



CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON

## Are You Listening Now?

### The challenge to humanitarian aid of communicating with people affected by disaster

*“Many outsiders didn’t know that our village existed. People came to help us only after a month after the earthquake, when a helicopter came in to rescue the seriously injured people. .... We really had a hard time as we didn’t know how to take care of our injured family members. We were especially worried about our children”.*

This panel discussion on the role of communication in humanitarian emergencies will draw on new research conducted after the earthquake in Nepal. The event is organised by the CDAC Network and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), and hosted by the Department for Journalism, City University, London, and supported by the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN).

When disaster strikes in the global south we are used to images of international aid workers flying in and saving lives. Often this comes with assumptions that the professionals know what the people need and little attention is paid to the contribution being made by those most affected through their own networks, systems and communities. Increasingly however, humanitarian organisations recognise that aid is made much more effective through communication efforts that engage and enable affected people to make their own decisions and speak back to aid policy makers.

These communication initiatives go far beyond the traditional lifesaving messages on local media that tell people to boil water or vaccinate their kids. There is a recognition that involving people in the response, re-establishing connectivity and reacting to feedback means that local knowledge and expertise is leveraged and people become active partners. But all this is far easier said than done. In many emergencies, the opportunities and potential advantages are not integrated into the response. In addition there is a constant challenge to assess if communication efforts are making an impact.

The event will feature the release of a new report ‘ARE YOU LISTENING NOW? Community Perspectives on Communicating with Communities efforts following the Nepal Earthquake Response’ an evaluation for the CDAC Network, funded by Dfid and supported in Nepal by Save the Children and World Vision.

## Speakers

- 1) Introductions by the Chair - **Dr Mel Bunce**, Director of the Humanitarian News Research Network, Department of Journalism, City University London
- 2) The growing importance and recognition of communication with communities, the Nepal research – **Rachel Houghton**, Director of the CDAC Network
- 3) The challenges for donors and the interest in community involvement - **Andy Wheatley**. Humanitarian Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID)
- 4) The Nepal Research key findings - **Margie Buchanan-Smith**, lead researcher 'Are You Listening Now?'
- 5) Practical communicating with communities - **Stijn Aelbers** Humanitarian Adviser, Internews
- 6) The problem of Impact Assessment - **Theodora Hannides**, Research Manager, BBC Media Action, presents the findings of four evaluations of responses to recent humanitarian emergencies and suggests conclusions on what mass media interventions are likely to be effective, or otherwise!

The presentations will be followed by questions from the floor.

**Time:** Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2pm

**Location:** Room A130, College Building, City University London, 280 St John Street, London, EC1V 4PB

**To Register for free go to:**

<http://www.city.ac.uk/events/2016/may/communicating-with-people-affected-by-disaster-lessons-from-nepal>

**For further information please contact;**

martin.dawes@cdacnetwork.org