IMPACT REFLECTION YEAR 1

Ensuring Effective System-Wide Communication across the Ukraine Response by Bridging the Gap between Local and Global Responders
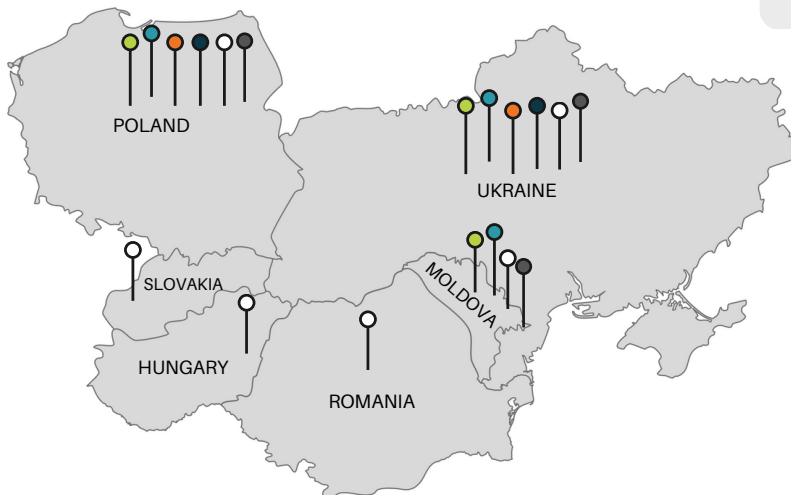
Communication is a lifeline in times of crisis. In the early stages of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, people affected reported that information was a greater priority than food or shelter[1] – and for many, this still remains the case. The CDAC project sought to put the foundations in place for the achievement of two strategic ambitions:

A facilitated and coordinated pathway of engagement that bridges the gap between national and international actors and supports coherent dialogue and communication with all affected people.

Knowledge and evidence gaps in local and regional communication and engagement are addressed on an ongoing basis and the impact of conflict on Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability (CCEA) is better understood.

YEAR 1 IMPACT: KEY STATISTICS

622 responders participated in CCEA Quality of Practice Group meetings

87 responders trained in CCEA coordination and implementation

96 responders engaged in CDAC End of Year 1 Learning Events

4 national NGO networks strengthened with technical assistance

2 UN-led CCE/AAP coordination structures provided with technical and capacity support

POLAND

UKRAINE

SLOVAKIA

MOLDOVA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

AREAS OF WORK

- ● Targeted CCEA training
- ● CCEA Quality of Practice Group meetings
- ● Support to national NGO network
- ● Support to UN-led CCE/AAP coordination
- ○ Quarterly analysis on CCEA gaps & opportunities
- ● End of Year 1 Learning Events

1 REACH (2022) Focus on AAP and information needs. Briefing note, March. See CDAC Network, The state of communication, community engagement and accountability across the Ukraine response.

A CDAC Network project funded by

INCREMENTAL BENCHMARKING

ASSESSING THE STATE OF COMMUNICATION ECOSYSTEM

4 quarterly snapshot reports and interactive matrix on country specific CCEA activities published

102 key informants from Ukraine and border countries consulted, representing:

31 **local/national** organisations

24 **international** organisations

CDAC systematically identified critical gaps around CCEA coordination, capacities and implementation in rapid snapshot assessments. Each report demonstrated incremental progress and was informed by key stakeholder consultations and a desk review, with practical recommendations feeding into CCEA programming and decision making in response countries.

Addressing the critical gaps identified by the snapshot reports, CDAC strengthened the capacity needed to facilitate information provision and two-way engagement through inclusive training courses and a mentoring and accompaniment programme targeted at current and potential CCE/AAP coordinators working in the response.

STRENGTHENING CCEA SKILLS AND CAPACITIES

622 responders participated in CCEA Quality of Practice Group meetings

87 responders trained in CCEA coordination and implementation

96 responders engaged in CDAC End of Year 1 Learning Events

CCEA requires cross-cutting expertise to ensure the participation and inclusion of all responders in humanitarian decision-making, coordination and operations. Since May 2022, CDAC has trained 87 current and potential coordinators and practitioners across the response with the necessary skills to design and implement CCEA programmes, establish cooperative partnerships, and coordinate response wide CCEA initiatives. To support local capacity strengthening, CDAC has translated key tools and guidance into local languages.

CDAC's capacity bridging approach goes beyond training to an equitable, two-way sharing of knowledge and skills across diverse response actors. Across the Ukraine response, CDAC has facilitated neutral spaces for diverse actors to share good CCEA practices. More than 600 responders have been engaged in CCEA Quality of Practice Group meetings in multiple languages and on topics identified by local and national actors. CDAC's decade of experience in CCEA capacity bridging and training has demonstrated the longer-term impact of investing in individuals to become change agents within their organisations and networks and drive the adoption of best practices and strategic approaches to CCEA.

> **83%** of participants of those that responded felt the **knowledge will be useful** to them in everyday work.
>
> **83%** felt the workshop allowed them to **develop their networks**.
>
> **92%** noted that they had the **opportunity to actively participate and bring their own experience** during the event.
>
> *Selected feedback from participants of CCEA Quality of Practice Group meetings*

Four quarterly snapshot reports

CDAC How-To Guide in 4 local languages

COORDINATING EFFECTIVE PATHWAYS OF ENGAGEMENT

4 national NGO networks strengthened with technical assistance

2 UN-led CCE/AAP coordination structures provided with technical and capacity support

CDAC's response seeks lasting systemic change by exploring and co-creating opportunities to strengthen relationships, systems and networks across diverse actors. CDAC has worked closely with four national NGO networks and two UN-led coordination structures to increase opportunities for local and non-traditional actors to coordinate CCE/AAP as equal partners; embed CCE knowledge and skills; elevate CCE/AAP priorities and provide targeted technical assistance on collective CCE/AAP efforts. By bridging the coordination gaps and fostering alternative pathways of engagement, the project has created a foundation for improved collaboration among diverse actors involved in the response to catalyse longer-term impacts on the overall effectiveness of CCE/AAP efforts.

ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE GAPS

4 quarterly snapshot reports and interactive matrix on country specific CCEA activities published

1 policy paper on information and communication in the context of conflict and displacement

CDAC's emphasis on knowledge and evidence gaps ensures that ongoing learning and adaptation are integrated into the response. The quarterly snapshot reports have provided valuable insights and recommendations for CCEA programming and decision-making, enabling stakeholders to make informed choices and prioritise areas for improvement. This iterative process of review and refinement can lead to the emergence of more effective and contextually relevant CCEA strategies and approaches over time.

At the global policy level, CDAC will elevate the gaps and priorities in a policy paper on information and communication in the context of conflict and displacement, highlighting the learnings from Ukraine and other conflict situations on communication and information rights and their role in conflict. The recommendations will be rolled out across the sector in 2023 and 2024.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the coming 24 months, CDAC will embed effective communication, information and engagement across the Ukraine response, bridging the divide between local and international systems for more appropriate and accountable programming. It will focus on the following results areas:

- National actors have the tools and knowledge needed to occupy leading roles in AAP working groups

- CCEA training meets the demands of national actors by using delivery that is locally appropriate and adapted to preferred language and learning style

- Improved CCEA understanding, skills, and abilities support the uptake of contextually relevant CCEA commitments at both organisational and systems level

- Specific blockages in CCEA pathways are identified and solutions are co-created by responders

- The relationship between information and conflict, communication and information rights is documented, better understood and better addressed in practice.

A CDAC Network project funded by DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

CDAC is a network of more than 35 of the largest humanitarian, media development and social innovation actors – including UN agencies, RCRC, NGOs, media and communications actors – working together to shift the dial on humanitarian and development decision-making – moving from global to local.

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