Communities in Humanitarian Settings
Principles and Emerging Trends of Risk Communication and Community Engagement for COVID-19 in Low Resource Setting
Agenda:

• Defining Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) during COVID-19

• Brief overview of key social behavior change and risk communication theories used in outbreaks

• A note about messaging and the cross-cutting nature of RCCE

• Brief overview of challenges and guidance for conducting RCCE in low-resource settings
What is Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) during COVID-19?

• Provides timely, relevant and actionable life-saving information (while addressing stigma and rumors)

• Identifies and supports community-led solutions

• Listens and responds to community feedback

• Uses innovative approaches and data to encourage social behavior change

Source: Adapted from the IFRC COVID-19 Rapid Training, RCCE
What Theory Can Inform Risk Communication Messaging?

Extended Parallel Process Model

Message components

Perceived threat? Susceptibility/severity
- No → Disregard → Message rejection
- Yes → Danger control → Message acceptance

Perceived efficacy? Self-efficacy/response efficacy
- Yes → Message acceptance
- No → Fear control → Message rejection
Which Theories Can Inform an RCCE Response?

Social Cognitive Learning Theory

• Observational learning: argues that seeing the behavior in practice and the benefits derived can help others adopt it

• Self-efficacy: Focuses on the interaction between an individual and the environment, highlighting the importance of creating an enabling environment

Diffusion of Innovation

• Communication channels can help an idea become more popular

• Works best when prominent members of society can influence

• How simple? Does it work for me? Can I see it? Can I try it?

Illustrates how people are initially slow to adopt new behaviors, but as the behavior becomes better known and accepted, more people practice it.
Socio-Ecological Model

**Structural**
- Policies, laws/legislation, guidance, protocols, economy, income equality, media/technology environment
- Religious & cultural values, institutional racism, gender norms, social movements

**Service**
- Capacity/skills
- Human resources
- Financial resources
- Coverage/access
- Functional referrals
- Trust in service providers

**Community**
- Community leadership
- Social capital/support
- Community assets/resources
- Collective efficacy
- Access to information
- Stigma

**Family/Peer**
- Peer influence
- Spousal communication
- Partner/family influence
- Spousal support

**Individual**
- Knowledge, perceived risk, self-efficacy, perceived norms, emotion, cognitive biases, stigma
Adapting Standard Prevention Messages – What Should Messages Do at the Field Level?

• Target key population groups
• Acknowledge challenges people face complying with measures
• Be evidence-based
• Be developed with the community
• Be clear, simple, practical, specific, and locally contextualized (local languages)
• Clearly explain the measures in each community, why, how long
• Raise awareness about other preventive measures, while ensuring people can implement these
• Link to available services and resources
• Instill confidence with a positive tone that reinforces specific behavior(s)
• Repeat across multiple channels frequently to increase reach and recall
• Not contribute to stigma; highlight importance of social responsibility
Going Beyond Messaging

Risk Communication and Community Engagement goes beyond the delivery of a simple message or slogan, to include the full range of ways in which people individually and collectively act or convey meaning.
1. Participation
2. Two-Way Communication
3. Empowerment and Ownership
4. Inclusion
5. Adaptability and Localization
6. Building on Local Capacity

Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement

Core Minimum Standards

UNICEF C4D

Women for Woman International
Tips for Engaging People in Low-Resource Settings Remotely and In-Person
Conduct Rapid Assessments and Analysis

Connecting through Hotlines

Fostering Virtual Discussions & Technical Support
Support Community-Led Solutions

Interactive Community Radio

Addressing Rumors and Misinformation

Non-Tech/Mobile Options
Home Visits by Front-Line Workers, CWHs, CVBs
Online & Mobile Training of Front-Line Workers
Planning Guide for Adapting RCCE as Public Health and Social Measures Shift: With Safety Tips for Conducting Community Meetings
Adapting RCCE during Shifting Lockdowns

• Collect and Discuss Rising Topics and New Norms
• Maintain Essential Prevention Measures and Integrate COVID-19 Messaging Into Other Issues
• Enable Behavior Change as PHSMs Shift and Address Low Risk Perceptions
• Address Fears of Accessing Preventative Health Services
• Engage Youth as Agents of Change
Challenges and Barriers
Challenges in Complying with COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures in Low-Resource Settings

- Population density
- Household and social structures
- WASH
- Livelihoods
- Economic factors
- Gender divides

- Health system
- Education
- Transport
- Transient populations
- Cultural practices
- Lack of social networks or safety nets
Risk Communication and Community Engagement Challenges in Low-Resource Settings

- Language barriers
- Limited access to communication resources
- Fewer options for face-to-face interactions
- Contested leadership
- Over-stretched community-based structures
- Mistrust
- Social cohesion – different backgrounds, wealth
- Exclusion
- Rapid spread of information
- Competing priorities
- Risk of stigma
Guidance for Planning Local Solutions with Communities

FINDING COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS TO COVID-19:
An interagency guidance note on working with communities in high density settings to plan local approaches to preventing and managing COVID-19.
Produced by the Interagency Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCE) technical working groups in East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

Purpose
This practical guidance note is intended for anyone involved in COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement (RCE) efforts in complex and fragile settings in Africa, which includes refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and informal urban settlements.

A combination of high population density, poor housing, limited access to water and sanitation, juxtaposed with inaccessible health services and widespread poverty, increase the risk and impact of a COVID-19 outbreak in these settings. Refugees, IDPs, and people living in informal urban settlements, which are often home to urban refugees and irregular migrants, are often marginalized and excluded from national response plans. This can lead to high levels of mistrust towards authorities and responders within these groups. This is further exacerbated by the fact that standard COVID-19 prevention measures, such as physical distancing and handwashing, will be more challenging and in some cases even impossible to implement in crowded camps and informal settlements.

This is why it is essential to work with communities in these settings to identify and support local, practical solutions to prevent the spread of infection and bring back the outbreak under control. Risk communication messages and community engagement approaches need to be adapted to acknowledge and address the challenges these communities face, as they risk seeing frustration and the outright rejection of humanitarian response efforts.

This guidance note draws on and summarizes content from a range of other guidance notes, many with a global focus or broader scope than RCE, to focus on:

1. Challenges faced by people living in camps and informal settlements in following standard COVID-19 prevention measures
2. Risk communication and community engagement challenges in camps and informal settlements
3. Step-by-step guidance on how to work with communities to plan COVID-19 response measures, including practical examples of successful RCE approaches and community-led solutions used in camps and informal settlements across Africa
4. Guidance on how to adapt standard COVID-19 prevention messages for these settings
5. Documents and tools to develop this guidance note
6. Useful resources to help you implement the recommendations in this guide
7. Acknowledgements

*Thanks to a large number of resources used in the development of this guidance note.
Understand the Community and their Context

- Basic demographic data
- Community structures
- Community dynamics
- Trusted sources of information and preferred communication channels
- People’s knowledge, attitudes, practices, and perceptions
- Capacities and current approaches
- Main needs and challenges
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Engage Community Leaders and Groups to Identify Local Solutions
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- Physical distancing
- Religious gatherings
- Public gatherings
- Handwashing
- Personal behaviors
- Transport
- Detection, reporting and referral system for suspect cases
- Isolation of cases
- Birth and burial practices
EXAMPLE: Supporting Communities to Construct their own Handwashing Stations
Communicate Prevention and Response Measures Clearly and Widely via Trusted Channels
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• Support communities in communicating local solutions, with opportunities for feedback
• Support trusted stakeholders to lead RCCE in their community
• Provide training
• Provide resources they need to carry out RCCE activities
• Encourage sharing of information through existing networks, using trusted and well-known approaches for their community
• Encourage dialogue and for them to share feedback from networks with humanitarian and government responders
• Depending on the context, consider engaging religious leaders of all denominations in the dialogue
Listen, Analyze, and Act on Community Feedback

• Establish a system for feedback, rumors and misinformation
• Use trusted channels and people within the community to collect community feedback and review these approaches
• Discuss community feedback and how to act on it
• Update community members on how their feedback has been used and acted upon
• Address fear, misinformation, stigma, and rumors quickly
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What Do We Mean By Community Feedback, and Why is it So Critical?
Types of Community Feedback

1. Rumours, observations and beliefs – information that may be partially or fully inaccurate

2. Questions – anything the community wants to know

3. Suggestions – ideas from the community about how to tackle issues or what we could do better or differently

4. Acknowledgement & praise – compliments from communities

Content based on IFRC’s session on Feedback Mechanisms developed for READY Initiative’s Micro-Training
Addressing Rumors, Misinformation and Disinformation
"The most vulnerable are smokers, alcoholics, the rich, and transporters" (Cameroon)

"Our traditional healers have the cure for the disease." (Burkina Faso)

"When you don’t have corona and go to hospital for treatment, you catch corona there" (Mauritius)

"Corona virus was manufactured to decimate the Africans" (Ghana)

"Coronavirus comes from the Chinese government to be more powerful" (Philippines)

"There is never a disease called COVID-19 the government, the health workers, and the politicians are all liars" (Ghana)

"Myanmar doesn't have cases because the weather here is so hot" (Myanmar)

"Black people can’t die of coronavirus; it is a disease of white people" (DRC)
How Are We Addressing Rumours?

Listen & Document

Verify

Engage

Content based on IFRC’s session on Feedback Mechanisms developed for READY Initiative’s Micro-Training
RCCE is a Cross-Cutting Approach in a Public Health and Humanitarian Response

Including Community Health Programs (e.g., home-based & palliative care)

- Health
- Social welfare
- Food Security
- Protection
- Education
- Nutrition

RCCE for Covid-19
Key Takeaways

• Communities must be at the center of any public health intervention, especially in emergencies, and this can be achieved through effective, participatory RCCE.

• Social behavior change and risk communication theories can inform an effective RCCE approach, specifically, to translate data into action.

Additional Considerations

RCCE is a cross-cutting approach, and should be integrated across sectors.