

CLOSING THE LOOP— RESPONDING TO PEOPLE'S INFORMATION NEEDS FROM CRISIS RESPONSE TO RECOVERY TO DEVELOPMENT:



A Case Study of Post-Earthquake Haiti

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IDP camp at the compound of the Television National d’Haiti (TNH). Photo by Jacobo Quintanilla, Internews, Jan 2010.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Information provision typically has been a peripheral concern in humanitarian assistance, if it has been included at all. And yet information is as important as food, shelter, water and medical care in the response to crisis, whether a natural disaster or an armed conflict. The availability of timely and accurate information empowers people who are often otherwise powerless to re-assert control over their own lives to regain their security, their safety and even their dignity.

This paper, a review of an Internews humanitarian-information radio program launched in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake that devastated the country, argues that information provision should be a core component of any humanitarian assistance or development program. Radio is a cost-effective, ubiquitous, widely used and credible news source in Haiti. The Internews program, *Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen* (*News You Can Use*, or *ENDK*), reported directly on concerns that members of the affected population identified as most important to them in the year after the earthquake, a year that included a destructive hurricane, a cholera epidemic and election violence. We therefore argue that *ENDK* has “closed the loop” on assistance provision by connecting it directly to the information needs of the affected population.

Key to *ENDK*'s success are three distinct but related ideas:

First, *ENDK* works because its programming is guided by research. *ENDK* discovers the population's needs through focus groups and continuous audience surveys, using the findings to guide its story selection and reporting. Over the period examined in this report, March 2010 to March 2011, Internews surveyed nearly 16,000 Haitians and conducted two sets of focus group studies with 488 others. Still today the research team surveys Haitians in communities throughout the most seriously damaged parts of the country to learn what new information needs its audience has identified, often as a result of an earlier round of research-based reporting. *ENDK* listeners, as we quote here, rely on its broadcasts to reconstruct their lives, their livelihoods and their communities. *ENDK* also shares its research findings with other aid providers, who have reported using it to improve the effectiveness of their own projects.

A second and related idea, and the operational principle at the heart of *ENDK*, is the importance of creating two-way information flows in which those in need of assistance directly and explicitly explain their information priorities to aid providers. It is neither strategically wise nor ethically



A focus group discusses while Internews' Deputy Director of Research Wesly Jean takes notes. Photo by Johnson Numa/Internews.

acceptable for aid providers to assume they know the information needs of people in crisis. Rather aid providers must ask in a responsible and comprehensive way what those needs are. While the survey research conducted by Internews in Haiti did not use scientifically representative samples, it did rely on a large and demographically varied segment of the population in the country's most severely damaged areas. The results of that research surprised both the researchers and the *ENDK* producers, who found that none of their original hypotheses about Haitians' information needs were correct. Throughout the study period discussed in this paper, Haitians' foremost concern was health, followed in varying degrees by education, employment and housing. As information levels increased, so too did Hai-



U.S. Marine explains how to use a handcrank radio. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Prentice Colter.

tians' demand for additional information, a phenomenon well-known in the literature on learning theory.

The third idea we discuss in this report has growing support in the professional and scholarly literature on crisis response particularly and development generally: Research-based, two-way communications build capacity in the information sector, thus increasing a society's ability to withstand disaster and recover from it more quickly. Research-based, two-way communication, we strongly believe, should be an integral component of all development programs, not just post-disaster humanitarian assistance programs, and it should be built into a project from the start. Doing so will increase the effectiveness of the project; increase its accountability to those it serves as well as to donors; and improve services in other development sectors because the affected population's own concerns and needs will be much better and more widely known. In short, research-based, two-way communications build resilience, allowing societies to more successfully respond to crises when they arise.

Creating this capacity will require investing in the training of researchers and communications experts, an expense that we believe is worth the return in more effective and more cost-effective delivery of assistance. More field research is needed to establish best practices and to discover how best to use research-driven reporting to reach and engage citizens, community groups and local NGOs, the people and organizations whose operations are key to developing indigenous resilience to crises. And while the ENKD program was designed around radio for reasons particular to Haiti, we urge aid providers to make use of other media as appropriate, particularly mobile telephony and social media.

But the key to effective assistance, we argue, is practical, directed, professional research. To serve any population honestly, credibly and effectively, humanitarian assistance providers must first learn what its needs are. They have to ask, earnestly and continuously.

INTRODUCTION

In humanitarian disasters people affected by an unfolding crisis have more than physical needs; they also have an urgent need for information. From earthquakes to armed conflicts, human survival can depend on knowing the answers to a few critical questions: Is it safe to go back home? What is the extent of the damage? Should I stay with my family or go for help? Where can I get clean water? Where is the nearest health facility? Information in crises is as important as food, water and shelter. It can save lives, assuage fear and prevent violent conflict. It can arrest the spread of disease and political turmoil. Information empowers: It allows people to knowledgeably make critical choices about their safety and that of their families and communities.

The capacity of any community to anticipate, respond to and recover from crises depends on the availability of timely and accurate information. Developing that capacity is an essential element not only of humanitarian response efforts in the immediate aftermath of disaster, but throughout the recovery and reconstruction process. In short, information provision is a fundamental element of successful development programs. And most critically, as this paper argues, information has to flow from those in need to those who provide assistance. Two-way communication, between aid recipients and aid providers, is the key to helping communities become more resilient to crises generally and better able to cope with them when they occur.

“Information is as important as food.”

Marcus Garcia — owner of Haitian radio station Melody FM

Haiti’s catastrophic 2010 earthquake brought new attention to the need for effective, two-way crisis communication. With much of the country’s infrastructure destroyed and its people injured and isolated, local media and emergency information systems played a crucial role. Their effectiveness, however, has been greatly enhanced by research on the specific information needs and desires of the affected population. Haiti’s earth-



Robenson Sanon, an early *ENDK* reporter, interviews a camp resident. Photo by Gary Eckert.

quake presented in stark relief the importance of understanding how people get information. That experience underscores our view that a dedicated knowledge of a society’s information ecosystem and communication networks in advance of a crisis makes possible the effective provision of information as part of a humanitarian response, and thus greatly increases the effectiveness of the entire humanitarian undertaking.



Press conference of the Mayor of Gonaive (Artibobite) about Hurricane Tomas facilitated by Internews on November 5, 2010. Photo by Guillaume Michel/Internews.

While relief organizations have increasingly recognized the importance of two-way communications and information provision, research into best practices and the impact of such interventions has been limited. The objective of this paper is to contribute to the developing discussion of research methods that can improve the timely collection and dissemination of information, ideally to develop approaches that are applicable across cultures and in a variety of humanitarian contexts. In so doing we aim to further debate about the importance of two-way communications not only in crisis contexts, but as a routine part of ongoing development efforts. While our focus is two-way communications in post-earthquake Haiti and their use in research-driven news reporting, that experience suggests to us an important opportunity for a sector-wide discussion on the role of research as an integral part of effective two-way communications strategies, methodological approaches, technique sharing and results. We intend this paper to contribute to that discussion, and specifically to the use of this type of project generally, not just in crises.

Few countries have experienced the almost continual devastation that Haiti has. In only a few short years, the island nation has experienced an earthquake, a tsunami, flooding, economic and political instability, epidemic disease and other calamities. Best known of these disasters, perhaps, is the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that shook the country on January 12, 2010, resulting in more than 200,000 deaths. The convulsion flattened 80 percent of the buildings in Leogane, at the earthquake's epicenter, and much of the public infrastructure in Port-au-Prince, the capital.

In the face of this catastrophe, Internews with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Pierre and Pamela Omidyar Fund, the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNO-CHA) and numerous individual donors, launched a daily 20-minute humanitarian radio program called *ENFOMASYON NOU DWE KONNEN* (*News You Can Use*), or *ENDK*. Prepared by a team of 12 Haitian journalists, the program has focused on timely, relevant and actionable information ranging from where to access food and water, to hygiene and health tips, to useful guidelines for protecting a tent from flooding during rain and who to contact to replace lost identification papers. The journalists' efforts are complemented by a team of Haitian researchers who conduct ongoing audience research to identify the affected population's essential and desired information needs. The results of that research guide *ENDK* programming decisions, which in turn create a renewed, more directed information response in subsequent audience research. This dynamic information flow is thus two-way, but in a real sense it is also networked, not merely one-to-one communications but many-to-many. In this way, *ENDK* does more than close the loop on information provision. It makes information flow very nearly continuous, increasing its power exponentially.

In the first two years of its existence, *ENDK* has made a significant impact on its frequent listeners and has had the potential to affect hundreds of thousands more in its listening area.

In the first two years of its existence, *ENDK* has made a significant impact on its frequent listeners and has had the potential to affect hundreds of thousands more in its listening area. To give one powerful if anecdotal example: On April 15, 2010, Joel Fanfan, a newly trained *ENDK* journalist, wrote a story about a Catholic Medical Mission Board program that allows amputees to receive free care and prostheses. A few days later the story was broadcast by more two dozen radio stations in the metropolitan Port-au-Prince area. After hearing the segment on Radio 1, Gesner Estimil, 38, an earthquake widower and father of

three, who had had his right leg amputated, got in touch with the journalist to inquire about the prosthesis program. Within minutes, Mr. Fanfan had contacted Catholic Medical Mission Board officials and secured Mr. Estimil an appointment for the next day. The specialist checked and treated the damaged leg, which was not yet in shape to receive a prosthesis. As a result, Mr. Estimil received a new leg a few months later, allowing him to regain his mobility and resume his florist business.

In that instance as in many others, *ENDK* has provided and continues to provide practical information about critical issues. *ENDK*'s success is the result of focusing on the information needs that Haitian citizens *themselves* have identified as most important and then creating program content to meet them. Though originally designed as a crisis-response project providing the information needed to save lives and calm fears in the immediate aftermath of the quake, the program exposed a need for ongoing reliable information addressing a wide range of issues related to recovery, reconstruction and development. As a result, *ENDK* has now been broadcast for free by more than 30 radio stations for more than two years.

The creation of *ENDK* was vital to ensuring affected populations had access to timely and essential information to help them survive the aftermath of the earthquake. More recently, as priorities have shifted from emergency to reconstruction, *ENDK* has taken steps to keep up with listener needs, based on Internews research results, and begun to provide information more relevant to the recovery process.

Terry Theiland – Independent Evaluation for USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in Haiti

The success of *ENDK* would not have been possible without the intelligence gained through ongoing audience research, a conclusion made clear in the research results, which demonstrated the falseness of the three hypotheses underpinning the original research design:

- 1) Men and women would have different information priorities.
- 2) People's information needs would vary based on the impact of the earthquake on their homes.
- 3) Information needs would change over time throughout the emergency response, recovery and reconstruction process.

That these hypotheses turned out to be so wrong confirms the central argument of this paper: Outsiders cannot and should not presume to know what a population's information needs will be following a crisis of any type, nor even during periods of "normal" development. The only way to truly find out is to ask. This means building into post-crisis humanitarian assistance programs *from the start* two-way communication projects in which research is the fundamental driver. For the same reason two-way communication should be integrated into ongoing development projects. Doing so will not only increase the quality of information and communication services provided to the population, and therefore the likelihood that they will be well received, but will also improve services in other development sectors because the population's own priorities will be much better known. Moreover, should a crisis occur, a research-based, two-way communications system is a resource that will much improve the ability of humanitarian assistance programs to understand the environments in which they are operating and therefore make faster and smarter decisions.

The first section of this paper discusses some of the key issues in the growing literature on the importance of information provision in risk and crisis contexts based on expressed needs. The next section briefly describes Haiti's social and environmental history, specifically its long history of dealing with crises. These first two sections are critical to contextualizing the importance of research-driven reporting in post-earthquake Haiti. The third section presents the methodology used in the audience research upon which *ENDK* reporting is grounded, including description of the Haitian team that conducts the research. The project itself is detailed in section four, which examines the synergistic relationship between the audience research and *ENDK* reporting. The paper's fifth and final section summarizes our key findings and recommendations, and offers some observations about the inverse relationship between information provision and "customer" satisfaction. While that relationship challenges any claim for the absolute effectiveness and impact of this type of project, understood properly, we believe it argues for the importance of research-driven reporting in all development efforts, not only those that respond to humanitarian crises.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW: RISK, CRISIS, DISASTER, AND INFORMATION AS HUMANITARIAN AID

Over the last decade, several reports, publications and events¹ have documented and contributed to the evidence on the importance of two-way communications with disaster-affected communities and the need for this vital element to become a permanent, predictable, and reliable component of humanitarian and development programs.

The humanitarian sector is now seeing that timely, accurate and well-targeted information and communication with those (potentially) affected by crisis, historically overlooked as a secondary need, is critical to building communities' resilience. Communications ensures more effective medical service, shelter, and food aid delivery. As important, it ensures increased accountability to the people aid providers seek to serve. Effective communication with disaster-affected communities saves lives, improves humanitarian effectiveness, provides vital psychosocial support, helps manage community expectations, gives affected populations a voice, fulfills their right to know, and helps (re)build resilient networks.²

The past seven years³ have seen rapid changes in the technology, global media, journalism and citizen-participation spheres. This (r)evolution in how technology has enabled people to access, produce, consume, and share information without regard for distance or sovereign borders has also changed the way communities can raise their voices and communicate among themselves, particularly at times of crisis. As communities are empowered by technology, their ability to communicate their expectations to a wider audience, including relief organizations, governments, and media, increases their expectations for an appropriate response. This communication potential also enables them to hold these organizations accountable (e.g. sous-

velliance or "watching from below"⁴) and connect with other stakeholders (i.e. diaspora groups) who play an increasingly critical role in disaster response.

Humanitarian aid agencies, NGOs and donors have recently begun to understand the critical role information and communication play during crises and disasters in developing countries, as well as in the context of development in general. As access to and demand for information grow in the world's poorest nations, aid organizations have begun to advocate for and practice "information as aid," and scholars have begun to conduct research concerning its logic, implementation, and impact. For example, leading aid organizations such as USAID and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) have explicitly integrated communication strategies and information and communication technologies (ICTs) into both Haiti-specific (USAID, 2012) and broader humanitarian aid policies:

For people who are caught up in conflict and other emergencies, the need for information is often acute. Frequently, they are separated from their families, lack shelter and adequate food, and are scared and confused by the events occurring around them. Media programming tailored to the needs of such people can provide an essential information lifeline. (DFID, 2000, p. 4)

[T]hrough the use of technology and new media, we will increase the quality and effectiveness of our programs...we will speed recovery...and improve our capacity to implement in these challenging environments. (USAID, 2011, p. 29)

1 See Annex 1: Landmark publications and events in the evolution of the humanitarian communications sector.

2 Please see Annex 2: Communication is Aid.

3 See *Information and Communication Technology for Peace: The Role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict*, Daniel Stauffacher, William Drake, Paul Currian and Julia Steinberger, United Nations ICT Task Force, 2005 (www.unapcict.org/ecohub/resources/information-and-communication-technology-for-peace-the-role-of-ict-in-preventing-responding-to-and-recovering-from-conflict)

4 See "Sousveillance," Jascha Hoffman, *New York Times*, December 10, 2006, at www.nytimes.com/2006/12/10/magazine/10section3b.t-3.html and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sousveillance>. (accessed May 2, 2012).

These programs are exceptional, however. Despite the unprecedented speed at which new players, new technology and solutions and new inter-sector initiatives (e.g. the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network) have entered the field of humanitarian response over the last five years, and particularly since the 2010 Haiti earthquake, neither the potential offered by these new players nor the power of local media has been adequately leveraged within disaster preparedness and emergency response programs. Particularly lacking has been two-way communication between aid providers, both national and international, and local populations.⁵

A new report on humanitarian professionalization recently published by Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA) argues that poor communication with local communities is still one of the major obstacles to humanitarian effectiveness: “The ‘missing’ competency of communicating with disaster-affected populations, involving them in disaster response programs and measuring overall performance against their expectations should be articulated in the final revision of the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework.”⁶ This area of disaster response remains among the least acknowledged, least funded, and most complex challenges both within organizations and in the broader humanitarian sector.

The importance of information and communication as humanitarian aid (Christoplos, 2006; International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), 2005; Najmuddin, 2005; Quintanilla & Goodfriend, 2011) and their potential to save lives and reduce suffering is also an emerging area of scholarly interest (cf. Wall & Chéry,

“The people who are in the receiving end of our assistance are rarely if ever consulted on what they need, or are able to choose who helps them or how (...) Whilst this has been long recognized as an issue, too little has done about it.”

UK Department for International Development (DFID) Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR), Executive Summary, March 2011.

2011; Wall & Robinson, 2008). Four interrelated themes in “information as aid” and related literatures are of particular interest: (1) the importance of two-way communication in humanitarian aid; (2) stakeholder information needs assessment; (3) the heightened desire for information caused by uncertainty in crisis and disaster situations; and (4) the importance of information and communication throughout the lifecycle of disasters and crises, as well as in a broader development context. These themes are explored below in a brief review of relevant academic and practitioner literature.

Two-way, Dialogic Communication

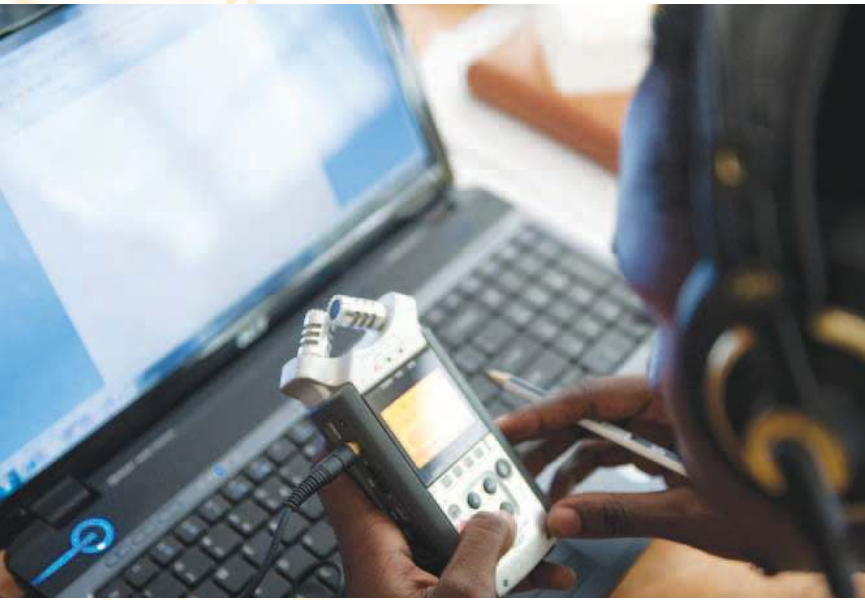
Documented two-way communication interventions using traditional (e.g. radio) and new technologies (e.g. SMS, social media) have been heralded by practitioners in crisis- and disaster-stricken areas around the world, including Sri Lanka (IFRC, 2005), Pakistan (Rehmat, 2006), and Haiti (Nelson, Sigal, & Zambrano, 2011) to name a few. However, aid organizations do not always achieve the goal of participatory dialogue between themselves and affected populations. Indeed, aid organizations continue to find an unmet need for dialogic communication in many humanitarian efforts, such as in Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire (Quintanilla & Goodfriend, 2011), and Aceh (Wall, 2006).

The risk and crisis communication literatures and disaster management scholarship also place emphasis on enhancing “stakeholder voice,” which first includes the voices of crisis-affected populations.⁷ A recent survey of disaster management experts found that the human perspective is of utmost importance. “[T]he starting point for crisis communication should be people—the directly and indirectly affected civilians and

⁷ See Reynolds & Seegar (2005) for a fuller discussion concerning distinctions between risk and crisis communication and disaster management.

⁵ “In 2008, the main danger was that people affected by humanitarian emergencies would continue to be left in the dark when disaster struck, deprived of the information that would help them to understand what was happening and what they could do to survive. In 2012, it may now be the humanitarian agencies themselves – rather than the survivors of a disaster – who risk being left in the dark.” Still left in the dark? *How people in emergencies use communication to survive – and how humanitarian agencies can help.* BBC Media Action, Imogen Wall, 2012.

⁶ Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalization, ELRHA, March 2012, p. 52, *Recommendation 4* (www.elrha.org/news/elrha/globalsurvey) In 2010 ELRHA conducted the first global survey on professionalization (www.elrha.org/work/professionalisation/scopingstudy) that informed the humanitarian sector of its uneven provision and fragmented and uncoordinated approaches to developing people and teams. (both sources accessed May 3, 2012). This was later confirmed in 2011 by the British government’s Department for International Development (DFID)’s Humanitarian Emergency Response Review, which stated that “the uneven quality of personnel is a major limiting factor in humanitarian response” and that “overall the level of professionalization in the humanitarian sector needs to be raised through better investment in skills and training.” The same review said in its Executive Summary that “The people who are on the receiving end of our assistance are rarely if ever consulted on what they need, or are able to choose who helps them or how. This means that gender-based issues and the needs of the vulnerable are too often overlooked. Whilst this has long been recognized as an issue, too little has been done about it.” At www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/HERR.pdf, (accessed May 3, 2012).



Yves Rumbold, ENDK's current editor-in-chief, at work.
Photo by Gary Eckert.

communities, and their needs" (Palttala, Boano, Lund, & Vos, 2012, p. 9). Theoretically grounded crisis communication best-practices literature also stresses the importance of communication with affected communities and the need for organizations to understand that "the public can serve as a resource, rather than a burden, in risk and crisis management. Thus, crisis communication best practices would emphasize a dialogic approach" (Seeger, 2007, p. 238).

Within the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model, developed by Reynolds and Seeger (2005), participation and dialogue are linked with increased trust, self-efficacy, and sense-making:

Ongoing, two-way communication activities are necessary for the public, agencies and other stakeholders to make sense of uncertain and equivocal situations and make choices about how to manage and reduce the threat(s)...Self-efficacy and sense-making are fundamental processes in crisis response. (Veil, Reynolds, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2008, p. 315)

However, many aid organizations have been reluctant to incorporate dialogic communication as a best practice. Wall and Robinson (2008) and Wall (2006) find that fear is often the reason: fear of unanswerable questions, fear of overload, and fear of equivocation, panic, rumors, and myths. However, Tierney (2003) argues some of these fears may be misplaced and Wall (2011) indicates that these fears may be overstated in developing countries.

Scholars are also incorporating two-way communication in models for monitoring and evaluation. Palttala and Vos (2012) developed a crisis/disaster communication audit instrument theoretically grounded in the CERC model. Within this instrument, communication quality is directly linked with two-way communication with affected populations (i.e. monitoring of perceptions and understanding, monitoring reactions to instructions, direct communication, and supporting reflection). They argue that the instrument gets at the heart of dialogue in crisis communication because "attending to the various stakeholders is not enough as this also entails increasing stakeholder voice. Communication has an interface function connecting the organization with the environment" (p. 41).

While the academic literature on these issues is theoretically and empirically grounded in a northern/western paradigm, many scholars also emphasize that crisis communication is fluid and should be strategically grounded in "audience needs, values, background, culture, and experience" (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005, p. 45) and the "expectations of stakeholders" (Palttala & Vos, 2012, p. 40). This framework gives guidance to those studying and working in developing countries, and the importance of their research will guide the further development of these ideas. Therefore, assessing the information and communication needs, desires, and satisfaction levels of local populations in the world's poorest countries and conflict-affected areas should, and will increasingly become a part of, aid organizations' work.

One example of such an effort is the work done by the Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC) Network, a ground-breaking, cross-sector collaboration between aid agencies, UN organizations, the Red Cross Movement, and media development organizations that recognizes information and two-way communication as key humanitarian deliverables (www.cdacnetwork.org).

The CDAC Network was formed in 2009 in response to the policy paper *Left in the Dark* (Wall, 2009), which showed that frequently people affected by disasters are left out of the information and communication loop, with an emphasis instead on reporting stories from disaster zones back to donor countries. In 2011, the CDAC Network ran its first-ever active deployment in Haiti providing valuable learning as a basis for much of its advocacy work. The CDAC Network is currently supporting the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Sub Working Group on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), part of the IASC Task Team on the UN Cluster Approach, in the development of an operational accountability framework that recognizes communication as aid as integral to accountability work.

Two more joint pilot programs to further and fully integrate “two-way communication” into the “Operational Framework” are planned for 2012 in partnership with the CDAC Network. These pilots will include the provision of timely, accurate and well-targeted (including life-saving) information as an aid deliverable, and equally important, the establishment of two-way communication with local communities as part of the most immediate and critical accountability exercise. The pilots will be integrated within and supported by an overarching system pilot approach that will include the coordination of accountability efforts as a cross-cutting/system-wide issue. A groundbreaking development and a key addition on this front is a new field coordinator position for two-way communication that the United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is creating in 2012 to provide surge capacity and training, among other tasks, across the organization. These pilots will build on the CDAC Haiti experience.

Information Needs Assessment and Information-Seeking under Uncertainty

A BBC World Service Trust (now called BBC Media Action) policy briefing exploring the unmet information needs of those affected by crises and disasters lists “getting information from people, not just to them” as an imperative in humanitarian

aid. “Understanding not only what populations need, but also what they need and want to *know* is crucial for a successful response” (Wall & Robinson, 2008, p. 7). The strategic nature of crisis communication requires humanitarian response groups to act as “discovering organizations” that proactively seek to learn about the environment in which they work. Without understanding the needs of affected populations, how they receive their information and the trust they place in its sources, aid communication will more likely be ineffective.

[T]he dynamics of making sense through clarifying the situation are of paramount importance. The style of communication and the issues discussed must be determined by the public’s dominant discourses. In crisis communication, being aware of the needs of citizens is crucial as it directs attention to which topics should be addressed and provides feedback. (Palttala & Vos, 2012, p. 42)

Assessing information needs is difficult, especially in remote places. Yet experts emphasize the importance of local knowledge and understanding different stakeholder groups’ (e.g. ethnic, regional, gender, etc.) information needs and desires as a “prerequisite of interaction and dialogue” (Palttala, et al., 2012). This knowledge directly affects the quality of messaging and feedback in later stages of a crisis. Wall and Robinson (2008) also underscore the importance of understanding channels of information flow. Identifying information sources that



The research team at a workshop. Photo by Laurie Guimond/Internews.

are trusted (and in local languages) is imperative in planning for crisis communication. They discuss an example in Basra (Iraq) where assistance providers determined radio to be a primary means of information sourcing. They constructed a station that broadcasts live and prerecorded information daily, and which now has a large and appreciative listenership (p. 6). Palttala and Vos (2012) include this type of assessment among the quality communication indicators in their audit scorecard (e.g. knowing public groups and their media use, continuous and ongoing monitoring of needs and perceptions of public groups).

In the midst of crises and disasters, of course, there arise unforeseen and unique information needs. To address this information gap, the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF), working with a small group of expert organizations, included six questions on information access into the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), a revised assessment methodology framework to be used during the first 72 hours and first two weeks of a crisis. This tool is still to be tested and its effectiveness independently evaluated.

Crises and disasters create great uncertainty in affected populations, and not surprisingly affect their sense of an ordered world (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Seeger, 2007; Veil, et al., 2008). To restore a sense of order, affected populations engage in increased information-seeking behaviors as crises unfold. Precisely how they behave varies. Societies and cultures differ in their acceptance of uncertainty, which affects their information seeking and satisfaction. Hofstede (2012) scores countries by “the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.” He finds, for example, that Sri Lankan culture is much more comfortable with uncertainty than is Iraqi culture. Further research could flesh out the implications of uncertainty avoidance and information seeking and satisfaction during crises and disasters.

Including Information and Communication in the Lifecycle of Aid

Practitioners of “information as aid” are calling for the concept to be applied during all stages of aid (Wall & Robinson, 2008), and scholars of risk and crisis communication agree with that recommendation. The CERC model (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005) envisions risk and crisis communication as a continuum, including five stages that often overlap in their cycles (Palttala & Vos, 2012) and unfold in a nonlinear fashion, as in Haiti in 2010 (Wall & Chéry, 2011). The pre-crisis stage involves com-

municating risk messages (persuasive messaging intended to reduce possible future harm); gathering information on the population, their information needs, and how they source their information; and building communication infrastructure. The initial event triggers immediate crisis messages meant to reduce uncertainty and enhance self-efficacy. The maintenance stage continues these efforts, while the resolution stage includes discussions about causes and new risks. The evaluation stage assesses the adequacy of response and attempts to build consensus about lessons learned and new understandings of risk. This assessment feeds back into preparation for the pre-crisis stage. Palttala and Vos (2012) explained that:

Currently, it is understood that risk and crisis communication processes form a solid continuum, and that the two overlap in real time. Effective crisis communication must begin long before an event occurs and continue after the immediate threat has receded. This way, crisis communication covers crisis phases from pre-crisis prevention and preparation strategies and response to post-crisis containment and evaluation strategies. (p. 40)

In short, practitioners of information as humanitarian aid argue that the provision of information and creating dialogue with communities are essential parts of development aid activities in general. The process is cyclical, building on its own knowledge, and to be effective — to save lives and improve development prospects — it must begin before a crisis arrives. Incorporating this long-term humanitarian communication view into a wide array of aid projects is a worthy goal given the mounting evidence for its role in the success of development and emergency response projects and the growing potential of the Internet to enhance its effects. Wall and Robinson (2008) call for just such an effort:

More donor attention to the role of communications strategies within projects that they are funding — i.e. asking what they are, if they are properly planned for and resourced — would also greatly help in ensuring that communications becomes a key requirement of project design. (p. 8)

This requires the attention of multiple stakeholders, including aid agencies, civil society, local communities, and donors. More empirical research is required in order to more fully understand “information as aid,” especially in developing countries. But without question there is increasing evidence that communication aid is essential, not just during the chaos and confusion of crises and disasters, but more broadly as a development goal in itself.

HAITI'S YEAR OF CRISIS: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Over the last 100 years there has been a general increase in death and destruction from natural disasters. Data provided by Benjamin et al. (2011) suggest that until about 1960 the number of annually reported natural disasters worldwide was fewer than 50. After that, the figures begin to rise, with an average of 70 events per year through the 1970s. By 1980, reported natural disasters in the world skyrocketed to 250 events annually, in the 1990s to more than 400, and in the last decade to more than 500 (a 900 percent increase over the 1970s level).

Changes in habitation patterns and limited economic resources available to the poorest countries mean that they are unable to enforce the environmental initiatives or building codes that would protect their populations from the some of the worst effects of these natural disasters. According to Benjamin, et al. (2011):

The number of natural disasters and their lethality have been rising, *with 2010 shaping up to be the deadliest year in recent memory....* Several factors may contribute to this worsening pattern. A major one is the rapid increase in population densities, especially in developing countries. (pp. 307–308, emphasis added)

Unfortunately, Haiti has suffered a disproportionate number of natural disasters over the last decade. Indeed, the country is caught in a cycle of violent environmental destruction. In large part this pattern has been exacerbated by massive deforestation over the last two decades, the result of which is that less than 2 percent of Haiti's forests remain, making the land susceptible to flooding and landslides (Margesson & Taft-Morales, 2010). This is a product of Haitians' efforts to survive with what little resources are available—they use wood to obtain charcoal for fuel, heat, etc. (cf., www.wunderground.com/resources/education/Haiti.asp). Much like New Orleans' misguided efforts to increase its real estate by draining wetlands and marshes essential to weathering storm surges, Haiti's deforestation has made it less able to withstand natural disasters.

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), earthquakes, floods, landslides, and extreme weather conditions made 2010

the deadliest year in the past two decades. Some 373 natural disasters killed almost 300,000 people in 2010, affecting nearly 207 million others, and costing nearly US\$110 billion in economic losses. CRED's data look at the top ten global disasters of 2010. For the first time in decades, the Americas head the list of the worst-affected continents, where one single event, the Haiti earthquake, was responsible for 75 percent of total deaths. ([http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(11\)60141-4/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(11)60141-4/fulltext))

As predicted by Benjamin, et. al., 2010 was indeed one of the deadliest years on record for Haiti. It began early in the year, on January 12, with a 7.0 earthquake that was centered around Haiti's most urbanized areas — Port-au-Prince, Léogâne and Petit Goâve. In Port-au-Prince, the country's capital, an estimated 25,000 public and commercial buildings were destroyed, including the National Palace, most government ministries, and the headquarters of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In Léogâne, the epicenter of the earthquake, approximately 80 percent of all buildings in the town collapsed, including a hospital. Petit Goâve additionally suffered a tsunami that resulted in flooding of the local groundwater table and a consequent loss of potable water for the town.

Consistent with the assertions made by Benjamin, et. al., the effects of the quake were exacerbated by several key factors:

- The shallowness of the earthquake, which was less than 10 kilometers below the earth's surface.



U.S. Marine explains how to use a handcrank radio. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Prentice Colter.

- Low-quality building construction resulting from lack of building code enforcement.
- The extreme poverty of the vast majority of Haitians, 78 percent of whom live on less than \$2 a day.
- Extreme population density in and around Port-au-Prince.

The earthquake as a consequence was devastating: More than 200,000 people died, 300,000 were injured, and about 1 million were displaced, with around 250,000 people moving to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps primarily located throughout the capital. Many of those whose homes were intact also opted to live in tents either in camps or their own courtyards for fear of aftershocks or another earthquake. Even today there are many people with homes who continue to sleep in tents in their courtyards. This is remarkable in that Haiti has a long rainy season that in 2010 began in earnest in mid-March, with torrents that turned IDP camps into rivers of mud. The displaced population spent weeks sitting up in chairs and standing as their tents flooded.

During the last quarter of the year, Haiti's situation was worsened further. With post-earthquake reconstruction still not fully

underway, the country was hit by a cholera outbreak and then by Hurricane Tomas. Until October 18, 2010, when the first case was reported, Haiti had not experienced cholera for more than 100 years (wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/outbreak-notice/haiti-cholera.htm). The spread of the epidemic was facilitated by the ongoing rains associated with the annual hurricane season (June 1 to November 31).

On November 5, 2010, having been spared two other hurricanes, Haiti was hit by Hurricane Tomas, which, while not as severe as anticipated, still caused serious flooding on the northern and southern peninsulas. Six deaths were directly associated with the storm. By mid-November, due at least in part to Tomas, cholera had spread to Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, where it caused more than 1,000 deaths.

Throughout 2010, a series of social protests punctuated life in Haiti. The protests began in the spring with demonstrations directed at the government's slow pace of reconstruction. Protests against MINUSTAH, the UN peace-keeping force that was later proven to be the source of cholera, replaced these in late October and early November. These, in turn, were replaced by election-related violence following the announcement of the first round of election results.

Although crises and disasters of both the natural and manmade variety are commonplace in Haiti, 2010 was exceptional in the number and magnitude of crises and their cumulative effects. As one of the poorest nations in the world—ranked 212 out of 215 by the CIA World Factbook, and burdened by unemployment and rampant corruption—Haiti has few resources available to address post-disaster issues. It was within this context that Internews launched its research-driven humanitarian “information as aid” project.

With the foregoing background—the theoretical and empirical contexts for understanding the importance of two-way communications and information provision as part of disaster relief and ongoing development efforts, and a brief history of Haiti's experience of crises—the next section of this paper turns to Internews' research-driven reporting project. Section four below begins by explaining the methodology used for the audience research that underpinned *ENDK*, the humanitarian information radio program.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A MECHANISM FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Following the January 2010 earthquake, the daily humanitarian information radio program *Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen* (*ENDK, News You Can Use*) produced by Haitian journalists and supported by Internews, provided research-driven information to help citizens find the assistance they needed. Although radio programs like *ENDK* have in the past been implemented in crisis situations as a way of communicating critical information to affected populations, the Haiti earthquake response was the first time such a project was coupled with ongoing audience research. This initiative represented a significant step toward true two-way communication with a crisis-affected population. Moreover, the project represents substantial work in the area of capacity building both of journalists, who receive on-the-job training through the production of *ENDK*, and the researchers who conduct the audience research.

This section of the paper examines the methodology used in the audience research. First, it presents how the research team was created and eventually became the focus of capacity-building activities as a by-product of the broader *ENDK* project. It then details the research methodology used in the project, including the hypotheses underpinning the design and the sampling framework. At the end of this section, we discuss the demographics of the research participants.

Research Capacity Building

The research aspect of the broader *ENDK* project began with the recruitment of an international research expert who designed the research program. In February 2010, Internews hired an initial Haitian staff of seven through word-of-mouth recruitment and trained them in both focus group and survey methodologies. They participated in fieldwork planning, questionnaire development and translation, and subsequently implemented the audience research project.

Although initially developed as an auxiliary activity to support *ENDK*, the team's research activities have since developed into a core piece of Internews-Haiti's broader activities. The audience research proved critical not only to Internews but to many others in the humanitarian community. As a result, the team's research reports are widely circulated on a fortnightly basis to

the UN clusters and to all agencies working on the relief and recovery process, including the Haitian government and local NGOs. The fact that the reports are compiled with statistical rigor has led to their use in the communications strategies of a range of organizations that have come to value the power of audience research. For example, HelpAge International used the results to develop its own communication strategy, including a weekly radio program aimed at educating the public about the needs of the elderly.

One of the most important success stories in Haiti was the production of consistent research into the communication environment, primarily by Internews [...] Their data, which was also made available systematically to humanitarians for the first time through CDAC Haiti, helped agencies to improve their programming and provided data that could be used by agency staff to sell communication projects to donors. (Wall and Chery 2011 *Ann Kite Yo Pale (Let Them Speak)*, p. 8)

These reports clearly demonstrated the acute need for this kind of information as well as the research team's capacity to execute high-quality, rigorous work. As a consequence, several organizations, including the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), worked collaboratively with the Internews research team to implement a survey on the affected population's understand-



News Presenter Kétia Marcellus recording *ENDK*. Photo by Gary Eckert.

ing of key cholera-prevention messages. Likewise, in collaboration with the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Haiti coordination initiative, Internews trained staff from several organizations — among them the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), IOM and the International Medical Corps (IMC) — that wished to implement their own studies using focus group research. The team also soon began receiving requests to engage in other research projects. To accommodate this increased work load the original team of seven grew to 19 in October 2010. As one of the team members explained, his experience of doing research with Internews has been life-changing:

My experiences as a researcher have allowed me to have a new understanding of socioeconomic development. They allowed me to re-examine the false preconceptions I had about my country. These experiences have also allowed me to develop my imagination and curiosity in the sense that now I care a lot more about questions than answers. They have allowed me to devote myself more to exploring things in-depth rather than superficially. These experiences have also helped me to discover interesting qualities in other Haitians, in particular hospitality. (Ricardo Placide, Deputy Director, BRESI)

In recognition of the important work conducted by the Internews research team and the few organizations equipped to conduct quality research on a nationwide basis in Haiti, USAID supported Internews-Haiti's goal of helping the team develop into an independent, self-sustaining research firm capable of operating to international standards. Five of the original researchers comprise the board of directors of the firm, which they named the Bureau de Recherches Économiques et Sociales Intégrées (BRESI). Through this reorganization, the former Haitian deputy director of research was promoted to director of research and four others were named deputy directors, each with a specific area of supervision (focus group research, survey research, fieldwork planning and organization, and human resources management).

The research team has now received formal training on and has experience in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, and in monitoring and evaluation and project management more broadly. In addition, they are receiving business management training to provide for the long-term sustainability of their firm. One hallmark of their work is the ability to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches in their project design. In their audience research, for example, they use focus groups not only to provide baseline evaluation information, but to develop survey questionnaires for follow-up research in a much larger audience sample. They do the process in reverse, too: Focus groups have been used to more fully explore findings from survey research. With each new research project the entire team, especially the core management group, increases its capacity for designing and implementing research projects and for managing essential administrative functions. Going forward the team envisions many ways that their work can contribute to Haiti's development:

- Studying various issues to determine the feasibility of a project or the importance of continuing a project.
- Showing the importance of facilitating access to credible information for people living in remote communities.
- Enabling donors to better appreciate the importance of their investments.
- Facilitating more complete understanding of the population's needs. (Johnson Numa, Deputy Director, BRESI)

AUDIENCE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Internews' audience research had three key questions:

- 1) How do Haitians access the media?
- 2) What do Haitians think are the most credible sources of information? How do Haitians use the media? What are their most important sources of news and information, and have their patterns of use changed since the earthquake?
- 3) What are their key information needs and how have these changed over time?

To address these questions, the research started with focus groups that served two purposes. First, they provided information about how Haitians generally, and the earthquake-affected population specifically, access and use the media and how they conceptualize their information needs. This information was used to develop a survey questionnaire that is the foundation for a rolling audience assessment that has been ongoing since mid-March 2010. The focus groups also provided a quasi-baseline for assessing the impact of information provision through *ENDK*. The focus groups could not serve as a true baseline because they were not carried out prior to the first *ENDK* broadcast. The research design was based on three hypotheses:

- 1) The affected population's information needs would vary according to the extent to which the earthquake had damaged their homes (completely destroyed, severely damaged, and relatively untouched).
- 2) Men and women would have different information priorities.
- 3) Information needs would change over time as the context changed from emergency response to recovery and reconstruction and as information needs were met.

The first focus groups and development of the survey instrument. In February 2010 focus groups were conducted in twelve different areas hardest hit by the earthquake — six communities within metropolitan Port-au-Prince and three in each of Petit Goâve and Léogâne. The researchers differentiated the focus groups along two dimensions. First, they chose locations based on the extent to which the population living there had experienced damage from the earthquake.



Researchers conducting audience survey. Photo by Kerley Darius/Internews

They designated groups as severely affected (their houses were completely destroyed); moderately affected (houses were damaged, but livable); and minimally affected (houses still intact). Those who were severely impacted were further divided between people living in camps and those who were camped out on their property amid the rubble of their homes. As Petit Goâve and Léogâne were both severely damaged by the earthquake, only those who were severely and moderately



Franck Lafont, Internews' Director of Research, planning field work. Photo by Philippe Allouard/Internews.

affected were included. In each location, the researchers separated focus groups by sex based on the hypothesis that men and women would have different priorities in terms of the information they sought. In addition, sex-separated focus groups ensure that women's voices are equally and fully heard. Thus, two focus groups were held in each of 12 locations—one each with men and women—for a total of 24.

The questionnaire for the focus groups was adapted from audience surveys used in other contexts. Adaptations included making the questions open-ended so as to be appropriate for focus group discussions and ensuring the questions were framed in such a way as to be culturally relevant. The indigenous research team was especially helpful in ensuring the cultural suitability of the questions. Once the questionnaire was developed in French, one member of the team translated it into Creole. The team then engaged in a "back-translation" exercise whereby the rest of the team translated the Creole version back into French. This oral exercise provided an opportunity to discuss each question to ensure not only that it was translated in such a way as to be conceptually understandable to a Haitian population, but also that the team clearly understood the questions and information desired from each. The last step prior to starting the field work was pilot-testing the guides with two focus groups (one male and one female). As appropriate, the researchers then made additional changes to the wording of the questions.

Based on the information from the two baseline focus groups, the researchers then developed a survey questionnaire. The baseline information was especially important in pre-coding answers to the survey questions, which were quite similar to those used for the focus groups. The researchers then trans-

lated the questionnaire from French into Creole and then repeated the back-translation exercise.

The survey sampling method and data collection

Gaining a truly representative sample of Haitians was impossible, particularly immediately following the earthquake, as the most recent census was out-of-date and there was significant population displacement. To mitigate these factors as much as possible, at each site the research team went to major commercial districts and spoke with individuals on a random basis, paying attention to gender and age in particular, but also to the extent possible the socioeconomic status of subjects. The idea was (and remains) to ensure, to the extent possible, that the randomly selected sample of affected Haitians is broadly demographically indicative of the wider population.

A key objective of the survey was to determine if and how information needs changed over time. As noted above, the hypothesis was that as information is provided to the affected population and as recovery and reconstruction proceeded, information needs would also change. Therefore, every two weeks for the past two years the research team has conducted an average of 600 audience surveys addressing access to and use of the media, information needs and satisfaction with the quantity of information available. Initially these surveys were completed in the same communities as the focus groups, including both camps and neighborhoods. Over time, however, the researchers defined the relevant areas for investigation more broadly; doing so avoided the risk of over-sampling any one population, and of course permitted data collection in a wider range of locations.

Every two weeks for the past two years the research team has conducted an average of 600 audience surveys addressing access to and use of the media, information needs and satisfaction with the quantity of information available.

The collected data from these weekly surveys are analyzed by focusing primarily on descriptive statistics, particularly cross-tabs, to see how access to and use of the media as well as information needs vary by gender, age group and residential location.

The second focus groups and closing the loop on information provision.

In July 2010, a second set of 24 quasi-endline focus groups, using the same questionnaire and held in the same areas as used for the baseline. Again, this was not a true endline as the *ENDK* project was still ongoing. But the object was to assess changes in people's access to and use of the media since the period immediately following the earthquake and changes in their information needs. In addition, the endline focus groups explored audience awareness and appreciation of *ENDK*. Because the audience survey revealed a consistent interest in health issues, a set of questions regarding the importance of health issues was also added to the endline focus groups.

Consequently, between March 2010 and March 2011, the period covered in this report, Internews tracked the changing information needs of the earthquake-affected population by surveying nearly 16,000 people in six areas of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, as well as in Petit-Goâve and Léogâne. In addition, 488 people participated in baseline (February 2010) and endline focus groups (July 2010).

In addition to examining data it collects through surveys and focus groups, the research team also analyzes SMS messages sent to *ENDK* by those who listen to the program. The objective, as with the audience survey, is to identify general patterns in information needs. The researchers code each SMS according to the information it seeks such that they can identify any change in the nature of the requests over time. Of course the SMS messages are not in any way a representative sample as the participants are self-selected. Still, the SMS data provide another interesting perspective on Haitians' information needs following the earthquake. These data collection methods continue today. Internews thus has two ongoing (audience survey and SMS) and one intermittent (FGDs) source of information about the affected population's access to and use of the media as well as its ongoing information needs. Analysis of the results from these various data sources are detailed in the next section.



A woman listens to *ENDK*. Photo by Internews.

6

RESEARCH DRIVEN REPORTING – THE CASE OF ENDK

Results from Internews' audience research, both survey and focus group, clearly show that *ENDK* is a success. It provides important humanitarian information through the radio, which is the main means of media access for the vast majority of Haitians as well as the one in which they have the most confidence. Interestingly, however, survey and focus group results also revealed that the three hypotheses about changing information needs that were the basis for the research design were false.

First, men and women do not have substantially different priorities in their information needs. Second, people's information needs did not vary depending on the state of their homes following the earthquake. Third, and most importantly, information needs did not change radically over time even within a changing emergency response and recovery context and where the population's information needs appeared to be met. If unexpected, these findings support the fundamental argument of this paper, which is that outsiders cannot and should not presume to know what a population's information needs will be following a crisis of any type. The only way to truly discover those needs is to ask.

Access to and Use of the Media

As clearly shown in the infographic entitled "The Importance of Radio in Haiti," radio is by far the most widely used source of news and information for the surveyed population. Although the percentage of survey respondents with cell phones (79 percent) is somewhat higher than that with radios (60 percent), many mobile phones have integrated radios. This contrasts significantly with other tools for accessing media such as televisions (33 percent) and computers (3 percent). Moreover,

while participants may own cell phones more commonly than they do radios, they perceive the information they receive via SMS as less credible than information they receive from radio. And 58.4 percent of survey respondents claimed to never use SMS to gain information, while 39.2 percent use radio every day to gain information. Consequently, cell phones and SMS are not key information tools for participants. These findings suggest that radio has apparently robust penetration and is a credible information source.

Indeed, both survey and focus group participants indicated that radio is their preferred source of news and information. As one participant in the endline focus groups explained:

[Radio] is the easiest media to use due to the different models there are which sell at a variety of prices. Sometimes to watch TV one must go to a neighbor's to watch a game or the news. Newspapers or magazines are not accessible at all because you have a paid subscription every month. We do not want to start a subscription without knowing whether we will be able pay the following month. (Endline *FGD # 10, Citésoleil, MTC, Men*)

Success is defined as having a positive impact (inciting change) both on listeners and humanitarian response organizations and addressing listeners information needs. For example, the Red Cross began providing more water trucks to one camp when they learned through an *ENDK* report that there was not enough water in the camp.



Radio is also preferred because it can be used anywhere, anytime, even while doing other things.

We can listen to the radio while doing other things and take it with us when we go somewhere. Also, when there is no electricity, with batteries there is no problem. (Endline FGD # 19, Leogane, MTC, Women)

Other common sources of information include word-of-mouth (43.8 percent use every day), television (17.6 percent use every day), and churches (8.8 percent every day and 52 percent weekly) and SMS. However all of these run a distant second to radio as both a highly used and credible source of information.

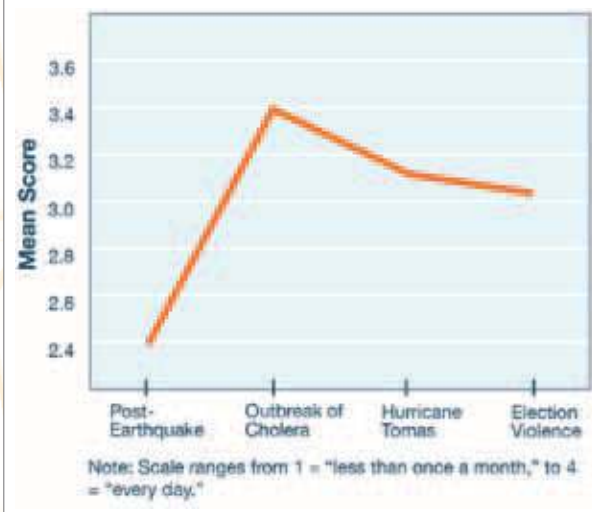
Other information sources commonly used by humanitarian organizations in post-crisis contexts, such as billboards and fliers, are not highly valued. In Haiti this is at least in part because of the low literacy rate, but people also simply do not pay attention to these media, nor do they perceive them to be credible. An example of this, one that may also reflect the level of poverty in Haiti, is evident in an oft-repeated anecdote about a man who went to an anti-Army rally wearing a pro-Army t-shirt. No one paid any attention to him. Similarly, Haitians will often

attend a political rally for one candidate wearing a t-shirt supporting another.

The importance of radio in the Haitian context results in part from the strong view among Haitians — 80.8 percent of respondents — that it is somewhat or very credible as a news and information source. Although word-of-mouth is the second-most important source of information, it is not one that Haitians consider credible; only 20.9 percent indicated that word-of-mouth is a somewhat or very credible source of information. Religious communities (64.7 percent) are similarly both an important and credible information source that are under-utilized by humanitarian organizations as communication channels. The third, fourth, and fifth most credible information sources according to Haitians, two of which are favored by international organizations, are respectively television (19 percent), billboards (14.1 percent) and SMS (14.1 percent).

Further analysis of the survey results reveals that radio usage and confidence significantly increased over the course of the four main crises that shaped the year 2010 for Haitians: the January earthquake, the October outbreak of cholera, the dam-

FIGURE 1 FREQUENCY OF RADIO USAGE AS A SOURCE FOR INFORMATION



age inflicted by Hurricane Tomas in November, and the election violence in December.

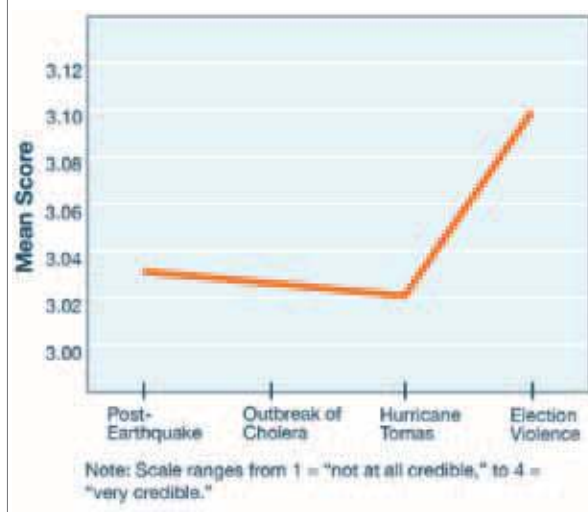
Participants were asked to identify their main sources of news and information and rank their frequency of use (1 = less than once a month, to 4 = every day). As shown in the Figure 1, frequency of radio listenership experienced a statistically significant increase after the earthquake and up to the outbreak of cholera, meaning that the average Haitian listened to radio almost every day.

Survey participants were also asked to rate their general level of confidence in various media (1 = not at all credible, to 4 = very credible). The general level of confidence in radio experienced a statistically significant increase following Hurricane Tomas. (See Figure 2)

Haitians thus turned to radio more than any other information source to gain credible information in a time of great uncertainty. For Haitians, radio is the medium for news and information to which they have the greatest access, prioritize above all others and trust the most. Other communications channels and media can be important, but only as complements to radio in communications strategies that use a wide array of tools. In addition, since the earthquake news and information have become much more important to Haitians. As one focus group participant indicated:

Before we listened to the radio mostly for music and it was not gospel music. Yet now we use the media very often for prayer and information programs...now we listen to news a lot. (Endline FGD # 1, Cite Soliel, GTC, Women)

FIGURE 2 CONFIDENCE IN RADIO AS A SOURCE FOR INFORMATION



The critical question for Internews and other aid providers is, of course: what information did Haitians want following the January 12, 2010, earthquake?

Critical Information Needs

As noted above, the research design anticipated that the population's information needs would vary depending on their sex, the impact of the earthquake on their home, and over time as their information needs were met and the post-disaster context changed. Not only was this not the case, *no* differences were found in the information priorities identified by any of these various groups. Furthermore, over the entire period from March 2010 to March 2011 health remained the number one issue about which Haitians wanted information. As shown in the infographic entitled "Haiti: A Research-based Response to Audience Demands," health was the number one topic of concern for nearly 50 percent of respondents during each month of the survey. According to endline focus group participants, the reason for the continuous need for health information is clear:

There is no life without health. Many people are sick in this country. (Endline FGD # 23, Carrefour, GTHC, Women)

The endline focus groups also revealed that the affected population seeks information on a wide variety of health topics, from where to find health care to illness prevention and treatment.

Haiti

A Research-Based Response to Audience Demands

JANUARY 2010

7.0 earthquake leaves 300,000 buildings destroyed, 300,000 injured, 230,000 dead, and 1.5 million displaced. Newspapers and most radio stations destroyed leaving information void.

Oct. 2010

First cholera outbreak in 100 years. Leaves over 7,000 dead and .5 million cases by end of 2011. Twitter successfully tracks spread.



Nov. 2010

Hurricane Tomas causes crop damage (300 square miles), rural sanitary crisis for 50,000, loss of 1,000 cholera treatment beds, and 20 deaths.

March 2011

Violence erupts with initial election results. Blockades erected and airport closed. UN peacekeepers use rubber bullets and tear gas. Haitian radio reports four killed.



March 2010 April 2010 May 2010 June 2010 July 2010 Aug. 2010 Sept. 2010 Oct. 2010 Nov. 2010 Dec. 2010 Jan. 2011 Feb. 2011 March 2011

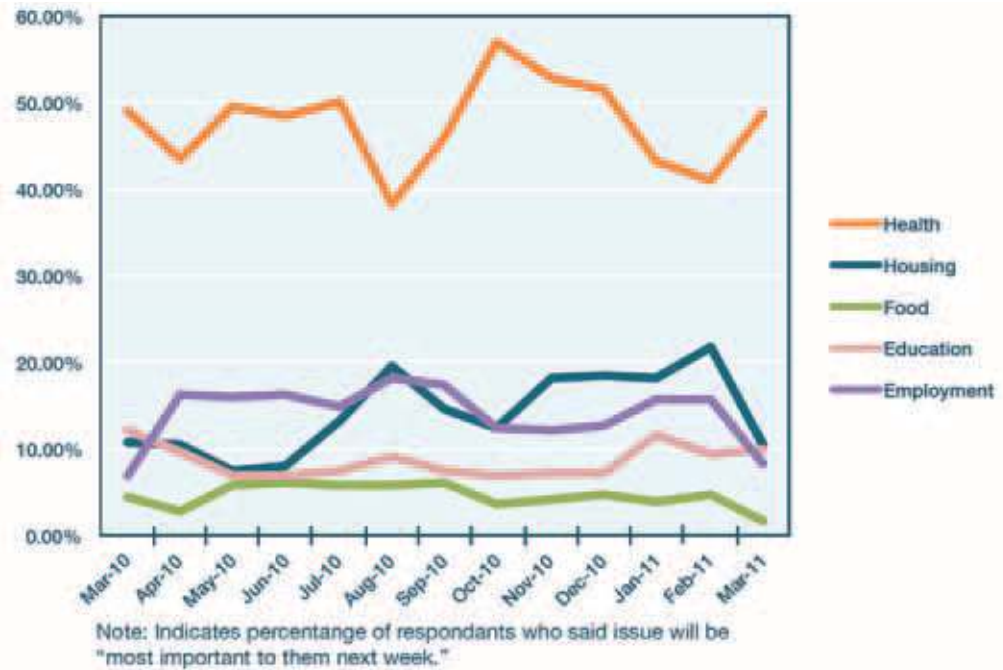


FREQUENT LISTENERS OF ENDK

were statically likely to be more satisfied with the availability of information about health than those who listen less frequently

Data based on a non-random sample of 15,702 respondents

FIGURE 3 IMPORTANT INFORMATION TOPICS FOR HAITIANS



■ Illness Preventions & Treatment (24/24 FGDs)

- HIV /STDs
- Vaginal Infections (12 groups of women/1 group of men)
- Diphtheria
- Malaria
- Diarrhea
- Filarirose
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid

■ Health Care Location (17/24 FGDs)

- Location of Free Healthcare Services (17/24 FGDs)
- Free Medication (7/24 FGDs)
- Medical Specialists (Psychologists, Psychiatrists, others) (3/24 FGDs)

Again, focus group participants explained their interest in these issues:

The Haitian population is exposed more than ever to health problems, it needs long-term solutions. Therefore, training on prevention against diseases is more important than knowing where one treats epidemics. (Endline FGD # 12, Tabarre, GTC, Men)

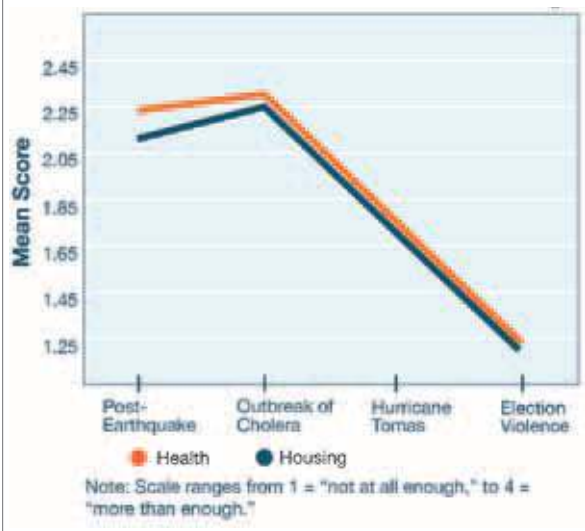
We want to be informed about the location of health-care centers and also to know if there isn't a way to

put free healthcare centers in the community for the most poor. (Endline FGD # 6, Petionville, FTHC, Men)

We need psychologists to combat mental disorders, especially impaired memory that happened to some individuals following the earthquake. (Endline FGD # 11, Caradeux, GTC, Women)

Education, employment and housing issues round out the top four issues of importance to survey participants over the same period—although at nowhere near the level of interest as health (See Figure 3). And while health remained the issue of greatest importance throughout the reporting period, the other issues fluctuated in importance. For example, in March 2010 the information topics in their order of importance as indicated by survey respondents were: health, education, housing, reconstruction, and employment. By April 2010, when schools reopened, the order of importance changed with demand for employment information increasing significantly, to the number two spot, where it remained until October 2010 when housing supplanted it as the second most important issue. The importance of housing may have been linked to the outbreak of cholera that same month. A significant portion of the earthquake-affected population was still living in camps, environments conducive to the spread of the disease.

FIGURE 4 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH QUANTITY OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON HEALTH & HOUSING



At the same time that the need for health information skyrocketed in Haiti, general satisfaction in levels of health information was on the decline. Participants were asked to identify their level of satisfaction with the availability of information on a variety of subjects, including health and housing (1 = not at all enough, to 4 = more than enough). As seen in Figure 4, there were statistically significant drops in satisfaction with information on health and housing following the outbreak of cholera. Levels of satisfaction with the availability of information were quite low following the earthquake, but managed to drop even further as the year went on and further crises unfolded. This suggests that respondents did not feel they were getting sufficient information about health or housing issues.

The previous two sections described the research methodology and presented key findings on changes in information needs. The next section discusses how the audience research findings were used to inform *ENDK* story selection and reporting.

ENDK: Audience-Responsive Radio

For the period under discussion in this paper, March 2010 to March 2011, the *ENDK* team produced five daily and one weekly "best of" 20-minute broadcasts. Thus on a weekly basis one hour and 40 minutes of new information was broadcast with 20 minutes of the "best" stories being repeated on Saturdays. Initially some of the more than 30 stations that broadcast the

program did so up to six times a day, but by March 2011 most did so only twice a day.

Analysis results from the survey data feed directly into the newsroom planning for *ENDK*'s daily programming, which reaches up to 70 percent of the Haitian population via its radio station partners. In this way *ENDK* responds directly to the affected population's articulated needs, representing a true two-way information flow. As of this writing, ongoing research continues to guide the *ENDK* production and also closes the loop with listeners by measuring the impact of the information provision on their lives.

The implications of the survey for *ENDK* content design were clear: Haitians were and are in dire need of information about health, more than any other issue. As shown in the infographic "A Research-based Response to Audience Demands," *ENDK* began with approximately 15 percent of its stories about health in March 2010, increasing them to more than 50 percent of the total by March 2011.

During the 13-month reporting period of this study, *ENDK* produced 2,241 magazine features. The broadcast output of *ENDK* has paralleled the findings of the research team on the Haitian population's changing information needs, but also provided other critical information. So, just as *ENDK* explained where amputees could obtain prosthetics in the immediate aftermath of the quake, it later explained where Haitians could find treatment for cholera following the outbreak of the epidemic. Other stories covered nutritional information, such as the importance of particular vitamins for purposes of general good health and how to obtain them from eating specific foods. Malaria and diarrhea prevention were also covered.

Other important topics covered by the program included:

- Immediate post-earthquake: location of food and health services
- February: food, food distribution and education
- March: earthquake-related topics such as aftershocks and/or the likelihood of another large quake
- April: education issues due to the reopening of schools
- May: weather-related issues due to the approach of hurricane season
- June: the World Cup provided some distraction
- July: health
- August: weather-related issues and education vied for prominence while environmental topics surged
- October: elections became important⁸
- November: the cholera epidemic and Hurricane Tomas dominated *ENDK*'s programming schedule.

⁸ *ENDK* only did stories to provide the population information about the elections process such where to register to vote and how to identify their polling place.

Thus, *ENDK*'s reporting directly mirrored the earthquake-affected population's expressed information needs and evolved over time to meet both the changing recovery context and expressed needs of the audience. The research-driven reporting allowed for time-sensitive and need-responsive content production.

Success Means Never Being Satisfied

That the Internews' project has accomplished its goals is evident in a comparative analysis of the baseline and endline focus groups. Within one month of launching *ENDK*, a majority of participants in 19 out of 24 focus groups (80 percent) knew about it. While this might appear to be a huge success, Internews wanted 100 percent of the earthquake-affected population to know about the service. By the July 2010 endline this was indeed the case, as a majority of participants in 24 out of 24 FGDs were aware of the *ENDK* broadcasts. Similarly, 46 percent of survey respondents during the period March 2010 to March 2011 indicated that they listened to *ENDK* at least once a month. Focus group participants indicated that *ENDK* was one their most important sources of news and information in responding to a question about how their media-use habits had changed since the earthquake. As one participant explained:

We spend a lot more time and attention listening to the news, especially *ENDK*. The program informs us on various topics (health, environment, work, etc.) which are very informative and helpful to us. (Endline, FGD # 8, Carrefour, GTHC, Men)

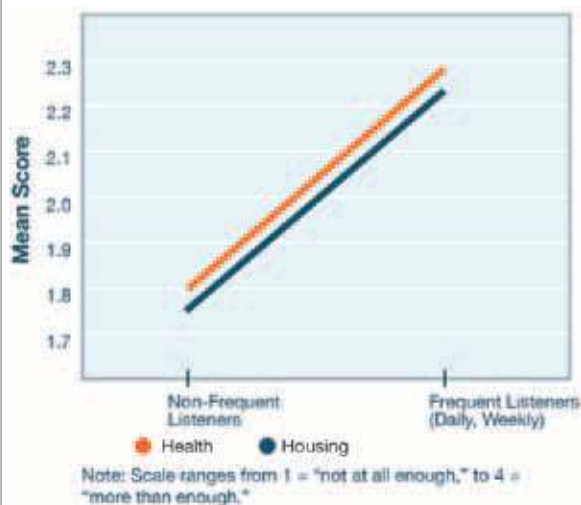
Another stated:

We like *ENDK* a lot because it informs us on many different subjects such health issues, earthquakes, appropriate behavior in camps, environmental protection, and who can help us in our daily lives. (Endline, FGD # 22, Leogane, GTHC, Women)

More importantly, endline focus group participants were able to identify key pieces of information that they had used in their daily lives, such as how to protect oneself during an earthquake or hurricane; how to prevent malaria by using a mosquito net and getting rid of any standing water; how to prevent diarrheal diseases by washing hands regularly and drinking only potable water. For example, one focus group participant explained:

On *ENDK* they tell us how to arrange our tarps against strong rain storms, how to react in the face of tremors, how to live with our neighbors and friends. They

FIGURE 5 COMPARISON OF FREQUENT AND NON-FREQUENT ENDK LISTENERS ON INFORMATION SATISFACTION



tell us not to leave stagnant water near our tents to keep mosquitos away and protect ourselves from malaria. (Endline, FGD # 1, Petit Goave, GTC, Women)

Another stated:

ENDK permits us to have information on many subjects such as health, the environment, housing, education and others that are very useful to us, and we benefit from these reports by improving our daily lives. (Endline, FGD # 4, Leogane, GTC, Women)

Another significant hallmark of *ENDK*'s success is that approximately 30 radio stations continue to broadcast the program for free, which is unprecedented in Haiti. Lucien Borges, owner of Port-au-Prince-based Radio/Tele Ginen, even displaced broadcasts of Voice of America, for which he is paid, with *ENDK* programming. He explained why:

It provides information for the people by the people in Creole. Lucien Borges – Owner of Port-au-Prince-based Radio/Tele Ginen

Similarly, Marcus Garcia, owner of Port-au-Prince-based Melodie FM, explained that he continues to broadcast *ENDK* programming because it provides high-quality, professionally produced relevant information that is not political or confusing. According to him, it is the clarity and neutrality of the program that makes it so credible to Haitians and it would be difficult for him to produce something of equal quality because he does not have the resources.

While these insights from both broadcasters and listeners clearly indicate *ENDK*'s significant impact, the ongoing demand for health information suggests it may be impossible for any one program to ever fully satisfy the population's information needs. For example, as discussed earlier, the level of importance attached to health issues has remained consistently high, but the satisfaction with the amount of health (see figure above) information delivered has declined. While these insights from both broadcasters and listeners clearly indicate *ENDK*'s significant impact, the ongoing demand for health information suggests it may be impossible for any one program to ever fully satisfy the population's information needs. For example, as discussed earlier, the level of importance attached to health issues has remained consistently high, but the satisfaction with the amount of health information delivered has declined.

While levels of satisfaction with the general level of information available on health and housing were low, and declined throughout 2010–2011, *ENDK* had a statistically significant effect on those who listened to the program frequently. A comparison of means between frequent *ENDK* listeners (those who listen daily or at least once a week) and non-frequent listeners (those who listen at least once a month or less than once a

month) revealed that *ENDK* listeners are more satisfied with health and housing information than non-frequent listeners. But even frequent listeners, on average, think the available levels of information on health and housing generally are not quite enough.

As noted previously, *ENDK* shared its research results with the wider humanitarian community working in Haiti, and these organizations used the research results to inform their own outreach and communications programs. One would think that in such a data-rich communications environment the listenership of *ENDK* should have been relatively well-informed regarding the issues of greatest interest to them, especially health issues. The fact that their expressed need for information could not be fully met, particularly pertaining to health issues, is a paradox. In fact, despite the seemingly high level of information available about the topics of greatest interest to the affected population, demand for more information on those subjects, particularly health, did not diminish. One possible explanation comes from classic learning theory: As people learn, their capacity (and demand) to learn increases. In other words, the more we know, the more we want to know.



Painting ENDK on the Internews office. Photo by Alain Draye/Internews.

7

CONCLUSION

Research has consistently shown that in times of crisis people seek out information to alleviate uncertainties. It follows, then, that aid organizations must first identify these uncertainties before they attempt to create and implement a communication program intended to assuage them. Internews, along with many of its partners, has been advocating for an “information as aid” approach to development work. This paper argues for an additional, critical component of that approach: To be effective, a communications program must rely on continual research to identify the information needs of those affected by conflict or disasters, then employ the findings from that research in the selection and production of media programming.

Only with robust, longitudinal data such as was gathered in Haiti by Internews can information providers meet the immediate and changing needs of post-disaster publics. The importance of timely, accurate information cannot be overstated. The citizens surveyed for this project listed health, housing, food, security, education, reconstruction, and employment as central issues. A white paper published by Balaisyte, et al. (2011) last year claimed that the biggest risks to Haiti in 2012 would be: lack of clean water; cholera (and overlooking problems while fighting it); security and crime; elections; environmental problems; more natural disasters (storms, earthquakes, floods); and a problem probably not on Haitian residents' radar — donor fatigue, or keeping donors interested in the seemingly endless problems in the country. The disconnect between the priorities articulated in Balaisyte's white paper and those expressed by survey participants clearly indicates the importance of effective two-way information. As demonstrated in this case-study, donors cannot presume to know what a population's own priorities are, particularly with respect to their information needs, without asking.

Research-driven reporting is one way to accomplish this. The positive impact of this type of project is clear in the focus group results discussed above that indicate general contentment with the quality of information provided through *ENDK* reporting. However, the paradox inherent in responding to a population's information needs is that satisfaction in the level of information provided may decline even while efforts to provide such information are increased. Research in crisis communication has argued that as affected publics begin to make sense of cri-



The research team posing during an Internews training. Photo by Moulin Sur Mer Hotel Staff.

ses — often with information provided to them from external sources — their desire for more information will increase. Ongoing, two-way communication with disaster-affected publics is necessary to determine their information needs, but it may also result in a public that thirsts for more knowledge. That can hardly be a bad thing. But it means that the likelihood of information-based programming such as *ENDK*'s to fully satisfy an audience's information needs is slim. Nonetheless, it provides an essential service in enabling crisis-affected publics to make sense of what is going on around them, and in doing so to regain some sense of stability in their lives, if not also their dignity.

We believe aid organizations should work to identify the most frequently used and trusted sources of information in a country, then use them in information campaigns. As demonstrated by Internews' research, radio is the most cost-effective medium to reach the broadest possible audience in Haiti (often the case in poor or developing countries), and the one most widely perceived as trustworthy and credible. Notwithstanding this fact, we believe a valuable direction for future research would be to assess campaigns directed at promoting the use of new technologies such as SMS in places like Haiti, where the technology is neither frequently used nor particularly trusted as an information source.

A final, important conclusion that can be drawn from this case study is this: While engaging in two-way communication during times of crisis is crucial to assuaging fear and potentially saving lives, it is equally important during reconstruction and development processes for ensuring an engaged citizenry and preparing for other eventual crises—especially the natural disasters that so frequently hit places like Haiti. Future research could also assess if “information as aid” can serve a risk-management function—identifying potential risk issues and providing measured information to audiences in development contexts. The “information as aid” development paradigm should take on a sense-making service to audiences. Learning about and directly speaking to the concerns and needs of citizens may be a crucial factor in mitigating the consequences of future crises. An informed public is an empowered public. Information provision at any stage of a crisis is thus a valuable development goal.

While engaging in two-way communication during times of crisis is crucial to assuaging fear and potentially saving lives, it is equally important during reconstruction and development processes for ensuring an engaged citizenry and preparing for other eventual crises — especially the natural disasters that so frequently hit places like Haiti.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The Internews *ENDK* project was and is based on the idea that the provision of timely, accurate and well-targeted (life-saving) information is an aid deliverable, and that two-way communication ensures that both the information and services provided respond directly to the expressed needs of the affected population. Based on our experience with that project, we make the following recommendations:

- Effective two-way communication must be based on ongoing research into the affected population's information priorities, especially as needs and priorities may change over time with changing conditions. Research should be a regular part of development efforts, and those efforts should include media development and research on information ecosystems. This information will improve aid effectiveness generally, particularly in the event of a crisis. It is especially critical for facilitating communities' resilience in the face of crises.
- Capacity-building both on the research and media sides is key to ensuring the sustainability of this type of project. It will facilitate the development of media that are responsive to their audiences' needs and simultaneously facilitate the development of the research capacity to acquiring the necessary information. Currently, however, and despite the growing interest from humanitarian organizations on communications with local populations and the important progress made to date, the obstacles to mainstreaming humanitarian communication models remain significant, including the lack of trained humanitarian communications experts.
- Aid providers must understand a society's information ecosystem in advance of any crisis. This will facilitate mapping change in that environment should a crisis occur and enable adaptation of information provision. This research should address questions about:
 - Information access (generally and variation across groups)
 - Information use (generally and variation across groups)
 - Trust and confidence in various information sources (generally and variation across groups)
 - Optimal communication delivery mechanisms for different types of information (generally and variation across groups).

- 
- Further research in both the Haitian context and more generally is needed into why various means of communication are more or less trusted, and how different groups of people, especially the most vulnerable, access and use information. In each new context there is a need to investigate how best, if at all, to use new technologies. As discussed here, it is not safe to assume that they are widely used or appreciated
 - Hypotheses about how differences in the information needs and priorities of the affected population and for specific groups, especially the most vulnerable (elderly, women, children, disabled, etc.), should underpin any research design but should be adapted to the context. For example, ethnicity is not an issue in Haiti, but in most African contexts it should be taken into consideration.
 - Researchers must develop ways to assess the effectiveness of two-way communications and information provision interventions even if they cannot fully assess their impact. Researchers must also engage community-based organizations and local NGOs to ensure that local populations' information and development needs are met in a long-term, sustainable way.

In the *ENDK* project, local media, and particularly radio, have played a transformative role in engaging communities during emergencies. Radio is often a uniquely valuable medium in developing countries because of the ubiquity and low cost of simple receivers, its relatively low production costs, and because it can overcome barriers of illiteracy and geographic isolation. This research demonstrates radio's potential in this regard.

Clearly, however, new technologies, particularly mobile and social media, offer new opportunities for aid providers, affected communities and ordinary citizens to communicate and disseminate information during crises. Humanitarian agencies need to learn the potential of those technologies on a case-by-case basis and use them as appropriate.

But in every case doing so will require what we urge here: that assistance providers use research to develop a sophisticated understanding of local information ecologies and communication needs. If done well, the kind of information-based approach described in this paper can be employed elsewhere to make interventions more effective and more accountable, in short to fulfill the humanitarian mission by bringing relief to suffering and displacing despair with hope.

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ANNEX 1: LANDMARK PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

2000

Working with the Media in Conflicts and other Emergencies. DFID policy paper produced by DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department and Social Development Department. www.reliefweb.int/node/21762

2001

Lifeline Media: Reaching populations in crisis – A guide to developing media projects in conflict situations. Loretta Hieber. www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/LGEL-5EBFQ3?OpenDocument

2003

Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies. Mark Frohardt, Internews. www.usip.org/publications/use-and-abuse-media-vulnerable-societies

2005

IFRC World Disasters Report (Information in disasters): "People need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter. Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources. Information bestows power." www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/SODA-6GV3LT?OpenDocument

The Right to Know. Imogen Wall. Report written for the Office of the Special Envoy to the Indian tsunami, focusing on Sri Lanka and Aceh post-tsunami. www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/94653175-72B4-4E69-9075-D1921FF119FA/0/the_right_to_know.pdf

2007

Global Symposium in Geneva: A meeting of 300 humanitarian practitioners, which put the information gap on the agenda. http://ict4peace.org/pubs/Symposium_Final_Statement.pdf

2008

Left in the Dark: The unmet need for information in emergency response. Imogen Wall and Lisa Robinson. BBC World Service Trust (WST) policy briefing, released in October, which argued that affected populations have immediate information needs that were not being met. www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/news/2008/10/081022_emergency_response_briefing.shtml

ALNAP (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action) published a report of its 23rd Biennial Meeting in Madrid on the complex relationships between the media and humanitarian agencies, making five recommendations for a new agenda. www.alnap.org/pool/files/23_media.pdf

2009

The CDAC Network is born and infoasaid, a joint project between Internews and the BBC World Service Trust, launched.

2010

CDAC became operational in Haiti (supported by the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) and led by Internews, www.cdac-haiti.org) and in Pakistan (a short deployment supported by infoasaid).

2011

Media, Information Systems and Communities: Lessons from Haiti. CDAC, Internews and the Knight Foundation, in January, analyzed the local media and information environment in the immediate aftermath of Haiti response. www.reliefweb.int/node/380413

The CDAC Network hired a full time coordinator and undertook a strategic review.

The IASC Sub Group on Accountability to Affected Populations was created, chaired by FAO and WFP, and forming part of the IASC Task Team on the Cluster Approach.

Disaster Relief 2.0: The future of information sharing in humanitarian emergencies, by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Published in March by the UN Foundation & Vodafone Foundation Technology Partnership. www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/disaster-relief-20-future-information-sharing-humanitarian-emergencies

Ann Kite Yo Pale (Let Them Speak) Best practice and lessons learned in communication in Haiti. Practical case studies and best practice in communications with affected communities during the 2010 responses. Imogen Wall and Yves Gérald-Chery, infoasaid, November 2011. <http://infoasaid.org/story/ann-kite-yo-pale-or-let-them-speak>

2012

BBC - Still Left in the dark http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/policybriefing/bbc_media_action_still_left_in_the_dark_policy_briefing.pdf

CDAC Network Media and Technology event (London) <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/public/news/media-and-tech-fair-wrap>

ANNEX 2: COMMUNICATION IS AID

Internews' experience responding to humanitarian and political crises around the world has demonstrated that engaging with local media saves lives and enhances humanitarian effectiveness and accountability. Internews has leading expertise on information and communication with affected communities in crisis and emergencies and access to a growing evidence base that its work:

- **SAVES LIVES:** In Haiti when Internews conducted baseline focus groups for an evaluation of its daily humanitarian radio broadcast, *ENDK*, in February 2010, about a month after the start of the program, 80 percent of groups identified *ENDK* as their main source of news and information, particularly for crisis-related information. In July, when Internews conducted the endline focus groups, 100 percent of groups indicated that *ENDK* was their main source of reliable news and information. Moreover they were able to cite specific examples of information they had applied to their lives. Most of these were health- and hygiene-related issues. The application of hygiene rules by the affected population mitigated the onset of any number of critical diseases often found in a crisis situation.

"In terms of programming, the principal, most identifiable, and tangible impact of USAID/OTI's investment in Internews is clearly the effect of the news program Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen (ENDK). It is evident from the evaluation, as well as Internews' own research, that the creation of ENDK was vital to ensuring affected populations had access to timely and essential information to help them survive the aftermath of the earthquake."

Independent Evaluation, OTI/USAID Haiti

- **IMPROVES HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS:** In humanitarian disasters people affected by the unfolding tragedy have more than physical and material needs: They also have an urgent need for information. In the wake of crises, from earthquakes to armed conflicts, survival can depend on knowing the answers to questions such as: Is it safe to go back home? What is the extent of the damage? Should I stay with my family or go for help? Where can I get clean water? Where is the nearest health facility?

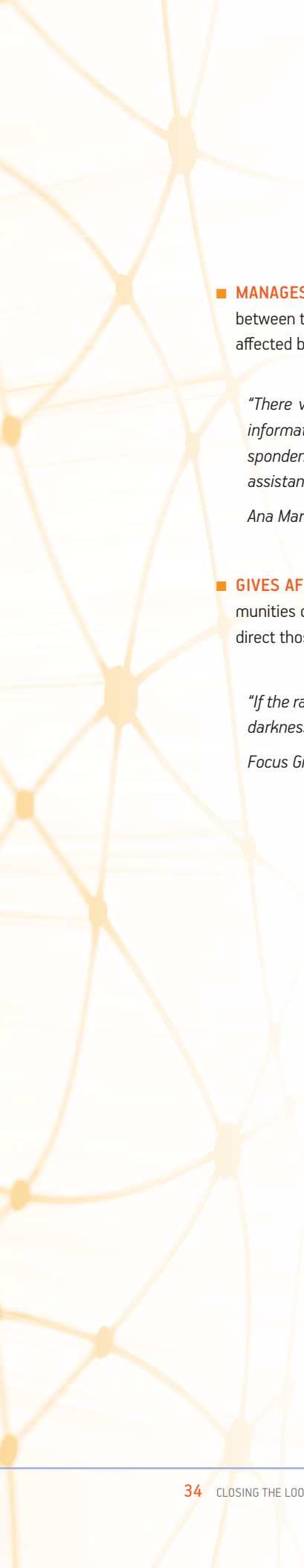
"Lifeline is filling a need that we had recognized before the inception of the program; by providing specific information on displaced people's needs, requirements and administrative barriers, Lifeline is filling a critical information gap."

Gordon Weiss, UN Spokesman in Sri Lanka

- **PROVIDES VITAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT:** The Eastern Chad Humanitarian Information Service provided an important space for women suffering from sexual violence to air their trauma in culturally sensitively ways accompanied by the broadcast of information that corrected misconceptions and rumors.

"Our protection/community services section works regularly with the Internews reporters: whether it be by responding to questions on our activities in recorded interviews or by addressing the refugee population through the radio network. Internews has proven very helpful in providing information on programmes and activities in the camps and, thus, helping to curb wrongful rumours and disinformation. The reporters have also helped us address specific issues related to sexual and gender-based violence through local news messages and campaigns. We need this service."

Claude Vadenboncoeur, UNHCR Protection Officer in Abéché, Eastern Chad

- 
- **MANAGES COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS:** Local Internews reporters in flood-affected Punjab and Sindh provided a vital bridge between the humanitarian community and the international relief operation that was unable to meet the needs of the millions affected by the floods.

"There was almost a consensus from both listeners and humanitarian organization respondents [in Pakistan], that information provided by radio reports was useful and helped flood-affected people manage their situation better. Respondents from humanitarian organizations, in particular, also found the information useful as it helped them mobilize assistance in complicated political situations."

Ana Margarita Tenorio, Independent Evaluation on behalf of UNOCHA

- **GIVES AFFECTED POPULATIONS A VOICE AND FULFILLS PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW:** Without genuine participation, communities cannot ask questions or make informed decisions; they cannot access information and they cannot inform, guide or direct those services supposedly intended to relieve and support them. Ultimately, they are left further disempowered.

"If the radio stopped operating at the moment, I think it would leave the community in the darkness... They will be in the darkness."

Focus Group Participant, Maluakon, South Sudan



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Internews is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard.

Internews provides communities the resources to produce local news and information with integrity and independence. With global expertise and reach, Internews trains both media professionals and citizen journalists, introduces innovative media solutions, increases coverage of vital issues and helps establish policies needed for open access to information.

Internews programs create platforms for dialogue and enable informed debate, which bring about social and economic progress.

Internews' commitment to research and evaluation creates effective and sustainable programs, even in the most challenging environments.

Formed in 1982, Internews is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in California. Internews has worked in more than 75 countries, and currently has offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North America.