CDAC Network Strategy
2022-2027

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Introduction

Since its inception, the CDAC Network has brought together local, regional and global actors to catalyse the ability of communities to connect, communicate and access the information they need in a crisis. CDAC leveraged the strength and diversity of its membership to advocate for affected populations to have the tools and pathways they need for a more localised and responsive humanitarian aid system.

In this next strategic period, CDAC will double down on its intent to reverse the focus of humanitarian and development decision-making, moving from global to local. We know that local solutions are not only more appropriate, but often more effective—they build on the leadership, capacities, visibility and voice of the people that act first, act fast, and that are best placed to support the most vulnerable in a crisis. It is an intentional move away from investment in short term coordination, to a 'response-wide', nationally-led preparedness model that spans multiple disasters.

The strategy was developed through a consultative process held between 2020 and 2021. The series of consultations involved CDAC members, external specialists, key stakeholders, and the CDAC Secretariat and Board. A survey of in-country programme teams was also conducted to understand the needs and priorities for Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability (CCEA) action and collaboration. The strategy provides an ambitious framework for CDAC Network to drive change in CCEA policy and practices and promote, challenge and advance a future humanitarian landscape that is inclusive and locally drive. Its vision will be achieved through the collective clout of the Network and the intentional inclusion and engagement of diverse actors.

Definitions

Communication and community engagement
An area of humanitarian action based on the principle of 'Communication is aid'. It gives priority to sharing life-saving, actionable information with people affected by disaster using two-way communication channels so aid providers listen to and act on people's needs, suggested solutions, feedback and complaints, and people receiving assistance have a say in and lead decisions that affect them. It also prioritises keeping people in crisis connected with each other and the outside world (Source: *CDAC How to Guide*).

Accountability
The process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power (Source: Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability)

The CDAC Network

Founded in 2009, CDAC Network is the global alliance of many of the world's biggest humanitarian and media development organisations – including media development, UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, specialist communications entities. Its members are determined to enable and support dialogue with and between communities and those responsible for longer term humanitarian and development nexus commitments, government and non-governmental. CDAC's diverse membership energises and enables this to happen both at the local and global level.

CDAC is at the forefront of a complex area of activity on information, two-way communication and locally-led decision-making that is now a major focus for humanitarian and nexus action. The **Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030** (SDGs), **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030**, and the **World Humanitarian Summit** "Grand Bargain", among other policy initiatives and declarations, have given increased prominence to this thematic area which is at the heart of improving accountability, transparency and participation in the sector. Network Members and partners advocate through these mechanisms to put communicating with communities at the heart of more localised and responsive humanitarian assistance. Our work supports the implementation of common standards such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Commitment on Affected Populations, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, the Sphere Standards, the Principles for Digital Development and the Minimum Standards and Core Capacities for Integrating Data Responsibility into Humanitarian Action.

The need to have authentic communication with affected communities is increasingly recognised as a requirement in terms of effectiveness, accountability, good governance and human rights, yet it remains a complex area that can challenge established organisations and ways of doing business.

"Together we need to look hard at how we listen to affected people and understand how we can give them what they want, what they need, and what they seek. In doing this, we create a humanitarian system that is more dignified, more accountable, and makes better use of scarce resources"

Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Opening Remarks, CDAC Network 2021 Annual General Assembly
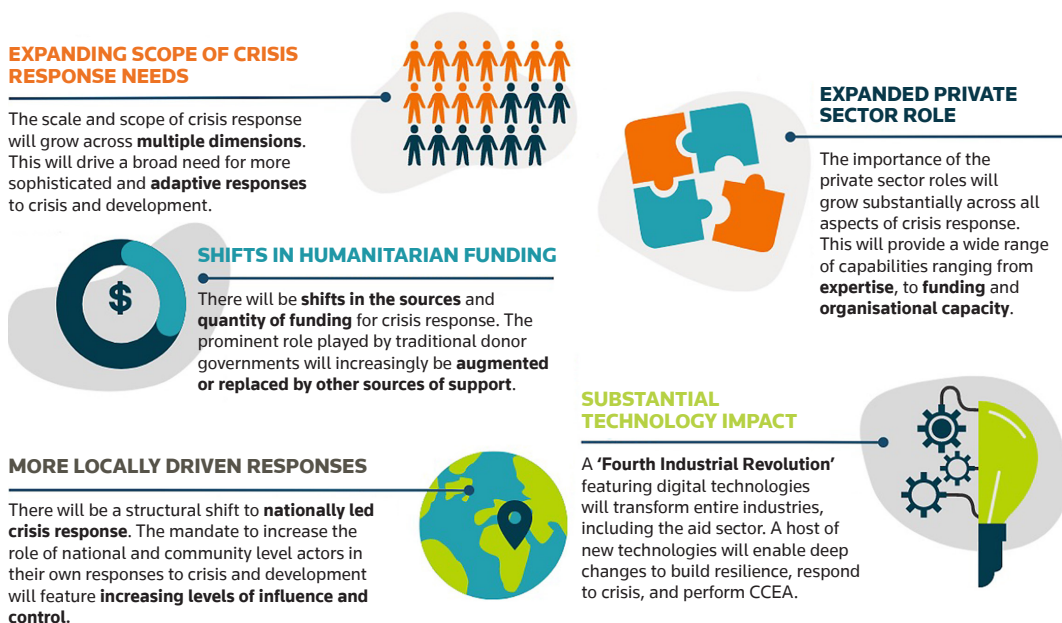
Global trends that will reshape CCEA

While huge progress has been made in raising the profile of CCEA, it remains a chronically under resourced area of humanitarian action. Collective Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is cheap—accounting for under 1% of response budgets—yet donors continuously fail to invest in it.[1] Every year, more people are affected by complex crises, but engagement remains unacceptably notional and communication gaps have led to inefficiencies, distrust and misinformation–leaving people in the dark at a time when they need information the most. The Covid-19 pandemic shone a light on these failures, exposing the disparities, inequalities and vulnerabilities that persist across different contexts.

The six-year period between 2022 and 2027 will feature a wide range of emerging, transformational changes across the globe (Figure 1). These will affect the nature of both humanitarian and development aid, as well as reaching deeply into communities, government, and the world economy. CCEA will be reshaped both by these changes and by a host of newly available technical tools and opportunities.

The CDAC Network's strategy has been developed with an awareness of the scale and scope of these coming changes. In this environment, it will not simply be enough to apply the current best practices established over recent years, often through the hard work of CDAC and its partners. Instead, the CDAC Network must position itself to be a step ahead of crisis by recognising and proactively acting on emerging challenges and opportunities that result from a changing world.

Figure 1. Emerging global trends for humanitarian and development CCEA

EXPANDING SCOPE OF CRISIS RESPONSE NEEDS

The scale and scope of crisis response will grow across **multiple dimensions**. This will drive a broad need for more sophisticated and **adaptive responses** to crisis and development.

SHIFTS IN HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

There will be **shifts in the sources** and **quantity of funding** for crisis response. The prominent role played by traditional donor governments will increasingly be **augmented or replaced by other sources of support**.

EXPANDED PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE

The importance of the private sector roles will grow substantially across all aspects of crisis response. This will provide a wide range of capabilities ranging from **expertise**, to **funding** and **organisational capacity**.

SUBSTANTIAL TECHNOLOGY IMPACT

A **'Fourth Industrial Revolution'** featuring digital technologies will transform entire industries, including the aid sector. A host of new technologies will enable deep changes to build resilience, respond to crisis, and perform CCEA.

MORE LOCALLY DRIVEN RESPONSES

There will be a structural shift to **nationally led crisis response**. The mandate to increase the role of national and community level actors in their own responses to crisis and development will feature **increasing levels of influence and control**.

[1] Kerrie Holloway & Oliver Lough. (October 2020). Implementing collective accountability to affected populations. Policy Brief 78, Humanitarian Policy Group.

The Overarching Vision

Vision – The world we want to see
Our vision is that communities will have the information and resources they need to determine their own solutions and be central stakeholders in humanitarian and development decision making.

Using the collective clout of the network, CDAC seeks to reverse the focus of humanitarian and development decision-making – moving from global to local. This is done through deep engagement with local bodies to strengthen sustainable communication and engagement ecosystems. These national and sub-national platforms support universal access to the decision-making apparatus and the intentional inclusion of marginalised voices.

CDAC's Unique Position – A Focus on intentional inclusion and accountability
CDAC is uniquely positioned to advance an approach to CCEA that contributes to greater inclusion of diverse people and entities in decision making and practice. We can help ensure that national and sub-national level CCEA is championed in the global system and that inclusion is central to CCEA planning, advocacy, debate, decision making and publications.

Our Strategic Direction

Realising this overall vision will require strategic effort across multiple areas. Action in these different domains has been divided into four strategic areas.
The initial strategic aim focuses on the creation and use of CCEA initiatives that deliver meaningful impact and are locally led. The second strategic aim seeks to engage the global community in this vision, helping international organisations embrace a locally led and highly collaborative approach.

Recognising the importance of technology across CCEA programs, the third strategic aim to CDAC as an advocate for the effective, equitable and ethical use of a rapidly expanding technical toolset. The final strategic aim targets internal goals of growth, diversity, and sustainability.

Each strategic aim is supported by a selected areas of action. Each areas of action describes how the related strategic aim can be delivered in practice and provides high level measures of success.

Enable Local Drivers of CCEA

Support efforts to place national governments, local civil society, local communities, and private sector actors at the centre of CCEA initiatives that empower local communities. Context: Crisis response will increasingly be led and delivered by a broad collaboration of national, community, civil society, and private sector actors. This transformed approach to humanitarian action will build on informed communities that are empowered to guide their own actions and shape the overall crisis response.

Area of action 1A: Support Broad Inclusion / Local Leadership

• Foster efforts to include a broad range of national actors in the leadership and delivery of CCEA, including government, private sector, civil society, media organisations and communities. Help place informed communities in a position of influence, particularly those groups that lack visibility and voice.

Measures of success:
• Extent of local leadership
• Inclusion of a broad range of actors such as Private Sector
• Community's level of power and influence
• Level of power and influence among groups that lack visibility and voice

Area of Action 1B: Advance the Creation of CCEA Platforms

• Support the development of CCEA Platforms that systematically bring together multiple actors in coordinated CCEA efforts. Foster cross nation learning and sharing of best practices, while adapting individual platforms to local needs and opportunities.

Measures of success:
• Extent of local leadership
• Inclusion of non-aid sector actors such as Private Sector
• Level of power and influence owned by communities
• Level of power and influence among groups that lack visibility and voice

Area of Action 1C: Foster Development of CCEA Skills

• Help provide ready access to tools, knowledge, and best practices that are needed to develop and deliver high quality CCEA. Engage a wide range of actors in the form and channel that is best suited to their needs and resources.

Measures of success:
• Breadth of resources and subjects
• Reach of training and engagement
• Accessibility of content (language, channel, cost)

Area of Action 1D: Bridge the Humanitarian and Development Nexus

- Create sustainable connections in CCEA across humanitarian and development policy and practice.

    Measures of success:
    - Connections with ongoing Development CCEA activities
    - CCEA platforms that include both Humanitarian and Development activities
    - Training and consultations that include both Humanitarian and Development actors
    - Materials and tools that integrate both Humanitarian and Development activities and goals

Area of Action 1E: Encourage Development of Evidence

- Support the creation of robust evidence on effective CCEA practices in diverse contexts.

    Measures of success:
    - Establishment of evidence gathering practices in CCEA initiatives
    - Collection and analysis of evidence
    - Broad sharing of evidence across all CCEA actors

BBC MEDIA ACTION

Provide a Strategic Global Voice for Inclusive CCEA

In the global system, champion a national and sub-national level approach to CCEA that ensures greater representation and inclusion in decision making policy and practice.

Context: Transformational changes in crisis response will require existing international aid sector actors to reshape their roles and strategies. Key to this transformation will be new policies and practices that leverage best practice approaches to CCEA.

Area of Action 2A: Strategically Participate in Broad Global Discussion

• Actively seek out and participate in conversations that can influence the increased use of locally led CCEA. Develop and present a strong narrative for CCEA best practices.

   Measures of success:
   • Creation of CCEA best practice narratives
   • Public forum presentations of CCEA for global community
   • Expanding CCEA discussion to include participation across the Humanitarian and Development nexus.
   • Inclusion in private policy and planning discussions among international actors

Area of Action 2B: Expand Global Collaborations

• Seek out collaborations with organisations and institutions that expand the breadth of skills, resources, and perspectives of CCEA.

   Measures of success:
   • Expanded membership of CDAC
   • New collaborations and partnerships with diverse organisations
   • Active engagement with new partners and expanded membership

Area of Action 2C: Support Others' Advocacy

• Support efforts of others to engage in CCEA advocacy and the adoption of CCEA within international aid sector responses.

   Measures of success:
   • Sharing of CCEA best practice narrative
   • Number and variety of supporting organisations providing advocacy

Responsibly Leverage CCEA Digital Technologies

Identify, promote, and guide efforts to responsibly leverage new digital technologies in CCEA efforts.

Context: Over the next sixyears, technology advances and growing availability will make technology a transformative tool for advancing CCEA and enabling crisis response. These opportunities will come with challenges linked to broad accessibility, privacy, and ethical use of technology.

Area of Action 3A: Democratise Digital and Communication Technology Access

• Foster efforts to expand access and use of existing digital and communication technologies, particularly by those groups that lack visibility and voice.

Measures of success:
• Availability of digital and communication technology infrastructure
• Availability of digital services in the language and form best suited to communities
• Access to digital and communication technologies for groups that lack visibility and voice

Area of Action 3B: Encourage Applications of New Digital Technologies

• Help identify and foster opportunities to leverage new technologies in support of pioneering new approaches to CCEA.

Measures of success:
• Opportunities identified to apply new technologies
• Evidence available in support of new technology use in CCEA
• Use of new technologies to support on the ground CCEA initiatives

Area of Action 3C: Advocate for Responsible Technology Use

• Leveraging recognised models of responsible digital practice, promote technology use in CCEA that respects privacy, safety, and rights of communities, particularly those groups that lack visibility and voice.

Measures of success:
• Efforts to incorporate diverse user preferences and needs in technology
• Support for responsible technology use standards
• Integration of responsible technology use into CCEA programs
• Identification of technology risks in CCEA programs

Sustain and Grow CDAC's Impact

Assure that CDAC has a sustainable foundation of support to continue its efforts and to expand its reach to more communities.

Context: The need for CCEA is not limited to a few geographies or contexts. There will be growing need for CCEA to be integrated into all areas of the world and across the humanitarian-development nexus

Area of Action 4A: Sustain Quality Operations

- Work to build a sustainable level of funding and resources that will enable high quality support of CCEA initiatives and policy.

    Measures of success:
    - Sustainable funding stream
    - Diversification of funding and support
    - Evidence of quality of programming

Area of Action 4B: Selectively Grow and Extend Reach

- Identify appropriate opportunities to expand the scale of existing CCEA initiatives and grow impact through membership, programme reach, and programme sophistication.

    Measures of success:
    - Growth of size of existing programs
    - Growth in the sophistication and effectiveness of existing programmes
    - Support for additional nations and geographic regions
    - Support for initiatives delivered by others

Area of Action 4C: Promote Greater Organisational Diversity

- Intentionally pursue efforts to develop a more diverse Board, Secretariat, and Membership for the CDAC Network.

    Measures of success:
    - Levels of diversity on the Board, Secretariat, and Membership
    - Structural innovations that promote diversity (e.g., membership models not linked to annual fees)
    - Outreach to more diverse groups and individuals

Area of Action 4D: Broaden the Foundation of Support

- Communicate and engage with a broad range of groups, including corporate/private sector, foundations, policy makers, media. Develop an outreach message that is seen as strong and valid.

  Measures of success:
  - Development of compelling communications and messaging
  - Outreach to new types of organisations
  - Active engagement that results from outreach

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Come join us

Join CDAC Network as a member, partner or supporter to advance Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability policy and practice and drive the change we need for a more inclusive and locally driven humanitarian system.

For more information on membership, please go to www.cdacnetwork.org or contact us at info@cdacnetwork.org

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