**Community member communication training for volunteers**

**Session 4 : Communication Approaches**

**Time Available:**

2.5 hours

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the session, participants will:

* Understand why good communication with communities is so important
* Improve their own communication skills
* Identify the type of information that should be communicated with communities

**Session outline**

1. Session introduction (5 minute, PPT & Flipcharts)
2. Why communication matters – group discussion (5mins, PPT & Flipcharts)
3. Game – characteristics of good communicators (30mins: 10min game + 20min discussion)
4. The content of good communication (20mins: Stories and discussion)
5. What information should we share with communities (30mins: Questions & discussion)
6. Role-play (60mins: 5mins intro + 15mins practice time + 10mins each group for acting out and feedback)

**Part 2: Why communication matters (5mins)**

**Facilitator Guidance**

1. First ask participants why they think good communication is important and discuss
2. Then recap by clicking through the bullet points on the screen

**Part 3: Game (30mins)**

**Materials**

* 30 Characteristics, cut out and laminated
* Blue tack
* Flip chart paper

**Facilitator Guidance**

1. Explain that participants will now take part in a game to decide which characteristics belong to a good communicator and which belong to a bad communicator
2. Give all participants at least one characteristic on a piece of paper
3. In the room, there will be two flip chart sheets. On one will be written ‘A Good Communicator…’ and on the other ‘A Bad Communicator…’
4. Ask participants to decide where their characteristic should be and stick it on the correct flip chart sheet
5. After everyone has stuck their characteristic on a flip chart, ask everyone to review and say if they disagree with where any of the characteristics have been stuck and if so why
6. Some specific characteristics to discuss include…

* **Body language:** What kind of body language should we use? (Look at people when they speak and maintain eye contact. If they are sitting down, then you should sit down too. Don’t point at people)
* **Listening well:** How important is to listen to what people say? Can we read between the lines? Can we assume we know what people are going to say before they speak? How frustrated do you feel when you are talking to someone and it feels like they aren’t really listening to you?
* **Language:** Which language should we use? Is it better to use the correct term for something or language people will understand?
* **Honest:** Should you always be honest? Is it ever ok to lie to a community? When?
* **Explaining things clearly:** Think of a time when someone has explained something very complicated to you and you understood well – how did they do this? What type of language did they use?
* **Listening and answering to questions:** how important is it to answer people’s questions when they ask them? What if you don’t know the answer? Should you make one up? What if it is a stupid question – how would you handle it?
* **Temper:** is it ever ok to shout at the community?
* **Laughing:** When is it ok to use humor and laugh with people? Laugh at people?
* **Talking:** How much should you talk…and when should you let the community talk?
* **Adaptable:** What if the community ask for something different? Can you be responsive to what they are saying? How important is it to be flexible? What if the community don’t understand what you are saying?
* **Respect:** How important is it to show respect to people? Put ourselves in the shoes of people collecting NFIs…how must they feel? Do they feel ashamed to be accepting hand-outs? How might that affect their behavior?

**Wrap-Up**

Ask if people have any other characteristics to add to the good and bad flip chart. Provide all participants with the ‘Communication Skills’ hand out.

**Part 4: The content of good communication (20mins)**

**Facilitator Guidance**

Now we have discussed how to deliver a message, this session will look at what should be included in the messages. The aim of this session is to discuss the content of good communication. Good communication needs to be ON TIME; TARGETED TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE; SENSITIVE TO PEOPLE’S FEELINGS; RELEVANT TO THEIR SITUATION; CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE; TWO-WAY; CONSISTENT i.e not confusing.

To illustrate this to participants, read the following 7 sentences and after each one ask them what is wrong with the information shared with the community and why.

1. South Sudan Red Cross volunteers are mobilized to talk to a community about how they can register to receive hygiene kits, but when they arrive in the community the distribution already happened.
   1. The information shared with the community was not on time.
   2. Risk: People need to receive information on time to be able to act on it – in this instance to register to receive a hygiene kit. Another example is receiving warnings of disasters in time to act on them and get to safety.
2. Psycho-social volunteers arrive in a village asking to speak to women who have been victims of sexual violence.
   1. The information shared is not sensitive to people’s feelings and dignity
   2. Risk: Women may be embarrassed to come forward and admit they have experienced sexual violence and so may miss out on counselling services which they could really benefit from.
3. Hygiene kits are being distributed to the most vulnerable families in a village. But information about the distribution is shared on noticeboards in the village and the four villages near-by.
   1. This information is not targeted at the right people
   2. Risk – If the hygiene kits are only meant for the most vulnerable then we need to speak directly to them. Putting it out as general information for all means we might not reach the people we really need to speak to – and raise expectations among the people we don’t plan to help.
4. Warnings about possible flooding in Bor are shared with people in Western Equatoria.
   1. This information is not relevant to people in Western Equatoria.
   2. Risk – if we share irrelevant information all the time, people might not listen when we share information they really need to know.
5. A flood warning issued, says ‘Heavy rains expected, so get prepared’.
   1. This message is not clear, it doesn’t say when the rains will come, which areas will be affected or how people should get prepared.
   2. Risk: If people don’t understand our messages they will simply ignore them – in the case of flood warning this could cost lives.
6. A volunteer explains how a new project will select beneficiaries at a community meeting and then leaves before anyone can ask any questions.
   1. The information is not 2-way because it doesn’t allow for people to ask questions or give their opinions
   2. Risk: If we don’t give people a chance to ask questions then they might not understand our messages. If we don’t listen to their opinions, we might get the project wrong. 2-way communication is a mark of respect and builds trust with communities.
7. After a flood information is issued by the Government that tells them to stay in their homes as there is fast flowing water that could drown them. An NGO puts out a message telling people they must travel to their office to register for help.
   1. The messages are no consistent and tell people to do two different things. This is confusing.
   2. Risk: People won’t know what to do or what is the correct action.

**Part 5: What information should we share with communities (30mins)**

**Facilitator Guidance**

This session has four scenarios. First read each scenario to the participants and then ask them what information could have been shared with the community to prevent the situation happening. Then show the answer only after the group discussion.

**Part 6: Role play (60mins)**

**Facilitator Guidance**

1. Break into 4 groups
2. In each group, decide who will play the role of SSRC volunteers and who will play the role of community members
3. Each group takes one of the scenarios from the previous session and spends 15mins acting out the scenario in their group. Think about how the SSRC volunteers can best manage the situation
4. Each group will have ONLY 5mins to present their scenario back to the whole group
5. After each performance take 5mins to discuss what they did well and what could have been done better with the whole group.
6. Ask the group what people learnt from the role play exercise.