



GOOD PRACTICES: INFORMATION SHARING

Challenges and Issues

According to the *HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management*, humanitarian organizations need to ensure beneficiaries and stakeholders have access to timely, relevant, and specific information about their organization and activities.

During the Pakistan's 2010 flood response, numerous agencies faced information sharing challenges. For IOM Mass Communications, any problems disseminating information in a timely and coordinated fashion was coupled with the responsibility of identifying what information was required where. Communicating in rural areas, with females and government authorities and technological impediments reduced impact further.

Other drawbacks include clusters not being in the habit of allocating funds for beneficiary communications and the lack of collective sharing culture. Additionally and mostly due to quick emergency rollover and lack of communication focal persons, INGOs/NGOs were also not always aware of the type of information and IOM Mass Comms services available to them and then when they were, often agencies were slow to respond with relevant sector specific information.

What worked well?

A 'Human Network' of communities leaders/information focal persons established by a strong field staff presence in the affected districts enabled better ground level feedback to address information gaps, challenges and needs. High quality, tangible and accurate information products, such as Information Service Directories and FAQs, were particularly effective means of disseminating and targeting information to provincial and community needs.

Other best practices include the provision of awareness sessions relating to health and hygiene. Awareness sessions delivered verbally worked well in areas of low literacy when alerting people to their right to information. The use of implementing partners and NGOs was also helpful in meeting the HAP Standard's benchmark of information sharing.

Lessons Learned

- Timely delivery of information is critical to ensure informed consent.
- 'Human Networks' are the best mode of communication with the masses.
- Partnership with grass root organizations is necessary to enhance information outreach.
- People need information products in languages they prefer.
- Increased channels to disseminate information in a transparent way will gain greater confidence of organizations and communities.
- Outreach in the community (e.g. through traditional birth attendants) can ensure quicker targeted information sharing.
- A combination of modern technology and local communication tools will ensure the sharing and receiving of information.