



**HANDBOOK FOR
COMMUNICATION
WITH COMMUNITIES**

for UNHCR Libya and Tunisia Operations



The purpose of this Handbook is to describe the role of Communication with Communities (CwC) in the humanitarian response and how it can be applied in practice by UNHCR staff in the Libya and Tunisia operations.

CwC is a method of two-way communication that supports the participation by refugees and other persons of concern (PoC) in the humanitarian programme cycle. It is one of the building blocks in UNHCR's Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Policy, that seeks to ensure that the humanitarian response is informed by the opinions, insights, and needs of affected populations.

CwC requires a certain level of communication skills that can only be reached through a learning process. In this handbook, each element of CwC will be explained in detail, with the focus on practical advice. It also provides guidance on how to design and implement a CwC strategy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is CwC and why is it important?

“Communicating with communities is not an option. Listening and talking to communities is a fundamental part of humanitarian response, including UNHCR and its partners’ work. It is essential in ensuring our accountability to our constituents – the communities affected by crisis, alongside operational effectiveness, security and stability.”¹

Humanitarian agencies have an obligation to provide information in a timely and accessible manner and to tailor their programmes in accordance with the needs and preferences of their PoC.

Information and communication are critical parts of humanitarian aid, without which people cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities.

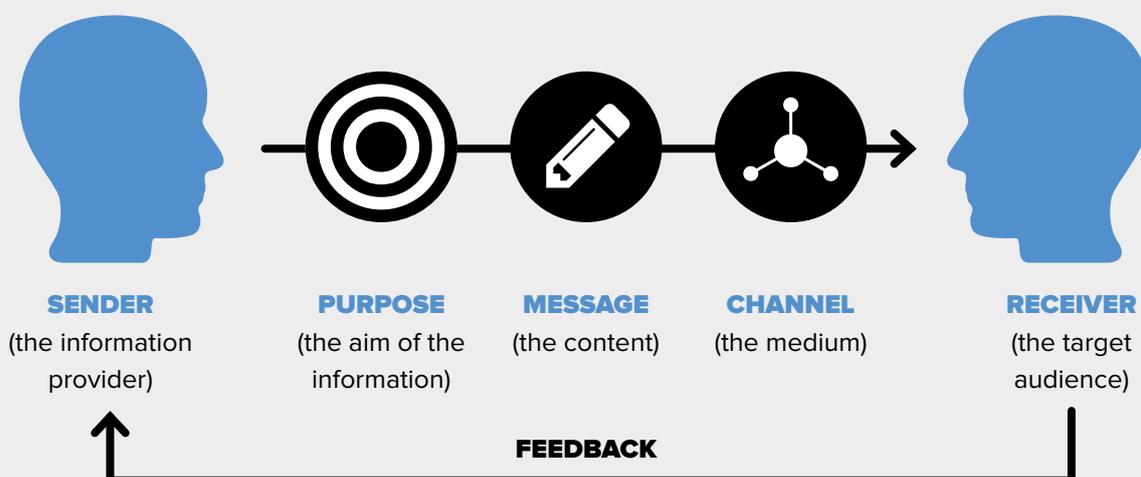
CwC is closely linked to Community-based Protection (CBP) and Protection Outreach and a key component in the activities of other operational sectors. It is a multifunctional, cross-cutting activity informed

by a strategy identifying communication tools and approaches within the specific context of the country of operation.

As one of the core actions of AAP, CwC is central to communication and transparency and is critical for realising UNHCR’s Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) policy, which seeks to ensure that all PoC fully participate in decisions that affect them and enjoy their rights on an equal footing with others. It is also reaching into other core actions, such as feedback and response.

CwC can be defined as two-way communication that helps to meet the information and communication needs of people affected by crisis. This two-way communication informs the design and implementation of services, helping agencies to adapt their programming to fit the needs and preferences of the communities they are working with.

¹ [UNHCR Innovation Service: Communicating with Communities](#)





1.2 CwC within UNHCR’s operational structure

CwC is a process in which a multifunctional team works closely with colleagues from relevant units as required, to create messages designed for specific operational purposes and to facilitate a dialogue between UNHCR and its PoC. CwC requires expertise and a good understanding of communication processes.

UNHCR’s CwC messages cover a variety of subjects, including protection, assistance and services, refugee status determination, legal assistance, resettlement, family reunification, voluntary repatriation, safety and security, livelihood, education, health, fraud. The wording and packaging of messages and the identification of the best tools and channels for effective dissemination and communication require expertise and should be the responsibility of a dedicated CwC team led by staff with the requisite communication background. Efficient CwC activities need sufficient resources, including dedicated staff and a budget line.

1.3 Terminology

- **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP):**
AAP is putting the needs and interests of affected communities at the centre of decision making. People receive the information they need to make informed decisions, participate in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to safe and responsive mechanisms for feedback and complaints.
- **Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD):**
A policy ensuring assistance and services are accessible to all PoC and appropriately respond to each person’s priorities and needs.
- **Call centre:** A phone centre where frontline workers are responding to calls, answering questions, or referring complaints or enquiries to dedicated units within UNHCR or other organisations.
- **Communication with Communities (CwC):**
CwC is the term used by UNHCR and many other agencies for two-way communication with affected persons of concern. It has replaced the earlier term Mass Information (MI).

- ➔ **Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA):** CEA, or alternatively Community Engagement (CE), is a term used by some agencies for communication with communities.
- ➔ **Complaints:** A formal complaint is a specific piece of feedback from anyone who has been negatively affected by an organisation's action or who believes that an organisation has failed to meet a stated commitment. Complaints require a response and are a priority for action.
- ➔ **Complaints and feedback mechanisms:** Systems that allow affected populations to express their views of the work of a humanitarian agency.
- ➔ **Digital tools:** These are social media communication tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter.
- ➔ **End users:** End users is the preferred term for members of affected communities that are participating in two-way communication with humanitarian agencies. It is replacing target audience which is properly used only to describe the recipient in connection with one-way information dissemination.
- ➔ **Face-to-face communication:** This the term for outreach work in refugee communities or with other affected populations, consisting of community meetings, focus group discussions (FGDs), home visits, etc.
- ➔ **FAQ:** FAQ stands for "Frequently Asked Questions." An FAQ is a list of commonly asked questions and answers. FAQ develop according to the questions that need to be answered. Whilst FAQ may form the basis of CwC messages, they are not the same thing. FAQ can be used by UNHCR or partner staff, PoC or others through dedicated FAQ websites.
- ➔ **Feedback:** Feedback is a statement of opinion shared by a community member with an organisation regarding its programmes and/or the behaviour of its staff and representatives.
- ➔ **Frontline workers:** These are agency staff or volunteers involved in direct contact with affected communities, be it as outreach workers, operational staff in the field, or call centre attendants.
- ➔ **Helpline:** A telephone service which offers help and information, but only during office hours.
- ➔ **Hotline:** A phone service available 24/7, frequently a mobile phone carried by staff able to give immediate assistance, also sometimes referred to as an emergency line.
- ➔ **Mixed population movements:** Refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants travelling together in irregular cross-border movements.
- ➔ **Multifunctional team:** A multifunctional team brings together the expertise of staff management, programme, protection, field, public-information and community-services staff, both national and international, as well as partner staff to enable a comprehensive analysis and planning process and to ensure common goals and approaches.
- ➔ **Multimedia:** This is a term referring to traditional communication tools and channels such as printed materials, radio, TV, video, helplines/hotlines, call centres, SMS.
- ➔ **Refugee outreach volunteers:** Refugees doing voluntary outreach work in the communities.
- ➔ **Outreach workers:** Staff of any humanitarian agency working in the field doing CBP or CwC work in the communities through face-to-face communication.
- ➔ **Participation:** Participation is the voluntary involvement by affected communities in the processes and activities led by humanitarian agencies. Everyone, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, has the right to express their views, have them heard, and be involved in decisions affecting them or their communities.
- ➔ **Two-way communication:** Two-way communication refers to processes and activities that respond to the information and communication needs of affected populations. Two-way communication strives to ensure dialogue between affected populations and responders using all available and appropriate communication channels.

2. HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH COMMUNITIES



2.1 CwC in Libya and Tunisia

CwC activities play a crucial role within the humanitarian response in the UNHCR Libya and Tunisia operations. Affected communities that UNHCR must communicate with include refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, IDP returnees, and additionally specific groups such as persons participating in mixed population movements ('people on the move'). Within these populations are groups with diverse information and communication needs – women and men, minors and older persons, vulnerable individuals, persons with specific needs, persons from different language and nationality groups.

The principles underpinning CwC are the same for all target groups regardless of their differences: The humanitarian response must be adapted to the specific needs of affected communities, and that can only be achieved through listening and responding to people's needs, feedback, and complaints.

Thus, as the principles for CwC remain the same, any differences between activities in the UNHCR Libya and Tunisia operations are to be found in the practical implementation of CwC rather than in the messaging. The choice of CwC tools and channels depend on the specific country situation, the communication landscape and target audiences which are also subject to change over time.

UNHCR Libya and Tunisia operations are committed to strengthening the CwC activities across their operations. In line with these commitments, the country CwC strategies aspire to achieve the following goals and objectives:

UNHCR LIBYA AND TUNISIA CWC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1 Promote an understanding of UNHCR as a trusted source of information

- Provide accurate, regular and up-to-date information
- Standardize messages in the form of FAQs across UNHCR and partners
- Use consistent branding to increase credibility
- Manage expectations

2 Ensure that people have the information they need to make informed decisions

- Understand target groups' communication needs
- Ensure information reaches all PoC, including different language groups and vulnerable groups
- Improve access to information for children and people with specific needs
- Ensure information channels are technically and financially accessible to all end users
- Implement continuous monitoring of the efficiency of the CwC activities to strengthen accountability and inform progress

3 Secure community engagement

- Enhance two-way communication channels
- Engage communities to identify and remove barriers to communication
- Involve communities in promoting messages
- Facilitate feedback

4 Standardise information to dispel misinformation and rumours

- Develop standardised materials on key topics
- Formulate messages in collaboration with relevant units
- Further advance a technical interface for CwC between UNHCR and partners through the Refugee Knowledgebase

5 Tailor product design, content and dissemination

- Explain complex issues in a user-friendly, popular, and visual way
- Tailored tools to people with diverse profiles and specific needs including those in transit and remote or hard-to-reach areas
- Ensure messaging is adapted / aligns with target groups (youth / children / people with specific needs)
- Respect community preferences and cultural sensitivities
- Disseminate materials following a structured dissemination plan

6 Use digital tools strategically

- Maintain a constant presence on social media
- Streamline information and content across all platforms
- Use separate accounts on a platform to address different target audiences – do not have messages to donors, media, and PoC on the same account

7 Support effective feedback mechanisms

- Ensure all printed materials direct PoC to feedback mechanisms
- Support development of telephony and social media tools
- Engage in regular social media monitoring and listening

2.2 Who are you talking to?

While the information that needs to be brought to the attention of affected communities may seem simple and straightforward, you must know your target audience, and their communication preferences to ensure that they get the message. Information needs and communication habits depend on the profile of the community and the circumstances they find themselves in.

Which communication tools are the most efficient if you want to reach the main refugee population in Libya or Tunisia and which ones should be used for reaching smaller groups with specific needs?

How do the communication habits of urban refugees in Libya and Tunisia differ from for example people travelling in mixed population movements?

What are the preferred communication channels of IDPs in Libya?

🔄 Language

A common language is necessary for successful communication. If information is provided in a language that the target audience does not fully understand or does not understand at all, productive interaction is not possible.

Even though someone claims they speak a language, their knowledge might be very basic. They might not be able to understand complex information or read longer texts.

In the context of the refugee situations in Libya and Tunisia, it should be kept in mind that Arabic, English, or French are foreign languages to many of UNHCR's PoC.

🔄 Educational/literacy levels

CwC messages should be drafted in a way that they can be understood also by persons with limited or no education. The educational levels of refugees and asylum seekers in Libya and Tunisia vary considerably, with PoC from the Middle East usually on a higher level than those from East or Sub-Saharan Africa.

Written information puts persons of low literacy levels or language skills at a disadvantage. For such groups, videos, audio messages, phones, and face-to-face communication should be the information channels of choice. This is not to say that written information is completely useless for persons of low literacy levels. Living in a world of written texts, most of them have developed strategies for obtaining the information with the help of family members or friends.

To facilitate the comprehension of messages, information should be presented with meaningful illustrations that attract attention through visual queues and symbols which can be understood regardless of literacy levels.

A pregnant woman of low literacy levels will understand that a leaflet is important to her if it features a picture of an expecting mother that hints at the content of the text.

🔄 Locations

A strategy for communication and especially dissemination of information must consider the locations of refugees and asylum seekers. Different methods must be applied for reaching persons living in urban environments than for those scattered in remote locations or on the move.

Most of UNHCR's PoC in Libya and Tunisia are living in urban settings and are therefore in principle easy to reach. However, PoC travelling through the countries in mixed population movements are often difficult to get in contact with. The communication landscape in Libya poses another problem, with destroyed infrastructure and connection problems in many locations.

🔄 Gender

The roles of men and women in a community are determined by cultural customs and traditions. This may place women and girls at a disadvantage in accessing information. Many refugee women have a low educational and literacy level and may feel inhibited from speaking up in public or even leaving the home to find information. Among refugees, women usually have less money at their disposal and are less likely to own a mobile phone or have internet access than men.

Information needs also differ between men and women. Male refugees in Libya put financial aid, relocation/resettlement, and accessing aid high on their list of priorities, while female refugees additionally mention healthcare, housing for rent, and information on finding items to purchase in the market among their priorities.²

➔ Age

In the digital era, age is a significant factor in communication habits. Older persons are less computer literate and less likely to be active on social media and may even be less educated and less literate than the younger generation.

Refugee children in Libya have the same information needs as adults, but the younger they are the more difficulties they are likely to have in understanding information from UNHCR. For example, a lack of clarity in information about the relocation/resettlement process may induce a sense of frustration and desperation among young persons, leading them to decide to continue towards Europe and to engage in child labour activities to finance the travel.³

➔ Diversity

UNHCR defines diversity as “different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, health, social and economic status, skills, and other specific personal characteristics.”⁴

Cultural values shape the way people receive and pass on information. Understanding cultural diversity is particularly important in face-to-face communication, as body language and rules of politeness and gender roles may differ between communities. In CwC, respect for cultural values builds trust and ensures acceptance of the messages.

2.3 How do you reach them?

➔ Current level of information

When planning your communication activities, it is important to understand what the communities know and what they do not know. For example, new arrivals generally need more basic information than people who have been in the country for a longer period. However, one should never take people’s information needs for granted, but base them on facts established through information-needs assessments, FGDs, or by other means.

➔ Access to phones

For refugees, a mobile phone is sometimes the most prized possession as it is their lifeline for staying in touch with family, friends and others. Consequently, mobile phones play an increasingly important role in CwC. SMS texts and audio messages are fast and inexpensive means of communication that do not incur costs for the recipient.

In using mobile phones as a CwC tool it is important to find out who can be reached.

- Who has access to mobile phones personally or in the family?
- Do men and women have equal access to phones?
- Can they afford airtime?
- Can they access electricity for charging their handsets?
- Do they change SIM cards/numbers often? Do they have reception at their location?

For refugees and asylum seekers in Libya and Tunisia, mobile phones are among the most important channels of communication, although in Libya access to the network can be hampered by the destruction of infrastructure, and connection is difficult outside urban areas. In Tunisia, on the other hand, the use of mobiles is common among the general population as well as refugees and asylum seekers.

² REACH: Communication with refugee and asylum-seeking communities, March 2021

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ [UNHCR Emergency Handbook - Age, gender and diversity \(AGD\) policy](#)

➔ Access to internet/digital literacy

Digital platforms, websites, and apps are increasingly popular as communication channels, offering tremendous possibilities to reach out to communities, but the extent to which they are useful depends on the situation of the recipients.

- How is the communication landscape in the country?
- Is there good internet coverage?
- Are there community members who cannot be reached because of economic reasons, connectivity, etc.?
- Do they have smartphones, can they afford to access the internet?
- What is their level of digital literacy?

There is a considerable difference between the situation in Libya, where the civil war has slowed down the development of IT infrastructure, and Tunisia, with a well-functioning communication network. In 2021, Tunisia had an internet penetration rate of 66.7%, which after Morocco is the second highest among the five North African countries, while in Libya internet penetration stood at 46.2%, the lowest in the region.

➔ Trusted information sources

Surveys across UNHCR's operations have consistently shown that the level of trust people give to various information sources differs widely. However, the single most trusted source of information across all communities is usually members of one's own community. These influencers or "info-mediaries" may be family members, elders, community leaders, religious leaders, or other respected community members.

A 2021 study revealed that trust in UNHCR among urban refugees in Libya depended on their familiarity with the organisation. Those who had little contact with UNHCR tended not to trust it, while trust increased, the more they knew about it. As lack of trust among PoC may have severe consequences for the operation, this shows how important it is to reach as many PoC as possible through CwC activities.

➔ Communicating through community members

In many cases UNHCR or partners communicate with communities through outreach volunteers or community leaders, teachers, religious leaders, etc. This takes place through a combination of communication formats:

- Through community meetings
- Dedicated community members receive messages through a WhatsApp tree groups or via e-mail
- Outreach volunteers distribute printed information materials to PoC households

This two-way communication approach has many advantages. Trust levels are higher among community members. More people can be reached including those who are not mobile enough, marginalised, too vulnerable or have other issues and cannot participate.

There are no language barriers and no cultural barriers within the community. However, there is one important cautionary remark: When selecting its counterparts in a community, UNHCR should make sure that these persons really represent their community, are accepted, and have their people's best interest at heart. There are always people who misuse their position for their own hidden agenda or for some political or economic interests. Therefore, counterparts should be selected and monitored carefully, and there should be feedback mechanisms in place for people to reach out to UNHCR independently of their community leaders.

➔ Cultural and sports events

Dedicated events - theatre or music performances, exhibitions and sports - are an excellent way to gather PoC in larger numbers. They can be used for:

- **Awareness-raising:** The event itself includes important issues, such as GBV, HIV prevention, the dangers of irregular movement, etc. Actors, musicians, athletes can more easily raise sensitive topics in a community through the events and trigger discussions and interest within the community.
- **Information sharing:** The greeting, the interval or gatherings around the event can be used for speeches and the distribution of information materials. This can place at dedicated information points.

2.4 Information-needs assessments

Information-needs assessments is an ongoing process, repeated periodically, as needs and communication preferences are subject to change. This can be achieved by including communication-related questions to regular protection-needs assessments.

Relevant data can be obtained through various methods:

1 REGISTRATION

Data on language, educational level, location, availability of mobile phone, vulnerabilities.

2 FRONTLINE WORK

UNHCR's and partners' staff in regular direct contact with PoC can easily find out which information sources they trust, which communication tools they use, and who they reach out to when they want to know something.

3 REGULAR COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Communities should be asked whether they feel well informed, what information they need, and how they would prefer to receive it.

4 DEDICATED FGDS

FGDs dedicated to collecting information needs are particularly helpful.

5 FEEDBACK

Feedback is a good source for the information needs of affected communities.

2.5 CwC with vulnerable persons and persons with specific needs

Communication with vulnerable persons and persons with specific needs requires tact and confidentiality, keeping in mind the safety and security of the person. The message and the medium may have to be adjusted.

Examples include:

- Persons with low literacy levels, blind or deaf persons who cannot access all information channels.
- Someone with decreased mobility can be informed through a variety of different media but cannot attend meetings.

For deciding which information channel is suitable, and how to avoid inflicting harm, the following questions should be considered:

- 1 Is the channel accessible to the vulnerable person?
- 2 Does the channel allow for two-way communication if required?
- 3 Will the necessary level of confidentiality be preserved?
- 4 Could a vulnerable person be (re-)traumatised when confronted with the information?

Many PoC in Libya and Tunisia are severely traumatised and CwC activities with them must therefore be conducted with caution, preferably by trained staff.



3. MESSAGING

3.1 Reducing complexity, increasing readability

The information UNHCR provides to persons of concern can be of a complex nature, with the text of the original document written in a specific legal style. Being used to such texts, UNHCR staff find them precise and clear. But such texts are not suitable for CwC messages and need to be rephrased to ensure that PoC understand all the essential aspects of the content. Therefore, the text in CwC messages differs considerably from that in other UNHCR documents. While the information must remain accurate and valid, it must at the same time be understandable to the target audience.

LEGAL MESSAGES	CwC MESSAGES
Long texts	Short texts
Detailed explanations	Focusing on main points
Precise legal terminology	Plain language
In English or French	Also translated into other languages

CwC messages are the opposite of legal-style texts. The overall goal is to reduce complexity as far as possible. CwC texts must focus on one or two main messages, be short, and written in plain, everyday language - Keep It Short and Simple: KISS

An old rule taught in schools of journalism equally applies to CwC: the KISS rule – Keep It Short and Simple.

For those who do not have much experience with plain language writing, a good practise is to review it with members of the community before releasing it. Another resource are the media experts from the community, such as refugee journalists and editors.

Recognising that complicated messages do not reach the intended audiences, many media, governments, and other institutions now have introduced “simple-language” or “plain-language” sections on their websites targeting people with low literacy levels or people with another mother tongue.

🕒 Checklist: Efficient messaging

- ✔ Write texts with your audience and their information needs in mind.
- ✔ Structure the message logically.
- ✔ Leave out unnecessary details.
- ✔ Write as if you were talking. Spoken language is automatically simpler.
- ✔ Be personal and direct.
- ✔ Keep it simple, use everyday words.
- ✔ Keep sentences short.
- ✔ Do not use legal jargon.
- ✔ If terminology is unavoidable, explain the word.
- ✔ If acronyms are unavoidable, write them out the first time they appear.
- ✔ Use examples to explain complicated concepts.
- ✔ Repeat the main points of the message.
- ✔ Divide longer information into short paragraphs.
- ✔ Give each piece of information its own heading or subheading.
- ✔ Use explanatory pictures, lists, and tables to help readers navigate the text.

RESOURCES:

There are some free websites which help convert standard texts into plain language, such as:

<https://www.simplish.org>

<http://seotoolzz.com/article-simplifier.php>

<https://rewordify.com>

<https://paraphrasing-tool.com>

3.2 Content

The content of UNHCR's CwC messages is determined by the information needs of PoC and the operational context and updates.

However, the expectations about information PoC wish to get is not always met by UNHCR. PoC may wish to receive answers and information about matters that go beyond the scope of UNHCR's capacity and mandate. This is a factor that complicates CwC activities and should always be considered.

NEED TO INFORM

Information UNHCR needs to provide

- Registration and RSD
- Legal situation of PoC
- Rights and obligations of refugees
- Resources for assistance
- Local protection options
- Durable solutions
- Dangers of irregular movements

WISH TO KNOW

Information refugees want to get

- How to access assistance
- How to get resettled
- How to get work
- How to move on to Europe
- Help with immediate needs
- Practical tips in location (doctor, money transfer, accommodation)
- Free internet access

3.3 Lifespan of information messages

Some CwC information material is more generic than others and remains valid for a longer period. Such material can be produced in more expensive formats (metal billboards, video clips, colour prints on durable paper etc.), or in larger quantities (posters, flyers).

Examples: Anti-fraud messages, health recommendations, fire-safety instructions, etc.

Messages that contain phone numbers, addresses, websites, or office hours have a shorter lifespan, meaning they are subject to periodic changes and should be in easily changeable formats.

Examples: Information on access to assistance, counselling, emergency numbers, referrals, hotlines, etc.

Topical messages are new or fast-changing developments or individual notifications which should therefore be disseminated as SMS, in digital form, or in very simple formats such as simple flyers.

Examples: Temporary closure of offices, last-minute changes to aid distribution, invitations to events or openings, etc.

When implementing CwC activities, routine tasks need to be planned for to ensure the information messages are still available and relevant. Create a standardised dissemination plan of CwC information and activities with predefined dates and topics for each target audience and main language groups.

Activities which can be planned for include:

- Allow time to monitor notice boards and other locations for print and video material which may be outdated or damaged
- Consult internally on a regular basis with other units to support upcoming information needs
- Plan regularly repeated CwC topical FGDs, ensuring to cover all sub-groups and inviting participants ahead of time
- Dedicate time during regular community meetings to share updates on important CwC information and dispelling misinformation

4. COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND CHANNELS

There are many things to consider when choosing the right communication tool or channel, such as communication preferences of target audiences, accessibility of the tool or channel, and capacity of the country operation to use specific tools. The choice is largely dependent on the assessments of the communication landscape that were done during the design and planning stage.

The rapid technical developments in communication technologies has opened many new avenues and possibilities in reaching out to the communities, but also brought new challenges and increased needs of a better understanding of information media

and information practices, both in CwC and community outreach. And, ultimately, the choice of tools, channels, and approaches vary depending on the profile and location of the end users as well as the purpose of the communication. The various tools and channels are combined and deployed for different campaigns.

For the purposes of this handbook, a three-tiered categorisation system is used. These categories are face-to-face, traditional and digital although the lines are often blurred with the rapid technological developments.



FACE-TO-FACE CWC

communication requires a physical or virtual meeting between humanitarian workers and affected communities. In its simplest form, it is two-way communication that does not require specific skills or tools beyond oral language capacities or other forms of direct communication, such as sign language.



TRADITIONAL CWC TOOLS

can be described as information mediatized by the sender for distribution (printed, recorded, broadcasted, sent by phone). The technologies used predate the internet. They include printed materials, video, audio and telephony. As opposed to other traditional media, telephony allows for two-directional communication only.



DIGITAL CWC TOOLS

are efficient two-way virtual communication tools across distances, but they require community members to have access to a computer or smartphone and the skills to handle it. An ever-expanding number of social media platforms enable users to engage with each other in a simple manner and provides innovative information tools.

Note that nowadays analogue communication methods like face-to-face and traditional media can be transmitted via internet, including speech, sound, text, and images.

5. FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

As generally confirmed by information-needs assessments, meeting face-to-face is the preferred way of communication for most PoC. Any question can be addressed immediately, on the spot. Confusion and misunderstandings are easier to resolve and messages easier to understand as the quality of communication is heightened by nonverbal gestures and facial expressions. More recently face-to-face CwC communication has been supplemented by virtual meetings. This was triggered by movement restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and is likely to continue in the future as it offered good results.

Many PoC cannot visit offices because of long distances and transportation costs and for some of them the only way to get in contact with UNHCR is face-to-face meetings at community centres or home visits. Moreover, face-to-face is especially important for vulnerable groups who for a variety of reasons may have challenges to understand written messages or make their needs known through online media or call centres.

The advantage of face-to-face meetings is the immediate feedback you receive from the communities. It helps to understand the information needs, detect information gaps, rumours, and misunderstandings.

Face-to-face meetings are especially important when communicating with PoC in the Libya and Tunisia operations where many people are fragile and traumatised from their experiences. Detecting and understanding how to communicate with them is of critical importance during CwC and outreach.

In Libya, face-to-face remains the most preferred communication channel among UNHCR's PoC, but the specific country context, with a volatile security situation and limited humanitarian access, complicates efficient implementation of face-to-face. In Tunisia, face-to-face is one of the communication channels preferred by PoC. Face-to-face meetings with PoC are taking place in offices of UNHCR and partners or in refugee shelters and homes.

Strengths

- A popular communication tool among PoC
- Strongest and most persuasive form of communication
- Two-way communication - allows for instant sharing of information and feedback
- Enables a first-hand understanding of the situation and condition of communities
- Information can be tailored to individual needs
- Helps to understand emerging information needs
- Sensitive issues can be handled privately
- Enables the detection of rumours and misinformation
- A tool that builds trust among the community
- Suitable for PoC of low literacy levels
- No specific technical equipment needed

Challenges

- Relies on physical access and can have limited reach if not used virtually
- Restriction of movements of UNHCR staff
- Affected communities spread across the operations
- Reaching persons in mixed population movements
- Some PoC are in detention centres with limited access
- Multiple languages of target groups
- Time-consuming and labour intensive
- Needs good communication skills

MOST COMMON FACE-TO-FACE FORMATS IN CWC

Group meetings (e. g. participatory assessments, focus groups etc.)

Communication through community members (volunteers, elders, etc.)

Drama, music, performances, sports

Information stands

Targeted house visits

5.1 Check list for face-to-face CwC meetings

Whether implementing community meetings, FGDs, participatory assessments or other face-to-face communications, some considerations must be kept in mind.

Preparation

- ✔ Direct communication can get very spontaneous, and speakers can be side-tracked. Therefore, it is advisable to write down the issues that need to be raised on paper.
- ✔ In order not to be confronted with unexpected questions one should be familiar with the FAQs and have the correct answers readily available from the Refugee Knowledgebase platform.
- ✔ Familiarise oneself with the cultural traits of the target audience and their rules of interaction. For example, is it admissible to shake hands? Is it admissible for men and women to look each other in the eyes? Who is allowed to speak publicly, leaders, men, everybody?
- ✔ Be prepared by knowing the background and circumstances of the people you are meeting.

During the meeting

- ✔ When talking, the speaker must adapt the level of language and vocabulary used to the linguistic capacities and the information level of the audience, even when communication is through an interpreter.
- ✔ The statements should be in simple clear language and to the point.
- ✔ The speaker should speak loudly enough so those even at the back of the group can hear and pronounce words clearly, head towards the audience.
- ✔ It is crucial always to keep eye contact with the audience. This helps the speaker detect problems (lack of understanding, disbelief, rising tension, boredom among the audience).
- ✔ Statements should be short to allow time for questions and discussion.
- ✔ The speaker needs to make sure that the discussion is not dominated by influential speakers and that the discourse does not exclude certain groups. In certain communities this would be typically women and youth, then separate meetings should be held for men, women, and youth.
- ✔ The discussion needs to be documented in some way (on tape or by taking notes).

After the meeting

- ✔ It is important to follow up on the meeting. Promises made must be kept, questions that remained unanswered must be dealt with.
- ✔ An analysis of the meeting records and the issues raised reveals important facts on information needs, but also on misinformation and rumours circulating in the community. It can also help UNHCR find out if previous CwC actions were successful and reached the intended audience.



5.2 Targeted home or shelter visits

Home or shelter visits are activities of both CBP and CwC. Both purposes can be combined by distributing information or sensitising people on a certain topic whilst following up on individual cases.

Household visits are an excellent way to receive feedback from the community at no additional costs. It suffices to dedicate time during the visit for a short survey with questions related to CwC.

5.3 Combining face-to-face communication with other CwC tools

Face-to-face communication is reinforced and most impactful when combined with other communication materials distributed in physical or digital format, such as the UNHCR Libya and Tunisia service brochures, flyers, posters etc. The information discussed during face-to-face communication should also be disseminated by using social media, dedicated refugee video and radio programmes or other CwC tools as appropriate.

6. TRADITIONAL TOOLS AND CHANNELS

Traditional tools and channels include printed materials such as posters, leaflets, and banners. They are widely used in humanitarian operations both in rural and urban areas. Multimedia includes radio and video. Radio has been a common communication tool in field operations globally, while the use of video is increasing. Due to the rapid development and spread of mobile phones, telephone-based tools have become one of the most used communication tools in humanitarian emergencies.

MOST IMPORTANT TYPES OF TRADITIONAL TOOLS

Printed materials (posters, leaflets, brochures, billboards)

Multimedia (radio, TV, video, screenings, cinema)

Telephone-based (bulk SMS and voice messages, call centers, helplines/hotlines)

Clear and easy to understand information in printed materials is branded, uses simple language and avoids legal jargon



6.1 Printed materials

Printed materials include UNHCR service brochures, leaflets, posters, or other text materials. Messages should be kept short and simple (KISS: Keep It Short and Simple). When the printed material is conveying a complicated issue, such as important legal or administrative issues, the message must be phrased in language that the refugees can understand and are familiar with.

The printed materials must be designed to be legible and attractive. While a string of text alone may look unappealing or uninteresting, printed materials with illustrations and colours attract attention.

Even though printed material is meant to be read and thus addresses literate persons, it can also be designed for people with low literacy levels and children. Messages can be understood not only through text, but also using pictures and graphic images.



A digital toolbox has been developed and serves as a centralised repository of print materials for use during CwC by UNHCR and partners. The toolbox should be used as a digital library to save and share branded materials. It includes templates, logos, stock messages etc. Thus, the future design, production, and dissemination of branded printed materials in Libya and Tunisia is facilitated.

An important element is the UNHCR Libya and UNHCR Tunisia service brochures about services and service providers available in the operations that are also included in the toolbox.

All existing posters are available on the Refugee Knowledgebase for easy reference.

Strengths

- Effective both for simple and complex information
- More space for messages than in social media and SMS
- Pictures and cartoons can be effective e.g. for PoC of low literacy levels and children
- Important CwC tool for brand recognition and trust
- Easy and fast to produce and distribute
- Digital library (toolbox) available to save and share branded materials

Challenges

- Dependent on audience literacy levels
- No real-time updating possible
- Distribution hampered by the security situation and limited UNHCR presence
- Few locations regularly frequented by refugees
- Target groups widely dispersed across the country
- Production of materials in multiple languages
- Environmental considerations (littering of discarded materials)

🔄 Checklist for printed materials:

- ✔️ Branded the same way – use the templates in the digital library (toolbox)
- ✔️ Write in simple language, avoid legal jargon
- ✔️ Check with community members and representatives for comprehension, usefulness, and respect for cultural sensitivities
- ✔️ Translate into all relevant languages
- ✔️ Update regularly, with time stamp

6.2 Video and audio

Video and audio are an effective and powerful communication tool to explain complex contexts and information in a simple way. It can visualise the steps needed to access assistance and services provided by UNHCR and partners. Video is also important in engaging PoC of low literacy levels, persons with specific needs, and children. It is being used in waiting areas of reception centres, in refugee community centres, and other localities, as well as on social media channels and platforms.

Whilst video production requires an investment in time and resources to produce, videos are highly valuable as they are able to convey complex information in an easy to understand and attractive manner.

Video has several advantages: It can be adapted to different languages and used for multiple purposes. While the same video can be of interest to many different audiences – PoC, donors, media, the general public, it is important to produce dedicated CwC videos for PoC targeting their information needs specifically.

Video communication is of high impact even though it is usually one-way only. When used online, technology is allowing for live interaction.



- ➔ When using video communications content for CwC:
- ✔ Ensure it is in all relevant languages covering all services provided by UNHCR and partners in Libya and Tunisia
- ✔ Screen the videos in frequented areas such as waiting and reception areas and disseminate via social media platforms
- ✔ Provide child-friendly content and content for people with specific needs
- ✔ Diversify communication content by producing information videos, procedural videos and animation videos, especially for PoC of low literacy levels and children

Audios, in particular podcasts, should be considered, as this is a good tool to reach persons of low literacy levels. These can be reproduced and adapted for other channels such as radio, online video streaming platforms and should be made available on social media channels and through messaging applications, such as WhatsApp trees. When shared in digital form, audios have small data package sizes and can reach people with access to poor signal or low bandwidth.

Strengths

- Emotionally appealing and persuasive CwC tools
- Suitable for PoC of low literacy levels and children
- Generic videos and audios can remain topical for a long time
- Can be accessed through smartphones
- Videos screened in frequented areas
- Audios can reach people with access to poor signal or low bandwidth

Challenges

- Need of technical training and technical
- Production potentially cost-intensive

6.3 Telephony

Telephone communication includes helplines, hotlines, call centres, and bulk SMS. Telephone call allow for an immediate two-way communication with dialogue and discussion between the agency and the PoC enabling effective response and referral on the spot. Telephone communication is also highly effective for reaching PoC at no additional cost to them. There is usually no cost incurred by the recipient of a phone call or an SMS. Telephony is thus a cost-effective way to reach PoC who otherwise would not have the means to receive the information or are in remote locations.

Call centres have developed into one of the most important channels for CwC. In some operations they are operated in cooperation between two or more agencies and embody strong inter-agency cooperation.

- ✔ CwC audio messages can be pre-recorded and adapted for the call center and provide CwC messaging in a direct (i.e through interactive voice response - IVR) or indirect manner (i.e whilst PoC is on hold).
- ✔ All helpline/hotline and call center attendants should have access to FAQs through the Refugee Knowledgebase in order to respond
- ✔ Establish access to a one number system, ideally a toll number such as a “Numero vert” in Tunisia or call backs.

Strengths

- Two-way communication tool suitable for handling of complaints and feedback
- Can provide targeted information in many languages
- Not depending on location (reaches more people than face-to-face)
- Many PoC in Libya and Tunisia use mobile phones
- Can reach PoC at no additional cost to them

Challenges

- Destroyed infrastructure with frequent power cuts
- User costs
- Frequent change of numbers / SIM cards by users

SMS is extensively being used in Libya and Tunisia as more PoC have access to mobile phones and stable connections. It is increasingly important for sending personalised information to PoC on issues that affect them.

For target audiences with a large proportion of people with low literacy levels, voice messages instead of texts are most useful.

- ✔ In addition to bulk SMS, produce voice messages (clips), especially for PoC with low literacy levels.
- ✔ SMS should be sent by a centralised phone number clearly indicating UNHCR or partners as the sender.
- ✔ Usually the maximum length of an SMS is limited at 160 characters.

🔧 RESOURCES

SMS length calculators can be used when drafting the CwC messages to check the length:

<https://www.checkmarket.com/kb/maximum-length-of-a-text-message/>

<https://www.textmagic.com/free-tools/sms-length-calculator>

<https://messente.com/documentation/tools/sms-length-calculator>

7. DIGITAL TOOLS

Digital tools represent a rapidly expanding field for CwC. Refugees use social media for connecting with families and friends both at home and in the diaspora, and to reach out to other refugees, checking security on the journey, familiarising themselves with new environments, and getting information on assistance and available services. UNHCR is increasingly engaged with social media, using it to convey information and communicate with PoC and affected communities.

Digital tools used for CwC include websites, email, dedicated apps for refugees, and chatbots. CwC also uses social media networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and messaging apps such as WhatsApp/WhatsApp trees, Signal, Telegram, and Viber.

Use of digital tools for CwC has many advantages. It allows for fast, interactive engagement with PoC allowing for multiple forms of media to be used (text, images, audio, video) through easy mass dissemination of information, and systematic tracking of impact. However, in refugee situations some groups may be excluded from accessing digital tools, often including women, older people, and vulnerable persons.

Note that traditional CwC tools can also be made accessible through digital channels and face-to-face meetings can take place via video conferencing. Print media such as service brochures can be shared in downloadable electronic format, recordings as podcasts, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NO HARM.

“Social Media brings risks and protection concerns. You should work actively with communities to inform them about possible data privacy and security issues.” UNHCR’s Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of People of Concern to UNHCR lays out obligations for the Data Controller to safeguard the right to privacy, data security, confidentiality, and other rights of data subjects.

Important points to be aware of

- Digital engagement across CwC tools is both private and public. This means that conversations can easily be republished and one-on-one direct messages can easily be shared.
- When an official UNHCR account (Twitter, Facebook, etc) responds to a query or a comment on a thread, it is accessible to everyone and represents the organisation as a whole.
- Hasty or impulsive reactions posted on behalf of UNHCR generate a trail of data, i.e. digital footprints, which can damage UNHCR’s reputation, even when posted from a personal social media account.
- UNHCR’s data protection policy and the rights of PoC to privacy and security in accordance with the principle of “DO NO HARM” is of paramount importance.

7.1 Social media digital engagement and optimisation

Digital tools can be an efficient and effective way to disseminate messages and information. Digital engagement is the process of working with target audiences through digital tools and social media platforms.

There are considerable challenges during digital engagement. Agencies are using their Facebook or WhatsApp platforms to disseminate information. Ensuring a continuous online dialogue with PoC is also human resource intensive. The information needs of PoC are high and require substantial ongoing engagement. Efficiencies can also be achieved by coordinating at the inter-agency level.

Most UNHCR country operations have a Facebook page where news and information are posted to donors and refugees. Serving all target audiences at the same time on the same Facebook page creates confusion for PoC. For example, a post acknowledging and thanking a donor government for its contribution to UNHCR may result in negative responses from refugees questioning why their circumstances have not improved despite the funding. It is therefore important to have distinct Facebook pages for different audiences, one for donors and media, and another for CwC purposes targeting PoC.

Digital engagement also takes the form of personal post or tweets by UNHCR staff. It is essential that the staff are aware that they are representing UNHCR and not engaging in a private capacity. As such, messages should support the objectives of UNHCR's communication strategy.

RESOURCES

[It is important to consult UNHCR guide "Using Social Media in Community-Based-Protection: A Guide"](#)

In order to achieve efficient digital engagement and optimise the social media platforms you should:

- ✔ Analyse your digital/online landscape and the level of connectivity in the area you are targeting.
- ✔ Know your target audience:
- ✔ Who are the main target groups?
- ✔ Which online channels do they prefer?
- ✔ Which main languages should be used?
- ✔ Have distinct Facebook pages for different audiences, one for donors and media, and another for CwC purposes targeting PoC.
- ✔ Make sure you have sufficient human resources to carry out clear and consistent digital engagement.
- ✔ Establish a social media strategy, including guidelines for interactive engagement, the use of DM (direct messaging), and responding to negative feedback.
- ✔ Establish templates for key messages.
- ✔ Ensure use of social media analytics to measure impact (M&E) and adapt accordingly.

Social media optimisation includes ongoing actions taken to ensure that PoC are reached through UNHCR social media platforms. Optimisation involves:

- Ensuring social media "About" profile is filled in, with location and use of photos and logo fully updated.
- Following technical best practices for how to structure posts per social platform: Length, visuals, hashtags (Twitter less, Instagram more).
- Make sure the social media sites used by the operation are easy to find.
- Plan your content through a social media calendar:
 - Include a mix of news, recurring messages, and ensure messages are clear.
 - Use infographics, images, audio and video as much as possible.
 - Establish a posting schedule and planning tool (for instance by using ContentCal or SproutSocial) for the roll-out of a social media calendar, which can work in conjunction with the CwC toolbox and the Libya and Tunisia Service brochures.

Benefits of a social media calendar

The CwC calendar allows for:

1. Planning CwC activities
2. Establishing regularity of messaging
3. Ensuring regular repetition of messages and FAQ
4. Keeping enough flexibility for news and topical adaptations
5. Ensuring CwC messaging is a cross sectoral activity
6. Creating consistency of messages across different channels
7. Increasing trust in UNHCR as source of information
8. Boosting UNHCR visibility and brand recognition

Social media calendar for the month should be prepared to roll out social media posts at regular, planned times depending on audience preferences and habits. Ensuring content is streamlined in this way minimises content gaps and makes sure information is reaching the audience. Collaboration with other sectors can be planned through the calendar ensuring there is ample time to check and confirm the correctness of CwC message content.

As appropriate you can schedule posts with the release and distribution of other tools such as posters, leaflets or physical screenings of videos of same message.

It should also be used later as part of monitoring and evaluation to assess most impactful posts, areas of interest of audience, reach etc.

Sample template for CwC social media calendar

Day of week / date / time	Sample topic	Message & format	Target audience	Responsible CwC team member	Content check FP
Day 1 / Monday, 12:00pm	Registration	Template #1 / text + Image	New arrivals – Arabic, Tigrinya, etc	CwC team member A + translators	Registration Officer +
Day 2 / Tuesday, 17:00 pm	Health related	Template #2 / text	PWSN group A, French/Amharic	CwC team member B	Health FP
Day 3/ Wednesday, 10:00am	RSD	Template #3 / text + Image	Stateless group A	CwC team member C	RSD Officer
Day 4/ Thursday	Education	Video	Parents, Arabic/ French/English/ Amharic	CwC team member A	Education Officer
Day 5/ Friday	Cash	Template #4 / text + Video	All eligible PoC (+18), Tigrinya	CwC team member B	Cash Officer
Day 6/ Saturday	Stories	Text or Video	All PoC	CwC team member C	PI FP
Day 7/ Sunday	Reminders of telephone numbers	Template #5 / text + Video	All PoC	CwC team member A	Protection FP
Ad hoc, when known add for week or the month	News, events and topical items	Template #6 / text + Image	All PoC	CwC team member B	PI FP
Weekly / Bi-weekly / Monthly	Special announcement	Template #7 / text + Image	Special group A	CwC team member D	Requestor
Weekly / Bi-weekly / Monthly	Fraud and feedback mechanisms	Template #8 / text + Image	All PoC	CwC team member B	Protection FP

7.2 Measuring success of digital engagement

The success of digital engagement requires ongoing monitoring, listening and evaluation. Monitoring involves watching, observing, and keeping track of progress over time, while listening involves hearing, interpreting, and understanding.

Due to the digital form of the data being captured through digital tools, data such as posts, conversations, reactions and other responses can all be analysed in the form of digital metrics. These are readily available through social media platforms.

This data can also be disaggregated by age, sex, and other diversity considerations as per UNHCR AGD guidelines. In order to measure the success of digital engagement you should consider the following:

1 USE METRICS

Assess traffic, user behavior, and levels of engagement.

2 ANALYSE FEEDBACK

What is the reaction of your audience?
Positive/Negative/Receptive?

3 EVALUATE FEEDBACK

Are you providing useful, timely, context-sensitive information?
Easy to understand/hard to understand?

4 REMAIN FLEXIBLE

Do you keep adapting your messages in response to changes in the situation?

5 BE STRATEGIC

Measure digital performance against the indicators chosen at the planning stage.

7.3 Digital platforms with CwC information

UNHCR Help.org

UNHCR manages the help.unhcr.org website which is focused on providing PoC with reliable information about protection and assistance services provided in Tunisia. The website offers PoC the opportunity to also visit a FAQ section for quick information about UNHCR in Tunisia, accommodation, financial assistance, education and other helpful services.

As the help.unhcr.org website is focused on providing information for PoC, it can be cross-promoted through CwC activities by providing helpful links to the website on social media and through the social media calendar.

Website Link: [Help.unhcr.org](https://help.unhcr.org)

The Refugee Knowledgebase

The Refugee Knowledgebase (RKB) is a dedicated online resource for use only by UNHCR and partners. It is not open to the general public or PoC and requires user access. It is a platform that links general and context-specific refugee related FAQs with directory information and media assets.

The RKB is entirely online and searchable at any time and from anywhere, including through mobile devices. The website can provide information in three languages: English, Arabic and French.

It also serves as a digital repository for available printed materials to PoC and has a section dedicated to multimedia. The content in the RKB has many formats, including text, images, videos or other forms of content like graphs and illustrations.

Users with the relevant access are also enabled to add or update FAQs on the system for use throughout the operation.

See instruction [video](#)

For any inquiries or support please contact: info@refugeeknowledgebase.org

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN CWC

Implementing CwC strategies is a resource-intensive task that involves CwC staff and all relevant units of the office. It is time consuming and requires human and financial resources. As such, it is crucial to keep monitoring and evaluating the impact and performance of each activity to the objectives. This is achieved by collecting quantitative and qualitative data to continue adapting messages and communications activities.

There are different types of assessments and different indicators to measure success in CwC:

Monitoring is an ongoing performance assessment. In CwC, it enables managers to observe the progress of CwC actions and products. It allows the manager to examine the volume and timeliness of actions and make adaptations and corrections in real time where necessary.

Evaluation is periodic exercise undertaken in retrospect, usually by persons not involved in project implementation. It examines the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activities and measures them against the objectives of the CwC strategy.

Measuring the success of communication strategies is more complicated than other forms of humanitarian interventions. Different indicators measure different types of achievements.

Two types of indicators are in use for evaluation processes, they are referred to as key performance indicators (KPIs) or key impact indicators (KIIs).

Performance indicators inform about the quantity and quality of output and are normally easy to determine.

Impact indicators measure changes in the welfare and behaviour of persons of concern and are much more difficult to establish.

Case study: Registration of babies born to refugees

Monitoring and evaluating the impact and performance of communications to the objectives set by the office is a highly important. Consider the impact and performance indicators in the following example.

Refugees in urban settings have difficulties registering newborn babies and UNHCR prints information leaflets explaining the process. These leaflets are to be distributed by community leaders and through its website and on Facebook for digital download.

Performance indicators

- X leaflets have been printed in Y languages
- Z copies have been distributed by community volunteers
- Facebook posts was seen by X people

These indicators show that the actions have been set in motion but does not reveal if the exact target audience (expecting parents) has been reached and if the information was helpful to them. As the objective was to facilitate the registration of babies born to refugees, impact must be measured by parameters outside of CwC:

- Increased number of refugee children registered with authorities
- Decreased number of enquiries at hotline regarding registration of new-borns



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Performance indicators and impact indicators in CwC measure success at different levels:

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- The number of face-to-face meetings held
- The number of calls handled by an infoline
- The number of information posters printed
- The number of brochures distributed
- The number of posts published on social media
- The number of persons participating and engaging in face-to-face meetings (male/female)
- The increase of calls at the Infoline (per nationalities/ gender, vulnerability,...)
- For digital media it is particularly easy to establish reach data: though the respective analytics tools: hits for texts, articles or links, followers on social media, engagement such as likes, shares or comments, views of videos etc.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Who is receiving the CwC messages? Is it the intended audience?
- Were there any groups/communities that were excluded/left out?
- Are the target audience responding to the CwC messages?
- Have the communication needs of the target audience changed?
- Has the information been helpful in resolving problems PoC are facing?

9. PUTTING A CWC STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN INTO PRACTICE



The CwC strategies for Libya and Tunisia must be implemented with feasibility in mind. CwC is a process and it requires a plan in order to be rolled-out. To practically implement the CwC goals and activities, an indicative step-by-step approach is presented below.

9.1 Steps to take

Step 1: Defining the purpose of the CwC strategy.

- ✔ What do we want to achieve?

Following multifunctional planning meetings, CwC goals are linked to target audiences and sectors.

Step 2: Determine your action plan

- ✔ Select who will be responsible to do what.
- ✔ Take into account budgetary needs, staffing needs, timeframes

Step 3: Segmenting the target audiences

- ✔ Who are they?
- ✔ What are their communication habits?
- ✔ What are their information needs?

CwC team researches and collects information on target audiences.

Step 4: Determining the messages

- ✔ What kind of information do we want to disseminate?
- ✔ How should it be presented?
- ✔ How do we word the message?

Key messages are defined and cleared with the relevant units. Note that this is about the correctness of the content of the message, not about the wording. Wording depends on the format used as the same content will be adapted differently on a poster, in a brochure, or in a video.

Note both the Libya and Tunisia operations have recently established repositories of FAQs with tools for updating them, which may form a base for updating CwC messages.

Step 5: Which combination of CwC tools and channels will work best?

- ✔ Which tools and channels are suitable and accessible for each target audience?
- ✔ Which media will reach the target audience?
- ✔ Which channels are trusted?

Based on information about target audiences and selected messages, CwC team decides on the most suitable formats for communication.

Step 6: Get the message to the audience

- ✔ Once the target audience, the messages and the format are selected, the CwC team should start communicating with the PoC.
- ✔ Keep track of the actions taken and the messages communicated to measure the efforts.

Step 7: Monitor and evaluate the CwC activities

- ✔ To what degree has the target audience been reached? Is it satisfactory?
- ✔ Have messages been understood and trusted?
- ✔ Have the information needs of the target audience been met?

Programme Unit determines the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that will be used and formulates the relevant KPIs and KIs.

Step 8: Did any PoC reach out to UNHCR?

- ✔ Are there feedback and complaint mechanisms established? Are they known to the PoC?
- ✔ How will UNHCR assure the feedback is being recorded and acted upon?
- ✔ Who is responsible to act on the feedback or complaint?

9.2 Template for CwC action plan

The best way to design a CwC strategy and monitor progress of many parallel CwC activities is an action plan containing the following elements:

Purpose/Objective, Key messages, Channel(s), Frequency/Dates, Budget, Responsibility, Impact/Evaluation, Status/Remarks.

CwC action plan: Arabic-speaking asylum seekers in Tunis, Sfax, and Sousse

Key messages	Channel(s)	Frequency/ Dates	Budget	Responsi- bility	Impact/ Evaluation	Status/ Remarks
Objective 1: Inform about health care options. Within a year the percentage of refugees seeking medical attention increased by 30%						
Addresses and working hours of local health care providers;	Posters in UNHCR and partner offices;	1/year Production in March (100 copies per city)	USD 2,000	Hassan	Check every 2 months if posters displayed; Check number of refugees frequenting clinics in 3 cities	Posters printed and mailed to partners
Explanation of procedures and costs involved	Leaflets distributed by volunteers	1/year Production in March (1,500 copies per city)	USD 6,000	Hassan	Check number of leaflets distributed each month, provide additional or reprint as necessary.	Flyers printed. Volunteers in Tunis and Sfax provided, Sousse pending
	Posts on Facebook	1/month	-	Khadija	Check followers, engagement	First post published on 2 March; Reach: 5,000, Engagement: 600
Objective 2: Inform new arrivals about hotline numbers						

9.3 Matching CwC tools and channels with requirements

There are many things to consider when choosing the right communication tool or channel. The choice is largely dependent on the assessments of the communication landscape that were done during the design and planning stage.

Accordingly, each tool's suitability for the intended purpose, audience and their needs will vary. The communications environment is also frequently changing, so shifting focus from one channel to another and being flexible to combine multiple tools for maximum impact is important.

The matrix below will assist you to match and determine which tool or channel is most suitable according to audience characteristics and needs. The three-tiered categorisation system used across the handbook is used.



LEGEND: ✓ very suitable + acceptable - not ideal ✗ very unsuitable ? depends

Face-to-face communication

	Group meetings	Participatory assessments	Communication through community members	Performances (drama music)	Information stands	Targeted house visits
Small audiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Large audiences	✗	-	+	✗	✗	✗
Low literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sedentary audiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
People on the move	-	?	✓	-	?	✗
Complex messages	+	+	-	+	-	+
Simple messages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Messages of long validity	-	-	-	+	+	+
Short lived messages	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
Remarks	Combine with printed materials, video or other channels		Provide them with printed material	Combine with discussion	Combine with printed materials	

LEGEND: ✓ very suitable + acceptable - not ideal ✗ very unsuitable ? depends

Traditional tools

	Leaflets, flyers	Brochures	Billboards, posters	Bulk SMS (text)	Bulk voice messages	Call centres, helplines/ hotlines
Small audiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	+
Large audiences	-	✗	?	✓	✓	✓
Low literacy	?	?	?	-	✓	✓
Sedentary audiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
People on the move	✓	?	+	?	?	✓
Complex messages	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	+
Simple messages	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Messages of long validity	✓	✓	-	✗	✗	✓
Short lived messages	✓	✗	+	✓	✓	+

Digital tools

	Social media platforms: Facebook / Messenger, WhatsApp / WhatsApp trees, Signal, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Viber, TikTok	Podcasts	Websites (mobile-friendly)	E-mail	Apps for refugees	Chatbot
Small audiences	+	+	+	✓	+	✗
Large audiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low literacy	?	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Sedentary audiences	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓
People on the move	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complex messages	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✗
Simple messages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Messages of long validity	+	✓	✓	✓	✗	+
Short lived messages	✓	✓	+	✓	✓	✓
Remarks	If messages are complex, it helps to repeat them or to add links to website, documents, etc					

10. ONLINE RESOURCES FOR SELF-LEARNING

In addition to training conducted on behalf of UNHCR, staff working on CwC have access to several additional online resources:

BBC Media Action / Our insight and impact

(Online database)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/insight-and-impact>

BBC Media Action is a highly experienced organisation specialising in outreach to communities. Their online database includes research reports, briefings, and working papers from 2012 onwards. Users can sign up for the regular BBC Media Action newsletter which shares developments in the communications environment.

CDAC tools and resources - a comprehensive overview

(Online toolbox)

<http://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20200331180829-b5e17>

This site offers excellent tools and guidance. The platform provides courses, reading materials, videos, templates, generic messages, and many other tools for planning and implementing CwC activities.

The Listening Post Collective Playbook

<https://www.listeningpostcollective.org/playbook>

The Listening Post Collective was established to enable local communities in the US to share information. It offers resources, tools, peer-to-peer support, and a shared learning space for community groups looking to revitalise their information ecosystems. The site is highly interactive and has simple step-by-step instructions, tools and practical advice for efficient community engagement.

UNHCR Innovation Service: Communicating with Communities

<https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/communicating-with-communities/>

A short guide which consolidates UNHCR Innovation Service's views and experiences of Communicating with Communities, and contains a selection of tools and videos to help field practitioners enhance their practice.

Read more

[Accountability to Affected Populations: A handbook for UNICEF and partners](#), UNICEF, June 2020

[A Red Cross/Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability](#), ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2016.

[Communicating with Communities and Accountability: A Current Debate](#), CDAC

[Communicating with Communities during COVID, and what are they telling UNHCR?](#) UNHCR MENA, April 2020

[Communicating with Communities - Handbook for Greece Version 1.1](#), National CwC Working Group, July 2016.

[Daadab Kenya - Humanitarian Communications and Information needs Assessment among Refugees in the Camps: Findings, Analysis & Recommendations](#), Internews, August 2011

[EMERGING PRACTICES: Mental health and psychosocial support in refugee operations during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), UNHCR, June 2020

[How to Establish and Manage a Systematic Community Feedback Mechanism](#), IFRC, 2018

[Humanitarian Futures for Messaging Apps](#), ICRC, June 2020

Mass communication with communities, a chapter in [UNHCR Emergency Handbook Minimum Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement](#), UNICEF, March 2020

[Placing accountability at the heart of humanitarian assistance](#) Listen Learn Act Project, April 2017

[The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#). CHS Alliance, Groupe URD, 2014.

[UNHCR Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People](#) (AAP), UNHCR, September 2020

Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of People of Concern to UNHCR

[Using social media in Community-Based Protection](#), A Guide: January 2021, UNHCR.

ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations	RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
AGD	Age, Gender, and Diversity	ROV	Refugee Outreach Volunteer
C4D	Communication for Development	TRC	Tunisian Refugee Council
CAAP	Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations	UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
CBO	Community-based Organisation	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
CBP	Community-based Protection		
CE	Community Engagement		
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability		
CCE	Communication and Community Engagement		
CCEI	Communication and Community Engagement Initiative		
CDC	Community Development Centres		
CE	Community Engagement		
CFM	Common Feedback Mechanism		
CTR	Tunisian Refugee Council		
CwC	Communication with Communities		
DM	Direct Message		
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question		
FGD	Focus Group Discussion		
IDP	Internally Displaced Person		
IP	Implementing Partner		
IVR	Interactive Voice Response		
KI	Key Informant		
KPIs	Key performance indicators		
KIIs	Key impact indicators		
KISS	Keep It Short and Simple		
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning		
MENA	Middle East and North Africa		
MI	Mass Information		
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation		
MSNA	Multi Sector Needs Assessment		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		
PA	Participatory Assessment		

