

# **BRIEFING REPORT ON CDAC-HAITI (COMMUNICATING WITH DISASTER AFFECTED COMMUNITIES- HAITI)**

## **BACKGROUND**

CDAC is a communications platform that has three principle objectives:

- 1) Harmonize communications among international and local organizations working in the humanitarian sector.
- 2) Integrate communications among international organizations and between them and the Haitian government.
- 3) Facilitate and promote two-way communications between humanitarian actors (Haitian Government, International NGOs, agencies) and beneficiaries.

CDAC, operational in Haiti since the January 2010 earthquake, initially primarily focused on coordinating communications among international actors, but in the past year has increasingly been playing a central role in facilitating communications among *all* humanitarian actors working in Haiti including international and local NGOs, the Haitian government (GoH) and the Haitian media. Starting in November CDACs coordination efforts have begun to bear significant fruit.

## **IMPACT**

- CDAC has enabled international NGOs and agencies' communication and media departments to ***exchange key messages and practices*** with Haitian communications practitioners (e.g. local associations of journalists, local NGOs communication staffs, etc).
- In an environment where numerous humanitarian actors tend to plan and implement their communication strategies independently, CDAC ***facilitated increased coordination*** and ***reinforced the GoH's lead position*** in defining the general communication strategy.
  - CDAC played a key role in ***harmonizing NGOs and UN agencies' communication products on cholera*** by strongly advocating for the exclusive use of GoH approved communication products. When humanitarian actors wanted to produce their own products, CDAC played a role in facilitating their interaction with GoH communications experts for their approval.
- The CDAC platform has enabled several key humanitarian actors to ***create synergy*** in their communication activities while offering ***a politically neutral cross-cutting space*** including local civil society organizations, local media, international and local NGOs and UN agencies.
  - By regularly ***compiling an inventory of communication activities*** (3Ws) and bringing numerous actors together where their projects were geographically and/or qualitatively related.
- By providing mapping of communication activities and bringing together its various partners in their efforts to communicate with the Haitian population, ***CDAC facilitated improved communications efforts that reduced the possibility of initiatives duplication***, increased coordination between humanitarian actors and the local media and created an operational bridge with those working directly on community mobilisation.
  - During the cholera epidemic CDAC played a pivotal role in ***identifying qualitative and quantitative gaps in Humanitarian actors' beneficiary directed communication activities*** and provided ***assistance to humanitarian actors in the design and adaptation of their communication activities*** accordingly ensuring harmonization with GoH messaging.

- In November, through the **coordination of a baseline survey on the impact of communication campaigns on cholera prevention and treatment**, CDAC identified that beyond the general messages, people had more questions and concerns not yet addressed by these mass media campaigns. The survey also revealed that people privilege radio as their first and most reliable source of information on cholera.

Based on these findings:

- CDAC **encouraged several partners to focus on interactive radios shows on cholera**. CDAC served as a **catalyst to share the questions and misconceptions** raised in these shows to facilitate to adapt future communication activities led by other partners.
- CDAC **mapped all radio activities related to cholera communication carried out by the GoH and humanitarian actors** and planned to coordinate the **training on cholera of radio journalists** all over the country (with AJH, UNESCO, MSF, MDM, Haitian Red Cross)

The baseline survey was not only a useful tool for adapting communication activities, but also played a role in **advocating for a 2 way communication flow between communication actors and beneficiaries**, as several humanitarian actors used it as a basis for implementation of their own focus groups and surveys with beneficiaries.

### **CDAC in 2011**

Several international NGOs recently expressed a strong interest in participating in the CDAC platform and reinforcing their collaboration with CDAC-Haiti (e.g. MSF, Médecins du Monde, IEDA Relief, World Vision, the French Red Cross, Intermón Oxfam, and the 'Communication for Development' section of UNICEF). This momentum grew out of the recognised added value of CDAC expressed by our current active participants (see attached).

CDAC and all its partners (GoH, NGOs, UN agencies, civil society organisation and local Media), **envision using the momentum the project created around Cholera awareness to enrich the design of other communication campaigns** such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Gender Based Violence (GBV), nutrition, return strategy from camps and reconstruction, etc.. )

- For instance CDAC planned to coordinate with *No Strings International*, an NGO designing Muppet shows for DRR, health prevention and protection themes, **a large campaign to train community mobilisers in puppetry and broadcast in isolated places video shows**. CDAC's network cultural and linguistic knowledge of Haiti will help facilitate the coordination and implementation of this project.

The unique CDAC network and working relationship established with the GoH is a huge asset to CDAC partners for bringing together all actors working on communicating with disaster affected communities in a more coherent way. Our unique network cross-cutting the humanitarian world, the GoH and civil society can enable us to:

- **Mainstream accountability of all the reconstruction and development activities in Haiti giving voice to beneficiaries in a sustainable way.**
  - By mainstreaming crowd-sourced complaint mechanisms initiated by CDAC partners (IOM, Noola, Crisis Mappers).
  - This project if shared and mainstreamed with more partners can give voice to beneficiaries in order for them to directly participate in defining the priorities of all humanitarian actors and making them more accountable to public scrutiny.

CDAC also needs to engage with all local partners to design a **realistic exit strategy**. This strategy includes a **transfer of some coordinating mechanisms to the GoH**, but also should include a **non-governmental dimension**.

**Dr Claude SURENA (Cabinet du Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population - MSPP) – Représentant du MSPP dans l’inter-cluster Santé**

CDAC, groupe intersectoriel de communication auprès des populations affectées par les désastres, a collaboré de manière efficace et efficiente avec le MSPP dans la lutte contre le choléra. Cette collaboration s’est axée d’abord sur la coordination des actions de communication des agences humanitaires et des organisations non gouvernementales intervenant dans la campagne d’information et de sensibilisation contre l’épidémie de choléra. CDAC a servi de relai d’information entre ces agences et ONGs au niveau des différentes plateformes indépendamment des secteurs auxquels elles appartiennent. CDAC, comme plateforme transversale, a assuré l’harmonisation des actions de communication. Les réunions hebdomadaires de CDAC ont permis aux agences humanitaires et ONGs d’échanger et de discuter des meilleures stratégies de communication à adopter pour mieux informer et sensibiliser la population en ayant la ligne stratégique du MSPP comme cadre. L’avis technique de CDAC a permis d’éclairer tous les acteurs concernés sur la confusion qu’un changement de message pouvait créer en pleine campagne d’information et aussi l’impact négatif que cela pouvait entraîner.

Fort de tout cela, nous prônons la continuité des activités de CDAC tant ses actions ont été utiles pour le MSPP dans la coordination et l’harmonisation des actions de communication des agences humanitaires et des ONGs dans la campagne d’information et sensibilisation du public dans la lutte contre le choléra.

**Dr Léa GUIDO (Représentante de L’OMS/OPS en Haïti)**

- CDAC permet de nous mettre directement en contact avec la population et obtenir leur feedback sur nos activités,
- CDAC a contribué à l’harmonisation dans la diffusion des messages de communication auprès de la population. Par exemple, dès le début de la réponse au choléra, CDAC a promu l’idée/concept/nécessité de suivre les messages clés du MSPP et de s’appuyer sur les matériels produits et validés par le MSPP,
- CDAC a su faire du lobby pour une meilleure cohérence de la communication entre les acteurs humanitaires et le MSPP,
- CDAC permet de distribuer nos communiqués de presse directement à la presse haïtienne.

**Silvia DANAILOV**

**(Senior Recovery Advisor, Social Mobilisation task team leader - UNICEF)**

**Joyce BRANDFUL**

**(Chief, Communication for Development - UNICEF)**

CDAC joue un rôle important de coordination pour les acteurs nationaux répondant à l’épidémie de cholera. La plateforme constituée autour de CDAC a permis aux membres d’échanger des informations sur les interventions respectives, de renforcer l’impact de leurs initiatives ainsi que d’éviter les doublons. Pour l’UNICEF, le mapping sur les interventions qui est régulièrement compilé nous a permis de bien préparer notre campagne de mobilisation sociale en cours dont une grande composante concerne les médias de masse. Nous comptons sur CDAC pour renforcer les efforts de coordination des

partenaires en soutien et sous l'égide du MSPP, tant au niveau national que dans les départements.

**Rachelle ELIEN (Chargée du Reporting et de l'Information - UNOCHA)**

- CDAC a permis une meilleure harmonisation des actions de communication surtout avec le cholera avec les stratégies du gouvernement.
- CDAC a réalisé un plaidoyer pour la mise en place d'activités de communication pour toucher les populations sinistrées
- CDAC a permis aux acteurs d'identifier les failles, les grandes tendances en communication et voir les programmes à mettre en œuvre en matière de communication
- CDAC a réalisé un travail d'échanges d'information entre les acteurs qui a diminué la duplication des actions sur le terrain en matière de communication
- CDAC a fait un travail de plaidoyer pour une relation de proximité avec les médias locaux et nationaux.

**Leonard DOYLE (Media and Communications - OIM/IOM)**

IOM's experience in working with CDAC in recent months has been extremely positive, especially in regard to the cholera crisis. CDAC's interim coordinator Ben Noble played a proactive and creative role in engaging with all levels of the Government of Haiti and humanitarian actors. He also took the cholera message to the national media in ways not previously seen and continues to be an effective bridge to getting the messages to and from the disaster affected community. For the future we have high hopes of working with CDAC as we grow the social media platform Sitwayen Ayiti | Citizen Haiti ([citizenhaiti.org](http://citizenhaiti.org)). IOM's Tanbou Project complaints mechanism which already includes over 4000 letters as well as numerous phone calls, SMS messages and Twitter comments from beneficiaries is now being extended to cover aid projects under the Haiti Reconstruction Fund. This new crowd-sourced complaints mechanism points the way for greater grassroots involvement in the aid process in Haiti and for genuine two way of communication with the disaster affected community. We see a pivotal role for CDAC in ensuring the success of this important project.

**Marianna NISSEN (Communication analyst -UNDP)**

-CDAC has offered agencies, NGOs and local authorities, an opportunity to interchange key messages and best practices to reach the earthquake affected communities, therefore providing more transparent and efficient means to communicate with the local population. CDAC proved to be a very useful service to spread information before and during the hurricane season and cholera outbreak, spreading messages through traditional media as well as other outreach outlets (churches, associations, etc) on cyclone preparedness, cholera prevention, etc.

CDAC was responsible for organizing a series of press conferences to mark the six month and one year anniversaries of the earthquake. This permitted local and international correspondents to learn about UNDP's interventions in terms of recovery and reconstruction.

For UNDP, CDAC has been essential to reach Haitians to tell them about our early recovery programs – such as Cash-for-Work (CFW) – their progress to clean the city of Port-au-Prince, but especially to control some expectations about the future of the CFW program. Should CDAC find the necessary funding to continue its activities – which we

Hope – UNDP will certainly make greater use of CDAC's services.

**Suranga MALLAWA, (Program coordinator- UNOPS)**

On the cholera response, CDAC

- Contributed to design and adopt key messages on cholera as member of the review board with MSPP and PAHO
- Played a key role in the actual dissemination of these messages and official communications from the MSPP, COUN, Red Cross movement and other institutional actors to the humanitarian community especially for the agencies implementing community mobilization, hygiene promotion and other information/communication projects such as official government position, updated lists of CTC, CTUs, etc...
- Was the only effective, updated and reliable source of information in the early days of the epidemics on communication and sensitization activities being implemented by the agencies through the 3W tool on a weekly basis which helped agencies responding to cholera coordinate their operations in the absence of any other *coordination of actual activities* tool from OCHA or the clusters
- Coordinated the implementation of the baseline knowledge survey on cholera and the impact of information on the population between all agencies involved from data collection to analysis of the data and dissemination of the findings
- Actively contributed to the design of the hygiene promotion strategy of the HP sub-cluster of the Wash cluster with UNICEF and facilitated identifying partners and contribution to the implementation of this strategy.

In addition and more generally, CDAC overall helped

- Creating a space for dialogue and linkages between the Government of Haiti, the affected communities, the humanitarian agencies and the media.
- Critical role at times of emergencies for adoption, dissemination and coordination of emergency messages (storms, cyclones etc...)
- Establishing a central community of practices on how to effectively communicate with beneficiaries
- Promoting and advocating for a dialogue based communication approach that raises communities' questions and concerns thereby involving them in key decision making processes as well as hold humanitarian agencies accountable and transparent to them

The actual disappearance of CDAC over the past weeks has already created a clear and visible gap for the implementation of the cholera response plan for information and communication activities and will definitely have a wider impact on the long run for effective communication with disaster affected communities for past disaster's response as well as for potential future ones (cyclone and hurricanes). The actual and fast securing of funds for CDAC will hence be decisive.

**Peleg CHARLES (National Media officer - OXFAM)**

CDAC favorise l'échange Inter-agence, permettant d'être au courant des activités de communication des autres partenaires et facilite l'accès à ces informations. CDAC a aussi facilité la communication avec les bénéficiaires à travers le projet de Caravane.

**Elysia Nisan (Media and Communications - Save the Children)**

CDAC is an important central point for the humanitarian community to dialogue with Haitian media and to ensure that beneficiaries are informed and conscious of their rights. Communications colleagues from the UN, NGOs and Haiti at large need this forum in order to build a community with open discussion, opportunities for input, problem-solving and strategizing with a concise, coherent and powerful voice for Haitians.

**Sabine WILKE (Communications Manager - CARE)**

CDAC a offert un forum de partage d'expérience entre les organisations en termes de communication avec les communautés affectées. Ceci a été un moyen important pour savoir si nous allons dans la bonne direction avec nos actions et comment nous pouvons améliorer certaines stratégies. Notamment dans le cadre de la lutte contre le cholera, CDAC a aussi toujours été une source des informations les plus récentes sur les messages d'hygiène, les stratégies adoptées sur le terrain et les défis à surmonter en faisant la communication publique. En offrant la liaison avec Internews, CDAC nous a aussi soutenu à publier des PSA et à identifier des thèmes à aborder pour mieux informer le public sur notre travail.

**Vicki ROSENTHAL (Project Coordinator- CECOSIDA)**

CDAC's existence is important to a functioning Haiti. At this time, where the country is more fragmented than ever: Mentally, emotionally, financially, physically, politically... the need for the prolonged existence of CDAC is vital.

**Sony ESTEUS (directeur du réseau des radios communautaires SAKS)**

CDAC grâce à ces réunions hebdomadaires a été un lieu de rencontre. Tous les partenaires ont pu utiliser cette plateforme pour échanger leurs informations et coordonner leurs activités de communications.

**Roger DAMAS (Communication - Action Contre la Faim - ACF)**

CDAC est avant tout une plateforme qui nous a permis d'harmoniser des actions de communication tout en favorisant de bonnes relations avec les medias locaux. CDAC a facilité la tâche aux ONGS dans la mise en place d'une série d'activités de communication pour toucher les populations sinistrées. Enfin CDAC nous a permis de discuter sur un ensemble de projets avec d'autres ONGS tout en identifiant les failles et les défis à relever.

### **Marlène Adrien DORISMOND (Health programs Manager – Food for the Hungry - FH)**

Si le travail était difficile et chaotique au début de la réponse humanitaire, Il est important de souligner que la création de CDAC a permis :

- La coordination et l'harmonisation des interventions en améliorant au fil des semaines et des mois son système de partage d'information en gardant en tête de rendre la tâche moins lourde aux acteurs présents sur le terrain.
- En facilitant la circulation d'informations critiques dans la prise de décisions et le choix des interventions sur le terrain (ce qui a diminué les duplications).
- Et surtout de réaliser l'intégration et la récupération du leadership des autorités haïtiennes établies pour accorder plus de légitimité à l'action des acteurs (ONG et Bailleurs)

### **Pascale VERLY (Program development specialist - CHEMONICS)**

CDAC is the only open platform to the media where different actors meet.

CDAC enables, NGO, GoH, Media, Civil society to collaborate in improving information sharing with the affected community. CDAC as a platform can bring together a diverse group of people to have constructive dialogue, improve communication with all actors involved in the reconstruction and avoid duplication of activities. As platform for advocacy for the affected population CDAC has the responsibility to ensure that the voice of the population is reflected in communication, and encourage policymakers, service providers to consistently share information with the population. CDAC is the bridge that connects the affected community to service providers and policy makers through communication, information sharing and outreach.

### **Sophie BOUDRE (Radio Producer - MINUSTAH FM) –**

As a radio producer working on MINUSTAH FM's humanitarian programming, I have found CDAC to be extremely useful. Being part of CDAC's information-gathering and sharing circle has helped MINUSTAH FM identify critical current issues and available response, and therefore devise relevant programming addressing the information needs of the beneficiary population. For instance, through 'Action Humanitaire', MINUSTAH FM's flagship humanitarian talk-back show, we were able to immediately address pressing issues such as the importance of oral rehydration, the fight against stigmatization or creating acceptance of the newly-built CTCs through understanding, after these were put forward and debated within the CDAC mechanism.