

QUICK GUIDE TO COMMUNICATION ON PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES & SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR PROTECTION¹

AIM OF THIS QUICK GUIDE:

This 'quick guide' has been compiled to help government and non-government actors involved in disaster preparedness and response in the Pacific, to start developing key protection messages and communicating them – in a variety of ways - to disaster-prone/affected communities and other target audiences. This guide is not intended as a comprehensive list of all possible issues, messages or activities. Rather, it is intended as a starting point to help humanitarian agencies recognize and communicate effectively on critical protection issues affecting the vulnerable individuals and groups that you are working with. It is hoped that this 'quick guide to communication on protection in emergencies' will stimulate exploration of creative, innovative ways to communicate protection messages in the Pacific before, during and after disasters.

This quick guide contains some sample key messages and points of advocacy in the following areas of protection in disasters:

- ❖ General Protection in Disasters [page 4]
- ❖ Psychosocial Impacts [page 5]
- ❖ Protection of Older People/People who are Sick or Injured/People with Disabilities [page 6-7]
- ❖ Protection against violence and abuse [page 7-8]
- ❖ Child Protection [page 8]
- ❖ Environmental Hazards [page 9]
- ❖ Staying in Evacuation Centres [page 9]
- ❖ Children & Youth in contact or conflict with the law [page 10]

SOME TIPS ON DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION MESSAGES & REACHING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:

Consider your target audience for the issue(s)/messages you wish to communicate. Your target audience may include one or more of the following, or others not listed here:

- Vulnerable groups (eg children, women, people with disabilities, elderly, minority groups etc)
- Parents/care-givers/guardians
- The broader community
- Service-providers
- Humanitarian workers
- Police/military/fire authority
- Government and non-government policy-makers
- Government and non-government decision-makers
- The media
- Staff/volunteers of your agency/organization

Prepare key messages and communication activities that are relevant to your context: select your messages and corresponding activities and adapt them to your local area – this may include language, illustration, or communication approach.

¹ Among other resources, this Quick Guide draws significantly on content from UNICEF Pakistan's Draft Emergency Communication Quick Guide for Child Protection in Emergencies, 2011

These protection messages were compiled by the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster (PHPC) for reference and adaptation by government & non-government actors engaged in protection-sensitive disaster preparedness and response in the Pacific region. They can be adapted to target specific vulnerable groups; care-givers; service-providers; policy/decision-makers and/or the broader community through print, pictorial, audio and audio-visual media. [February 2012]. Contact pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com or +679 331 0465 for feedback or further information

Key messages should focus on awareness, prevention or response/harm reduction. Messages should be short, memorable and communicated in a way that is appropriate to your audience (eg. where literacy levels are low, messages should be communicated through images or oral communication).

Communication activities: think creatively about communication activities that will have maximum impact in an emergency in your local context. Communication activities do not need to be complex. A communication activity might be as simple as a conversation with an evacuation centre manager, or a simple educational game with children. Avoid the temptation to print and distribute large amounts of written information – it is likely to just end up in the rubbish. Effective communication activities can cover a wide range of activities such as those listed below. Remember that communication can and should be targeted at all levels of society – individual children and adults, their communities and governments/decision makers

Ways to communicate key protection messages:

- Conversations or meetings with evacuation centre managers / community leaders / communities
- Discussion groups
- Theatre performances and puppet shows
- Radio announcements/discussions/skits
- Media releases
- Local newspaper articles
- Branded materials (eg. water containers, blankets, tarpaulin, hygiene kits etc),
- Community meetings
- Children's play and learning activities etc
- Megaphone / community announcements/ messages at places of worship
- At distributions of food / NFIs / water
- Wallet-size reference cards with key messages/vital information and referral numbers on them
- Television discussion / panel
- Banners & IEC materials.
- On physical objects/infrastructure (eg water tanks)
- At child friendly spaces, temporary learning spaces and community/religious centres
- At delivery of health services and water supply points
- In comic form (eg as part of a booklet of health messages)
- Educational games / skits / songs
- Integration into educational materials or lesson plans (i.e. through schools, temporary learning spaces or child-friendly spaces)
- Encourage children to create their own ways of communicating key messages with their peers (e.g. song, dance).
- Trainings and briefing sessions
- Tailored training sessions for key government and non-government humanitarian actors
- Integration into police manuals, policies and procedures
- SMS messages
- Awareness raising competitions
- 'community friendly police' awards.

Think carefully and practically about the best way to reach people and achieve the change you are aiming for: Remember that *telling* people what to do or simply pointing out what is wrong with current practices is less effective than *showing* them alternatives, highlighting their benefits + giving them user-friendly practical *tools* to help them do it. Where possible, work with children and adults to understand and support *their* solutions to the identified problems. Remember also, that there are always reasons why harmful practices exist; work to understand those reasons so that appropriate alternatives or solutions can be offered.

Actively engage children and youth in communication of protection messages: Treat children/youth as both recipients and active participants in communicating for protection – test messages and activities with them and seek their involvement in disseminating messages where appropriate.

Monitor the impact of protection messaging/advocacy: Check with your target audience on a regular basis to make sure your communication is having the desired effect. Try something different if it isn't.

ALWAYS assess the risks of communicating: Apply a 'do no harm' approach when developing key messages and implementing communication activities. If there is *any* possibility that vulnerable people will be put at risk of further harm by receiving/acting on planned messages you should consider revising your approach. Consider carefully the implications of starting communication on sensitive protection issues (eg gender-based violence; family violence, child abuse etc) in an emergency context. Note that such protection issues require ongoing, long-term, multi-layered awareness-raising approaches that should be pursued before, during and after disasters, rather than initiated through emergency communication/key messaging processes. Partially equipping vulnerable individuals/groups to raise such protection issues in the absence of structured and supportive programs delivered by sensitized staff may lead to greater harm.

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GENERAL PROTECTION – SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO DISASTER-PRONE/AFFECTED COMMUNITIES:

1. Situations of anxiety, suffering, hardship and stress often creates tension even within the family – do not take it out on your loved ones or others
2. When you evacuate your home or village, make sure you do not leave anyone behind. Some people may need help to evacuate – do not forget them.
3. In times of heavy rain and floods, keep your children safe from harm and injury – do not let them play near flooded rivers or in muddy water.
4. In a disaster situation, people may try to take advantage of those who are vulnerable, including children and young people. Do not let this happen to members of your family.
5. Protect yourself, your family and others from further injury or harm - we are all facing this disaster together and together we will help each other to recover from it
6. Know where your family members are at all times – always tell someone where you will be going and when you will be back
7. If you and your family are moving from your home to an evacuation centre or another safe place, try to hold hands and stay together so that no-one gets lost along the way
8. Act together as a community to keep vulnerable people safe, including children, elderly, people with disabilities and others who may need special assistance or help
9. By working together, we can help each other to cope:
 - GIVE help to others
 - ACCEPT help from others
 - LISTEN to others, provide them comfort
 - TALK with people you trust
 - PARTICIPATE in community and social activities
 - REACH out to those who are most affected, including sick people, elderly people, pregnant women, people with disabilities, widows and children who have lost their parents

TO GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS / EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGERS / FIRST-RESPONDER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS / SERVICE-PROVIDERS:

Protection covers many areas -

- Ensure that all affected households have access to basic relief supplies, without discrimination
- Make sure that all affected people are aware of relief activities and can access assistance and support safely
- Check that your activities and interventions do not expose people to further harm
- Vulnerable individuals/groups - including unaccompanied children/youth, pregnant women, mothers with young children, female-headed households, people with disabilities and the elderly - may require specific attention to meet their specific needs. Check on them and make sure they are okay
- Identify and communicate referral options and processes for those in need of special care, assistance or protection
 - Prepare local referral information – covering a range of different protection concerns - for dissemination to (i) first responders and (ii) in flood-affected communities
 - Disseminate local referral information through various channels – ie community radio, through volunteers providing assistance/support on the ground, community meetings, posters in evacuation centres, laminated referral cards, as part of distributions etc

PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS – SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO DISASTER-PRONE/AFFECTED COMMUNITIES:

1. It is ok if you feel sad, worried or scared after an emergency - your feelings are a normal response to a difficult situation
2. Seek out activities that make you feel safe and secure – talk with family and friends; exercise; return to normal work or school activities if possible
3. Helping your family to return to normal activities and daily routines will also help you to feel better
4. It is normal for people of all ages to be emotionally distressed by the emergency - you can help by making each other feel safe and secure, for example giving family time for talking, eating together, acknowledging the distress, returning to everyday routines
5. Violence in any form is NOT useful to help people to recover.
6. Taking care of yourself will enable you to care for others in need:
 - Don't be ashamed to ask for help. It's important that you take care of yourself, so you can help others.
 - Focus on the things you do well and be patient with yourself. Even during these difficult times, try to re-establish your daily routines such as sleeping, eating regularly
 - If you feel you can't cope or are not getting better, go to a health clinic.
7. By working together, we can help each other to cope.
 - GIVE help to others
 - ACCEPT help from others
 - LISTEN to others, provide them comfort
 - TALK with people you trust
 - PARTICIPATE in community and social activities
 - REACH out to those who are most affected, including sick people, elderly people, pregnant women, people with disabilities, widows and children who have lost their parents.

TO GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS / EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGERS / FIRST-RESPONDER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS / SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Emergencies affect people in different ways:

- Do not assume that everyone in an emergency is traumatised
- Do not assume that people who appear resilient do not need support.
- Do not assume that emergencies affect men, women, boys and girls in the same way - or that programs designed for men will be equally helpful and accessible to women, and vice versa. Pay attention to gender differences in planning and designing your programs.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS – SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

The following messages are provided as a starting point for communication on protection of older people, people with disabilities, sick & injured people, among other vulnerable groups identified in the affected population.

TO VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS:

1. You can ask for help if you need it

- If you need medical help, food or information ask your family or guardians to help you access it
- Tell your carers/guardians if the flood damage means you cannot get to the places you need to get to
- If you do not understand information ask someone to explain it another way

TO WIDER COMMUNITY:

1. Caregivers of people with injuries/disabilities in your community will need your support.

- This emergency will be especially hard for guardians and care-givers – check on them and offer your support, perhaps by helping them for a few hours every day.

TO GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS / EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGERS / FIRST-RESPONDER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS / SERVICE-PROVIDERS / CARERS:

Older people, sick and injured people, and people with disabilities will need particular care and attention during and after the emergency

- Ensure that older people, people who are sick or injured and people with disabilities are included in all vulnerability assessments and that their specific needs are identified, monitored & addressed. Encourage their participation in decision-making.
- Make special efforts to identify, locate, register and follow up people with injuries/disabilities/serious illness and other vulnerable groups. They may be harder to find or make contact with but they have the same needs and rights as everyone else.
- Make sure that the information you provide is accessible. Use at least two forms of communication (eg. written and auditory) and simple language/pictures in order to reach all vulnerable people
- Locate older people, people with injuries/ disabilities and their caregivers close to essential facilities and services.
- Check that older people, people who are sick or injured and people with disabilities can access the areas where they need to go (eg. latrines, educational facilities, health services). Arrange for someone to assist them if needed.
- Support older people, people who are sick or injured and people with disabilities to take part in community activities.

Older people, sick and injured people, and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse and other protection risks

- In some cases this is because they cannot run or call for help or cannot understand (read, hear, comprehend) important messages.
- Isolation, lack of confidence or communication barriers can increase all protection risks for these vulnerable individuals
- Remember to raise awareness and talk about the specific and basic needs of older people, sick and injured people, people with disabilities when discussing protection issues with government officials, religious leaders and humanitarian workers

Recognise that people with disabilities are not all the same.

- Girls, boys, men and women will have different needs. Within these groups, needs will also vary depending on the disabilities they have. Adapt your approach accordingly.

Loss of a caregiver can have significant impacts for older people and people with disabilities.

- Prioritise these groups in assistance, support and protection efforts.

Women, men, girls and boys with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.

VIOLENCE AND ABUSE - SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

Following disasters, the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse can increase in circumstances of frustration, desperation and distress. Forms of violence may include: physical violence (eg. assault by relatives, community members, strangers); harassment at distribution centres or water points; sexual violence (eg. non-consensual sexual contact; rape, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and inappropriate touching); denial of access to resources and services; psychological/emotional abuse; harmful traditional practices.

TO DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES:

1. Beware of strangers and people offering to take care of you or your children or to give you a job, money, shelter, food in exchange for something from you – you or your children may be at risk of being hurt, exploited, or trafficked
2. Violence in any form is NOT useful to help people to recover.
3. Know where your children are and who they are with
4. You have the right to complain and to report any exploitation or abuse by humanitarian workers or those providing assistance.
5. Tell your children and family that no one has the right to touch them or demand any sexual actions / favours in exchange for supplies
6. Stay safe from violence and abuse:
 - If you are going far from your family's shelter (e.g. to collect firewood, attend school etc) try to always go with someone you feel safe with.
 - At night time, ask an adult you trust to accompany you to the latrines.
7. If anyone (a stranger or a member of your family) hurts you, scares you, makes you feel bad or touches you in way you don't like:
 - TELL someone you trust
 - ASK them for any help you need (you are entitled to protection, care and support)
 - DO **NOT** blame yourself – this is not your fault.
8. If you know of someone who is being hurt, made to feel bad or touched in ways they don't like:
 - ENCOURAGE them to tell someone they trust
 - SUPPORT them by referring them to the appropriate services.
9. If someone tells you they have been hurt or abused:
 - TELL them you believe them
 - REASSURE them that it is not their fault and that they are safe now
 - RESPECT their right to privacy and their right to decide what support they need
 - HELP them get the services they need. This can include mental health support, family support and especially health services, including HIV testing if needed

TO GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS / EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGERS / FIRST-RESPONDER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS / SERVICE-PROVIDERS:

Prevent abuse by humanitarian workers and others providing assistance.

- Train staff and volunteers across all sectors on Codes of Conduct and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- Ensure all involved in distributions are aware that humanitarian aid is free. Implement a zero-tolerance approach for anyone attempting to get favours of any kind in return for assistance.
- Set up a simple and safe complaints mechanism for beneficiaries to report any exploitation or abuse by humanitarian workers from your organisation.
- Ensure protection of those reporting any exploitation and abuse by maintaining privacy.

TO HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES WORKING IN THE AREA OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

Work to establish and promote referral and support mechanisms and infrastructure for survivors of gender-based violence and those most at risk:

- This can include police protection, shelters, safe spaces in evacuation centres and communities, psychosocial support and legal aid.
- Consider the particular vulnerabilities of women, girls and boys during return to disaster-affected areas.

Reduce the risks associated with latrines/bathing facilities.

- Ensure that sanitation facilities and other facilities are well lit, in safe locations and do not in any way endanger those using them.

Involve men and community leaders as partners in violence-prevention activities.

- Raise awareness in communities, particularly with community leaders about the issue of violence and abuse, particularly gender-based violence
- Promote positive male involvement in violence-prevention activities. They have an important role to play as partners in protection and leaders in community behaviour change.

Remember that boys are also a highly vulnerable group.

- Boys are also vulnerable to sexual violence. Make sure you consider their particular needs in planning protection activities and services.

CHILD PROTECTION - SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO PARENTS/CARE-GIVERS:

1. Children need extra care at this difficult time. You can help them by making them feel safe and loved, giving them extra care and attention, encouraging them to talk with you, returning to everyday routines and sending them to Child Friendly Spaces and/or Temporary Learning Spaces
2. Make sure any chores your children need to do don't put them in danger
3. Try to make sure that children are with a trusted adult when working or playing away from home or when using latrines or bathing areas
4. Tell your children to beware of people offering to take care of them or offering jobs, food, shelter, medicine, money in exchange for something from your children. They may be at risk of being exploited or hurt.
5. If you see a child being harmed by an adult or another child ask them to stop or seek help to stop it.

TO GOVERNMENT / NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS:

- Prioritise programs and advocacy that support children and youth to resume pre-disaster activities (eg. school, recreation etc).

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS (FLOOD DEBRIS, TOXIC WASTE ETC) - SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO DISASTER-PRONE/AFFECTED COMMUNITIES:

1. Wear shoes if you have them when you're walking in flooded and damaged areas.
2. Stay away from flooded or damaged roads, bridges and train tracks.
3. Do not drink from water left by floods.
4. Do not swim in flooded waterways
5. Do not play in caves left by floods.
6. Watch out for snakes, especially around trees and bushes.
7. Avoid touching electrical wires or plugs that got wet during the floods.
8. If your family has a mosquito net, make sure you sleep under it every night.
9. Stay out of buildings that have been damaged by floods
10. Children - ask your parents/guardians before entering buildings in your village that have been damaged

STAYING IN EVACUATION CENTRES - SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO EVACUEES:

1. Make sure that your family/household is registered at the evacuation centre
2. You should not be forced to leave an evacuation centre if you do not have a safe place to go
3. Evacuation centres are set up to provide safety for all families affected by disaster and in need of safe shelter – you should not be turned away, even if you are from a different community than others staying in the centre
4. If you are staying in an evacuation centre, ask a trusted family member or friend to accompany you to the latrines at night time.

TO EVACUATION CENTRE MANAGERS / GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS:

Registration of families is a priority

- Registration of vulnerable children, women and families (including unaccompanied women and children and female-headed households) is crucial in order to ensure that they have access to essential assistance and services (food, shelter, medical care etc).

Be aware and reduce risks associated with latrines/bathing facilities

- Ensure that latrines, water points and other facilities are safe and easy to use for all people including children, elderly and people with disabilities. Make sure that latrines and water points are well lit and in safe locations that do not expose users to further danger.

Advocate for the needs of girls and women

- The particular needs of women and girls in emergency situations must be respected. Their specific needs of privacy, hygiene, safety and dignity must be brought to the attention of those providing emergency relief and recovery services.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CONTACT OR CONFLICT WITH THE LAW – SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES & ADVOCACY

TO CHILDREN/YOUTH:

- If you steal, fight or break the law in any way, you could go to prison - You will be away from your friends, family and home and at a high risk of being hurt by people you don't know.

TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

Teach your children about the consequences of crime.

- Talk with your children about the risks of coming into contact with the law (eg. 'You may be treated as an adult' / 'Prison is an unsafe place').
- Teach them that if they break the law they are meeting a 'small need' but risking 'big trouble'.

Help your children to avoid breaking the law

- Giving your children enough food and clothing should be a priority.
- Make sure you know who your children's friends are and where they are when not at home.
- Teach your children that fighting is not the solution to disagreements.
- Encourage your children to resume the educational and sporting activities they did before the emergency.
- Do not ask your children to steal or beg on the street – they may be at risk of being abused, arrested and imprisoned

TO POLICE/LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Children should not be treated as adults.

- Even if they have broken the law, children and youth under 18 years of age need your special protection.
- Children in detention and prison are very vulnerable to physical or sexual assault. Any child in custody should be in different (and appropriate) facilities to adults.
- Where possible, children should be put on probation as an alternative to jail.

If you arrest or detain a girl or boy under 18 years of age:

- Be gentle with them, do not raise your voice, and try to come down to their height when talking with them.
- Identify and contact their parents or guardians immediately.
- Inform the child about their rights in simple language.
- Appoint a probation officer.
- Seek advice from NGOs or social workers experienced at managing and supporting children in conflict with the law.
- Ensure the child's basic needs are met (eg. food, medical supplies and somewhere safe to sleep / stay)

TO GOVERNMENT & NON-GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ACTORS / FIRST-RESPONDER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS / SERVICE-PROVIDERS:

Prevention is the best protection.

- Rapid provision of essential relief supplies (particularly food and clothing) is a key way to prevent children and their families from stealing, begging or resorting to prostitution. Coordinate and work with relevant agencies to make sure those most in need receive assistance.