

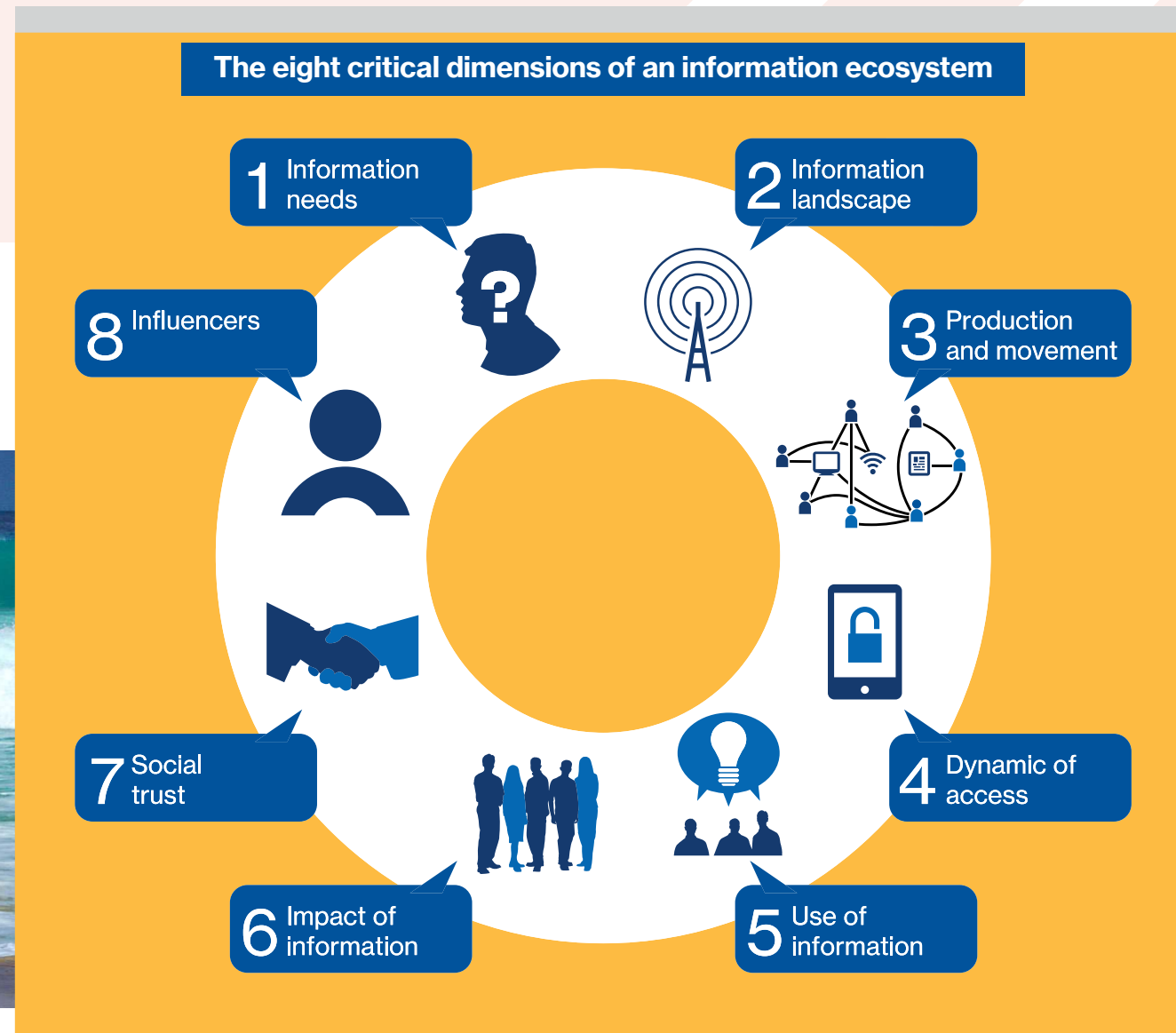
The Barbados Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA):

How the flow of information
impacts disaster preparedness
and response



ABOUT THIS REPORT

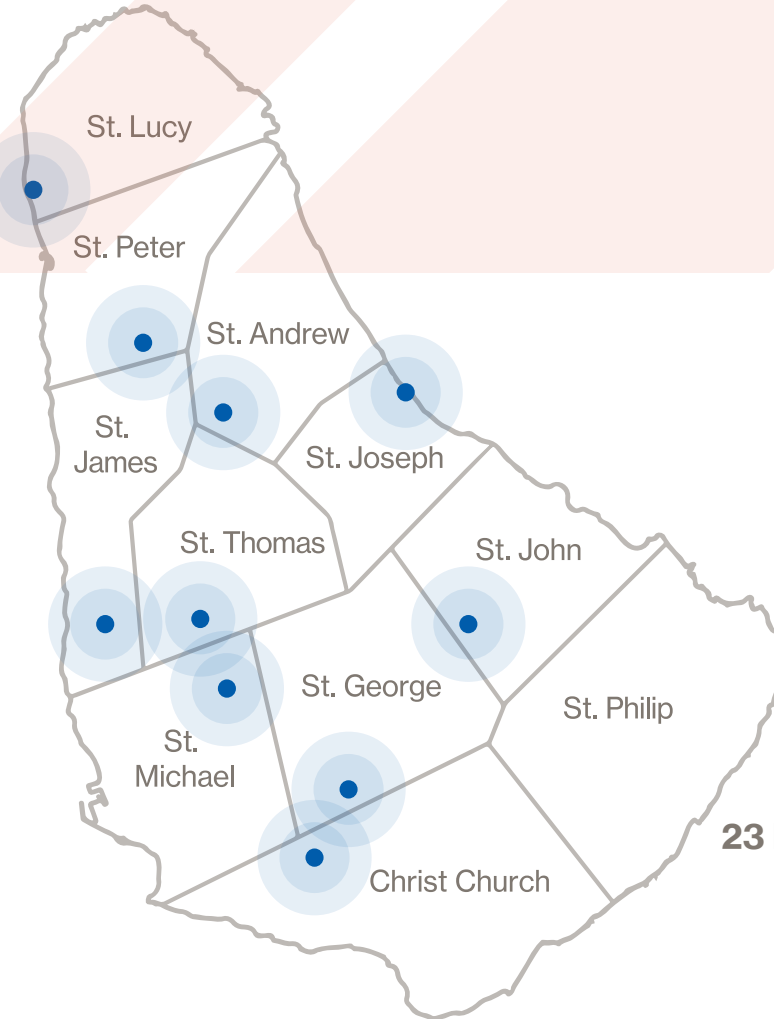
An Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) captures all dimensions of the relationship between information supply and information demand. It uses a human centered research exercise aimed at understanding how people and communities find, share, value, and trust information in their own local contexts, whether it comes from the media or not.



INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean region is vulnerable to many types of natural hazards, including floods and droughts, tropical storms and hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic events. The threat of hurricanes has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic **and getting the right information can literally mean the difference between life and death.** Affected communities need information about the nature of the disaster, level of risk, what services are available, connecting with family and friends etc. **Without access to accurate, trusted information, rumors and misinformation can exacerbate a crisis,** leading people to make poor decisions and making them more vulnerable.

As part of the Information Saves Lives Pilot in Barbados, Internews commissioned an IEA to investigate **how the flow of information in vulnerable communities affects residents' response and readiness to disaster preparedness and the COVID19 pandemic.** The methodology used a mix of remotely implemented, quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methodologies including broad information-related questions, focus group discussions and key informant interviews which generated important insights into the socio-cultural dynamics, trends, and nuances of information flow.



12 Interviewers



80 Survey Questions



208 Respondents



23 Focus Group Participants

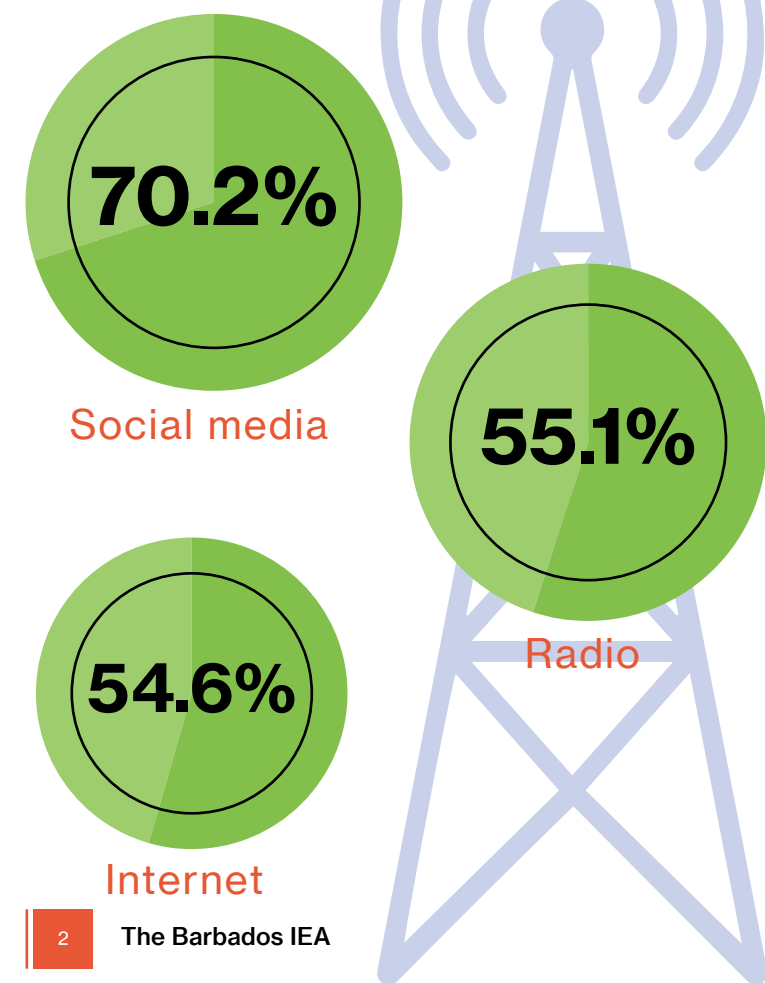


5 Media Professionals

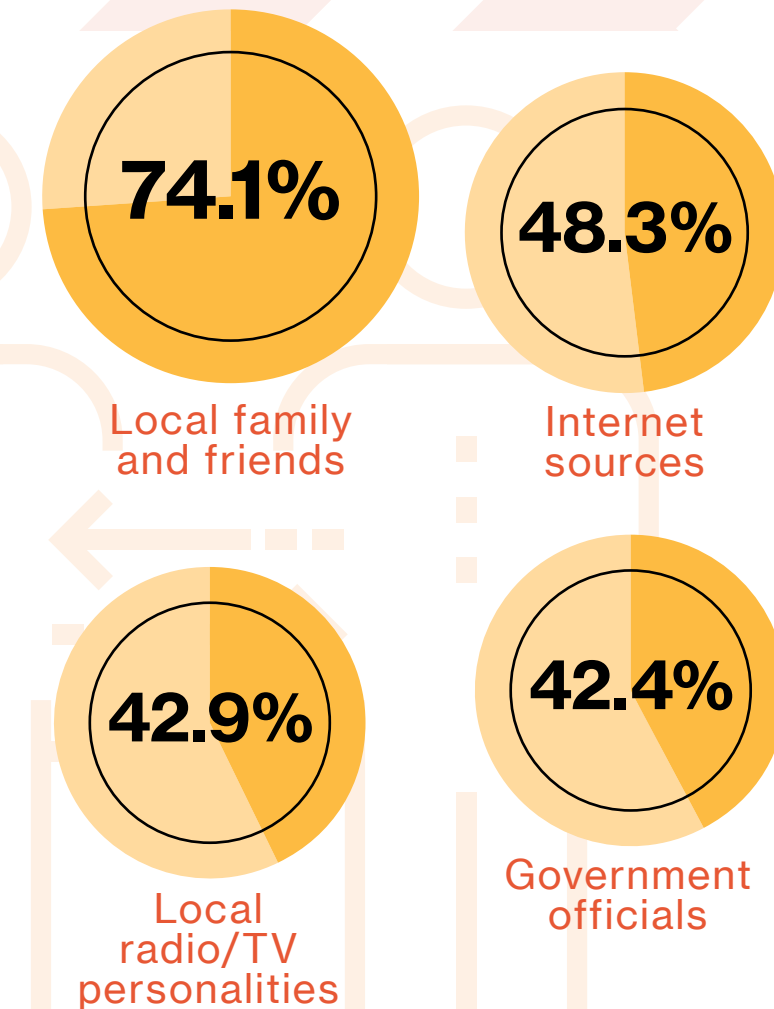
KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Dynamics of information landscape

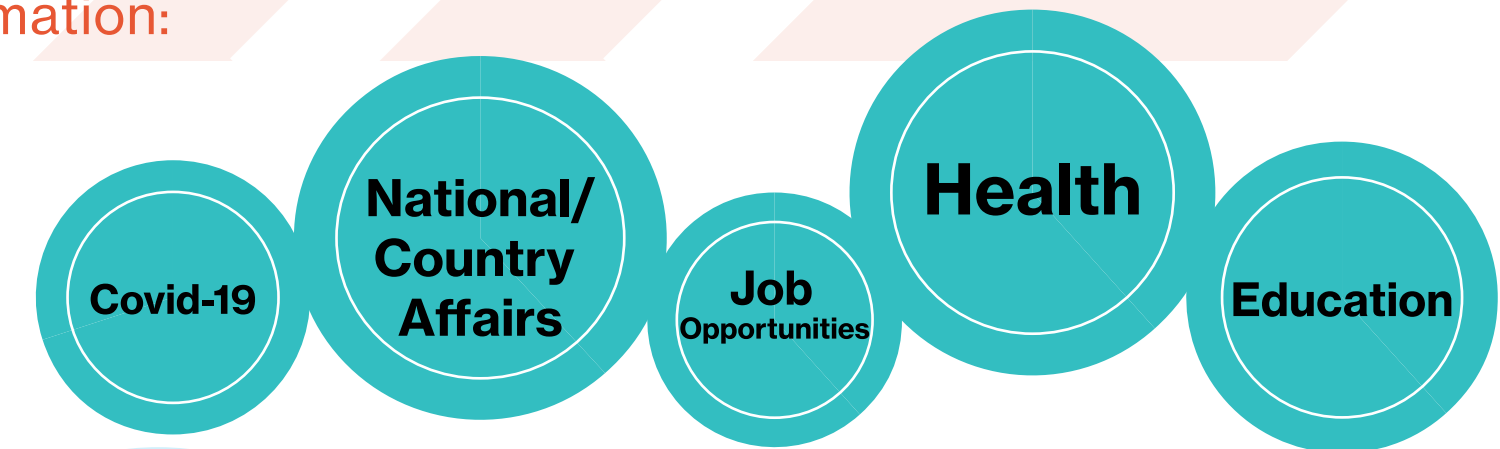
Information channels most frequently used:



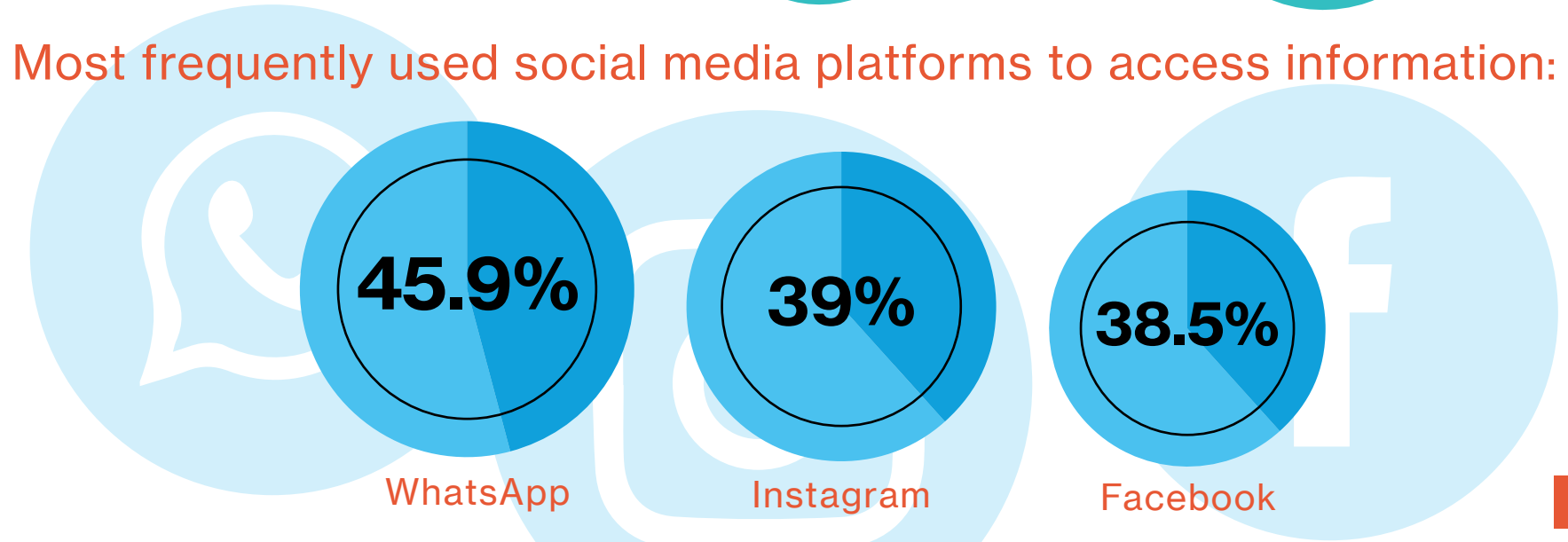
Main sources of information:



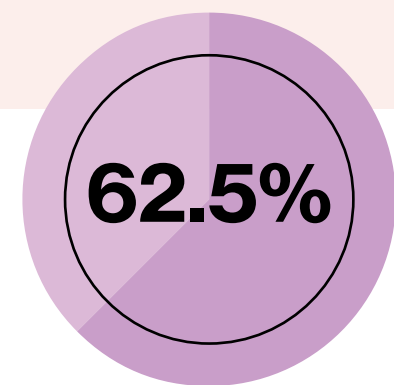
Top five issues on which respondents reported needing more information:



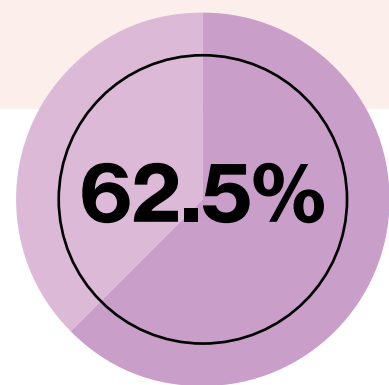
Most frequently used social media platforms to access information:



Persons living with disabilities largely receive news and information from:



Radio



Social media



Trust in information sources is being eroded due to mis & disinformation, diminishing news values, lack of ethics, partiality & inaccuracy in some news stories.

Dynamics of disaster and emergency communication

Disaster and emergency communications are heavily dependent on electricity and internet.



To access disaster, emergency & COVID 19 information

67.3% of respondents used **radio**
52.2% used **social media**

To obtain COVID 19 info:

62.4%

used
social
media

52.7%

used
TV

46.3%

used
internet

Government officials were identified as the most trusted source for information on Covid-19, disaster & emergency information.



Dissemination of disaster and crisis related information is considered to be slow.

Citizens are complacent about disaster preparation.

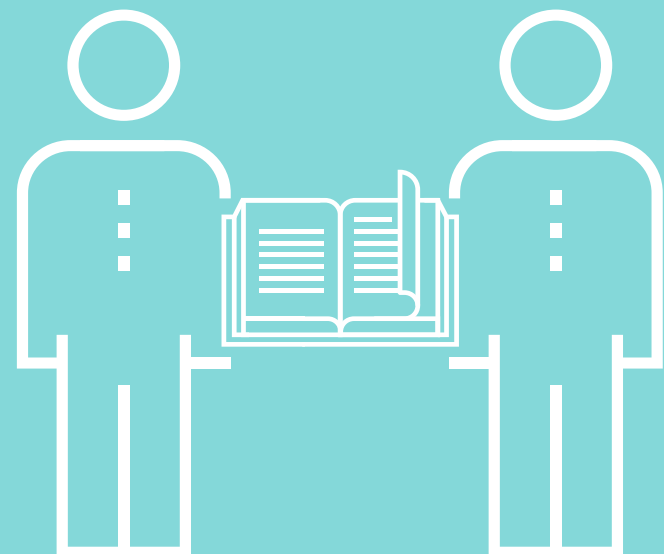
75% of respondents believed they received adequate information to prepare for disasters. **HOWEVER** experiences with Hurricane Elsa in July 2021 Indicated otherwise.

(For more info see Figures 5.13-5.15 Barbados Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA))



RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings and strengthen the information ecosystem for future resilience building in Barbados, what role can key stakeholders play?



Government and its stakeholders:

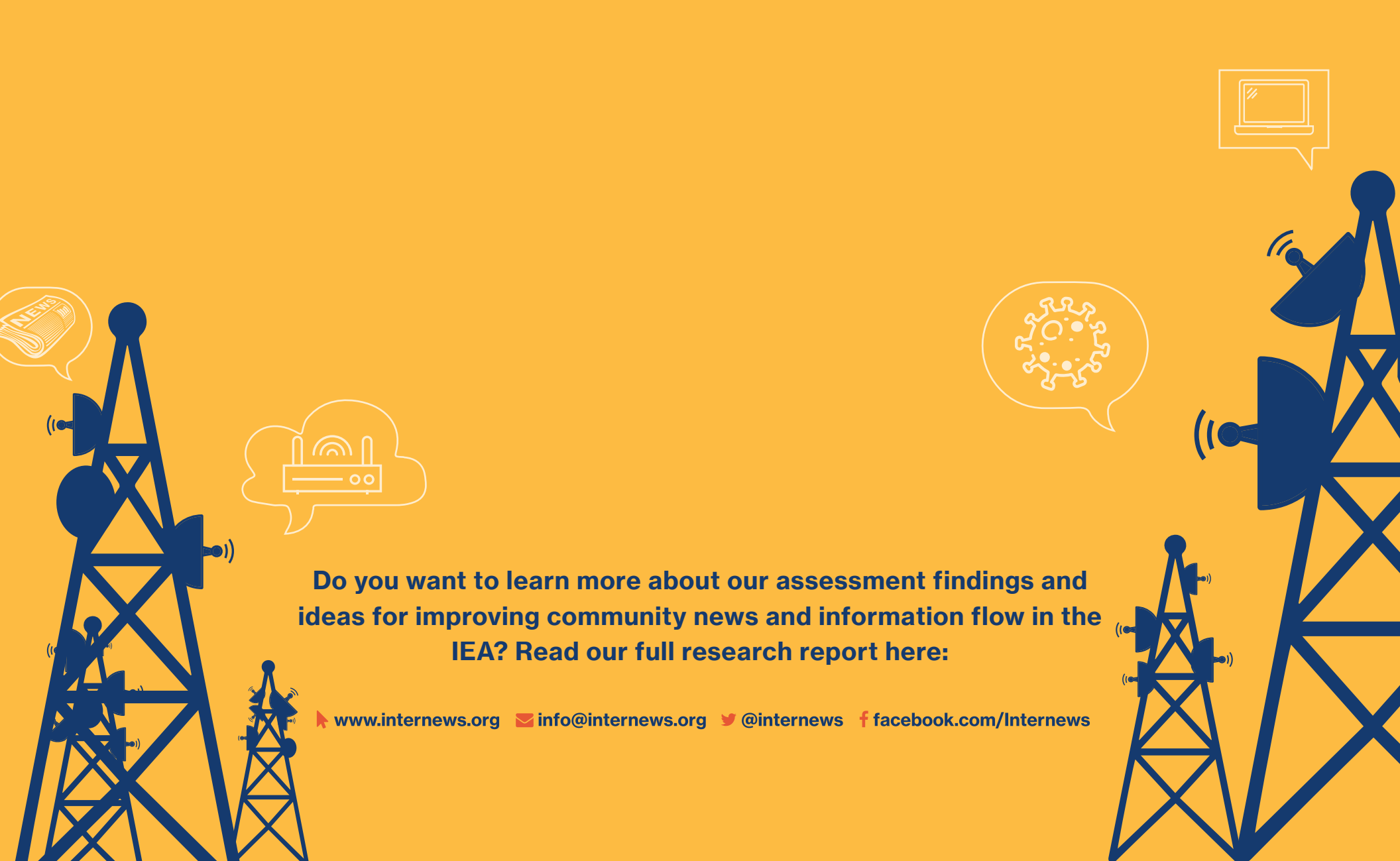
- Model equity in the access to and dissemination of information to media outlets for widest public dissemination;
- Facilitate public access to locally relevant research data & information for enquiry, analysis & extension;
- Upgrade & modernize emergency communications to include modern technologies & contingencies for instances when main public system becomes inoperable;
- Utilize effective communications strategies to reduce public complacency to preparedness & emergency threat warnings.



The Media:

- Utilize disability-inclusive messaging & safe access to emergency information for this target group;
- Commit to strengthening the quality of their journalism;
- Develop skills in contemporary journalism for the digital new media age.





Do you want to learn more about our assessment findings and ideas for improving community news and information flow in the IEA? Read our full research report here:

 www.internews.org  info@internews.org  [@internews](https://twitter.com/internews)  facebook.com/Internews

Internews, an international non-profit organization, empowers people worldwide with the trustworthy, high-quality news and information they need to make informed decisions, participate in their communities, and hold power to account.