

# HUMANITARIAN BROADCASTING IN EMERGENCIES: A SYNTHESIS OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

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# Acronyms

<b>ACORAB</b>	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters of Nepal	<b>KII</b>	key informant interviews
<b>BAN</b>	Broadcasting Association of Nepal	<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations
<b>CDAC</b>	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network	<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee	<b>R2HC</b>	Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development	<b>SMAC</b>	Social Mobilisation Action Consortium
<b>EVD</b>	Ebola virus disease	<b>SSI</b>	semi-structured interview
<b>FGD</b>	focus group discussion	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IRFC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	<b>Unicef</b>	United Nations Children's Fund



People pass an Ebola awareness mural in Monrovia, Liberia, in October 2014. © John Moore/Getty Images

# Executive summary

Since 1994, when a new Kinyarwanda-language service was set up in response to the Rwanda genocide, the BBC World Service and (since it was established in 1999) BBC Media Action have responded to 28 emergencies providing critical information to meet the needs of people affected.

In recent years, the humanitarian community has increasingly recognised the importance of getting critical information to and from people affected by disasters. The systems, learning and co-ordination around such communication support have improved since 2012 when, along with other media and humanitarian actors, BBC Media Action helped to establish the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network.

However, there is still little systematic learning around what does and does not work in using communication to help people respond to and recover from disaster. This research report is designed as a contribution to address this gap, using insights from BBC Media Action's own monitoring and evaluations of four specific case studies.

BBC Media Action responds to different emergencies in different ways, ranging from establishing emergency programmes, often with the BBC World Service, to supporting and working in partnership with community, commercial or state broadcasters in the countries affected through to emergency preparedness training and capacity strengthening. This report, however, focuses mainly on mass communication programming – broadcasting that can reach millions of people when disaster strikes – informing them about what has happened, what to do, how to find missing loved ones and how to protect themselves and their families during the crisis.

**Chapter 1** provides a brief review of some of the most salient literature and clarifies some of the terminology used in the context of media and communication in humanitarian responses.

**Chapter 2** reviews the special challenges of carrying out effective research and generating robust evidence from communication interventions in humanitarian crises. These challenges are both ethical (such as ensuring research does no harm and benefits those affected at the time) and practical (such as the difficulty of establishing baseline data or of carrying out focus group discussions during an epidemic). Some of these challenges are common to all humanitarian response work, some of them are specific to evaluating mass media information and communication interventions (such as how to determine what constitutes “good” information or what is the specific effect of a programme often reaching millions of people).

**Chapter 3** outlines BBC Media Action's research approach to humanitarian responses, and then explains the method used here to synthesise research findings across the four cases studies that form the basis of this report. This synthesis is framed around selected OECD/DAC (Development Assistant Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) evaluation criteria.<sup>1</sup>

**Chapter 4** outlines the four case studies that form the focus of this report: (i) a project providing audiovisual content screened mainly in UNHCR registration centres in Jordan and Lebanon designed to enable Syrian refugees to access humanitarian support and articulate their needs (2013–2014); (ii) a set of radio broadcasts to provide people in Gaza with practical humanitarian

information and enable them to access help around the period of the 2014 crisis; (iii) a major communication response to the 2014–2015 West Africa Ebola epidemic, initially through an existing BBC Media Action partnership with 36 radio stations across Sierra Leone, and then with a series of broadcast partnerships reaching across Liberia and Guinea, together with capacity strengthening and emergency preparedness training; and (iv) rapid response broadcasts to the April/May 2015 Nepal earthquakes with the BBC Nepali service and several hundred partner radio stations covering the entire country.

**Chapter 5** provides a synthesis of these four case studies into a set of findings and insights that can collectively be drawn from the evaluations. Findings show that audiences were able to identify strongly with the characters and topics in the programmes, and that they were relevant and appropriate for a mass audience. They highlight the importance of partnership in further addressing more localised needs and issues. Findings also show that issues of engagement, access and trust are key to the programme’s effectiveness in achieving its outcomes across the identified areas: connecting people to each other; giving people a voice; enhancing discussion and dialogue; positively influencing attitudes; encouraging and motivating people to act; and enhancing knowledge.

**Chapter 6** suggests an indicative theory of change, informed by these evaluation findings and other literature, for the use of mass communication in humanitarian interventions.

**Chapter 7** provides a conclusion making four points in particular. First, that while mass media is effective at reaching large numbers of people with potentially life-saving information across a range of topics, it is less effective at providing more context-specific, localised information that people also need. A combination of mass media and local partnerships is needed to address this. Second, information needs to be practical to be useful, and mass media is most effective at providing practical information that can be universally applied, such as information about the situation, what to do and how to protect yourself and your family, rather than more specific details of what to do in any given context or situation. More localised, context-specific information provision is also important. Third, mass-scale broadcasts are particularly effective at achieving psychosocial impacts, such as helping people feel more connected with others going through the same experience and providing confidence to act in the face of crisis. Finally, crisis exacerbates and heightens existing issues and people make choices about where to get their information based on access, quality, trust and relevance of content. People in crisis place an especially high value on information they can trust, and trust can be lost or gained very quickly. Verifying the trustworthiness of information, which normally involves having strong relationships with local actors and humanitarian responders, is paramount.



# Introduction

Conflict and rapid- and slow-onset disasters all continue to have devastating effects across the world. In 2014 there were major crises<sup>2</sup> in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria and Iraq, resulting in millions of people being displaced and lives and livelihoods destroyed. The 2014 Ebola epidemic was the largest known outbreak of its kind, affecting millions across West Africa.<sup>3</sup> In early 2015 the long foreseen earthquake(s) in Nepal killed almost 9,000 people,<sup>4</sup> bringing devastation to already vulnerable livelihoods and infrastructure. In addition to rapid-onset crises, slower onset disasters, often exacerbated by climate change, continue to destroy systems, lives and livelihoods globally.<sup>5</sup> The number of people dependent on humanitarian assistance<sup>6</sup> has risen from 57.5 million in 2014 to 78.9 million in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

A humanitarian emergency is defined as “an event or series of events that represent a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people”.<sup>8</sup>

(*Humanitarian Coalition*<sup>9</sup>)

Such grim statistics place increasing pressure on the humanitarian system to be ever more effective and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different interventions. Despite important progress in recent years, it is widely recognised that there remains a need to improve the quality of the evidence base in order to inform decisions and ultimately be more effective, ethical and accountable to beneficiaries.<sup>10</sup>

BBC Media Action (and before it the BBC itself) has provided humanitarian assistance to emergencies

for the past 20 years. Interventions span refugee crises, conflict and both rapid- and slow-onset disasters. Projects vary widely depending on the context, and use a variety of communication media to reach people affected, including international, national and local radio, mobile phones, television, leaflets, interpersonal communication and community mobilisation. Such communication interventions are a niche form of humanitarian assistance that are even less well understood, in terms of their role and impact on people affected by crisis, than more conventional forms of humanitarian assistance.

In the development sphere, the rationale for communication interventions has largely been built around what happens when they are *not* used (see section I.1). While substantial anecdotal monitoring and research has highlighted the actual benefits of communication *in* emergencies, there is limited published work that draws findings from evaluations across responses, or which examines the impact of such interventions at the beneficiary or audience level.

This report seeks to contribute to learning and the research base by looking mainly at a specific strand of communication interventions – mass media humanitarian broadcasts. BBC Media Action has conducted audience research to inform the production and evaluate the effectiveness of four mass media projects tailored to support audiences in four different humanitarian contexts. These contexts are the 2015 Nepal earthquake, the 2014–2015 response to the Ebola epidemic, the 2014 Gaza conflict and the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis.

This report takes audience research findings from these four interventions and has re-analysed them

against selected criteria from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) and specific media metrics to understand better the strengths and limitations of humanitarian broadcasts in crisis. The learning is designed to be useful in assisting development and humanitarian practitioners, and those who support them, with future communication interventions, and to serve as a precursor to future evaluative work of communication in crisis.<sup>11</sup>

# Chapter I

## Literature review

### I.1 Background

In common with many advances in the humanitarian sector, recognition of the need for critical information and communication in crisis came out of costly learning about what happens in its absence. A lack of information, as well as poor or non-existent communication with beneficiaries and between aid agencies, has resulted in poor or inappropriate delivery of aid that has harmed local people and systems.<sup>12</sup> Evaluations and reviews, particularly of the 2004 Asian tsunami, highlighted that information has a critical role to play both in disaster preparedness<sup>13</sup> and in response. It is suggested that in crisis “people need information as much as much as water, food, medicine or shelter.<sup>14</sup> Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources. Information bestows power.”<sup>15</sup>

Even before the often cited 2005 *World Disasters Report*,<sup>16</sup> policy-makers and donors were highlighting the need for information and communication in crisis. The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) stressed the need as early as 2000, arguing that “[People affected] are separated from their families, lack shelter and adequate food and are scared and confused by the events occurring around them. Programming tailored to the needs of such people can provide an essential information lifeline.”<sup>17</sup>

In recent years, aid agencies have placed more emphasis on the need for information and communication in crisis, influenced by advances in technology that have dramatically increased the reach and potential of information,<sup>18</sup> and by learning from the humanitarian failure that results from a lack of information and communication.<sup>19</sup> Various advances have been made in the sector including initiatives to encourage collaboration and co-ordination, particularly the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network, and the ‘Communicating with Communities’ working groups. The latter have been set up by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) when responding to specific humanitarian responses, such as Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.<sup>20</sup> In addition, communication questions have been integrated into humanitarian cluster joint needs assessments,<sup>21</sup> and many humanitarian agencies have expanded their work to include specific communication initiatives. One of the most recent advances has been the expansion of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster’s mandate to include communication technologies for people affected by crisis as part of their 2020 vision strategy.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.2 Clarifying the role of communication in humanitarian responses

Today information and communication in crisis has many labels, including “beneficiary communication”, “communicating with communities” and “community engagement”. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) gives a helpful definition of beneficiary communication:

Communication that aims to save and improve lives through the provision of timely, relevant and accurate information and support an environment of transparency and accountability through the creation of feedback mechanisms.<sup>23</sup>

There are two distinct, but related areas reflected in this definition:

1. Communication that seeks to improve the humanitarian aid response (accountability communication – see Box 1).
2. Information and communication that seeks to meet the direct needs of people affected by crisis (usually some form of media intervention – see Box 2).

Both types of communication have important roles in crisis, but they are distinct – as illustrated in Boxes 1 and 2. While the overall purpose of both types of communication intervention is to help people affected by crisis, projects that use communication as an accountability tool (Box 1) usually revolve around putting mechanisms in place to help agencies collect feedback on aid programmes from beneficiaries, such as feedback surveys. Their primary aim is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the aid response by ensuring it is meeting community needs, but it is not aid in itself.

### Box 1: Information and communication as an accountability mechanism: Case study Nepal earthquake 2015

Following the 2015 Nepal earthquakes, humanitarian agencies joined together and set up a “common feedback mechanism”. The purpose of this was to allow people affected to give their opinion on the aid distribution. Various mechanisms were set up to gather information and opinions from people affected. The idea was that this information would then be fed into a central database, which aid agencies could access to help them to inform and shape their interventions so as to better serve the people affected.

This type of “communication in crisis” serves as an accountability mechanism to help the aid effort become more effective.

Communication projects that focus on information provision (Box 2) – which are the focus of this report – are specifically designed to help people to survive and recover from the crisis, and so are direct forms of aid.

They can also have the additional role of providing a platform and dialogue for accountability. For example, reviews of local media interventions by the humanitarian response organisation, First Response Radio, showed that people affected by the 2008 Bihar flooding in Northern India contacted their local radio to inform them when they were missed out of the relief distributions.<sup>24</sup> The radio station then broadcast this information and passed it on to local relief co-ordinators. Listeners contacted the station to say the programme gave them a voice to get the aid they needed, as well as helped them with educational information and psychological support.<sup>25</sup>

### Box 2: Information and communication that directly meets the needs of those affected: Case study Nepal earthquake 2015

BBC Media Action broadcast critical information through BBC World Service Nepali and partner stations to help people affected by the Nepal earthquake. Programmes included information about how to stay safe during aftershocks, recognising and dealing with trauma, and advice on water, sanitation and hygiene issues. The aim of the programmes was to help people to survive and cope in a crisis, as well as to voice and share their concerns.

This is an example of “information and communication in crisis” specifically designed to provide practical guidance to people so they can survive and recover at a time of humanitarian crisis. It is humanitarian assistance and is distinct from other more traditional forms of broadcasting, such as news.

## 1.3 Evaluations and measurement in emergencies: Evidence base

Evaluations that assess the overall effectiveness of humanitarian interventions are limited. A scoping paper by the international non-governmental organisation 3ie found that “with the exception of health and nutrition, most areas in the humanitarian sector suffer from a paucity of evidence”.<sup>26</sup> The review highlighted a lack of robust evaluations of humanitarian assistance with only a small proportion (mostly in mental health) using a counterfactual, control or comparator group.

Evaluations of information and communication interventions in the humanitarian sector are even rarer, and many academics and researchers conclude that there remains a significant gap in the evidence base as to the effect of information and communication on people affected by crisis. Several valuable “learning reviews”

and “lessons learned” reports have been commissioned, including UN OCHA-funded reviews of CDAC’s activities in emergency responses to the 2010 Haiti earthquake,<sup>27</sup> the 2014 Typhoon Bopha in Mindanao<sup>28</sup> and the 2014 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.<sup>29</sup> Such reviews have provided important insights into sector-level communication activities and co-ordination but are not designed as evaluations of these interventions.

The challenges of carrying out effective evaluations of communication interventions are outlined in the next section and have clear limitations with practitioners tending towards more “learning orientated” reviews. Evaluations of interventions that do exist, including those that form the case studies of this paper, tend to rely on non-representative self-reported attributions of change and are therefore limited in the evidence they supply (the attempt made in this paper to carry out a more rigorous synthesis of findings is designed to help ameliorate this weakness).

Some more robust assessments have been made, particularly by Ella Romo Murphy of Finland’s University of Jyväskylä<sup>30</sup> among a significant body of work on the use of communication in disasters, especially in disaster preparedness and building community resilience, Murphy has also examined the effectiveness of the communication processes in place in Banda Aceh during and after the 2004 tsunami (rather than specific interventions, or sector-level communication activities). It suggests that communication information strategies in crisis would be strengthened by an emphasis on personal and community communication, particularly through local places (prayer halls and coffee shops) in relation to information exchange and decision-making. It highlights the role of broadcast media in providing accurate and reliable information and countering rumours.<sup>31</sup>

While existing learning reviews and evaluations provide helpful insights and learning about communication initiatives and processes in crisis, there are few studies that look specifically at the outcomes of communication interventions in disaster response. Bradley and colleagues systematically reviewed 100 studies relating to “risk communication” in disasters (of which 27 were directly comparable studies) and found that, while several pointed to improvements in knowledge and behaviour in the context of disasters, there remains a need for “more high-quality randomised trials and appropriately-analysed cluster randomised trials in the field of disaster risk communication where these can be conducted within an appropriate research ethics framework”.<sup>32</sup>

Despite a lack of evidence or systematic evaluation of the direct effect of information and communication in crisis, there is a growing recognition of its importance. Many agencies are incorporating elements of communication into their humanitarian programmes and are increasingly seeking to partner with communication agencies to help enhance their work.

The World Health Organization argues that the link between mental health and psychosocial problems is an important consideration in emergencies.

Unicef includes information provision as part of their minimum psychosocial support requirements needed in emergencies,<sup>33</sup> recognising that affected people's need for information about their rights and how to cope with the crisis is a key part of such support. Psychosocial support (which, as this report will highlight, constitutes a key area of impact of mass communication humanitarian programming) is defined by the IFRC as "a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities".<sup>34</sup> The World Health Organization argues that the link between mental health and psychosocial problems is an important consideration in emergencies and is "crucial to the overall well-being, functioning, and resilience of individuals, societies, and countries recovering from emergencies".<sup>35</sup>



A grandmother and her grandson sit on the belongings that they have salvaged from their collapsed homes on 29 April 2015 in Bhaktapur, Nepal. © Omar Havana/Getty Images



# Chapter 2

## The challenges of research in crisis interventions

This section looks at some of the challenges humanitarian agencies face regarding conducting research in crisis. “Research” in this context takes many forms and includes continuous assessments to understand the needs of people affected and to inform outputs. It looks at the general challenges of any research in crisis but also focuses particular attention on the specific challenges of researching whether programmes are effective at achieving their intended outcomes.

Outside of crisis, assessing whether a communication intervention has been effective normally involves a research design made up of a series of straightforward components: formative research to inform programme content, objectives and the main indicators that the programme should address; a baseline survey to measure these indicators in relation to the target audience (indicators might include existing knowledge, attitudes, practices), and an endline survey to measure the effect of the programme on those exposed to it. The surveys would be representative of the national or target population and provide reach figures and detailed information about audiences. Alternatively, or in addition, qualitative research (such as focus groups or in-depth interviews) are used to evaluate the programme. Ideally a counterfactual or control group is established. However, for both practical and ethical reasons, few of these elements are possible in a crisis.

### 2.1 Challenges of methodology

Many of the challenges to evaluation are not specific to communication interventions. Conducting any research in crisis – particularly the more traditional evaluations that are considered ‘robust’ – poses multiple practical challenges for researchers, as they have to manage several, often conflicting, pressures. These include the logistical constraints in an emergency setting (such as limited access to beneficiaries), time and resource constraints, and donor requirements. They are working in a landscape that has shifted, and thus any earlier baseline data is often no longer applicable and fresh baseline surveys are invariably impossible to conduct.

In addition, the ethical considerations of working with people affected by crisis limit the types of evaluation that can be done. Deliberately setting up

a counterfactual or control group that would not receive aid, for example, would clearly be unethical. This forces evaluators to be more creative, such as comparing the effect of different ways of delivering aid, thus setting up a comparator without denying aid. One of the biggest ethical challenges for evaluation in crisis is ensuring the research is of “direct benefit” to the people affected, a principle that is repeatedly stressed in the humanitarian community,<sup>36</sup> and one highlighted in a proposed ethical framework for health research in crisis,<sup>37</sup> commissioned by the Research for Health in Humanitarian Crisis (R2HC) programme.<sup>38</sup>

The reality is that most humanitarian agencies struggle with any form of research in crisis, and are heavily constrained by the emergency environment and pressure to deliver quickly.

Researchers therefore have the challenge of creating a design that is directly beneficial to people affected so that it informs the immediate programme output (and not just the longer term), but also making the design robust enough to provide some kind of evidence as to what is working.

Added to this is the weighing up of the balance between the benefits and the risk of harm to both the people affected by crisis (who do not want to be burdened by questions and surveys) and the research team going into a complex, potentially dangerous, situation. The reality is that most humanitarian agencies struggle with any form of research in crisis, and are heavily constrained by the emergency environment and pressure to deliver quickly.

## 2.2 Challenges specific to the communication sector

Compared with other sectors in the field of international development, the communication sector is relatively new.

A clear reason for prioritising a communication response, and an obvious indicator of success, is the number of people it is capable of reaching. One of the benefits of mass communication also makes it very difficult to evaluate. Broadcasts can reach people that are isolated and that other NGOs cannot reach but, as a consequence, it is difficult to record how many people broadcasts reach and what their effects are. Services that are provided face to face by NGOs often have in-built monitoring and feedback mechanisms, capable of gathering data relatively easily, for example on how many people have benefited from access to clean water or how many immunisations have been administered.

In other sectors, such as in health and sanitation, the intended outcome is well known. For example, creating a minimum SPHERE standard<sup>39</sup> for communication (such as number of radios received) would not equate to something like a minimum number of litres of clean water delivered, since

the direct benefits of water in or out of emergencies are known, but the direct benefits of information and communication cannot be measured to the same degree. Additionally, there are not the same quality measures for communication; for example, we know that for water to be effective it needs to be clean but, and whilst we know that information needs to be accurate, relevant and trustworthy, there are not necessarily universally agreed quality standards or specifications as to what makes “good communication”.

Communication interventions in crisis have also been historically poor at determining clearly defined, measurable outcomes, from the outset. This is partly due to the lack of information needs assessment data immediately available, and partly because of the urgent need to get programmes on air quickly in a context of crisis (the BBC World Service/BBC Media Action Nepal response was on air within nine hours of the first 2015 earthquake, for example). Communication responders have the additional challenge of having relatively underdeveloped theories of change to draw on.

### 2.2.1 Developing theories of change for communication in humanitarian response

However, like other sectors in emergencies, the communication field is able to develop theories of change and intervention approaches by drawing on existing knowledge and learning from its development counterpart – communication for development – briefly outlined in this section. The communication for development field – for example, when focused on improving uptake of health-seeking behaviour or shifting social norms around stigma or gender inequality – has made important advances in knowing what is needed for effective communication.<sup>40</sup> It draws on and tests health and behaviour change models, such as Fishbein and Cappella (2006),<sup>41</sup> that highlight the particular importance of skills, abilities and intentions as drivers of change within environmental constraints. The Fishbein and Cappella model suggests that there are three main psychosocial determinants of intention – attitude, the perceived norms of performing the behaviour, and self-efficacy.

Although self reported evaluations<sup>42</sup> suggest a link between media programmes and behaviour change, there is little robust evidence available that validates this. However, there is evidence<sup>43</sup> that suggest direct links between media programmes and *drivers* of change (that is media programmes have directly influenced audience’s level of *knowledge*, their *attitudes*, *social norm*, *efficacy* and *levels of discussion*). In health programming, there is additional evidence that these *drivers* positively influence behaviour change itself. (BBC Media Action’s own unpublished resilience data indicates that being *motivated to act*, and *discussing* resilience issues with others influence individuals’ intention to act, which in turn influences the action they take).

Although, in humanitarian crises, this kind of long-term behaviour change is not necessarily the goal of communication interventions, such research can provide a useful contribution to begin developing and testing theories of change

that focus on identified communication outcomes for humanitarian contexts. Section 6 of this report uses the synthesised evaluation findings to propose a draft theory of change for the use of mass communication interventions in humanitarian responses.

# Chapter 3

## Research approach

Along with many other similar actors in this arena, BBC Media Action's research approach is evolving to meet the highlighted ethical, methodological and other challenges, and build on existing evidence bases to develop and refine theories of change. In this section, we begin by summarising BBC Media Action's overarching research approach as an organisation, then outline its approach in crisis. We conclude by outlining the approach used to synthesise research findings across the four case studies that form the backbone of this research report.

### 3.1 BBC Media Action's overarching research approach

BBC Media Action's research approach is determined by the specific project design, which draws on and integrates different models and communication theories from across the communication for development and health communication sectors. However, while these and other components of communication theory help to test the relationship between variables and their effect on programme outcomes, they cannot always be applied directly to communication in the context of humanitarian responses. In crisis, communication interventions are not usually designed to shift specific behaviours or social norms – more often the focus of health communication models. Rather, a great deal of the focus in crisis communication is on enabling people to understand what has happened and equip them with the information, motivation and confidence to work out for themselves how best to respond in their particular context.

### 3.2 Research approach in crisis

In humanitarian response settings, therefore, the recognised drivers that media can influence, such as knowledge, attitudes and motivation, are elevated to outcomes – since they become elements of psychosocial support which are crucial in alleviating suffering, generating efficacy and aiding recovery in emergencies. These outcomes form the foundational blocks of project designs, with specific subject areas selected according to identified local needs. Previous research (such as audience preferences, cultural and social motivators and barriers) is used to help to inform appropriate formats.

Special attention also needs to be paid to ethical considerations in humanitarian responses. BBC Media Action has incorporated elements of the R2HC

framework<sup>44</sup> and Médecins Sans Frontières' ethical guidelines<sup>45</sup> into its quality assurance and guidelines for research in crisis.

In developing a research design, a combined approach of continuous assessments and evaluative research throughout the different phases of the crisis is used to feed into immediate programme outputs and learning (see Figure 1). More evaluative research is built in as the emergency moves out of the critical phase, when fewer needs assessments are needed. Collaboration is a key part of the approach and conducting primary research assessments are avoided if other agencies are able to add additional information and communication on relevant questions (such as what media beneficiaries have access to) to their assessments.

The specific approach and research methodology is adapted to each emergency context. The balance between quantitative and qualitative approaches, the timing, content and sample size of surveys, the number of focus group discussions and so on is all highly context-dependent with inevitable consequences for research quality and rigour.

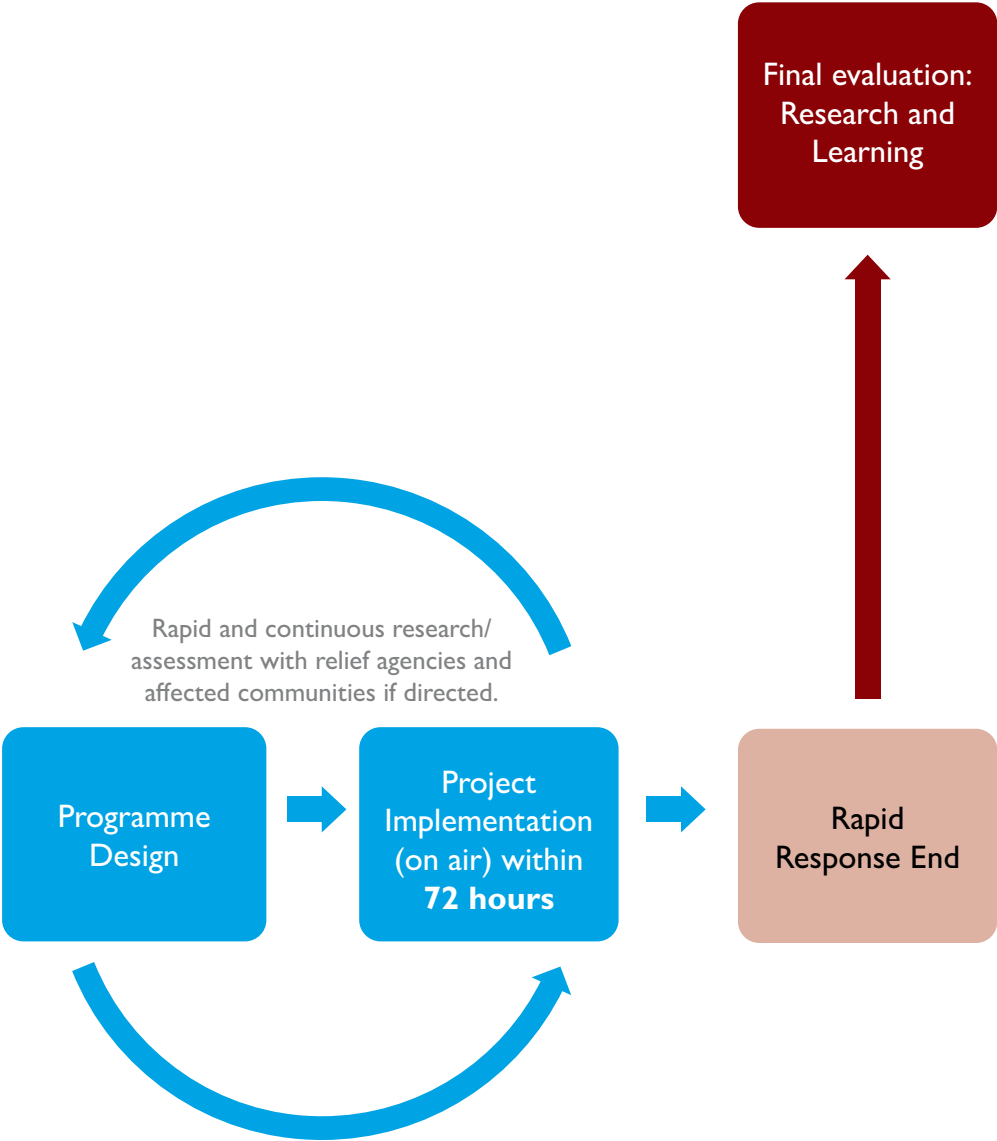
For example, in the case of BBC Media Action's evaluation of their radio response to the Ebola epidemic in 2014–2015, it was impossible to establish direct access to people who were affected by the epidemic without the research process itself exacerbating the risk of spreading the virus (for example by asking people to gather together for focus groups). For this reason, a short SMS survey administered by GeoPoll phone survey (see section 4.3.2) was used in combination with expert interviews, and focus group discussions were added later when access became possible. During BBC Media Action's response to the 2014 Gaza crisis, face to face research was deemed unsafe, so telephone interviews with audiences were conducted for evaluative research, and collaboration with partners enabled us to collect information from communication needs assessments being conducted by others.

### 3.2.1 Synthesising research findings

While methodologies differ, the same evaluation framework and overarching research questions are, wherever possible, used throughout all BBC Media Action's evaluations to enable a level of consistency and synthesis of findings. The framework incorporates media metrics developed from communication theories of change that inform project-level outcomes and criteria from the widely used OECD/DAC evaluation criteria adapted for humanitarian interventions<sup>46</sup> (see Table 1).

The OECD/DAC criteria (see Appendix 1) originate from a set of aid principles developed by DAC members in consultation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. They were adapted into a set of evaluation criteria to serve as a complementary set of measures for humanitarian interventions: relevance and appropriateness, connectedness, coherence, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. The criteria draw on best practice and are commonly used in humanitarian evaluations.

Figure 1: BBC Media Action simplified model of research in humanitarian response



### 3.3 Research approach specific to this study

In 2014 and 2015, BBC Media Action evaluated the effectiveness of media outputs in humanitarian crisis across four different responses. Evaluations focused on the effectiveness of these responses to achieve impact benefiting the affected populations. For this study, to gain wider insights into the effectiveness of media in crisis, secondary data analysis of the evaluations of these four responses was conducted, taking the data and evaluating it systematically against four selected adapted OECD/DAC criteria, specifically: relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness and impact. Specific media metrics were incorporated into the framework: engagement and trust was incorporated into *relevance*; under *effectiveness* media metrics such as engagement and trust and project-level outcomes were incorporated, specifically: motivation, confidence, discussion, knowledge, attitudes and actions.

The data from each response was coded into a qualitative framework against each of the criteria. For example, *relevance* was broken down into *usefulness* of the information, how *practical* and *easy* it was to apply, and the ability to *access* the medium and content itself. Coders were given guidance on how to code the data and 20% of data from each coder was double-coded by the author of this report to ensure inter-coder reliability.

The research question the study sought to answer was: What are the achievements and limitations of mass-scale humanitarian broadcasts in crisis and how can they best serve people affected by crisis. The findings will be used to understand the achievements and limitations of mass-scale humanitarian broadcasts. Insights will be drawn from the evidence and literature to understand how humanitarian broadcasts can better serve people affected by crisis.



Table 1: Summary of BBC Media Action’s research questions and criteria used in crisis

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>BBC Media Action humanitarian research questions</b>	<b>Rationale for inclusion/exclusion in this study</b>
Relevance/ Appropriateness	Was the information relevant to the affected community? (i.e. Was the information useful, practical and easy for the target audience to apply to their own situation? Was the medium used appropriate? Could all the target audience access the information easily (hear/see/read it)?	Key criteria for humanitarian broadcasts in emergencies, and allows us to look at the medium and the content in evaluation
	<p><b>Communication components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Engagement</i>: How did audiences feel about the format, presentation, content and quality of the broadcasts?</li> <li>• <i>Trust</i>: Did audiences trust the media platform, the content, the presenters, the guests?</li> <li>• <i>Media context</i>: Was the information consistent with other information shared in the crisis?</li> </ul>	A key component of reaching and maintaining audiences
Connectedness	<i>Project question: What is the capacity of the local media? Does the project include in-built mechanisms for capacity strengthening?</i>	<i>A key part of project reviews and evaluations, but not part of this synthesis of evidence, since only one intervention was short term</i>
Coverage	<i>Did the selected medium reach the target audience?</i>	<i>A critical component of the justification for mass media</i>
Coherence*	<i>Does the project adhere to humanitarian and BBC principles (trust, working together, quality, respect)?</i>	<i>Included in project assessments, not beneficiary evaluations</i>
Efficiency	<i>What level of resources does the medium require to achieve the outputs?</i>	<i>Not included in the research as evaluations did not include comparisons of alternative outputs</i>
Effectiveness	<p><b>Giving a voice</b></p> <p>Did the affected community have an appropriate channel of communication to make its own voice heard?</p> <p><b>Did the project meet its objectives?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Motivation</i>: Did the broadcasts encourage or motivate people affected in any way?</li> <li>• <i>Confidence</i>: Did the broadcasts influence affected people’s confidence in themselves, the situation, or other people?</li> <li>• <i>Discussion</i>: Did audiences share the information with other people? Did they discuss the content?</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge</i>: What influence did the information broadcast have on knowledge?</li> <li>• <i>Attitudes</i>: Did the broadcasts influence attitudes of affected people towards themselves, other people, organisations or systems?</li> <li>• <i>Action</i>: Did the target audience take any action as a result of listening to the broadcasts?</li> </ul>	Adapted to include ‘two-way’ communication, an important measure for humanitarian broadcasting
Impact	<i>What influence did the interventions have on people’s ability to recover from crisis?</i>	<i>Impact will be looked at through synthesising evidence at the outcome level and through interpretation of results of the role of mass media interventions in crisis</i>

\*Italics refers to criteria not selected



As part of their Syrian Refugee Project, BBC Media Action produced short videos with important audio visual messages. These were shown on large screens at UNHCR registration centres in Lebanon and Jordan. Here, Syrian refugees watch the BBC Media Action film 'Syrian children in Chantila camp make wishes' while they wait at a UNHCR registration centre in Tripoli, Lebanon, in May 2014. © ANWAR AMRO/AFP/Getty Images

# Chapter 4

## Case studies

This section summarises the findings from four BBC Media Action communication interventions in emergencies, selected as the most recent interventions with varied types of crisis and intervention. It gives an overview of the main findings, research methodology and type of intervention for each case study and is structured around the selected criteria.

4.1 Syrian refugee project 2013–2014	27
4.2 Gaza Lifeline 2014	32
4.3 Ebola Response, West Africa 2014–2015	35
4.4 Nepal earthquake response 2015	40

Table 2: Case studies and summary of research methodology

<b>Disaster</b>	<b>Type of intervention</b>	<b>Purpose of intervention (goal)</b>	<b>Phase of intervention</b>	<b>Research &amp; evaluation methodology</b>
Nepal earthquake April–May 2015  (BBC Media Action, CARE, Norway MFA, USAID OFDA funded)	<b>Mass media</b> Radio broadcasts on BBC Nepali service and partner stations	To help people cope and take practical action to recover	Emergency	Communication needs assessments across multiple time points Key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) across 2 time points to date
Ebola epidemic 2014–2015  (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, DFID, PGAFF, UNICEF funded)	<b>Mass media</b> Radio broadcasts through local partners, social mobilisation, training	To use media and communication to help prevent the spread of Ebola virus disease and help those affected to better cope with the crisis	Emergency and post-emergency	FGDs across 3 time points, KIIs GeoPoll surveys across 3 time points
Gaza crisis 2014  (BBC World Service funded)	<b>Mass media</b> Radio broadcasts on BBC Arabic service	To provide people in Gaza with information to help them cope with some of the problems that they faced as a result of the humanitarian crisis and give them a chance to voice concerns and share experiences	Emergency	Communication needs assessment, IDIs across 2 time points, KIIs
Syrian refugee crisis 2014  European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) funded	TV screens in UNHCR refugee registration camps in Jordan and Lebanon	To provide Syrian refugees with information to help them make informed decisions, access support networks and give them a voice to share experience	(Slow onset)	FGDs, KIIs, semi-structured interviews (SSIs), observations, feedback forms – single time point

## 4.1 Syrian refugee project 2013–2014

### 4.1.1 Background

BBC Media Action's Syrian refugee project was implemented in 2013–2014 in response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan and Lebanon. Assessments revealed that many refugees did not have adequate access to the information necessary for them to access services and the assistance being provided by humanitarian actors. The communication that did exist, consisting mainly of printed leaflets and telephone hotlines, had limited impact within a semi-literate refugee population.

### Intervention

In collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), BBC Media Action produced a series of audio visual messages, in the form of short videos, that were shown on large screens at UNHCR registration centres in Lebanon and Jordan, and in the Zataari refugee camp in Jordan (see Box 3 for details).

### Box 3: Film content for Syrian refugees



A screen grab encouraging refugees to be pro-active in seeking out help and information from a series of short animations based on an Arab proverb 'he who has a tongue is never lost'

#### **Animation: Tongue Man**

A series of short animations encouraging refugees to be pro-active in seeking out help and information based on an Arabic proverb, 'someone with a tongue is never lost'.

#### **Mini-drama: We Are A Team**

Illustrates the theme of solidarity, tolerance and diversity. People from a wide variety of backgrounds play football together.

#### **Mini-drama: The Broker**

Warns refugees against being cheated by middlemen into handing over money for services.

#### **Refugee stories: Syrian Refugee Children**

Features children at Najda Now community centre in Chatila camp in Beirut. Volunteer workers talk about the children in their care; children talk about their lives and what they'd do if they had three wishes.

#### **Refugee story: Ayham**

A Syrian boy, Ayham, talks about his life and why he likes to compose rap songs.

#### **Mini-drama: Your Child's Education**

Demonstrates the importance of educating children. Features an illiterate father who ends up getting help learning to read from his children.

#### **Refugee story: Mu'tazz – The Volunteer**

Documentary portrait of Mu'tazz, a Syrian refugee who started a school for refugee children in the Beqaa.

#### **Animation: Register your Child's Birth**

Informs viewers about the importance for refugees to register new births with the civil authorities in their host countries.

*This list only includes a small selection of the 16 films produced for the project.*

### Project goals and objectives

The project sought to provide Syrian refugees with information to enable them to make informed decisions and access support networks as well as to give them a voice to share their experiences.

The project was specifically designed in the short term to: a) encourage refugees to be able to identify organisations that could help them; b) provide information that better enabled refugees to help themselves; and c) help refugees access the services they need. The project was also designed to contribute to longer term goals of promoting tolerance and solidarity and reducing the exploitation of refugees.

The purpose of the evaluation was to inform and improve future interventions by BBC Media Action, and specifically phase two of the project, by assessing the overall effectiveness, relevance and appropriateness of the intervention.

### 4.1.2 Research and evaluation

BBC Media Action commissioned a small-scale, qualitative evaluation which took place in January 2014 while the programme was airing. It primarily assessed the knowledge and attitudes of refugees and UNHCR employees in each of the seven centres where the content was aired, to provide a snapshot<sup>47</sup> of the effectiveness of the overall intervention, and to assess progress made towards achieving the short-term objectives. The purpose of the evaluation was to inform and improve future interventions by BBC Media Action, and specifically phase two of the project, by assessing the overall effectiveness, relevance and appropriateness of the intervention.

### Methodology

A small, targeted qualitative design was chosen due to the sensitivity of the context. Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were conducted with refugees and UNHCR workers in each of the seven locations where the content was airing at the time in Jordan and Lebanon (see Table 3). Observations of refugee behaviour while the content was airing were conducted in each centre and feedback forms were left in the UNHCR registration centres. The forms were designed with graphics to enable less literate respondents to complete them. A minimum of two interviews with refugees and two with UNHCR staff, plus one or two observations, were conducted in each centre.

Table 3: Syria research activities

Research activity	Details	Timing of fieldwork relative to phase of crisis	Purpose of research
	<b>Jordan: Khlada, Irbid, Zataari camp Lebanon: Tyre, Beirut, Tripoli, Zahle</b>		
SSIs with refugees	9 in Jordan, 12 in Lebanon	N/A – slow-onset crisis. Some refugees had just entered the host countries, others were re-registering	Inform and evaluate
SSIs with UNHCR staff	4 in Jordan, 7 in Lebanon		Inform and evaluate
Observations of refugees in centres	4 in Jordan, 7 in Lebanon		Inform and evaluate
Feedback forms about the media content	74 in Jordan, 130 in Lebanon		Inform and evaluate

### 4.1.3 Key findings

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Access

##### Platform

- The television screens in UNHCR centres were an innovative way of getting information to people with approximately 175,000 Syrian refugees registering at the UNHCR centres each month.<sup>48</sup> Access was hampered for some by sound levels (the volume was turned down during registration) and visibility (not everybody could see the screens fully).
- Audiences additionally accessed the videos through YouTube, Facebook and Vimeo, reaching over 7,000 people in the first month after they were uploaded.

##### Content

- Refugees in the centres said they could identify with the people in the video clips and liked that the video clips were of Syrian actors they could relate to. They also felt that the clips should more accurately reflect the severity of their suffering.
- Respondents related to the issues discussed in the video clips, such as immigration challenges and education for children. They empathised with the issues raised, and discussed them with their families.
- Respondents found the information helpful and relevant to their lives but would have liked to have more specific information that was even more relevant. They requested more country-specific, targeted information, such as where to access the services mentioned on the clips, names and addresses of services in specific countries. Although they felt motivated to ask for help, they were not always clear about who to ask, or where to go for specific needs.

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Engagement

- Refugees also commented that the outputs were entertaining and engaging, while observers at the registration centres noted widespread

interest from both adults and children when they were screened, such as children running up to the screen and pressing their faces against the screens when other children came on.

- The evaluation indicated that the messages embedded in the most popular clips were repeated by word of mouth and that, in some cases – especially a short film called *The Broker*, which highlighted the risks of being defrauded by conmen setting themselves up as aid helpers – they stimulated discussion around the issues raised.

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Trust

- Refugees said they believed the video clips were created to provide information or help to refugees, and advice on where to get assistance and go for help. The BBC content was aired with UNHCR content so some thought that the content was created by UNHCR. This may have affected people's trust in the content as they did not seem to have a high opinion of the services delivered by UNHCR.

#### Effectiveness

- **Knowledge and learning:** Respondents agreed that the information provided by the clips was valuable and helpful, with 80% of those who filled out feedback forms stating that they had learned something new. Refugees talked about learning the importance of vaccinating children and seeking out services available.
- **Motivation and confidence:** Over half of the refugees interviewed said that the clips had encouraged or motivated them to ask for help. This was an achievement in an environment where many claim that their efforts to access aid and support have been stonewalled or frustrated. However, this was hampered by the fact that they were not confident that UNHCR would act on requests they made for help.
- **Actions:** Respondents did mention intending to take actions such as registering their children's births. However, they often requested country-specific information, such as the names and addresses of services in Jordan and Lebanon. For example, they asked for information about food coupons (Jordan) and medical services (Lebanon). Strengthening the capacity of local agencies to respond to such requests would dramatically increase the project's impact and would encourage more refugees to seek help.
- **Learnings:** Care needs to be taken when positioning the video screens at overcrowded registration centres to ensure that the content enjoys optimum exposure. Sound can also be problematic because of the need to reduce the volume when procedural announcements are made. Increasing the number of screens at each centre and briefing all UNHCR field staff could help future projects overcome some of the technical challenges faced on the ground.





Palestinian workers remove iron from the rubble of a building that was destroyed during the 50-day conflict between Israel and Hamas militants in the summer of 2014, in the al-Shejaiya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City.  
© Mohammed Abed/AFP/Getty Images

## 4.2 Gaza Lifeline 2014

### 4.2.1 Background

In July 2014, the Israeli Army launched 'Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip' lasting until late August 2014. Seven weeks of Israeli bombardment, Palestinian rocket attacks and ground fighting resulted in the deaths of more than 2,000 people, the vast majority of them Gazans. According to the United Nations, most of the Palestinians killed were civilians.<sup>49</sup>

### Intervention

*Atheer Gaza* (Gaza Lifeline) was produced by BBC Media Action to support the humanitarian response to this crisis. It was broadcast on the BBC Arabic service (through a local FM relay), which has an estimated audience of over 170,000 people in Gaza,<sup>50,51</sup> and on local radio station *Alwan*, which has an estimated audience of more than 200 000 people.<sup>52</sup> Episodes were also streamed through the BBC Arabic website and SoundCloud, with over 45,000 listeners on SoundCloud and 12,000 Facebook 'likes' as of January 2015.

### Box 4: Facts about *Atheer Gaza*

**48 programmes**

**More than 100 audio packages**

**2 Gaza non-partisan FM radio stations**

**BBC Arabic MW and FM**

**Multi-platform and two-way communication**

**On air** Sunday to Thursday

**5 times a day** to meet listeners' needs

**Online + SMS** service

**45,000+ listen** on Soundcloud

**12,000+ Facebook likes**

**Daily online interaction**

More than **40 aid organisations and officials**

**Calls to action/contact information**

**3 stage formative** and **evaluative research**

### Goals and objectives

*Atheer Gaza* aimed to provide information to help people cope with some of the problems they faced as a result of the crisis and to give them a chance to voice concerns and share experiences. Specifically, it aimed to: a) provide practical, useful information during the crisis; b) encourage people to take action/steps to protect themselves from hazards; c) provide information on those humanitarian

services that were available to support them; d) provide psychological support via trauma experts and other voices from their own communities that could provide comfort; e) provide ideas and solutions to local problems (for example, how to charge a mobile phone off a car battery); and f) give people a voice to share their experiences, raise concerns and help to hold authorities and relief providers to account.

#### 4.2.2 Research and evaluation

Where possible, research was conducted in collaboration with others, adhering to the “do no harm” principle, and recognising the importance of not adding to the burden/suffering of people affected by crisis. BBC Media Action co-ordinated with UN OCHA working group and the CDAC Network to implement a co-ordinated approach to information-gathering. They used a non-representative sample of 700 people living in damaged areas and shelters. It also drew on an inter-agency needs assessment in Gaza<sup>53</sup> to understand priority needs and inform programming. Additionally, rapid research was conducted at different time points to inform and evaluate the radio programme as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Gaza research activities

Research activity	Details	Timing of fieldwork relative to phase of crisis	Purpose of research
Pre-testing	1 FGD with 9 people	Emergency (Aug 2014)	Inform
Audience research	10 in-depth listener interviews <sup>54</sup>	Emergency (Sept/Oct 2014)	Inform and evaluate
Audience research	10 in-depth listener interviews, 3 key stakeholder interviews (humanitarian staff)	Post-emergency (Nov/Dec 2014)	Inform and evaluate

#### 4.2.3 Key findings

##### Relevance and appropriateness: Access

###### Platform

- During and after the crisis, people depended on a range of information sources but radio was key (accessed especially through mobile phones) due to electricity shortages. Those with electricity liked to use the internet. Broadcasting *Atheer Gaza* both on radio and through the internet fitted well with what people were using and reached a mix of audience types.

###### Content

- Respondents reported that they found the show easy to understand and that they liked the clear presenters. Some suggested that the use of less formal Arabic could have helped the show to feel even “closer to the people”.
- Listeners appreciated the content on offer, especially the variety of topics, but would have liked more detail on specific issues. They particularly wanted more “solution-focused” programming. Listeners appreciated that the

programme raised “difficult issues” (such as immigration and exploitation) and discussed the topics with friends and family.

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Engagement

- Listeners liked that *Atheer Gaza* had its own style, which differentiated it from the others, for instance by providing interviews with humanitarian organisations and contact information for agencies involved in the reconstruction. Listeners were engaged by the show, particularly because it included ordinary people from Gaza and talked about the reality of life on the ground, which they identified with. Some felt that the programme should have reflected more of the very worst cases in Gaza and wanted wider social problems addressed, such as women’s rights.
- Listeners liked that the show included multiple voices, but they would have liked to be able to interact more themselves, such as through a more interactive Facebook page or phone-ins.

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Accuracy and trust

In general, much of the local media was perceived to be biased to a specific political party. Listeners expressed consistent concerns about the accuracy and trustworthiness of information they had access to, which deteriorated further during the crisis. They felt that few media programmes gave them helpful information about the reality of life on the ground and focused mostly on news and political affairs. While international media was perceived as being less biased, it was also seen as being less useful at providing locally specific information. *Atheer Gaza* was seen as being trustworthy because of the perceived neutrality of the BBC brand, and the use of a non-partisan radio outlet (Radio Alwan). Listeners liked and trusted the presenters, but reported that some decision-makers interviewed on the programme were inaccurate. Listeners would have liked the presenters to hold them to account more than they did.

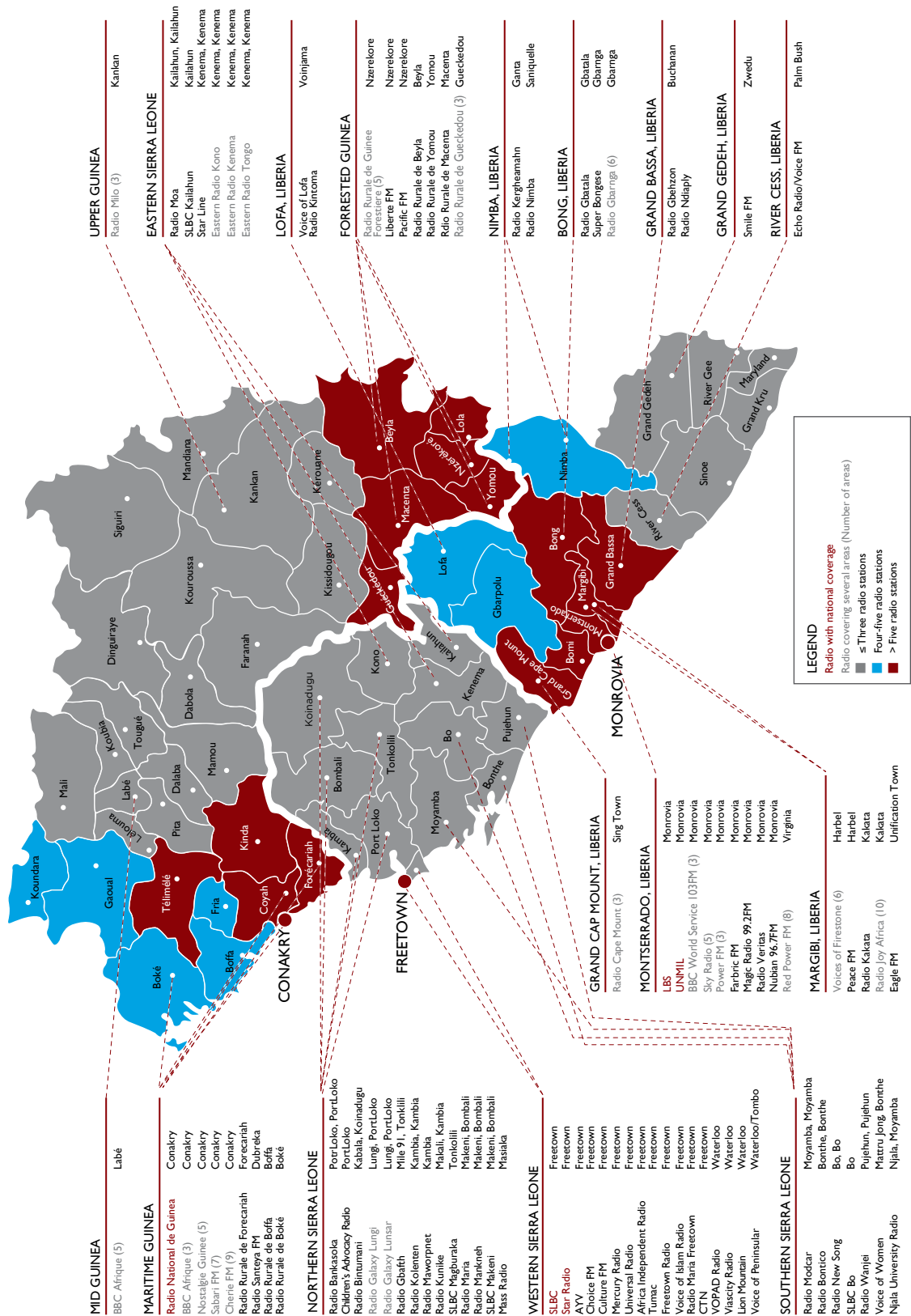
#### Effectiveness

- **Knowledge and learning:** Listeners reported learning new information, for example how to recognise symptoms of trauma and get help.
- **Connecting people:** The show helped connect affected people to officials by broadcasting their concerns and raising them on the show. Humanitarian workers found it valuable as an educational resource and directed people affected to it.
- **Motivation and actions:** It is clear that people liked the show, and found it helpful to their lives. Their levels of motivation were strongly influenced by the conflict situation and broader political environment. They would have liked the show to give more solution-focused ideas to the issues addressed.

### 4.3 Ebola virus disease, West Africa 2014–2015

## BBC Media Action Broadcast and Mentoring Partnerships

GUINEA - SIERRA LEONE - LIBERIA



### 4.3.1 Background

The outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in West Africa was the worst of its kind in history. The overall response to the epidemic, and the criticisms made of it, have been well documented by many organisations, not least by reviews set up by the World Health Organization.<sup>55</sup> The communication response to the crisis, which has often been cited in these reviews as an important contributor to the containment of the epidemic, has not been comprehensively documented. BBC Media Action mounted one of the first and largest communication responses to the epidemic, working initially in Sierra Leone through an existing network of radio stations across the country, and then developing mass-scale media programming in Guinea and Liberia, as well as providing lifeline training across West Africa. This report provides only a very brief summary of the activities involved in this response.

### Interventions

A range of linked interventions were developed, consisting primarily of:

- Kick Ebola Nar Salone, a magazine radio programme created by BBC Media Action staff in Sierra Leone and broadcast on a network of over 35 local partner radio stations.
- Social Mobilisation Action Consortium (SMAC), a major consortium of several agencies, including BBC Media Action. SMAC works in support of the National Social Mobilisation Pillar and provides information about EVD via different channels, including media. SMAC works with and through existing local community structures capable of leading and role-modelling behaviour change, in order to reduce EVD infections.
- Lifeline Preparedness: training governments, media practitioners and humanitarians in 10 “at risk” countries across the region on how to use media and communication as a tool to encourage the prevention of EVD.
- Mr Plan Plan, a mini-drama created by BBC Media Action and aired through the BBC World Service and other partners in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, designed to enable people to actively prepare (to make a plan) their own response and instil a sense of confidence and agency in response to concerns that people felt helpless in the face of the crisis.
- A series of public service announcements broadcast in Sierra Leone.
- *Kick Ebola from Liberia*, a radio discussion programme created by BBC Media Action and aired through the BBC World Service in Liberia.

### Project goal and objectives

BBC Media Action’s several projects all worked towards the shared goal of using media and communication to help to prevent the spread of Ebola and help those affected to better cope with the crisis. Specifically, programme activities were designed so that people could: a) have access to a platform where they could voice their needs, share experiences and propose solutions; b) have access to accurate information about the Ebola virus, transmission, prevention and treatment, so that they could take measures to protect themselves, their families and communities; and c) feel motivated to make

practical decisions and actions that could enable them to protect themselves and others.

### 4.3.2 Research and evaluation

The Ebola context presented challenges for research in that ethical considerations prevented research teams going into the field for large periods, for fear of contributing to the spread of the virus. A series of alternative research methodologies were put in place with inevitable compromises involved for the robustness of the research design. Desk research and interviews with experts were used to help to inform and shape the initial outputs. Listening groups were conducted several months after the initial outbreak following local guidelines as to safety. In Liberia, BBC Media Action had the additional challenge of not having its own staff operating on the ground.

To gather audience opinion, BBC Media Action used a GeoPoll SMS survey conducted through the main mobile provider in Liberia, as well as carrying out interviews with experts over the phone. The GeoPoll survey was a non-representative survey of listeners collected through mobile phones. Invitations to complete were sent to a random selection of subscribers to the MTN network, which has 50% market share in Liberia. Nonetheless, not all Liberians had an equal chance of being selected for this survey, and those who took part were more likely to be educated, literate and urban in comparison with the population as a whole.

Table 5: Ebola research activities

Research activity	Details	Timing of fieldwork relative to phase of crisis	Purpose of research
Pre-testing	Radio scripts were tested with key informants and target audiences	Emergency	Inform
Expert interviews/ panels	5 in Liberia, 3 in Sierra Leone	Emergency and post-emergency	Inform and evaluate
Audience research	5 FGDs in Sierra Leone, 12 FGDs in Liberia	Emergency, post-emergency and recovery	Inform and evaluate
GeoPoll survey	3 rounds of surveys in Liberia	Emergency and post-emergency	Inform and evaluate

### 4.3.3 Key findings

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Access Platform

- Liberia: *Kick Ebola from Liberia* programme was broadcast across 26 partner radio stations, 112 times a week, with the vast majority of the country being able to listen to the programme. Episodes of Mr Plan Plan were aired approximately 90 times a week via BBC airwaves, as well as 22 other radio



stations, including UN radio and the state broadcaster, the two largest radio broadcasters in Liberia with close to nationwide coverage.

- In Sierra Leone, programmes were broadcast through a network of over 35 partner stations, covering all regions of the country. The Mr Plan Plan drama has also been uploaded onto the mobile phones of 1,000 social community mobilisers as a tool for community discussion in Sierra Leone. A nationally representative survey by BBC Media Action in 2013 indicated that over 50% of the population over the age of 15 listen to stations on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, many of which carried BBC Media Action’s programme.
- At the time of broadcasting, the programme’s Facebook page had 11,697 followers, which was the biggest Facebook news group for Liberians.<sup>56</sup> In Sierra Leone, a WhatsApp service created for the programme had over 12,000 followers.
- Listeners interviewed in Liberia were positive about the platform that Kick Ebola offered people to express themselves. In multiple waves of SMS surveys, the majority of respondents (around 85%) agreed that Kick Ebola gave listeners an opportunity to voice their concerns. Participants from focus groups echoed this feedback and felt that being able to share their opinions and concerns would increase the visibility of their issues among responders.

*Content*

- Social media was highly effective at giving audiences a voice and enabling the programme to address emerging issues and concerns in real time.
- Listeners appreciated the content and themes of the programme, which they found to be highly relevant to their situation and needs – such as debating issues around safe burial practices and dealing with family members affected. The information found to be least relevant to their lives was on vaccines. Unlike many of the other topics in the show, which included discussion with the general public or known and trusted figureheads, the vaccine issue was covered by interviews with unfamiliar experts, which is likely to have contributed to a feeling of distrust.

*Relevance and appropriateness: Engagement*

Listeners reported being engaged by the content and format. They liked the drama and identified with the characters and their struggles dealing with EVD. People appreciated being able to hear the voice of ordinary people and being able to contribute to the local radio stations (more generally people were prepared to phone in to such programmes despite the costs of phone credit). Radio experts in Sierra Leone and Liberia did note that phone-in programmes on local stations needed to be carefully managed in order not to contribute to misinformation or rumours.

Future responses should make further efforts to ensure that local stations are provided with support to deliver this type of programming, with a concern for accuracy and prevention of spreading rumours.



“I really love the programme because we can speak our minds and tell the people [what is really] happening so that those responsible can hear us and reach our communities to help us.”

Female focus group participant from West Point Community, Liberia

#### Relevance and appropriateness: Trust

Not all information sources were trusted to the same extent and broadcast partners were selected based on trust levels. The research showed that listeners valued and trusted the information they heard. Respondents picked out a number of factors that drove their trust in the shows, including: the channel through which it was distributed; the consistency of content with other trusted sources; the accurate depiction of community life; and the use of trusted and respected contributors, such as religious leaders, traditional healers, health workers and social mobilisers. This applied both to the *Kick Ebola from Liberia* discussion programme and the characters in the radio drama *Mr Plan Plan*.

In Liberia, project staff heard anecdotally many times that *Kick Ebola from Liberia* was particularly trusted because it was a BBC show covering events that were relevant to Liberian lives.

#### Effectiveness: Knowledge

- Programming was reported to increase and consolidate knowledge around Ebola, in particular preventative information about the disease and how to avoid contracting it, and information about treatment and how to interact with and care for survivors.
- Liberian listeners valued hearing discussion and solutions from voices across the country.
- *Kick Ebola* listeners said that they had learned something new from the discussion show, and the mini-drama series had encouraged them to continue to practice preventative behaviours.
- Anecdotal feedback, as well as data collected by other responders, highlighted that many people learnt about the Ebola helpline and other key elements of the response through the radio.<sup>57</sup> Triangulating these findings with those of BBC Media Action's indicated that radio had a strong role in improving knowledge around Ebola.

#### Effectiveness: Attitudes

With many organisations working to tackle stigma, discriminatory attitudes were shown to decrease drastically between August and December 2014.<sup>58</sup> Other BBC Media Action research carried out under SMACin Sierra Leone has also suggested that stories on survivors in the media had been valuable and complementary to NGO efforts to support survivors.

Participants of BBC Media Action's focus groups stated that they would treat survivors differently after listening to the show. They spontaneously spoke about accepting, encouraging and interacting with survivors. Three-quarters

(74%) of respondents to BBC Media Action's mobile phone survey also agreed that they would be comfortable buying food from a survivor after listening to *Kick Ebola from Liberia*.

“As Sheik, we are the ones who sit beside the corpse when offering prayers and there is a possibility for us to touch it. With the help of this drama [Mr Plan Plan], I will no longer read the Quran very close to a corpse. We will return to our traditions after these plans have worked in eradicating the virus from the entire country.”

Focus group participant from Kobala, Sierra Leone

#### Effectiveness: Motivation and action

The programmes engaged audiences and motivated people to take up a preventative plan and practices such as hand washing and safe burial practices. Listeners reported that Mr Plan Plan was particularly helpful, because it depicted reality, and provided concrete advice about going about making a plan. Local radio station staff echoed this, reporting that “having a plan like “Mr Plan Plan” had become a slogan in the communities”.<sup>59</sup> Two elements in particular were highlighted as being important in motivating listeners to take action. The first was the fact that trusted experts responded to pressing questions, and the second was the fact that the shows focused on providing practical and actionable advice.

## 4.4 Nepal earthquake response 2015

### 4.4.1 Background

On 25 April 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck less than 50 miles outside Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. This was followed by another 7.3 magnitude quake on 12 May. Estimates put the death toll at almost 9,000, with 2.8 million people requiring humanitarian assistance in the resulting crisis.

#### Intervention

Nine hours after the first earthquake, the BBC World Service with support from BBC Media Action began broadcasting content through the BBC Nepali service. Programmes were also broadcast through a network of partner radio stations. The network consisted of approximately 300 stations, although some had been damaged by the earthquake and were off air.<sup>60</sup> After a week on air the programme was rebranded as *Milijuli Nepali* (Together Nepal), with 15-minute episodes being broadcast six times a week.

*Milijuli Nepali* aims to provide people with timely, relevant and practical information to alleviate suffering and assist with their recovery. Programming also aims to give affected people the opportunity to voice their concerns, express their needs, share their stories and hold humanitarian aid providers to account.



On 4 May 2015, BBC Media Action launched Milijuli Nepali (Together Nepal), a special radio programme for the people affected by the earthquake in Nepal. Here, BBC Media Action interviews some of the earthquake affected families living together under a shelter. © BBC Media Action

Table 6: Nepal research activities

Research activity	Details	Timing of fieldwork relative to phase of crisis	Purpose of research
Online needs assessment – audiences	More than 3,000 responses collected	Emergency and post-emergency (weeks 1 to 12 after the earthquake)	Inform
Qualitative audience feedback	5 FGDs completed	Emergency and post-emergency	Inform and evaluate
Desk review of secondary data		Weekly	Inform
Interactive Voice Recording feedback mechanism	100 IVRs recorded	Live on 26 June	Inform
Interim evaluation	6 FGDs, 2 mini group discussions, 10 in-depth interviews	Recovery (July 2015)	Inform and evaluate

#### 4.4.2 Research and evaluation

Research was conducted throughout the intervention to inform and shape production, and ensure it was based on the priority needs of affected communities. Evaluative research was also conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention.

#### Interim evaluation methodology

In July 2015, qualitative research (focus group discussions and in-depth interviews) was completed with *Milijuli Nepali* audiences (those who had listened to the programme more than once in the last month) and key informants (practitioners in the media and humanitarian sector and community leaders). Fieldwork was undertaken by BBC Media Action researchers, in collaboration with the project’s humanitarian partner, Care, in three of the most affected districts, Kathmandu Valley, Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk.

#### 4.4.3 Key findings

These findings are based on results from the first evaluation. Programming is still on air and further research is planned to explore the impact further.

#### Media context

Three months after the onset of the crisis, affected populations were still relying heavily on radio for information. Radio was preferred over other sources because of its efficiency in providing timely information and ease of access (including through mobile phone). A strong network of community radio stations, with good coverage of the affected areas, meant that community radio stations were listeners’ preferred choice for local information before the earthquake, and have continued to be the most accessed and trusted source during the crisis.

### Relevance and appropriateness: Access

*Milijuli Nepali* is widely available to listeners through partner stations relaying the BBC Nepali service. Feedback suggests the programme could maximise its audience with more repeats, signposting and an earlier primary slot (post-9pm is too late, particularly for rural listeners).

### Relevance and appropriateness: Engagement

#### *Platform and format*

- Findings suggest that the format of the programme has worked well to combine practical information and stories from the field.
- Listeners liked the presenters' style and field reporting, as well as the programme name, which encapsulates the tone that listeners want from a radio programme like this: "working together, united through the crises".
- Listeners liked the familiar style of reporting from the field and face-to-face interviews with real people and experts.
- Listeners liked hearing the local voices but they wanted two-way communication – to be able to interact with the programme themselves directly.

#### Content

- Audiences and key informants agreed that the solution-focused nature of *Milijuli Nepali* set it apart from other programmes addressing the crisis.
- Listeners identified with the real-life experiences presented from different areas and liked the local perspectives. They also commented that not all information was relevant to all listeners (e.g. how to re-use location-specific building materials).
- Listeners gave several examples of the way the programme had been able to address the specific needs of women (trafficking and maternal care). Some noted that additional marginalised groups and castes could be given further voice.
- Listeners found the programming relevant, easy to understand (for all education levels) and the information largely practical and easy to apply.
- While listeners identified the audience for the programmes as those affected by the earthquakes, they also felt that the show had value for unaffected people listening, as they could share the information and be better prepared themselves in the case of future earthquakes.

### Relevance and appropriateness: Trust

The BBC brand, existing well-established trust in community radio stations and the focus on local, real-life experiences resulted in strong trust in the programme.

#### Effectiveness

- **Knowledge and practice:** Listeners recalled a wide variety of information from the programmes, particularly on safety, health and rebuilding. Some were able to give direct examples of how they had used this information or shared it with others, suggesting they had been able to apply the advice provided.

- **Attitudes:** Respondents said that they would have liked the opportunity to hold the decision makers to account, and were sometimes frustrated at the information leaders gave and wanted there to be follow up.
- **Motivation and action:** One of the greatest information needs identified by listeners was the need for psychosocial support, with an emphasis on recovery and getting back to normal. Feedback suggests that multiple elements of the programme are able to contribute to a sense of empowerment among listeners that they can do something to improve their situation: the programme name; the provision of practical/easy-to-use information; the focus on solutions as well as issues; and the inclusion of encouraging/inspiring stories from real people who have overcome problems.

# Chapter 5

## Overall findings and insights

This section synthesises findings across the four case studies. The categories and subheadings selected are drawn from the adapted OECD/DAC criteria and other components outlined in the research framework (see Table 1).

### 5.1 Relevance and appropriateness

An overall finding is that issues of engagement, access and trust are key to achieving outcomes. Even when people are desperate for *any* information in the crisis and might be expected to have lower standards around the quality, relevance and engagement of that information, findings across cases do not support this. Crisis exacerbates and heightens existing issues and people make choices about where to get their information based on access, quality, trust and relevance of content.

#### 5.1.1 Access to information in crisis

Access is a critical component of media interventions, without which it is impossible to reach people affected. It includes physical access to the medium itself (often a challenge in crisis due to lack of electricity and loss of assets), and access to the content – comprehension and appropriateness of language and content for the audience. Across the four case studies, a key advantage of the mass media outlets was their ability to reach large numbers of people affected by crisis. While this had the advantage of being able to quickly give critical information to large numbers and very different groups of people, there were also real challenges in making that information specific, specifically useful at the local level.

Findings across the case studies are consistent with learning from other disasters, in that electricity is a major barrier to information. People relied mostly on radio for the information they needed in Sierra Leone, Nepal and Gaza. In Gaza especially, radio was also listened through mobile phones, which can require less electricity. Not surprisingly, given the very different disaster settings, the way people used information was very different. In Gaza, people selected multiple channels based on their level of trust in the medium and broadcaster, relevance to their lives, and what they liked. In Nepal, many people asked could not recall which radio station or programme they got their information from immediately after the earthquake.

Additionally, research showed that people had strong opinions about what they did and didn't like, such as the tone of the presenters or the format of the shows.

For instance, in Nepal listeners commented that they liked the outdoor interviews in the villages, which was the same format used by community stations. Across the case studies, listeners had different opinions about the multiplicity of topics covered, with some appreciating a wide variety, and others preferring fewer but more detailed topics. However, across the data listeners consistently found the programmes to be of a high quality, with engaging content that was relevant to their current needs.

### 5.1.2 Engagement

Listener engagement with the programmes related closely to their empathising with the content and feeling that the presenters and guests on the programmes were empathetic to their situation and needs. The most frequently mentioned programmes in Gaza and Syria were those that listeners were particularly engaged or moved by emotionally. Listeners were sensitive to the type of content and the way it was presented. Affected people in Gaza, for example, liked the fact that presenters were from Gaza and understood what they were going through. Being able to identify with the people, places and context broadcast was extremely important to listeners. Seeing and hearing people like them who reflected their reality and needs was important and something that the programmes did well. Programmes achieved this by interviewing local people from different areas, visiting communities and speaking to people. Ebola interventions used drama characters to represent the different views and challenges involved with confronting the virus.

#### Atheer Gaza

The particular programme that listeners mentioned frequently during interviews was one about 'death boats'. The programme had interviewed people who had lost relatives trying to flee the country. Listeners were very moved by this programme, and indeed some knew or had heard of the family featured.

Listeners were sensitive to having a full and accurate representation of their suffering, and at times they felt that their reality was harder than the one reflected in the programmes. This was highlighted in Nepal and Gaza, and is one of the challenges of mass media outlets for a large target audience. Nevertheless, research across the cases showed that the programmes were particularly successful in creating content that represented people like them whom they could identify with, and in using formats that were appropriate and engaging. In Nepal, listeners highlighted their evolving preferences throughout the disaster phase. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, they needed more informative programming but then wanted more entertaining programming during the recovery phase as they begin to tire of hearing about the earthquake.



## Syrian refugees: Engagement and formats

Syrian refugees in UNHCR registration centres appreciated the cartoon animation of an Arabic proverb “using your tongue”. They found the animated content engaging and funny, while the familiar Arabic proverb made a poignant point – “if you don’t ask, you don’t get help”.

### 5.1.3 Trust and accountability

Perceptions of relevance and accuracy related closely to *trust* in the evaluation findings. Listeners trusted programmes that they believed to be accurate and consistent with other information they had heard and knew. In a rapidly changing and uncertain environment, trust is fluid and heavily dependent on the accuracy of the information given. Content that accurately reflected current issues was trusted. Listeners to Kick Ebola, for example, said they trusted the information because it was timely and reflected “what is happening now”. In Nepal, listeners gained trust in Radio Nepal after it accurately gave early warning information about an aftershock happening at a specific time. While it was a coincidence that this event happened to occur at the time forewarned, many radio stations helped to stir up rumours about when others would hit, as it was impossible to predict these events accurately.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, they needed more informative programming but then wanted more entertaining programming during the recovery phase as they begin to tire of hearing about the earthquake.

In conflict settings (Gaza and Syrian refugees), the levels of trust people have can be especially important to confidence in the content. In Gaza, listeners trusted the BBC brand and the non-partisan station (Radio Alwan) selected for broadcast. In Jordan and Lebanon, the content for Syrian refugees was played on television screens in UNHCR registration centres (which also showed some UNHCR content). This meant that ownership of the content was sometimes attributed to UNHCR, an agency not necessarily perceived well among refugees rather than a more neutral source, which could have influenced the believability of the content.

Accountability, accuracy and trust are connected. Findings showed that, while listeners generally trusted the overall platform and the presenters, if a guest on the programme gave information that was wrong or perceived to be inaccurate, this affected the levels of trust in the programme. This raises challenges for the humanitarian broadcaster who may not always see the need, or have the time or capacity, to verify information from “experts on the show”. This can be a particular challenge for mass media broadcasters whose content needs to be accurate across large areas. For example, listeners in Gaza said that they did not receive the school uniforms promised by a representative from a humanitarian agency on the show.

In emergencies, accuracy and accountability become more pressing. Confidence and trust issues are heightened. Respondents in Sierra Leone highlighted that accountability is “more of a life and death issue” in crisis. People therefore have higher expectations from responders (decision-makers, governments and the aid community) to take action. Broadcasters were perceived by some to have a responsibility in holding decision-makers to account and bringing about transparency.

When programmes gave decision-makers a platform, respondents felt strongly that programme-makers should follow up on what they said, and hold them to account. This was apparent in evaluation findings of Nepal’s governance programme,<sup>61</sup> and Gaza where listeners felt frustrated with the information given by decision-makers, which they perceived to be inaccurate, and wanted an opportunity to interact with them.

## 5.2 Effectiveness: What effect did the interventions have on people affected by crisis?

The outcomes of interventions are influenced by the extent to which the broadcasting mechanism is trusted, accessed and engaged with as outlined in the previous section. The identified outcomes common to each case (highlighted in Table 1) are: giving people a voice, motivation, confidence, discussion, knowledge, attitudes and actions. ‘Connecting people’ was not a pre-determined theme in the analysis but emerged as a finding across the case studies so is included in this section.

### 5.2.1 Connecting people in crisis

Programmes played a key role in connecting affected people with others in emergencies, and particularly connecting audiences, practitioners (such as aid workers) and systems. Evidence was strongest in showing connections between affected people. Listeners valued hearing or seeing “people like them” and being able to identify with their experiences and challenges.

**Audiences:** Findings from the Syria research and Gaza also showed that the interventions had a role in connecting people to “the other”: those who they did not perceive to be like them. Audiences spoke about the extended role the media could play in breaking down barriers between different groups. Ebola research also showed that the programme helped to break down barriers and stigma affecting Ebola survivors.

**Practitioners:** BBC Media Action’s interventions also helped to connect affected people with humanitarian agencies by giving them a platform to share information. In Gaza, humanitarian workers interviewed highlighted their appreciation of the programme and being able to refer people to it as a source of information – reaching more people than they could alone.

“I would have liked the programme to include voices from the West Bank too, to be more representative.”

Interview, Gaza

**Systems:** Evaluations showed that, at least to an extent, programmes connected affected people to decision-makers and policy-makers by providing a platform for dialogue and asking questions. However, this was limited, and listeners would have liked an opportunity to ask questions themselves, or for the presenters to follow up on issues directly with those in authority.

### 5.2.2 Giving people a voice

Giving people a voice to air their concerns and share their experiences has been highlighted as a key part of communication interventions in crisis, in helping to ensure that content is relevant to need. It can help to provide assurance and support by enabling people to share common problems, and provides reassurance in knowing that they are not alone and others are aware of their concerns.

Findings across the case studies supported the premise that people affected by crisis want and appreciate a platform to share and hear experiences. Representing people “like them” plays a role in making them feel that their voices and issues that they care about are heard. Listeners in Gaza appreciated the way the programme was not afraid to discuss “difficult issues” important to them and wanted the programme to be aired on western media too so that the international community could hear.

As well as appreciating hearing “people like them” voice their concerns, listeners also appreciated having their own channels of communication for dialogue. In Sierra Leone, over 12,000 people signed up to the programme’s WhatsApp group where they could send through comments, questions and requests for programming. In Nepal, listeners used the Interactive Voice Recording machine to leave their comments and suggestions for the programme. However, overall the evaluations show that two-way communication was limited through the mass media outlets, and listeners wanted more interaction and follow-up of issues. In Gaza, they wanted to be able to interact and have dialogue through the Facebook page the project had created. In Nepal’s governance programme, they wanted to be able to speak directly to the decision-makers and have dialogue with them about issues raised.

### 5.2.3 Discussion, dialogue and sharing information

While mass media outlets are limited in the number of people/voices they can represent on air, they are good at encouraging discussion off air. Across the case studies, audiences said they discussed the content they had heard with friends and families. These included difficult topics such as rights and equality issues for Dalits in the Nepal earthquake response, or how to follow preventative measures needed to avoid Ebola without dishonouring tradition

in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Additionally, listeners said they shared their learning from the programmes with friends and family: examples included how to recognise psychological trauma in Gaza, and warnings of immigration exploitation in Jordan and Lebanon. Discussion can have psychological benefits itself and as highlighted in the literature review, statistical analysis of health media interventions have shown positive associations between increased discussion and action.

### Sharing advice: *Atheer Gaza*

After hearing a programme about how to deal with trauma in conflict on BBC Media Action's programme *Atheer Gaza*, a female listener was able to help her friend who was afraid and suffering with trauma. (Gaza evaluation)

#### 5.2.4 Knowledge and learning

Sharing knowledge through information provision is perhaps the most frequently referred to benefit of media in crisis. It is referenced both as a prerequisite to action and in terms of meeting psychosocial needs in itself, and it is part of the recommended minimum requirements of emergency psychosocial aid (see section 2).

Evaluations showed that programme interventions created and re-enforced awareness of issues, such as Ebola transmission in Liberia and Sierra Leone and exploitation of immigration in Gaza and Syria. Listeners were able to recall information they had heard on the programmes, and reported learning new information such as how to recognise and deal with trauma in conflict in Gaza or services available for Syrian refugees. Re-enforcement of knowledge through trusted platforms was valued particularly in the Ebola interventions, where the media landscape was confused and the media gave inconsistent, often frightening information. Similarly in Nepal, listeners appreciated content like *Milijuli Nepali*, as it was not "scare mongering" and provided practical and useful information. It was valued for helping to dispel rumours, such as water not needing to be filtered as well as boiled to be safe. Listeners also valued and learned about how to stay safe during aftershocks, although they said that they wished they had known this information before the earthquake and felt unprepared.

Humanitarians interviewed also valued the educational content of programmes and directed people to the programmes in Gaza and in Syrian refugee registration centres. They viewed the programmes as helpful to their role of sharing information with people affected.

Overall evaluations support the idea that mass media has a key role in helping the relief effort by providing information and raising awareness of issues. As

with all forms of learning, the most useful knowledge was that which was of most interest and most relevant to their lives.

### 5.2.5 Shifting attitudes

The role of media in shifting attitudes is well recognised in the communication for development field (see section 1), with data to suggest that it is also a determinant of action. However, attitude shifts are usually looked at over longer time periods than in crisis, where the influence of media is less known.

Despite the shorter time periods for shifts to occur, the evaluation findings suggest that media can influence attitudes in crisis, particularly in relation to people's feelings about the situation. Evidence suggests that programmes made listeners feel more hopeful in and about their situation, largely by connecting them with others through shared experiences, making them aware that they were not alone and that their situation and needs were known.

“I lost hope entirely in fighting this [Ebola] disease, but after listening to this programme today, I will show love to people who have the disease in order to give them hope, that they will get well again.”

Focus group discussion, Freetown, Sierra Leone

In the Ebola context, listeners reported that the programmes helped to reduce their fear of medical workers treating Ebola survivors and encouraged them to feel and be more tolerant towards them, giving a sense of hope and belief that the situation would improve.

### 5.2.6 Motivation and actions

Evidence across the case studies suggests that the broadcasts were good at motivating and encouraging people to feel more confident in themselves, each other and their situation. Hearing other's stories and sharing experiences provided hope and reassurance in difficult and complex settings. Listeners in Nepal appreciated hearing factual, calm and useful information that did not “scare monger” or spread rumours as some of the traditional media outlets did. Similarly in Ebola contexts, listeners appreciated useful information that they could act on amid a crowded media and communication landscape where rumours and scare mongering were reported.

**Feeling motivated and encouraged:** Syrian refugees commented that the outputs encouraged and motivated them to take action to help themselves and to ask for help from service providers, even when their past experience had given them little confidence that such requests would result in action. Similarly in Gaza, listeners commented that the programmes gave them some hope – but little expectation that requests would be met. Listeners in Nepal were encouraged by the real-life stories shared and wanted to hear more positive examples of how people have recovered and overcome problems (including examples from other places where people have experienced and recovered from similar disasters).

## Challenges of local information: Nepal

A key informant in Nepal spoke about the value of the general shelter building information broadcast by *Milijuli Nepali* after the earthquake, but highlighted the limited value of the details given to specific locations only (types of wood to use etc). Balancing general information with localised information is a challenge for the mass broadcaster, since evaluations show that people do want specific details as well as general information to enable them to take specific action.

**Motivation to act:** Listeners to Ebola broadcasts reported being motivated to take preventative measures as a result of hearing the programme, such as practising safe burials and hand washing. Additionally, respondents to the GeoPoll survey reported acting on the information they heard to protect themselves from Ebola. Across the case studies, listeners reported acting or intended to act on the information they had heard. In Nepal, women reported acting on health and sanitation advice. Syrian refugees said they intended to act on some of the information they heard in the registration centres, such as registering their children's births and getting them vaccinated.

“I did not realise that the earthquake had affected other people too until I put on the radio, I thought we were the only ones.”

Radio listener, Nepal earthquake

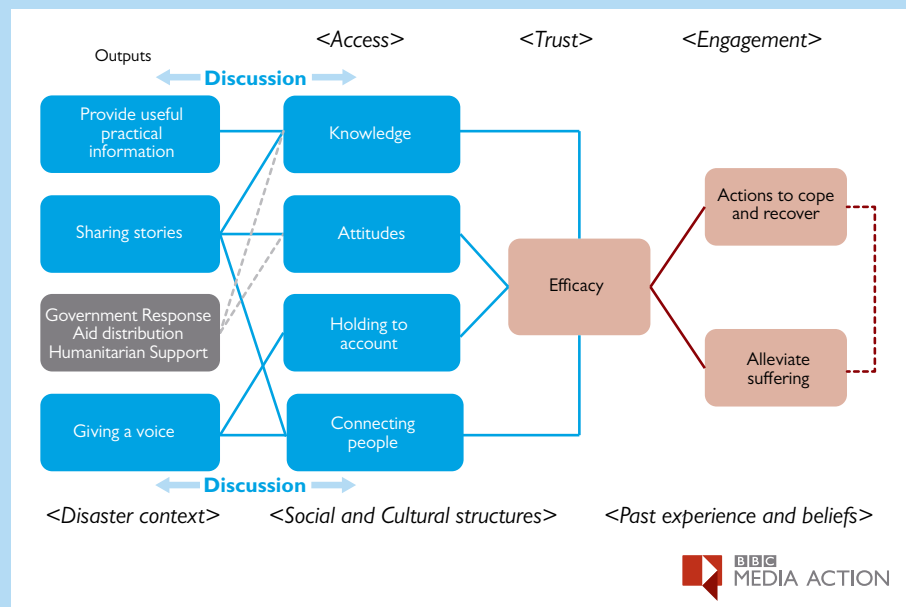
However, taking action was not the strongest outcome of the broadcasts. Synthesised findings suggest that mass media is more appropriate at encouraging actions relevant to everyone, such as hand washing (for example for Ebola prevention), rather than specific localised actions that will only be relevant for specific audiences and may rely on the capacity of humanitarian responders. Evaluations showed that generic information that is not actionable in their particular setting can be frustrating for listeners. Audiences in Gaza, for example, expressed frustration with all media interventions (including *Atheer Gaza*) in not providing enough clearly relevant solution-focused information. Similarly Syrian refugees reported needing additional information to take immediate specific action (such as contacting medical services) because they lacked contact details.

# Chapter 6

## An outline theory of change

Based on this synthesis of findings from the research carried out across these four case studies, an outline theory of change is suggested for the role of mass media interventions in humanitarian responses (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Outline theory of change for the role of mass media interventions in humanitarian responses



Access, trust and engagement of the broadcasts are represented at the top of the figure as fundamental pillars throughout the interventions needed to reach audiences. Consistent with BBC Media Action's approach (see section 3), findings show the greatest impact of the programming to be centred around outcomes that are key elements of *psychosocial* support (see Box 5):

- **Knowing** what to do and how to cope in a crisis is recognised as a key element of psychosocial support.<sup>62</sup>
- Being empowered to **hold others to account** is a form of action that is also recognised as helping mental wellbeing.
- **Connecting people** to others in the same situation so they can share experiences can provide psychological support, or connecting them to aid workers or governments can help them to feel that the situation will improve and help to influence attitudes and feelings towards the situation and other people.

These psychosocial outcomes can give hope and confidence (**efficacy**) to people in crisis, which can help to **alleviate their suffering**. These outcomes broadly fit into the empirically supported elements of intervention needed for psychosocial support identified by Hobfoll et al. (2007) (see Box 5).<sup>63</sup>

### Box 5: Five principles of psychosocial care in disasters

#### 1. Promote sense of safety

A sense of safety is encouraged through accurate, neutral and positive information (Hobfoll et al., 2007).<sup>64</sup>

#### 2. Promote calm

#### 3. Promote sense of collective and self-efficacy

Promoting the belief that self or collective actions are likely to lead to positive outcomes.

#### 4. Promote connectedness

#### 5. Promote hope

Findings show that the outcomes achieved by the media broadcasts are heavily influenced and constrained by the disaster context, the social and cultural systems and past experiences.

Other outputs by humanitarian actors, governments and institutions are included as direct components in the model, as they also directly influence the outcomes, working as both barriers and enablers. For example, *Atheer Gaza* was seen to be an encouraging programme (thus having a positive effect on efficacy), but people's sense of efficacy and confidence that the situation would change was heavily influenced by the role of the government.

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the broadcasts and the contextual barriers and enablers can help practitioners to set feasible objectives and work with partners to address gaps.





Following BBC Media Action Ebola lifeline communication training, journalists at Idadu FM in Benin arranged a Q&A phone session with listeners. © Hadrien Bonnaud/UNICEF

# Chapter 7

## Conclusion and recommendations

This synthesis of evidence suggests that BBC Media Action interventions have an important role to play in assisting people affected by crisis, and is consistent with other literature that highlights the role of media in providing accurate and reliable information in crisis. It highlights that, as with other forms of humanitarian assistance, mass media cannot fully meet people's needs, and it works best alongside other interventions and actors, particularly locally based media broadcasters and other actors who can provide follow-up on issues raised and address locally specific issues and concerns. The links between the media intervention outcomes and the elements needed for psychosocial support are interesting, and it would be beneficial for future research to test this further to develop and refine theories of change for interventions.

Looking across the synthesised findings suggests the following:

- *Mass-scale media can reach many people and cover many topics. Local partners are needed for follow-up of issues:* Findings show that broadcasts can reach many people quickly and cover a wide range of topics. However, covering issues in depth and following up on issues raised is a challenge when trying to reach such a wide audience. Local partnership is key here, since evaluations showed that listeners wanted issues raised on the programme to be followed up (particularly around holding decision-makers to account), and were frustrated when they were not.
- *Mass-scale media is more effective in sharing universal information (i.e. about the situation, what to do, how to protect yourself and your family) than in providing specific details for a given context:* Mass media can reach mass audiences quickly with information, but to be most effective it needs to be practical. For example, the Ebola evaluations showed that listeners benefited and learned from the universal actions that were shared, such as how to practice safe burials or hand washing. Mass media was a good outlet for this, able to reach many people with solution-focused practical information. In other contexts, when specific details were shared that were only relevant to some locations or people groups, listeners were frustrated. Findings suggest that mass-scale media is less appropriate for localised specific information, and can compromise accuracy, perception of trust and relevance. Local media outlets inevitably lend themselves much more to localised information. Collaboration with local partners is therefore key in this since evaluations showed that listeners did want specific localised information.

- *The effectiveness of media broadcasts is influenced by other actors' response and actions:* As outlined in the theory of change, the effects of the media interventions are influenced by the activities of other actors (i.e. humanitarian actors, governments). This means that verification of information and partnership is essential to the media broadcasts having a positive effect on people affected by crisis.
- *Mass-scale broadcasts can help people to feel more connected but they need local partners to help make the connections happen:* The findings showed that the broadcasts helped affected people to feel connected to others like them in the same situation, and also to practitioners and decision-makers to an extent, and this feeling of connection helped them psychologically. The interventions were limited in actually connecting people since two-way communication is much more of a challenge for mass-scale interventions, both in terms of logistics and scale. Partnership with local broadcasters and humanitarian agencies is key in this to enable local people to have a voice and make connections with others in the crisis.
- *Psychosocial aspects of humanitarian relief should not be underestimated:* Psychosocial outcomes can give hope and confidence (efficacy) to people in crisis and can be critical to enabling people to respond effectively. Mass humanitarian broadcasts are especially effective at supporting psychosocial outcomes.

# Appendix

## Summary definitions of OECD/ DAC criteria<sup>65</sup>

Criterion	Definition	Main use*
Relevance/ Appropriateness	Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy). Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness.	All evaluation types except those with a mainly institutional focus.
Connectedness	(Adapted from sustainability) Connectedness refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.	Evaluations assessing institutional structures and partnerships.
Coherence	Coherence is the need to assess security, developmental, trade and military policies, as well as humanitarian policies, to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that all policies take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations.	Joint evaluations, large-scale evaluations and those with a focus on policy.
Coverage	Coverage refers to the need to reach all major population groups that are facing life-threatening suffering wherever they are.	All evaluation types except those with a mainly institutional focus.
Efficiency	Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the most efficient approach has been used.	All evaluation types where adequate financial information is available.
Effectiveness	Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. Implicit within the criterion of effectiveness is timeliness.	Single-sector or single-agency evaluations.
Impact	Impact looks at the wider effects of the project – social, economic, technical, environmental – on individuals, genders and age-groups, communities and institutions. Impacts can be intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household).	Multi-sector, multi-agency evaluations; joint evaluations; sector-wide evaluations.

\* All of the criteria will be useful in most evaluations to some extent. This column selects evaluations types where each criterion will be particularly useful. For further details on the types of evaluations noted in the third column, see ALNAP Training Module 1 (at <http://www.alnap.org/training.html>).<sup>66</sup>

# Endnotes

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