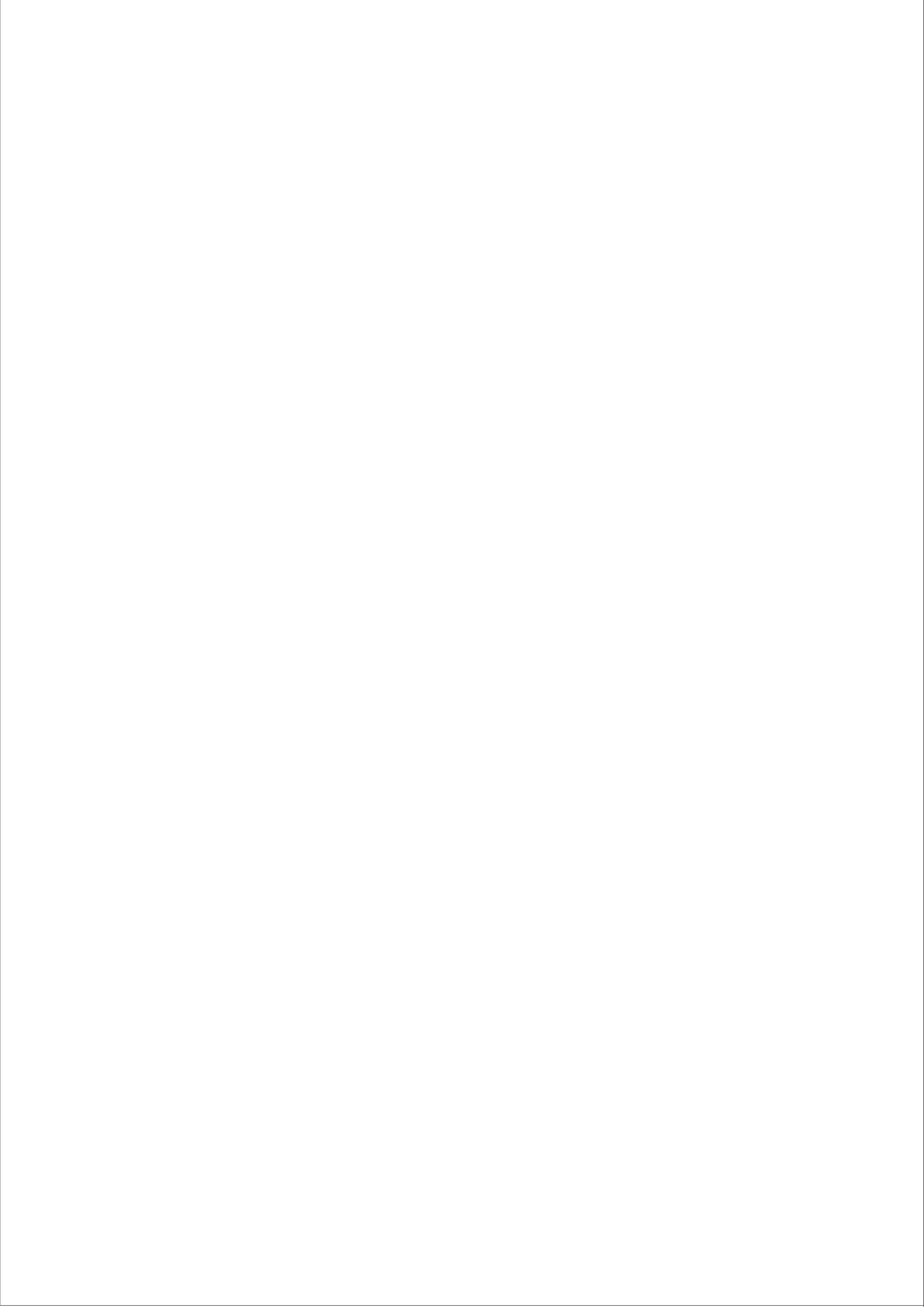# MARKER SYSTEM

COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

CwC

MARKER SYSTEM

COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

CwC

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
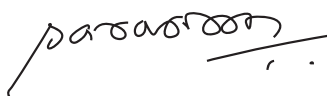
The UN Migration Agency

F o r e w o r d

The number of disasters – both natural and man-made – is on the rise worldwide. Communicating effectively before, during, and after disasters with impacted communities is crucial to ensuring the design and implementation of humanitarian interventions are fit-for-purpose – giving rise to the concept of Communications with Communities (CwC). It also allows implementing agencies and donors to be held accountable for their programming, while ensuring transparency to the affected communities. Awareness of CwC, however, is limited among disaster responders, governments, donors, and private sector stakeholders, despite two-way communication being an integral part of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

In the Bangladesh context, the need for CwC is not well understood by stakeholders involved in humanitarian interventions. A gap analysis study conducted by SHONGJOG – a multi-stakeholder platform for CwC in Bangladesh – suggested that a lack of effective two-way communication channels at the community level impedes responsive humanitarian actions.

IOM – in collaboration with BBC Media Action – initiated a project involving awareness-raising of CwC among stakeholders to ensure its inclusion in humanitarian programming. To that end, IOM developed a 'CwC Marker System' – a strategic tool providing guidance on how to assess CwC issues in a humanitarian action proposal.

I am confident that humanitarian responders will find this CwC Marker System useful in integrating CwC components into humanitarian programming. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) for supporting SHONGJOG and its CwC initiatives. We are grateful to the 'Communication with Disaster Affected Communities' (CDAC) Network and UKAID for providing technical and financial support for this initiative.

Sarat Dash
Chief of Mission
IOM Bangladesh

The CwC Marker is a new strategic tool designed to ensure that adequate consideration is given to integrating the CwC framework when designing interventions and responding to emergencies. This toolkit provides an overview of the CwC Marker and its application as well as guidance on how to assess CwC issues in a humanitarian action proposal.

Marker System:
Communication with Communities (CwC)

IOM Bangladesh / October 2017

CONTENTS

1

Background

IOM, in collaboration with BBC Media Action, initiated an activity to implement a component of the project entitled "Advocacy for Communication with Communities at National Level in Bangladesh". 'Shongjog' is a multi-stakeholder platform for the advancement of Communication with Communities (CwC) in Bangladesh. The CwC Marker is designed to build support for CwC by ensuring that consideration is given by the project sponsors (donors and other funding partners) to the resourcing and planning of CwC in interventions and responses to disaster and other emergency situations.

This CwC Marker toolkit outlines how to assess CwC interventions in a project that proposes to extend support in an emergency humanitarian response through communication and community engagement. The tool also outlines how the CwC framework in a humanitarian response can be integrated and mainstreamed through the donors and the funding partners.

2 What is the

Communication with Communities (CwC) can be described as an organized and effective effort to help exchange accurate and pertinent information that helps people to access emergency humanitarian services. Exchange of accurate, timely communication can help people make well-informed decisions and can also help build resilience in the communities and enhance recovery. The CwC framework can also help ensure the optimal allocation of scarce resources to the different phases of Disaster Risk Management (DRM).

The CwC Marker is a new strategic tool designed to ensure that adequate consideration is given to integrating the CwC framework when designing interventions and responding to emergencies. This toolkit provides an overview of the CwC Marker and its application as well as guidance on how to assess CwC issues in a humanitarian action proposal.

The CwC Marker can provide donors, funding partners, government agencies, humanitarian agencies and other organizations with the basis for assessing to what extent the CwC framework is used in the proposed intervention. The Marker can also help the implementing partners and practitioners to understand if the CwC framework has been adequately addressed in the proposal. A proposal based on the CwC framework suggests that all relevant stakeholders have been duly consulted, informed and educated about the critical services that a community demands.

The CwC Marker can, therefore, become an essential prerequisite to assess and engage the CwC framework within a full array of DRM plans and policies, and contribute to the overarching objectives of reducing society's vulnerability and enhancing resilience in emergencies.

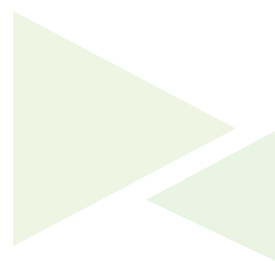# CwC Marker and why is it important?

2.1 Criteria

The CwC Marker uses the following four criteria to assess how strongly humanitarian actions integrate the Communication with Communities (CwC) framework in considerations:

1. Complete participation and inclusion of all groups are ensured and community dynamics are captured and analyzed adequately.
2. An accessible system for receiving, acknowledging and responding to feedback is present.
3. Community people have transparent knowledge about the workings of the humanitarian actors.
4. Culturally appropriate communications are emphasized.

The following matrix (developed on the above mentioned four criteria) can be used to assess quickly whether the proposal and the proposed action meets the CwC principles. Once the initial assessment is done, a detailed marking and scoring process can then be used to assess how strongly the proposal integrates the CwC framework, primarily through determining how many criteria are met in the proposal.
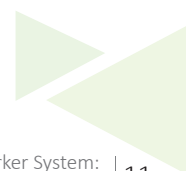
Criteria	Whether the proposal meets the criteria of the Marker	

2.1.1 **Complete participation and inclusion of all groups are ensured and community dynamics are captured and analyzed adequately** **Description:** The proposal contains an adequate analysis of community and community dynamics?	**YES** Sufficiently meets	**NO** Does not sufficiently meet
Since community structure is not static, the proposal should indicate the changes over time because of the arrival, departure and movement of people, and the effects of outside forces such as natural and man-made disasters. The proposal should show the community information disaggregated by elements that might influence information requirements, such as: • Age, sex, ethnic, and educational characteristics • Income, employment and occupation • Institutions, clubs, societies, religious groups, etc. • Access to information channels CwC affirms that each individual in the community has the right to a full range of information and services, therefore the proposal should adequately address cultural and demographic diversity in the proposed intervention: • That it is has mechanisms to serve all members of the community without discrimination based on culture, age, gender and disability. • That it ensures information regarding the provision of services. • That it ensures a broad range of channels are used to cover different communities, their locations and different socio-cultural and religious dynamics. • That it ensures the engagement of appropriate staff who reflect the diversity of the community, and who are trained to work with/ serve diverse communities.		
Key elements to consider in this criterion: • The analysis identifies relevant past and potential emergency situations (e.g. risk of floods, droughts, storms, landslides, earthquakes, epidemics or technological disasters, climate change and environmental degradation and equally the threat of an outbreak or intensification of conflict) and their characteristics (what areas might be affected, intensity and likelihood).		

Criteria	Whether the proposal meets the criteria of the Marker	
• The analysis covers the vulnerability of different population groups to these emergency situations (e.g. which population groups will be most affected by the identified emergencies and threats, and what capacities do they have to cope with them?). • The analysis identifies what causes and drives these vulnerabilities. • Coping mechanisms and livelihood patterns/strategies are identified. • Identifies the different cultural and demographic diversification present in the community. • Identifies and assesses the differences in the needs and requirements of assistance and services, particularly information services. • Identifies and assesses the different organizations (e.g. faith-based or community-based) as well as local public agencies serving the people in the community (what services are they providing and to whom?). • identifies how the information and services are made accessible to the diverse community.		

2.1.2	An accessible system for receiving, acknowledging and responding to feedback is present **Description:** The proposal contains an adequate mechanism for capturing and responding to community feedback	**YES** Sufficiently meets	**NO** Does not sufficiently meet
An effective and accessible system for receiving questions and complaints provides the following benefits: 1. Resolves confusion, since the target population clearly understands the purpose, planned interventions and principles of humanitarian actors working in their community (for example, a clear understanding of why some people receive assistance and others do not, etc.). 2. It resolves issues raised by a person who is dissatisfied in a timely and cost-effective manner. 3. It provides information that can lead to improvements in service delivery. 4. Where complaints are handled properly, a good system can improve the satisfaction of the community and strengthen public confidence in service providers.			

Criteria	Whether the proposal meets the criteria of the Marker	

Key elements to consider in this criterion:

- Methods explicitly used for receiving complaints and feedback (e.g. consultation or social media).
- The systems are visible and well publicized to the community
- The systems are easy and appropriate for community people to access and understand.
- An explicit system is in place for referrals and responses to complaints. Questions are acknowledged in a timely manner, addressed promptly and according to order of urgency, and complainants are kept informed throughout the process.

2.1.3 **Community people have transparent knowledge about the workings of the humanitarian actors** **Description:** The proposal assesses levels of understanding within the target population in relation to the purpose, planned interventions and principles of humanitarian actors working in their community	**YES** Sufficiently meets	**NO** Do not sufficiently meet
The community people should be able to know what to expect and avoid any over expectation. It is important to describe how planned interventions are communicated, how effective they are, and if there is a clear understanding of why some people receive assistance and others do not, etc.		
Key elements to consider in this criterion: • Provision by the humanitarian organization of information about the situation and about the response that affected people can expect (including amounts of assistance, eligibility criteria, and location and timing of assistance). • Two-way communication between aid agencies and populations regarding the community needs and the quality, timeliness and relevance of the services being provided. • Participatory methods that involve people in all aspects of humanitarian operations.		

Criteria	Whether the proposal meets the criteria of the Marker	
2.1.4 **Culturally appropriate communications are emphasized** **Description:** The proposal emphasizes the need to communicate effectively with language minorities, people with limited literacy skills, people with hearing and sight disabilities, people living in remote areas, etc.	**YES** Sufficiently meets	**NO** Do not sufficiently meet
Communication should effectively cater to the needs of the different language minorities, people with limited literacy skills, people in rural areas etc.		
Key elements to consider in this criterion: - Strategy to reach vulnerable groups such as language minorities, people with limited or no literacy skills, people with hearing and sight disabilities and people living in remote areas. - Adequate guidelines and measures are present to ensure understanding and respect of local language, cultures and customs. - Measures are in place to ensure consistency and timeliness of information dissemination and collection. - Multiple channels are used to reach diverse groups. - Strategies exist to ensure consistent messages reach the right people at the right time.		

2.2 Scoring the proposal based on criteria met

To complete the assessment, the proposal now needs to be checked as to how strongly the CwC framework is integrated. This can be assessed through determining how many of the above-mentioned criteria are sufficiently met in the proposal, as provided in the matrix below:

| Number of Criteria Met	Mark	Meaning
The proposal meets none or only 1 criterion	0	The proposal barely integrates CwC framework
The action meets 1 or 2 criteria	1	The proposal moderately integrates the CwC framework
The action meets 3 or 4 criteria	2	The proposal strongly integrates the CwC framework

The matrix provided above uses a cardinal scale to measure or compare how strongly the CwC framework is integrated in a proposal or proposed action/intervention.

3 Conclusions

This CwC Marker provides a guideline for assessing a proposal that embraces the CwC principles. This assessment does not identify and weigh the merits and defects of a proposal, but determines the strength of CwC in the proposed interventions and actions.

Finally, to summarize the assessment, the following categories can be assigned to the proposals to indicate its level of endorsement and recommendation:
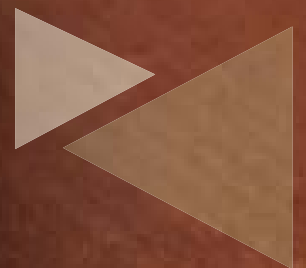
Category	Description	Recommendation
A	**Outstanding**: of highest quality and at the forefront of the CwC proposition	Recommended unconditionally
B	**Excellent**: of high quality and CwC is strongly mainstreamed	Strongly support recommendation
C	**Good**: the proposition is sound but lacks critical CwC elements	Unsupportive of recommendation, requires revision
D	**Not up to the mark**: poor and has significant weaknesses or major flaws in embracing CwC	Not recommended

Bibliography

1. African Development Solutions (ADESO) "A More Dignified and Equitable Humanitarian System"

2. Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) "Study on Communication with Communities (CwC) Gap Analysis in Bangladesh" March 2016

3. BBC Media Action "How Can Communication Help Affected Communities?"

4. BBC Media Action "Response Checklist- Coordinated Communications with Affected Communities"

5. CDAC Network and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) "The Authenticity Challenge to the Participation Revolution"

6. European Commission- Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection "Gender-Age Marker"

7. European Commission- Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection "Resilience Marker: General Guidance" November 2014

8. European Commission- Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection "Resilience Marker Assessment Card"

9. Ghure Darai: "Providing Information and Supporting Action, A study to assess the impact of BBC Media Action's Ghure Darai programme in response to Cyclone Mahasen"

10. Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) "2016 Bangladesh (Cyclone ROANU)" June 2016

11. ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies "A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA): Improving Communication, Engagement and Accountability in all we do" 2016

12. International Organization for Migration (IOM), The Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE), "Communicating with Communities: A Case Study and Guide from Pakistan and Elsewhere" 2014

13. Istanbul, Turkey "The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need" May 2016

14. Shongjog "The Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Communication with Communities in Bangladesh- Strategic Direction"

15. The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), "Engagement of Crisis-affected People in Humanitarian Action- Background Paper" ALNAP 29th Annual Meeting, March 2014, Addis Ababa

16. The Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network "Practice Brief: Communicating with Communities during the First Six Weeks of an Emergency Response", October 2014

17. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Communications Services Branch, New York, USA, "Communications with Communities – Checklist", June 2013

18. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and BBC Media Action "Communicating with Communities: Experiences from Asia- Bangladesh- Myanmar- Philippines"

19. UNICEF e-learning Resource "Glossary of Communication for Development Terms"

20. UNICEF e-learning Resource "The Phases of Behavior Change"

21. World Health Organization (WHO), Department of Communications, Office of the WHO Director General "WHO Strategic Communications Framework" March 2017

The Shongjog Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) is a collaborative effort made up of government, international and national NGOs and other groups. The MSP on Communicating with Communities (CwC) aims to promote trust between communities and the disaster response sector by recognizing the voices of the community and reflecting them in strategies, policies and decision-making processes.

Disclaimer

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency