

# Information management

**Information is critical to an effective and well coordinated humanitarian response. It needs to be clear, accurate, relevant to the situation, and produced and updated regularly.**

**Data Collection** – *keep it simple*

- **Collect only what you need:** consider what decisions you need to make and what information you need to make these decisions and coordinate with others
- **Use a range of methods:** reporting forms, spreadsheets, phones, apps
- **Use common formats and datasets:** to ensure data can be analysed and compared with others e.g. location reference, individual/household/village levels
- **Build relationships:** people share information if they get useful, timely information in return

**Data Collation** – *sorting and aligning the pieces*

- **Storage:** database; electronic if possible; ensure ease of use and access
- **Find common links:** sort by location (GPS coordinates/P-codes), categories

**Data Analysis** – *creative processing of data*

- **Forms of analysis:** needs, capacity, output, gaps and impact analyses
- **Questions:** e.g. geographic patterns, trends over time, agency totals, validity and accuracy of information?
- **Processes:** mapping; matrices/spreadsheets; graphs/charts. This may need technical expertise and is often done centrally e.g. through UN OCHA / clusters

**Information Dissemination** – *sharing your 'picture'*

- **Who:** who needs to know, especially those whose data is included and the affected population
- **How:** e.g. email, local media, posters, hardcopy, website, maps
- **Style:** culturally accessible is the key; simple language; clear presentation

**Decision Making** – *using the information and knowledge*

- Ensure information is used to guide planning, advocacy, monitoring and operational decisions to prioritise the needs of the affected population.

## Examples of how technology is changing disaster information management

- digital data collection tools replacing pen and paper, increasing speed and quality of data
- mass text messaging programmes to share advice
- satellite imagery in assessing damage
- solar-powered lanterns attached to chargers for all types of mobile handsets
- 'mesh networking' to allow mobile phones to communicate directly with each other even where there is no network coverage
- crowdsourcing information through social media with information visualised on an online map for humanitarian use
- use of #nameofdisaster on Twitter to map early information
- digital data collection to monitor distribution of supplies in remote areas
- robots being deployed for search and rescue or demining
- UAVs (aka drones) can be used to map terrain, assess damage, search and rescue and airdrop aid in inaccessible areas.

### Key information in emergencies

- Emergency and security alerts, updates, bulletins
- Pre-disaster baseline information
- Ongoing assessment of needs, risks, capacities and gaps
- 4W (Who is doing, What, Where, When)
- National plans, policies, standards, legal needs
- Supply chain and budgetary information
- Reports: situation (sitreps), progress, etc.

### Useful sources of information

- Affected population
- National and local government reports and agencies
- Media (news and social – local and international)
- UN agencies & OCHA
- Humanitarian websites
- NGOs (local and international)
- Assessment reports
- Coordination meetings
- Local weather and hazard monitoring

### Coordinating information

- OCHA produce information to support coordination of all humanitarian organisations:
- Common Operational Datasets
- Country specific websites
- Humanitarian Kiosk app
- Mapping
- 3W Database
- Contacts and meetings
- Needs Assessment
- Financial Tracking Service

### Additional resources on All In Diary website

OCHA Information Management Guidance-Sudden Onset Emergencies, © OCHA, 2015  
Information Management and Communication in emergencies, © PAHO, 2009  
World Disasters Report - focus on technology, © IFRC 2013

### Web links for further information

OCHA toolkit: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/applications/tools>  
UNHCR Emergency IM Toolkit: <http://data.unhcr.org/imtoolkit/>  
Joint IDP Profiling Service: <http://www.iips.org/en/tools/our-tools>