Internews

Managing Misinformation in a Humanitarian Context

Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology

**Part III:
How To Guide**

Internews
Humanitarian
Information Services
Learning Collection

The Internews Humanitarian Information Services Learning Collection communicates key lessons, best practices, and programmatic methodologies used by Internews' humanitarian teams around the world.

Each module within the Learning Collection includes three parts: Context, Case Studies, and a How-To Guide. The Context and Case Studies are packaged separately for ease of use.

Internews first developed our rumour tracking methodology in 2014 in Liberia, in order to address the deadly Ebola outbreak. Since then, we've implemented rumour tracking as a way to address misinformation during humanitarian crises in numerous countries and contexts, reaching hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries. This guide was authored by Viviane Lucia Fluck, PhD, and produced with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development.

About Internews

Internews is an international nonprofit organizations that 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.

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INTRODUCTION

Part III. How To Guide provides a step-by-step methodology to set up a rumour tracking service.

"Part I. Context" describes the importance of access to fair, accurate and actionable information, the damage rumours can do in a humanitarian context and the value of Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology as a tool for communicating with communities and humanitarian accountability.

"Part II. Case Study" gives an overview of several Internews rumour tracking projects and an in-depth case study of rumour tracking in Greece. The case study also covers challenges and lessons learned in order to offer recommendations for future rumour tracking activities.

"Part III. How To Guide" provides samples, templates, and a step-by-step methodology establishing, facilitating, and monitoring a rumour tracking project in a humanitarian context.

This document contains Part III of the Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology Guide. Parts I and II can be downloaded separately here.

In it, you will find information and advice on everything from how to source rumours and fact-check information, to how to share actionable and practical answers to address these rumours.

Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology is designed to be flexible and responsive to local context – and you should be too. While there are minimum standards that every project should include in order to implement the Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology (see minimum standards, p. 6), projects need to build on these standards based on local contexts.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

The following minimum standards are the basis of Internews' Rumour Tracking Methodology. These standards are based on our experience implementing numerous rumour tracking projects around the world as well as the organisational philosophy of Internews.

A project using Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology...

1. **Implements an information needs or information ecosystem assessment** (see p. 10) and discusses needs with the community before setting up a rumour tracking project to ensure it is the best methodology for the overall project and context, including the language the affected community uses, who they trust etc.

2. **Includes the minimum required staff for the project** (see organigram, p. 13). This ensures quality standards are maintained and workloads are realistic.

3. **Ensures all staff (this includes i.e. project lead, drivers, community correspondents and so on) attend Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and gender equality training.** All staff must be aware of and trained in using an internal AND external complaints and PSEA mechanism.

This training can be provided by other agencies, such as UNHCR, and should be complemented by a discussion in gender segregated groups about the lessons learned from the training, how they apply to the project and internal complaints' mechanism.

4. **Includes a diverse group of the affected community in decision making.** This inclusion is maintained during all phases of the project (aim for equal gender representation and good variation of age, (dis-)ability etc.

5. **Establishes data protection standards at the beginning of the project.** This includes password protected databases, decisions on what data is collected and who has access to which data, etc. (see p. 15)

6. **Documents all community data as accurately as possible and relies on direct and diverse community voices.** Community voices should be captured by adapting templates provided in the annex - this is the basis for everything you do. (see parts 3 & 4, see annexes 1 & 2)

7. **Uses open questions to collect qualitative community data in order to let the community set the agenda (see p. 17). For example asking the community:**

   a. What do you think humanitarians need to know?

b. Have you heard something that you are not sure is true?

c. Is there anything (positive or negative) about the humanitarian response you'd like to share?

8. **Always uses the language the affected community is most comfortable in** (both for collecting rumours and answering them). This is not necessarily the language that is most spoken or most convenient, and it can also be several languages. (see p. 19)

9. **Fact-checks answers to rumours through at least two reliable sources** (see p. 32). Ideally, a reference point for the affected community is given with each answer.

10. **Regularly checks in with the affected community.** Asking how useful the community finds answers to rumours, if they are in the right language, using the right channels, etc.

11. **Prioritises qualitative community data.** Both in analysis and in design, priority is given to the unfiltered voices of community members – first the qualitative community voices, then a short analysis that gives context. Quantitative data may add to this to contextualise. (see p. 32 and more examples of rumour bulletins in Part II)

Ebola-prevention pictures and messages line the walls in the streets of Liberia

KEY COMPONENTS

There are five key components needed to run a project using Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology (see figure 1).

These five parts are part of a continuous cycle with the community at its heart. In the following, each part is described in detail with tips on how to implement them. They are to be used together with the templates in the annex, which should be adapted according to context.

Figure 1. Five Key Parts of Rumour Tracking

PART 1 – UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT & COMMUNITY

Understanding how people communicate, in what language they are most confident and what person(s) and channel(s) they trust most is the foundation of implementing Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology. Never make assumptions about what people in the affected community need to know or how best to communicate with them. It is important that all decisions are based on information gathered from the affected community themselves, not based on assumptions, no matter how much experience in similar contexts or even the same country may be available in the project team.

Each of the following steps to implement and run Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology is based on this first step.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

An Internews study into the information needs of migrants in Italy found that they are much more likely to act upon information exchanged via word of mouth through their networks than through formal channels or authorities. This makes sharing answers to rumours almost impossible for humanitarian organizations that only use formal systems of information dissemination.

WeWorld partner worked to provide information for refugees and migrants in Italy
Credit: Andrea Panico

INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT AND INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are two key formats Internews uses to understand the context before setting up a rumour tracking project:

An information ecosystem assessment (IEA)

Information ecosystem assessments are in-depth assessments, using different research methods. An IEA discovers how information is generated and flows within a community. Within these systems, different types of news and information may be received and passed on to others—through word of mouth, key community members, phone, the Internet, and other communication channels. An examination of an information ecosystem looks at the flow, trust, use and impact of information and communication.

Examples:

Information eco system in Afghanistan

An information needs assessment (INA)

An INA is a shorter survey, ideally combined with qualitative data from focus group discussions or interviews, that assesses what people do or do not know and understand about the current situation and humanitarian response, how they would like to receive information about it and how they are likely to share this information. If there is limited time and resources, projects sometimes choose to only implement an INA, rather than an information ecosystem assessment.

Examples:

Information needs assessment in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Information needs assessment in Gao, Mali

While it is important to conduct an INA and map the information ecosystem at the beginning of your project, this process needs to be repeated frequently to determine whether you are still meeting the needs of the community. Information needs and uses are never static and especially in a humanitarian context, can change rapidly, so it's important to continually assess, analyse and act.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

At one point in the Rohingya refugee response, mobile phone use was extremely restricted amongst most of the refugee community as the government only permitted people with some form of national ID to register a SIM card and the refugees did not have this form of ID. This meant that some humanitarian agencies were advocating against even mentioning mobile phone use so as not to endanger the refugees. However, about three months later these restrictions became less severe, and while mobile phones were still not the channel of the majority, they became a much more significant communication channel than before.

Implementation Tips

✓ Lobby with partner organisations to include key INA questions in their programs for a regular update on communication preferences of the community.

✓ Download this toolkit to help you implement an INA created by Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) member agencies (including Internews) and The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS).

✓ Click here for more on information ecosystem assessments.

Internews training of Community Correspondents in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

PART 2 –
PROJECT PLANNING
AND SET-UP

It is important to not only base all planning of the project on community input, but also to adapt it accordingly as you implement.

BUILDING YOUR TEAM

Accurate rumour identification requires the support of people who are in a position to listen to the community and hear the latest rumours as they are circulating. In general, these are people who are part of, or widely trusted by, members of the community. These "rumour investigators," often called community correspondents, or community liaison officers, can help document rumours, determine their accuracy and origin, and work to replace misinformation with practical, fact-checked information. The next phase of the rumour tracking process requires a reliable mechanism to analyse the rumours collected and find answers to these rumours.

Implementation Tips

✔ Ensure that the people you hire do not just have the technical skills but also understand the values of rumour tracking and the importance of putting the community at the centre of everything we do

✔ Adapt and use the organigram on p. 11 and the sample job descriptions (see annex 1) to determine which roles are needed

✔ Consider collaborating with other organisations to advertise posts, i.e. in Bangladesh, the Asian University of Women was extremely helpful in circulating job advertisements to their alumnae

✔ Ensure all team members are trained in protection and the Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology

✔ Have regular check-ins with all team members to ensure healthy team dynamics and a continuous collaborative spirit between staff members that belong to the community and those from somewhere else

ORGANIGRAM

This organigram does not include administrative and logistical roles such as accountant and field coordinator etc. Sample job descriptions for these roles can be found in the annex. Roles which are essential for implementing a rumour project are highlighted with a *
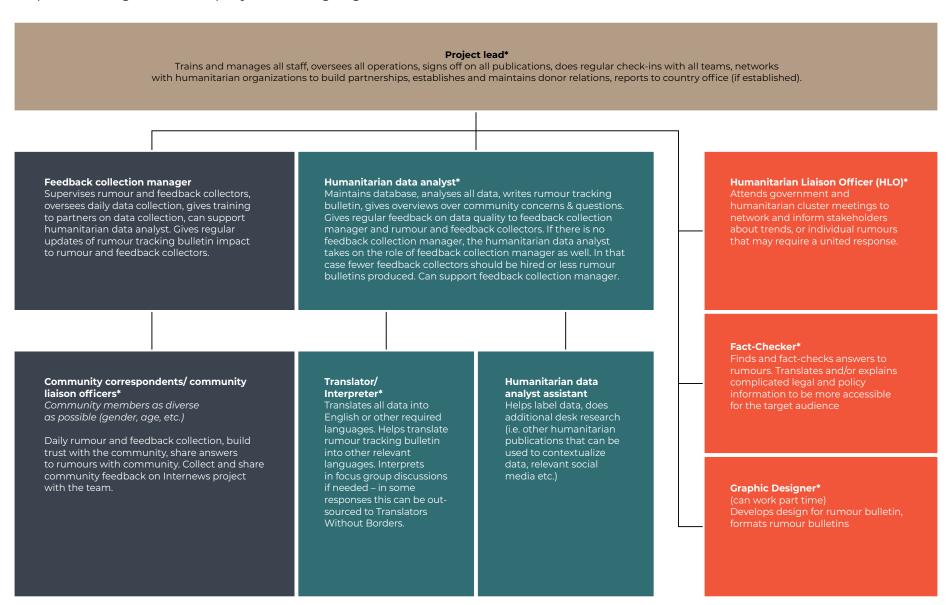
Project lead*
Trains and manages all staff, oversees all operations, signs off on all publications, does regular check-ins with all teams, networks with humanitarian organizations to build partnerships, establishes and maintains donor relations, reports to country office (if established).

Feedback collection manager
Supervises rumour and feedback collectors, oversees daily data collection, gives training to partners on data collection, can support humanitarian data analyst. Gives regular updates of rumour tracking bulletin impact to rumour and feedback collectors.

Humanitarian data analyst*
Maintains database, analyses all data, writes rumour tracking bulletin, gives overviews over community concerns & questions. Gives regular feedback on data quality to feedback collection manager and rumour and feedback collectors. If there is no feedback collection manager, the humanitarian data analyst takes on the role of feedback collection manager as well. In that case fewer feedback collectors should be hired or less rumour bulletins produced. Can support feedback collection manager.

Humanitarian Liaison Officer (HLO)*
Attends government and humanitarian cluster meetings to network and inform stakeholders about trends, or individual rumours that may require a united response.

Community correspondents/ community liaison officers*
Community members as diverse as possible (gender, age, etc.)

Daily rumour and feedback collection, build trust with the community, share answers to rumours with community. Collect and share community feedback on Internews project with the team.

Translator/ Interpreter*
Translates all data into English or other required languages. Helps translate rumour tracking bulletin into other relevant languages. Interprets in focus group discussions if needed – in some responses this can be out-sourced to Translators Without Borders.

Humanitarian data analyst assistant
Helps label data, does additional desk research (i.e. other humanitarian publications that can be used to contextualize data, relevant social media etc.)

Fact-Checker*
Finds and fact-checks answers to rumours. Translates and/or explains complicated legal and policy information to be more accessible for the target audience

Graphic Designer*
(can work part time)
Develops design for rumour bulletin, formats rumour bulletins

Figure 2. Organigram

DO NO HARM

A key principle of all Internews projects is not to cause any harm. All rumour tracking projects follow the 'do no harm' principle. **We are not journalists, and our goal is not to find the next scoop.** As a basis, every action needs to be questioned whether it will cause harm to the people we are trying to support. Projects need to think about the following issues before starting to work with the community: protection-related complaints, data protection and building trust.

Implementation Tips

✔ Ensure all staff and volunteers are clear that the most important goal is to 'do no harm' and that they do not mistake themselves for journalists who are reporting on humanitarian action or on the community.

PROTECTION-RELATED COMPLAINTS

Staff and volunteers work very closely with the community and often develop strong trusting relationships. As such, they may receive information or complaints about serious protection-related issues. This includes:

- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- Fraud

- Extortion
- Human trafficking
- Anything that breaks Internews' code of conduct

It is crucial, that **all staff have training in the topics related to these serious complaints and how to deal with them before engaging with the community.** When coming across a serious external complaint, such as rape, for example, the person collecting feedback should not ask the individual to re-tell their traumatising event as this may cause further harm. Instead the feedback collector should refer this case and directly bring the individual to the appropriate service that can handle these types of serious complaints.

For internal serious complaints the internal referral pathway should be used. It is key to keep information on the individual sharing the complaint confidential and escalate the complaint to the project lead (or if the project lead is not trusted, their line manager, or directly to HR).

In situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence, conducting individual interviews can put people at risk not only because of the sensitive nature of the information collected, but because mere participation in the process can cause people to be stigmatized or targeted. **It is key to ensure the safety of people sharing information with us and our staff.**

Implementation Tips

✔ Ensure all staff and volunteers have attended a [protection] training and understand what protection related issues are and that they are not protection case workers. These trainings are often offered by agencies operating in the response, such as UNHCR or other agencies working in protection.

✔ All staff/volunteers need to understand the code of conduct, so take time to discuss the code of conduct and if needed simplify the language to ensure everybody understands it.

✔ Map all protection related services (i.e. organisations working with gender-based violence, human trafficking and so on) so that team members can refer community members that need help.

✔ Develop a simple referral pathway for internal complaints and ensure all staff members know how to use it and are comfortable to use it. Include an external referral pathway too, the protection cluster/sector will be able to guide you on external referral.

✔ Have regular gender segregated check-ins to ensure trusted communication with team members so they are comfortable to speak up in case they need to report something.

✔ Ensure the team knows where to refer PSEA complaints against other organisations.

✔ Ensure all staff have access to psycho social support if they have gone through a traumatising experience.

DATA SECURITY

Even if we do not collect identifiable information of community members, such as names and phone numbers, it is important to ensure that the data we collect is safe. This is also important in order for other organisations to be comfortable to share data with us.

Implementation Tips

✔ Collect as little identifiable data as possible, only collect names and contact if really needed.

✔ Ensure the database (excel sheet) is password protected.

✔ Ensure all staff understand data protection, for instance when a community member sends a complaint to a text line of a radio station, the broadcaster should not read out their number.

✔ Decide who has access to the master database.

✔ Think about what will happen to the data once the project ends. Often Internews shares their

data with the humanitarian data exchange (make sure that there are no identifying details left in your data before you share it).

✓ Check out this useful ICRC guide on data protection.

BUILDING TRUST AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

In order to do no harm – both in your intentions and in your ability to run a rumour project and provide consistent follow-up and feedback - your project has to build up trust.

Implementation Tips

✓ **Meet with community leaders and trusted information providers:** It is important to meet with the local leaders (women, religious, youth etc), to explain the project and provide them with an ongoing channel to communicate with the project, ask questions and provide feedback. Not only will they have a valuable insight into the mood of the community and priorities, but entering into a community without their blessing may result in the leaders themselves sowing distrust in the project or feeling side-lined in the process. It is also important, however, to never rely solely on community leaders.

✓ **Be accurate, fair and timely. Always:** A rumour tracking service needs to be beyond reproach. As soon as one piece of information is deemed questionable, inaccurate, politically motivated or damaging, it casts doubt on every piece of information distributed via the service. Check, double check and check again before you send the information. As situations can change rapidly in an emergency, some information may be out of date by the time you are ready to distribute. While this can be frustrating, it is better to release accurate information slightly later than expected rather than rushing to release information that will quickly become irrelevant or is incorrect. And of course, **if you do make a mistake, address it, clarify, apologise, and move on.**

PART 3 – COLLECTING RUMOURS

While it is important to decide early on *how* exactly you might collect rumours, the actual collection should not begin until you have all processes in place. Without clearly defined ways to respond to the information collected, disseminate it efficiently or ensure that the systems work, your project will very quickly lose the trust of the community. A typical workflow for rumour tracking is centred around the community and is a continuous cycle (see figure 3).

Set-up rumour tracker: Create database, determine collection method and train staff

1

Share outputs **8**

Collect community feedback (daily and in a way that allows access to a diverse part of the community)

2

Community

Draft outputs (i.e. rumour bulletins, narrowcast etc.) **7**

3 Download data/enter data into master database

Research answers to rumours (fact-check with at least two sources) **6**

4 Translation (ideally the data analyst speaks the language of the community and only translates the data that is used in the rumour bulletin into English. In other contexts everything will need to be translated)

5

Analyse data (what are key themes, what are the rumours that need to be addressed?)

Figure 3. Typical Rumour Work Flow

(NOT) ASKING FOR RUMOURS

People First – The community sets the agenda. Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology does not use questionnaires but open questions such as 'what do you think humanitarians need to know about?' The overall goal is to put people, their views, and their concerns at the centre of our activities and let them set the agenda. As a consequence, all data gathered from the affected community should be first-hand, collected by people who have been trained to collect and document community data in all its richness, in the same language(s) as the community, unformatted and not driven by a mandate or guided by a questionnaire.

As a rule, unstructured and informal conversations work best. Asking what challenges community members are facing, what information they need, what they have heard but not seen, or information they have heard that they weren't sure of will not only give you a more natural interaction, but should illicit better responses as well. And remember, for a person affected by a crisis, just having someone to talk to and share their concerns with may be a thoroughly cathartic experience. You could find you begin with a question about 'challenges' and as people begin to feel more comfortable with you, they share much more of their experience. In these instances, your time is theirs. Stop, listen, and let them be heard.

Implementation Tips

✔ Quality over quantity is key. Ensure community data is collected with time and the community sets the agenda.

✔ The key is to have a conversation, not do a survey or assessment.

✔ Train the team collecting community data in asking open questions and follow-up questions.

LANGUAGE

Language can be a crucial barrier to communication. It is key to collect and share information in the language(s) that the affected community is most comfortable and confident in. This is not necessarily the language that is the most spoken or spoken in the capital, but the language(s) that individuals are most comfortable in, the language they speak in their homes.

Implementation Tips

✔ Ensure the appropriate languages are used for both collecting and sharing information.

✔ Often there are contextual factors that play a role in language, so always check translations with community members as diaspora may lack the context.

✔ Have a look if there are resources on language differences within the community you want to support, i.e. such as these by Translators Without Borders or other organisations.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In the Rohingya refugee crisis, humanitarians often pointed out that there is a 70% overlap between Rohingya language and Chittagonian dialect (a dialect of Bangladesh). However, the percentage of understanding actually varied heavily between 40% and 70% depending on where in Rhakine state the Rohingya person was from. Additionally, the 30% that were not the same consisted partly of Burmese words that were completely unintelligible for any Bangladeshi person. Turning those numbers around and saying people won't understand 30% of what is said helps make clear how important it is to use the right language. Rohingya refugees were extremely keen to receive information in their own language.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

When collecting rumours, it is important to manage expectations. **You won't have all the answers, and you might not be able to provide them later.** It is essential to let the community know this and also be transparent that while we will share their information with relevant organisations, this will not guarantee that their needs are met. However, it is important to come prepared and have gathered and understood some of the relevant facts and available services the community might be interested in. The team collecting community data need to be aware of answers to frequently asked questions and have relevant referral contacts at hand.

Implementation Tips

✔ Create FAQ sheets for the team collecting community data so that they can share useful information with the community.

✔ Have other organisations do orientations and short trainings with your team so that they are informed for instance how vaccines work and can give answers rather than read off a text.

✔ Make sure that the team collecting community data knows where what services are so that they can point people in the right direction if they themselves do not have the answer.

✔ Ensure all team members understand how to manage expectations.

An Internews trainer works with a group of refugee community correspondents on using mobile data collection to collect rumours

DIFFERENT METHODS TO COLLECT AND ANSWER RUMOURS

Your information needs assessment or information ecosystem assessment (p. 10) will be a good starting point to help you determine the best ways to collect rumours and share answers. This will tell you the ways the community already shares and collects information. Working within the systems they are already using will also make it easier for you to access information from the community quickly and easily.

Include all parts of a community

Often the most vulnerable people are the least likely to have access to the information or assistance that may be available for them. Therefore, it is vitally important that those collecting interactions actively seek out vulnerable groups.

Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology works around the idea of two-way communication which is why almost all of the following channels are both for collecting and answering rumours.

Implementation Tips

- ✔ Always use face-to-face methods to collect rumours, then add other channels.

- ✔ Regularly check percentages of gender, age, disability etc. in your data to question whether you are reaching all different parts of the community or only the most confident.

- ✔ Using different channels to collect information offers a more diverse group of people in the community a way to communicate with you.

FACE-TO-FACE

Having face-to-face interactions builds trust. If the community regularly sees your staff being respectful, providing useful information and interacting well with all members of the community, this will contribute greatly to the trust they place in you. Face-to-face conversations are a great way to not only collect rumours, but also provide answers.

During these face-to-face conversations, it is easiest to collect data using a mobile data collection system such as Kobo toolbox or Open Data Toolkit (ODK) with tablets or phones rather than notebooks – both are free software used to collect any kind of data. Using Kobo or ODK ensures the data goes straight into the database. Sometimes it might take a while to train people who are not very comfortable with tablets or phones, but it is worth investing the time as it means data will be documented directly into a database rather than having to transfer from paper to excel later.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, a team of between 20 and 40 community correspondents would go into the community daily to collect rumours and share answers, both verbally one-to-one and through a narrowcast. This enabled them to send female community correspondents to female headed households and share information. As the movement of women was extremely restricted this was an excellent way to bring information to a vulnerable part of the community rather than expecting them to come to the information source.

Implementation Tips

✔ Do ensure that the feedback collectors are comfortable with using tablets/phones. For security reasons it can sometimes be a risk bringing gadgets into areas where these items are seen as very expensive. They can also be intimidating to less tech savvy people.

✔ Use and adapt the template (see annex 1) as a simple collection form you can use with Kobo Toolbox or ODK.

✔ Use this guide to learn how to set up a Kobo form and find more information about Kobo here.

✔ Use this guide to learn about ODK.

✔ If you use Kobo/ODK to collect data, remember this extra step: After you download the data off the phones and into Kobo, you'll need to copy/paste the data from Kobo into your own master excel database. This might entail some fine tuning of columns and drop-down menus. But keeping a master excel allows you to add columns for translation and makes for easier sorting and analysis.

FIELD STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Individuals such as health workers, religious workers, community volunteers and other service providers interact with a wide variety of community members, and they are often already trusted sources of information. Incorporating them into your rumour tracking service can greatly expand your ability to reach all corners of a community. Use and adapt the Letter of Understanding (LOU) template (see annex 3) to create a simple document that

can be signed at field level and allows other organisations to share anonymised data with you. Not collecting any identifiable data such as names, contact details and addresses makes it more likely other organisations will share their information with you.

Implementation Tips

✔ Build partnerships with different organisations that have 'boots on the ground,' most likely their volunteers are already having many conversations with the community.

✔ Make sure to let your partner organisation decide what data they feel comfortable sharing with you.

✔ You can offer to train volunteers from other organisations in collecting feedback, which can be a great benefit to partners: volunteers receive free training and you can mention their organisation as a source in your outputs (i.e. rumour bulletins).

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Liberia, the rumour tacking service created a network of 2,500 people who worked in the community: religious leaders, women leaders, journalists, community health workers, social mobilization officers, Ebola Treatment Centre staff, Red Cross volunteers, and other trusted sources of information. This network was then able to submit rumours and questions they heard in their daily work to the Ebola Rumour Tracking Service via SMS (see SMS short code section below). This way information could be fact-checked and used to alert the media and humanitarian partners of the most prominent or relevant misinformation circulating within the community.

Community Action Against Ebola (CAAEB) members get ready for Ebola information outreach in Liberia

SMS WITH AND WITHOUT SHORT CODE

A short code is like a normal mobile phone number, but with only 5-6 digits making it easier to remember. Short codes allow community members to send information to a central hub, but also to register with the service to receive regular updates. For example, an SMS broadcast could alert community members of where to register for assistance, the number to call for missing relatives or tips on how to filter water. This system can be used for both community members and field staff/volunteers who can be asked a simple question such as: do you have any questions, concerns or rumours you would like to share with us?

However, the process to obtain short codes differs from country to country and involves substantial additional cost in the range of hundreds of USD per month. Sometimes this means using a short code is only possible when collaborating with bigger agencies.

To better manage and store information, you could also consider using an SMS management platform such as Frontline SMS or Echo Mobile. This type of software allows you to store and export contact information from every subscriber (which can be useful to create an SMS broadcast) but also to design automated response systems called 'activities'. You can have automated responses such as 'thank you for submitting a rumour, here is a link to the latest rumour tracking information'. SMS activities can also be used for surveying, for example "Please respond with 'Yes' if you have a radio at home"[1].

Implementation Tips

✔ Consider partnering with a local phone provider to create a free-of-charge number. You should make every effort to offer text-in services at zero cost to local users – or at standard local SMS rates.

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1   The World Food Programme has launched a guide to using SMS surveys responsibly: http://mvam.org/2017/05/25/are-you-conducting-mobile-surveys-responsibly/

Community Action Against Ebola (CAAEB) go from house to house to spread awareness about Ebola in Ganta, Liberia

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Liberia, Internews used an SMS based system called 'Dey Say' (see p. 24 in Part II of this manual) to collect and respond to rumours from community workers stationed around the country working on the Ebola crisis. By establishing one single phone number to send the rumours to, the team at the other end was able to easily collect and collate the information to monitor, track and report rumours about Ebola across different counties in Liberia. Rumours mapped through the tracker were addressed through a variety of outreach channels, including local radio stations where audiences had a chance to call in and share their concerns. Internews partnered with UNICEF who were able to provide a short code to be the main contact number for the service.

LOCAL MEDIA

Local media can be a valuable resource to both collect rumours and disseminate fact-checked information to a community affected by disaster. It is key to understand the local media channels before partnering with them (reach, language, trustworthiness, affiliations etc.). Local media can collect rumours they hear from their audience and share them with your project. Broadcasters and journalists can read rumour bulletins directly on air, or use them as a basis for stories to provide answers to the rumours for their audiences. Such collaborations can be very beneficial to local media, as they can get more access to useful humanitarian information sources and thus increase their own relevance to the affected community.

Implementation Tips

✔ Some local media may ask for additional training to address rumours, some may prefer having a mentor to work with them on site, and others may have enough capacity already and just need to be sent the rumour bulletins.

✔ Make sure not to assume that all local media require 'capacity building.' Instead ask them what kind of collaboration they would find useful.

Radio

Radio is often the most accessible form of media to an affected community as it can be accessed in areas with little power availability (mobile phone radio receivers or windup/solar powered radios), it can travel long distances (often to areas that emergency services have yet to reach), it is in real time and can therefore provide up to date information and it can overcome access problems caused by illiteracy. However, it does require people to have radio receivers, and to know the broadcast time of when information is shared, as well as the time to sit down and listen to it.

Radio also offers a lot of flexibility when it comes to collecting and addressing rumours. Listeners can easily submit rumours to a dedicated SMS number, call the station, or deliver rumours in person. Hearing

rumours addressed live on air with clear, fact-checked information allows the community direct access to useful information. For example, if there is a rumour circulating that emergency food resources are not being allocated fairly, a live call-in show with a representative from the responsible organisation provides an opportunity to discuss the issue and better explain how food distributions work and where people can complain if they are unhappy.

Implementation Tips

✔ Consider sharing your rumour bulletin with local radio stations.

✔ Ensure the radio stations have the capacity to collect and address rumours; if not consider offering training.

✔ Even if you don't directly collaborate with the radio station, it is worth monitoring its broadcasts for rumours that might come up.

✔ If the community has easy and affordable access to the internet, you could consider creating a low-cost internet radio station, allowing anyone with access to the internet access to your information (i.e. without the geographical constraints of traditional radio broadcast).

✔ If you or partner organisations have the opportunity to distribute

radios use this Internews guide to plan what radios to buy and how to distribute them.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Nepal after the 2015 Ghorka Earthquake, Internews had discussion sessions with community radios on how radio could format their segments to address rumours and report for communities affected by disasters. After these sessions the radio stations received a regular rumour bulletin including local contacts of humanitarians and other relevant stakeholders that the broadcasters could use to find answers to rumours.

Humanitarian responders sift through rubble in Bhakthapur, Nepal after the 2015 earthquake

Newspaper and TV

Newspapers and television stations can also play a role in collecting rumours and sharing facts if they remain intact and are the preferred means of communication for the community. For example, a newspaper could have a running advertisement encouraging people to submit rumours via email, SMS, calls or in person and publish a regular 'rumours and answers' column as part of their recovery coverage. A television station could set up a call-in service for people to register rumours, complaints and feedback and host a daily news segment as part of the regular nightly bulletin addressing the most prominent rumours. It's important that these outlets are comfortable dealing with rumours and with how to address them. Your project could offer training and support for stations and newspapers to add this valuable service, or could partner with local outlets to work side-by-side in this process.

However, a significant disadvantage to both TV and newspapers is the time it takes between the arrival of information and publication. Also, none of these channels are free to access and there may be literacy barriers when using newspapers and technical barriers when using TV.

Implementation Tips

✔ Consider sharing your rumour bulletin with trusted local media.

✔ Ensure the newspaper and TV stations have the capacity to address rumours; if not consider offering training.

✔ Even if you don't directly collaborate with newspaper and TV, it is worth monitoring the local newspapers and TV for rumours that might come up.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Access to the internet is becoming increasingly more affordable and humanitarian agencies are working to prioritize access to support communities, i.e. through mobile Wi-Fi networks, free Wi-Fi corners, or working to repair infrastructure swiftly. It is key to use your information needs assessment or information ecosystem assessment to understand which social media channels are used and trusted as well as by whom and how they are used.

The key limitation to social media is that information is public and linked to personal profiles. For example, someone might not feel comfortable reporting serious humanitarian misconduct or personal information directly on the Facebook or twitter account of your rumour tracking service. Alternatively, they may feel comfortable making a complaint publicly, but it could create protection issues for the user as each post is linked to their personal page. Another good reason to dissuade public posting of rumours is that it may in fact work against you by making the unverified information more publicly available, and even worse, link that poor information to your service via your social media account.

Implementation Tips

✔ Often following a disaster, community-led pages and accounts emerge that are used as a resource to share information. If it is not appropriate for you to partner with these pages or accounts, simply monitor the conversations that happen publicly to determine the mood of the community, persistent rumours and the relationship between the community and emergency responders.

✔ Disable public posting on your Facebook wall to encourage submissions through private message instead (explain why you disabled public posting).

✔ Only establish accounts on social media platforms that the community is already using, and only if you have enough capacity to handle the account continuously.

✔ Ensure that platforms are tightly monitored and the monitor is authorized to 'hide' posts that may be offensive, dangerous or unhelpful.

✔ Consider recording a video that explains answers to rumours, use animation or perhaps record an audio (for example with Audioboom or Soundcloud) and share it via your social media platforms.

✔ In countries that do not have affordable access to the internet you might consider making your website available via Facebook's Free Basics Platform. This platform provides people free access to a range of simply designed sites. While Free Basics is not yet available in every country, anyone can add their website to the Free Basics Platform so long as they abide by participation guidelines, which include performance optimization for older phones and slower network connections.

✔ Have a look at this guide by IFRC, ICRC and UNOCHA on how to engage communities with social media.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Italy, Internews assessed the communication needs of migrants arriving to the country in 2017 and found that social media was one of the most valued means of communication. Social media allowed the migrants to communicate and share information in a language they were comfortable with while also ensuring that information was 'mobile' and travelled with them as they changed countries (rather than a static newsletter, or local media service).

Messaging Apps

Increasingly, communities affected by crisis are using messaging apps to communicate with each other. Messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Viber can be a great way to collect rumours and answer questions. However, the same limitations as with other social media need to be considered and the same tips apply (see above).

Implementation Tips

✔ Turn your rumour bulletins into pdf or jpeg format in order to share them on social media.

✔ Ensure you know who is using which app and who is excluded from it in order to minimize inequalities associated with

gender, age, literacy, experience with technology, network connectivity or access to energy or mobile phones.

✔ Ensure that there are clear guidelines on how to use the messaging app and ensure data security.

✔ Have a look at these findings about using WhatsApp to communicate with Syrian refugees.

Blogs and Forums

The community you are aiming to support may already be using prominent bloggers or forums to discuss rumours or inefficiencies in the crisis response. If this is the case, it is important to incorporate these channels into your rumour collection model.

Implementation Tips

✔ Map which bloggers are trusted by the community and can be trusted by you.

✔ Directly reach out to bloggers to work with them in encouraging the community to submit rumours via their page or simply 'watch' these pages to see what information is being shared.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Haiti, Internews shared practical information to address rumours on a popular Haitian blog called Ayibopost. In Bangladesh, the project monitored blogs run by Rohingya people in order to understand what was being shared among the community and what information was available in the Rohingya language.

Community Correspondents participate in a rumour tracking training in Bangladesh

PHYSICAL LOCATION

In some communities, approaching people and asking questions may be seen as too direct and perhaps threatening. You may find that creating a reason for the community to come to you could be a good additional technique for collecting rumours. Remember that using a designated physical location may exclude people who don't dare approach you, are disabled, or are not able to approach you due to cultural customs or physical barriers. Moreover, this requires that people know about the location.

Implementation Tips

✔ Find ways to make sharing information more natural. For example, provide a free tea or coffee or a mobile phone charging service.

✔ Make sure that it is clear to the community when the space is open and what services are available.

✔ Decide what days and times your physical location is open and let the community know about the operating hours.

COMMUNITY MEETING OR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Community meetings are another valuable way to collect rumours and address rumours. Allowing the community to ask further questions of officials and clarify amongst their peers can provide accountability and transparency of humanitarian processes. Community meetings are limited by the size of the community you are working in. If you are working across several affected cities with high populations, community meetings may not reach enough people with the important information. Additionally, this style of meeting tends to allow those in the community that already have a dominant voice and higher level of access to information the chance to speak even more.

Implementation Tips

✔ If you choose to use this method, you should make sure systems are in place to ensure vulnerable members of the community are not drowned out by those with the loudest voices.

✔ Ensure staff who organise the community meetings can moderate this process so that you don't end up with an angry crowd. The key is to manage expectations about what the community meeting is about and what its limitations are; handling questions you don't know the answer to well (I don't have the answer to this question now, but I will note it down and return on a later day to respond); listening to what people have to say; and communicating clearly.

PART 4 – ANALYSING AND FACT CHECKING

You need to have systems in place to contextualise community data and verify answers to rumours to create accurate, timely and actionable responses. The systems you design will need to take into account the speed at which information can be checked and responded to, to ensure that it remains accurate and that the community maintains trust in it. In many humanitarian responses, the policies and procedures may change to adapt to the evolving situation, so it is important that your turnaround time matches the fluidity of the context.

HOW TO DOCUMENT AND ANALYSE COMMUNITY DATA

All community data must be stored in a password protected central excel database (see annex 1). This makes it easier to be transparent and accountable in our practices and to see themes and trends as they emerge. Ideally, this database is linked to your digital data collection via Kobo toolbox/ODK (see p. 21). Otherwise, you will need to allocate staff to input all data collected into the excel database manually. All data is collected in the original language(s) of the community. Ideally, the person analysing the data is fluent in that language and only translates into English the community voices included

in the rumour bulletin and other publications. If that is not possible all data needs to be translated.

> **Community data:** includes all the documented information community members share with the project. This includes everything from rumours and suggestions, to questions and complaints. Rumour tracking projects don't just collect rumours, but also everything else the community wants to share.

Adapt and follow these steps to document your data:

1. Collect data daily (either through mobile data collection such as Kobo/ODK or on paper), ensure to always collect gender, age range (make sure these are the same as the dropdown menu in the excel database), location and a detailed account of what the person is sharing with you.

2. If you are using ODK/Kobo and there is no internet available where you collect data, make sure to upload the data as soon as you're back at the office/ base camp. If you collect data on paper, make sure to transfer it to the excel database (the person entering the data should be trusted to protect the confidentiality of the data).

3. Once it is in the spreadsheet, the data analyst reviews the data and tags it according to the columns in the excel database (sector, topic, type, sensitivity etc.).

4. Ideally, the data analyst or a translator should translate all of the data in a separate column in your master spreadsheet/database, so that the original language text is maintained, and next to the translated version. This ensures everyone can review the data, and that time is not spent re-translating over and over for different products/needs.

5. Ensure to keep excellent version control of your database.

6. The data analyst should be very familiar with all the data, reviewing it consistently to spot not only the dominant themes, but also relevant rumours, topics, sectors etc.

7. Decide which time frame of data you want to analyse for your rumour products (one week of data for a weekly output, bi-weekly etc.). You can refer to previous data if it is relevant as a reference, but should always use the newest data as the main source.

Implementation Tips

✔ Adapt and use the template as an excel database (see annex 1).

✔ Analyse the data from the ground up, i.e. look for themes coming from the data rather than cherry-picking what you think humanitarians want to hear.

✔ Always label and categorise data at the backend, in the database, not through the data collectors. This allows data collectors to focus on conversations rather than tick boxes.

✔ Ensure that topics for the topic column in the excel database are generated from the collected data (i.e. 'unfair distribution'). Don't change the topics too often in order to have comparable analysis over time.

✔ If possible add a simple excel dashboard with pivot charts to your excel database to keep track of gender, key topics and trends in addition to your qualitative analysis.

✔ If you are partnering with other organizations, you can upload their data into your database, but be sure to indicate the source of the data.

HOW TO CHOOSE WHICH RUMOURS TO ANSWER

The best way to prioritize rumours is to look at the likelihood they will be believed in parallel with the potential negative impact they may have on the community.

Do a qualitative data analysis looking for themes and sub-themes. Think about what rumours might bear the highest risk for the community and the humanitarian organisations working there. For example, you will want to prioritize addressing rumours that could result in the community mistrusting or abandoning services, or worse creating violence or chaos.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In Greece we realized that rumours do not necessarily spread following the normal information ecosystem matrix, where trust is one of the strongest variables in defining information sources. Those with stronger trust normally are the most important influencers in the conversation. But when people have false hopes, the level of trust does not matter as much – people can be strongly influenced by a non-influencer, or a temporary influencer. For example, one single refugee saying that the border with Bulgaria is open and if people run there now they will be able to leave Greece could be enough to get hundreds of people to take the risk to run to the border.

Refugees arrive on the shore of Greece in lifeboats

When we look at rumours, we should see them in their singularity, not as part of any other piece of information. Rumours are not like a satisfaction survey where you can determine that if 70% of people liked the water pump, for example, therefore the water pump is good. One rumour, share by one person at the right time and with the right people, has far more potential to negatively impact the community or the humanitarian responders than a rumour that 50% of people agree on.

A successful rumour tracking project needs to understand and recognize the potential impact of a rumour, its likelihood to be believed, and understand what piece of information is needed to proactively correct the misunderstanding without spreading the rumour further ("someone said XYZ but this is not true" is not a good way to address rumours).

Consider whether refuting the rumour may in fact contribute to its spread and whether your source of information is trusted by the community. For example, in Country A there is a little-known rumour that the government is poisoning the water supply. The country has been unstable for a long time and the community considers the government to be untrustworthy. If you address this rumour, and source a response from the government to address the rumour, the community may begin to suspect you are also untrustworthy and in cahoots with the government. By deeming it worthy of a response you have unintentionally added credibility to the claim and additionally, more people have heard the words 'Government' and 'poison' in the same sentence (perhaps even without remembering the intention of the statement) and these negative associations can be difficult to address.

As mentioned earlier, the point of a rumour tracking project is not only to address rumours, it is also to understand the 'why' and 'how'. Responses cannot seem defensive or reactionary. It is not our role to continually tell people that what they believe is 'wrong'. Addressing rumours needs to happen through a conversation that takes into account where the information comes from and why people want to believe it.

When assessing the risk a rumour might pose, it is important to consider:

Could this rumour harm the community or promote risky behaviour? For example, "I have heard that if you try to cross the border in the middle of winter there are no guards."

Does this rumour present a security risk to specific groups within the community? Could they become a target if this rumour spreads? For example, "The wealthy migrants are

getting more food assistance than the rest of us. Humanitarians only want them to survive."

Could this rumour put your staff, or other service providers at risk? For example, "This charity cannot be trusted, I heard they have been talking to the rebel army to help them access the camp and attack us."

Could this rumour discourage or prevent people from accessing services? For example, "The medicine being given out at the clinic is only paracetamol. They have run out of drugs and that's why they won't give you anything stronger for your sickness."

Could the rumour present a reputational risk? For example, "I saw a delivery of warm jackets arrive at the camp for distribution, but the NGO just took them all for themselves, they never distributed anything."

Implementation Tips

- ✓ **For print**: Using the original wording of a rumour along with the factual response shows the project is listening, interacting with, and responding to the community and their direct information needs. Rather than only providing a cleanly edited response, it gives the

information context and in helping the community relate to the message, may improve their acceptance of the answer. However, there may be specific incidences where repeating the rumour could heighten insecurity within the community, prevent or discourage access to services or present a security risk for staff. In these incidences it may be best to make a more strategic response to the rumour.

- ✓ **For audio:** There should always be a clear link to the community in order for them to recognise a response to their questions and needs. However, with a non-captive audience it may be better to address rumours indirectly, through sharing practical answers to a rumour rather than repeating the rumour verbatim. For instance, you can rephrase the rumour as a question: instead of "The government is deporting all migrants back to their country without assessing the risk" you could perhaps say, "If my asylum application fails, is the government allowed to send me home if I am afraid I will be targeted?" or "there have been many questions about returns, therefore we are providing some information on how returns work and places where you can receive more detailed information."

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS RUMOUR?

In finding the accurate information to address the rumour, you will need to keep in mind 'why' and 'how' this rumour might have originated. In humanitarian situations, rumours can emerge easily from simple misunderstandings or changes of policy or programmes. The rumour may have a basis in fact, but the information has become distorted either from the very beginning or as it has been passed from person to person.

Implementation Tips

✔ When you have a rumour in hand, ask yourself:

What caused this rumour? (Misinformation, disinformation or a misunderstanding of factual information?)

What can we learn from this rumour? For example, do we (or another organization) need to look at how we communicate, or how the community is involved in policy changes?

What action is needed to address the rumour? Do we need to provide more information, establish better inclusion and feedback channels or perhaps investigate/report allegations of misconduct?

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In South Sudan the organisation responsible for distributing food within a Protection of Civilians camp decided to change their food distribution programme. They were responding to community feedback that the rations lacked salt, sugar, baby milk powder and other foods. The organisation decided that instead of distributing 100% of the food ration to the community, the community would now receive 50% of the food ration and the remainder of their allocation would be provided in 'vouchers' that could be exchanged for goods at a number of stores within the camp. Without asking the community or providing a clear explanation of the reasons behind the change, this created the perfect conditions for rumours to spread. People considered the vouchers to be worthless and did not believe traders would exchange them for goods. They were scared that the rations were being reduced to force them to leave the protection of the camp, or that the food had in fact run out and they might starve. Tensions in the camp increased quickly and violent demonstrations followed. This organization thought they were doing the right thing by using community feedback to adapt their food distribution policy, but without participation and communication they caused instability in the camp, a threat towards their own staff and a loss of community trust.

WHO CAN HELP YOU ANSWER RUMOURS?

The first step to being able to answer rumours is to know with whom to fact-check information. It is important to remember that we are not the experts in terms of finding answers, that is the role of other humanitarian organisations, community members, government etc. However, we are the experts in gathering these answers and turning them into practical information that is easy to understand for the broader community. These are some of the typical key informants:
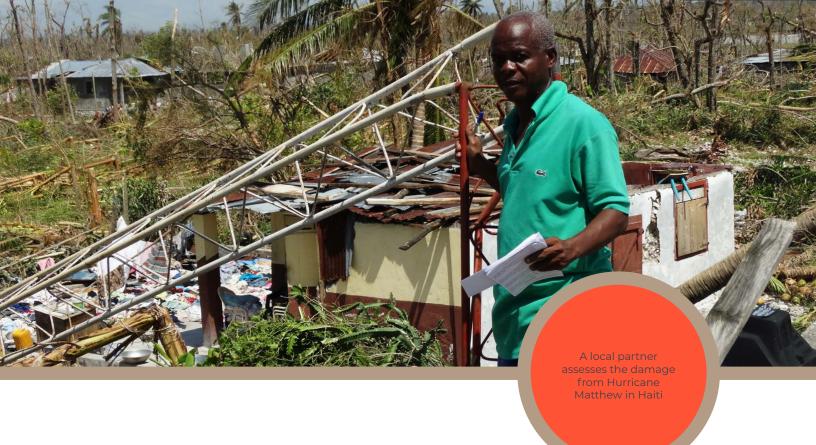
Individuals from the affected or host community: Often communities come up with their own solutions to problems, which can be replicated in other parts of the community. Moreover, there will be valuable experts within the community that speak the local languages and understand the context.

Government Representatives: If a rumour relates to government policy, services available or any government intervention, you're going to need to establish who are the appropriate contacts for what information and what processes are needed to get this information. Government will often be the trickiest as they often apply a very traditional, centralized approach to the provision of information.

Humanitarian partners: While many humanitarian organisations and NGOs commit vast funds towards communications departments, these information points often focus on top-down messaging and external messaging, rather than responding quickly to rumours or fact-checking. It will be important to ensure that organisations do not perceive your service to be a 'media' organization as this will likely increase the level of red-tape in place and may restrict you to accessing information via official spokespersons, rather than the person most familiar with the information you need. While spokespeople perform a valuable task in informing the public of NGO programmes while also promoting and protecting their reputation, their knowledge is generally aimed at a broader, often international audience, rather than the specific and hyper-local information needed for a rumour tracking service. It's critical to build relationships with partners on the ground, so they feel comfortable sharing information, rather than always sending you to their communications department or PR person.

Civil society or other community organisations: These organisations may also be a valuable resource in your fact-finding missions. Often these organisations also work to make government and NGO policies and procedures more transparent (for example by wading through new government legislation and

A local partner assesses the damage from Hurricane Matthew in Haiti

analysing the possible effect on the community) and may be well versed in the information you need to respond to the community questions and rumours.

Implementation Tips

✔ Use printed two-pagers from previous rumour tracking projects to introduce your project to partners.

✔ Create a service map and/or database of different sources of information (online sources and people) and keep it updated, as humanitarian staff turnover is frequent.

✔ Map which meetings are important to attend to gather information, and then consistently attend them.

✔ Stay in frequent contact with sources, so they know and are familiar with you, your team and your project.

✔ Share final products with your sources.

✔ Collect FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) documents from organisations, as these often have clear information on the more frequent, consistent topics of rumours.

USING KEY INFORMATION PROVIDERS

Both government and humanitarian providers are well known for their use of convoluted and confusing jargon, so your next task will be to 'translate' the information into something accurate, actionable and to the point so that it can then be shared through your various channels.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In the News That Moves project in Greece, the response to the rumour had to be short enough to fit in both the online and printed weekly rumour tracking publication. The team focused on answering the question accurately and succinctly and pointed the reader in the right direction to find out further information if required.

While you trust your key information providers, you should verify the information with other sources to ensure it is accurate. Consider the intentions of the information provider: do they have any bias in this scenario, what are the reasons they might want to provide incomplete or even false or misleading information?

It is important to use sources that are not only trusted by you, but also by

the community. For example, while you will most likely need authorities on board in order to access the information you need, keep in mind that authorities are not always trusted by the community you are working with.

Implementation Tips

✔ Share the community feedback/ rumour with the source for fact-checking.

✔ Ensure information from sources is easy to understand and doesn't use acronyms or jargon.

✔ Edit down long answers and interviews so the response is succinct, rather than writing long, verbatim answers.

✔ Ensure the information actually answers the rumour, and isn't too general or off-topic.

✔ Check out this useful guide to humanitarian terminology from UNOCHA or this Humanitarian jargon word search.

✔ Always use at least two sources to fact-check information.

✔ Be sure to know which sources are trusted by the community.

✔ Don't just use information off the internet without checking where it comes from.

HOW TO ANSWER A RUMOUR

Focus on the way forward: The aim of Internews Rumour Tracking Methodology is to answer rumours with accurate, practical information. The focus is on the next steps, not on what lies behind. This should not be used as a method of extracting stories or evidence of trauma.

Implementation Tips

✔ Ensure that the answer is actionable, and helps people know what they can do based on the response.

✔ Ensure the answer fits with the editorial guidelines (see annex 5).

✔ Use easy to understand language, don't use acronyms (even if you think they are simple).

✔ Always point the community towards a location where they can ask more questions about the topic.

After the earthquake in 2015, many Nepalis took shelter in temporary camps until their houses could be repaired or rebuilt

PART 5 – SHARING OUTPUTS

TIMEFRAMES FOR RESPONSE

When creating your response, set up a reasonable time frame in which you will respond to any rumour or question. Simply ignoring a rumour or delaying your response to it may in fact increase its impact.

If you are responding to individuals directly, you should provide them with clear actionable information within 24 hours of their request. If you wait longer, the information you provide may no longer be useful to them as either their circumstances may have changed, or worse, the rumour has become even more prevalent and complicated. This also means you'll need to collect identifiable information, such as a phone number or address, in order to get back to them directly, so be sure their data is protected and cannot be leaked.

Implementation Tips

✔ If an answer advocates using a particular service (say, weapon collection or health screenings) it is essential that communities can gain access to that service and make use of it. Advocating an action without the necessary service being there to support it can damage the reputation of

agencies involved in humanitarian assistance and can lead to a loss of trust in any future information that is provided by your service.

✔ When rumours are collected, ensure the community is also informed where and how rumours are answered (and that not all rumours may be addressed).

DIFFERENT METHODS TO SHARE ANSWERS

All of the methods described above in the section on rumour collection, should also be used for sharing answers to rumours. In addition, there are a few other ways to share answers to rumours.

NARROWCAST

A narrowcast is a community-led audio programme that is recorded and stored on SD cards or USB sticks. It is called narrowcasting as it reaches a much more localized or specialised audience than broadcasting, which covers a more dispersed audience. The content is then shared through speakers that can be set up in gathering places such as tea stalls or community centres, put on quadbikes or tom toms to make the audio mobile, or just carried from one place to another to diversify the people listening. Content can also be played to listening groups or shared through Bluetooth or social media. Especially

in contexts where there is little radio and internet available, narrowcasting can be an excellent tool to bring answers to rumours to the people.

Implementation Tips

✓ If you don't have a captive audience (i.e. you set up in a tea shop and people drop in and out while you're playing the narrowcast) it is advisable to not repeat the rumour verbatim as somebody might only hear the rumour part and be further strengthened in their belief that the rumour is true. Instead you can formulate questions that are behind the rumour, i.e. 'we heard from the community that there is a lot of different information about repatriation, so we talked to a volunteer from UNCHR to give some answers.' Focus on the answers to the rumour.

✓ Creating a narrowcast is another component of the project and needs staff and expertise. If you're implementing narrowcasting, look at this useful Internews learning collection based on a project in South Sudan.

✓ To learn how to set up and run listening groups, look at this Internews guide.

✓ Make sure you narrowcast in the language(s) of the community and involve them in all parts of the production.

✓ Share your narrowcast with other organisations so they can play it for instance in their hospitals, community areas or community groups.

✓ Listeners should recognise themselves in the voices of the narrowcast, so try to find community experts rather than interviewing humanitarians from foreign countries or the capital.

PRINTED POSTERS OR FLYERS

Having something tangible that you can hand to someone can sometimes add weight to the information you are providing, while at the same time working within the space limitations of a printed product will help to ensure rumours are addressed succinctly.

Implementation Tips

✔ Link up with partners for distribution of your answers, i.e. consider partnering with a community health organisation to have their health workers distribute the information as they work amongst the affected community.

✔ Make sure that posters always include the date, so that if people see an old poster they know information might not be up to date.

✔ Include information on where/ how people get in touch if they have more questions or want to check for more up-to-date information.

FIELD EXPERIENCE:

In the News That Moves rumour tracking project in Greece, the five most prominent rumours were answered each week and, with the help of a graphic designer, turned into an attractive one-page printed product, translated into several languages. This product could then be distributed when Community Liaison Officers worked within migrant camps, left at community meeting points for pick-up, emailed to humanitarian partners for them to print out, or posted on community bulletin boards.

Amid the refugee camps in Greece, volunteer tents display important and relevant bulletins of information

WRITTEN RUMOUR BULLETINS

While rumour tracking services can be a valuable tool to improve access to trustworthy, actionable information for an affected community, they can also be a valuable tool to collect feedback about the humanitarian response overall. Among the rumours and questions you are collecting, you may find confusion, feedback and direct complaints about the response, how decisions are made and how programmes are implemented. This information can be used to improve the overall response and allow the community to play a greater role in how services are delivered to them.

In most contexts Internews has produced two written rumour bulletins (often in addition to other products that are specific to each community):

A bulletin or newsletter for humanitarian decisionmakers that gives insight into community rumours, concerns and questions.
Example: In The Loop, Greece

A bulletin or newsletter for humanitarian field staff and (literacy rates allowing) the affected community, that gives rumours and fact-checked answers.
Example: Rumours and Answers, Greece

Implementation Tips

✔ In contexts where the community has a high literacy rate you can also share parts of the full rumour bulletin directly with the community (but make sure not to share personal details of humanitarian workers, instead give contact details of their information points or designated contacts).

✔ In contexts where the community has a low literacy rate ensure that the answers from the rumour bulletin are not only shared through field staff but also through other channels (i.e. see narrowcast).

✔ Present findings from community data in meetings with government and humanitarian partners.

✔ Ensure other stakeholders link to your rumour bulletin.

✔ Set up a mailchimp account to let humanitarians and other interested parties subscribe to your rumour bulletins.

✔ Use this guide to learn how to set up a mailchimp newsletter.

Part 3. Annex

Internews
Rumour Tracking
Methodology

TEMPLATES

ANNEX 1: RUMOUR TRACKING FORM

Ideally this form is set up and used via mobile data collection with Kobo toolbox/ODK. Use dropdown menus for location, age range, gender, protection, answered directly and referred sections and a tick box for consent.

RUMOUR TRACKING FORM		
Community correspondent/liaison officer name:		
Date:	Location:	
Asked for consent?	Gender:	Age range:
Community data (feedback, rumours, questions etc...) as verbatim as possible:		
Is this a protection-related complaint? yes / no / unsure		
Did you give an answer directly: yes / no		
Did you refer the person to another organisation (if yes, write which one):		

ANNEX 2: MASTER FEEDBACK/RUMOUR TRACKING TABLE
for managers or identified feedback focal points

This data set is broken up into two pages for ease of reference but a formal excel template including all columns can be found at: https://internews.org/rumour-database

These orange columns can be copy/pasted from ODK/Kobo.

Date received	Name of staff or volunteer who received complaint/feedback	Location	Individual or group?	Sex	Age	If group: number of people in group; age range; gender	Community data (rumours, concerns, questions, etc.)

ANNEX 2: MASTER FEEDBACK/RUMOUR TRACKING TABLE (CONTINUED)
for managers or identified feedback focal points

This data set is broken up into two pages for ease of reference but a formal excel template including all columns can be found at: https://internews.org/rumour-database

Green cells are copy/pasted from ODK/Kobo, but need to be checked by data analyst, blue cells are filled in by data analyst.

Is this urgent? (relates to PSEA or similar?)	Sector	Type (rumour, concern, question, request, suggestion)	Topic: (e.g. HP activities, sanitation activities, staff/volunteer behaviour etc)	Details of action taken and response needed (e.g., escalate to manager, forward to other sector)	Who is responsible for action?	Response date	If follow up needed, specify who will follow up

ANNEX 3: LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING FOR DATA SHARING

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN XXX AND INTERNEWS

This Letter of Understanding (LOU) establishes collaboration on issues of mutual concern for both organisations, INTERNEWS and XXX, and in particular on the delivering of lifesaving information to XXX (fill in community/refugees etc.), working closely with local authorities, national and international organisations who are responding to the XXX (fill in emergency). This LOU is not intended to serve as a legally enforceable document. Its purpose is to formalize the cooperation and to strengthen the relationship in between Internews and XXX in formulating strategies for the setting up of a local rumour tracking system,

WHEREAS; the parties entering this Letter of Understanding have, on the basis of their respective mandate, as common aim to support and increase awareness about dangerous rumours and misconceptions among XXX (fill in community etc.).

WHEREAS; the parties entering this Letter of Understanding, have complementary resources, skills and approaches which need to be harnessed to consolidate the impact of both the information mechanisms set up by INTERNEWS and XXX.

The parties hereby:

AGREE to collaborate on the basis of exchange of information only, where XXX will be responsible for its own staff connected to the project and the resources needed to collect the information, and INTERNEWS will be responsible for its own staff and resources needed to implement the verification, production and dissemination of information processes and the costs associated to it.

AGREE that XX will share the collected data in an anonymised format with Internews.

AGREE that Internews will be allowed to share all of the anonymized data on its HDX page.

AGREE that the terms of this LOU is for the period of XX months (from XX/ XX to XX/XX) and serves as a standby arrangement to be followed by a legally binding agreement if necessary. The implementation of this project will be regularly monitored by both parties and the LOU will be revised in accordance to mutually agreed changes by all parties involved in this LOU.

AGREE that visibility will be given to each institution participating in this project, in particular recognizing XXX's contribution, where appropriate, in all meetings, updates, reports and material produced as an outcome of the project.

SIGNED:

For XXX	For INTERNEWS
SIGNATURE:	**SIGNATURE:**
NAME, ROLE:	**NAME, HIS project lead** (XXX@internews.org)
DATE:	**DATE:**

SAMPLES

ANNEX 4: JOB DESCRIPTIONS FROM BANGLADESH

HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION SERVICES PROJECT LEAD

Location:

Duration:

Anticipated Start Date:

Project

[Insert project description here]

Role

The Project Lead (PL) will be responsible for the Internews activities of the [insert Project Title here]. The PL will manage team members in planning weekly activities and keeping them on track for their deliverables, including Rumour Tracking, Narrowcasting and feedback analysis. The PL also has to manage relationships with the partners inside and outside of the consortium and ensure that joint-products are in line with the HIS project goals. Additionally, the PL has to attend relevant meetings relating to CwC and to the project in order to maintain relationships with humanitarian partners and keep on top of humanitarian planning.

Tasks

- Ensure gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the project
- Ensure healthy team dynamic in which all team members are treated fairly and have space to grow and impact the project
- Supervise the Internews Narrowcast Audio Service – managed by the Humanitarian MultiMedia Expert with a team of Community Correspondents producing regular local language audio programs and other outputs as deemed relevant
- Supervise the Internews feedback collection activities, as managed by the Humanitarian Community Engagement Officer, including qualitative feedback collection by a team of Community Correspondents, conducting focus group discussions and organising regular, ongoing listener groups and listening posts

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- Oversee the capacity building of local community correspondents on information gathering techniques, humanitarian communication, including Communications with Communities, script writing, and technical aspects of mixing program content
- Manage the audio delivery processes in place and finding innovative ways to expand the reach of the content e.g., the quad bike and speaker, static sites etc.
- Supervise the Internews rumour tracking activities, as managed by the Humanitarian Feedback Analyst
- Maintain editorial supervision over regular Rumour Updates
- Reinforce and expand two-way communication channels and systems between humanitarian agencies, and local community groups and individuals
- Provide the humanitarian community with CwC Technical Expertise, also but not limited to:
  - provide support for the CwC WG;
  - support agencies that are already implementing CwC activities;
  - look at the gaps and challenges in the current Cwc response;
  - when requested work bilaterally with single agencies through assessments and recommendations
- Conduct an assessment of various feedback mechanism and collection activities currently in place, to draft 'common analysis tool' in consultation with partners, and based on successful models used in other humanitarian contexts
- Conduct an assessment of the current status of information hubs operated by various agencies and offer technical support to improve the effectiveness of these hubs, and training provided to workers as required
- Represent the Internews HIS-project at all coordination fora and through bilateral interaction with key partners; maintain and update a database with relevant contacts
- Supervise the ETC connect app trainer
- Closely liaise with the London HQ office for managing the project administration, HR, contracts and finance
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the site/project, including overseeing staff
- Deliver regular (e.g., weekly M&E) programme reports, newsletters etc., as well as archiving all audio material and scripts
- Liaise with donors on the ground
- Explore new ways of engaging with communities and channeling their feedback to humanitarian service providers
- Produce a weekly headlines document that is shared with NGOs to reflect community concerns

- When needed, produce multimedia materials (blog posts, photos, tweets etc.) from the project for external audiences; liaise with communications sections within Internews to promote the project
- Work closely with the Senior Humanitarian Adviser on project planning and coordination
- Maintain close relationships with the Internews country office and its programmes to ensure optimal coordination and communication

Qualifications

- Minimum 5 years' experience managing media and/or communication projects in humanitarian settings
- Basic to intermediate knowledge of gender mainstreaming and PSEA
- Master's degree in media, journalism, communications, international development, humanitarian sector or related field
- Proven working experience in working on Communicating with Communities related activities
- Knowledge of, and strong working experience in radio production
- Knowledge of and strong working experience in qualitative data, feedback collection & analysis
- Excellent ability to provide operational and administrative oversight
- A thorough understanding of the work of humanitarian and development agencies, including working within the UN cluster system
- Proven ability to lead and supervise a diverse team of people
- Strong communication and diplomatic skills
- Proven ability to develop staff and mentoring programs
- Experience of living and/or working in conflict/post-conflict environments
- Ability to adjust to shifting political circumstances and create programming accordingly
- Must be self-reliant, organized, resourceful, good problem-solver, good humored, and flexible
- Excellent English oral and written skills mandatory (a working knowledge of any other UN language is highly desirable)
- Understanding of and demonstrated commitment to upholding Internews' Core Values

COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Job Title: Community Correspondent

Location:

Supervisor: Multi Media Trainer

Project:

[Insert project description here]

Internews will set up a community-based information service run by members of the community for the community. This will be done through localised narrowcasting, peer-to-peer sharing and other ways of reaching those members of the community that have the least access to information and decision making. The information produced by these community-correspondents will also be shared with the wider humanitarian system, integrating qualitative feedback with aggregated feedback from other humanitarian partners.

The Community Correspondent will be responsible to collect, collate and process comments, questions and rumours from refugees in a continuous and consistent way, and help turn them into practical information for refugees.

These updates are aimed to increase the affected populations understanding of their own context and any resources available to improve it, and to give the affected community tools to voice their concerns, ask questions and give comments on the service delivery. As such, it also improves accountability of the humanitarian system.

The Community Correspondent position duties include:

- Contribute to an environment in which male and female staff and volunteers are equally participating in discussions
- Contribute to a gender balanced and fair working environment
- Excellent listening skills, taking a backseat with your own opinions in order to document what the community is saying
- Responsible for engaging with the affected population to understand and collect their needs, questions and comments
- Conduct regular surveys and focus group discussions

- Together with the Humanitarian Liaison Officer, turn information relevant for the affected population into information materials, including audio & other relevant formats
- Disseminate updates through the available information channels, including, but not only the volunteers & staff of humanitarian organisations, audio-equipment
- Help the data manager to collect, document and process community opinions and feedback through mobile phone, including chat applications, written questions, feedback, generated by, outreach workers and volunteers, social media, and others
- Perform any other duties as assigned by the supervisor

Qualifications

- Fluency in [insert local language here]
- Strong writing skills
- Minimum standard software production skills (written, print, and online)
- Self-motivated and able to work in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to work in a team and independently
- Strong understanding of, and commitment towards editorial values of the project

HUMANITARIAN DATA ANALYST

Job Title: Humanitarian Data Analyst

Location:

Duration:

Supervisor: RHIS Project Lead

Anticipated Start Date:

Project:

[Insert project description here]

The Data Analyst supports the Project Lead with collating, processing and analyzing feedback gathered from refugees and local community and making it available for the rest of the team in a consistent and continuous way. The Data Analyst will also support the PL in turning this feedback into regular humanitarian reports with a strong focus on user-friendliness and identifying the right visuals that can help make the diverse sets of data relevant for a wider audience.

The Humanitarian Data Analyst's duties include:

- Contribute to an environment in which male and female staff and volunteers are equally participating in discussions
- Contribute to a gender balanced and fair working environment
- Support feedback gathering by Internews staff and partners by evaluating methodology and suggesting improvements where necessary
- Help turn qualitative data into useful content for refugees as assigned by the project lead
- Provide regular updates to the Managing Editor on relevant topics and trends
- Produce regular updates for humanitarian partners to improve their understanding of the concerns and questions living among refugees
- Support Monitoring and Evaluation activities to assess impact, reach and quality of the on-going project
- Perform any other duties as assigned by the supervisors

Qualifications

- Strong in research, information management and/or monitoring and evaluation in development/humanitarian contexts
- Strong data management skills, including thorough understanding of qualitative and quantitative data
- Strong data visualization skills and knowledge of the relevant software to produce info-graphics
- Strong software skills to ensure proper design and lay-out of the regular reports
- Self motivated and used to work in a fast-paced environment
- Strong understanding of, and commitment towards editorial values of the project
- Very good knowledge of written and spoken English
- Good knowledge of [insert local language here] is a must
- Knowledge of [insert local language here] is highly desirable

ANNEX 5: EDITORIAL GUIDELINES FROM HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION SERVICE PROJECT COX'S BAZAR

1. Information is aid.

2. The Internews Humanitarian Information Service (HIS) aims to improve and enhance the lives of people who have been affected by crisis.

3. The HIS programmes provide reliable, verified, coordinated and targeted information. The HIS programmes are all based on the Do No Harm principle and respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

4. Priority is always given to questions, concerns, ideas and input from the affected population and how to address those.

5. The primary audience is the affected population and therefore the narrowcasting will be produced in the language they speak.

6. The link between the input from the community and the response will always be made clear in the formatting of the content, to emphasise the purpose of the HIS and as such encourage more participation. Listeners should be able to 'recognise themselves' in the programme.

7. Information provided by HIS is non-political, non-religious and focused on humanitarian issues that support the most vulnerable people (including women, elderly, disabled and children).

8. The HIS programmes do not report on: political issues; acts of combat; movements of troops; inter-ethnic clashes; in general acts of war, any kind of hate speech.

9. The HIS programme makes an active effort to include diverse members of the community and not just include the 'loudest voice'.

10. The focus of the content is on the way forward, what is within the means of the community to improve their current situation or, in summary "actionable news you can use".

11. Explaining how decisions are made is as important as communicating what the decisions are.

12. The HIS programmes are based on the principles of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Communicating with Communities (CwC), as expressed by the IASC and the CDAC network.

Implementing Principles:

13. Information for the HIS service is not provided through traditional FM radio airwaves, but rather on a mobile sound system, in order to ensure the programme reaches audiences that do not have access to information.

14. No information provided in humanitarian coordination meetings to members of the HIS team during their duty will be shared with the wider public unless it's explicitly approved.

15. The Project Lead and the Multimedia Trainer (MT) review all scripts before they are released. The Scripts are all sent to the Project Lead (PL) once a week for revision.

16. After sign-off from the MT and the PL final editing of clips and sound-bites are made and translated into the local language.

17. Information generated for HIS-programmes is exclusively to be used by HIS-channels, unless written permission is given by the PL.

18. Internews keeps an archive of all HIS-scripts and all audio recordings. A copy can also be given to INGOs or UN agencies, local administration if requested. These requests should be documented and shared with the PL.

19. On all topics reported by the HIS programmes both the local community and the INGOs/UN Agencies/other relevant stakeholders are given the opportunity to express their opinions – we don't talk about 'the other' without talking to 'the other'.

20. HIS acts as an accountability mechanism for service providers (NGOs and UN agencies). All NGOs/UN agencies/other stakeholders are always given the opportunity to respond to feedback from the community when a programme about their services is made.

21. The HIS-service ensures that different types of voices from the Rohingya community are included and reflected in the HIS-programmes. The programme actively strives to achieve gender balance, include voices from vulnerable parts of the community (elderly, disabled etc.).

22. The HIS-team retain the editorial freedom over the content produced for their HIS-channels at all times.

23. The community listening groups (consisting of community correspondents and community groups already in existence) ensure that as many people as possible are listening to the service and help monitor the quality of the programmes.

Key Questions to Consider for all Outputs

1. Does it cause harm?

2. How many people are affected by the issue?

    - Among the most vulnerable?
    - Among our audience?

3. How big is the impact?

    - Physical
    - Mental

4. How big is the risk to talk about it?

    - For the community members?
    - For our own project?

5. Can we provide information that is helpful?

    - Is it already helpful to talk about it? Relief vs Risk/frustration
    - Practical information/solutions

6. Is the information already available and easy accessible for our audience?

    - Avoid duplication
      or
    - Reinforcing important information

7. Do we have the right resources to provide the information?

    - In a timely manner?
    - In a format that is useful?

INTERNEWS

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Internews

Photo above: A radio journalist captures the commentary of a group of children following the Nepali earthquake in 2015