



A COLLECTIVE SERVICE FOR RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DO WE NEED A COLLECTIVE SERVICE?

COVID-19 is the most significant humanitarian and health crisis in a generation, requiring a response that leverages the best of existing practice while also developing new models to meet this unprecedented challenge. The Collective Service supports the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) pillar of the COVID-19 response to deliver the structures and services required, for this emergency and beyond.

From the start of the COVID-19 crisis, RCCE has been recognized as a central pillar of the response, essential to the successful delivery of both medical and non-medical

interventions. Encompassing everything from behaviour change to countering misinformation and supporting community leadership, RCCE is a cross cutting priority that requires a broad range of humanitarian and public health partners to work together with governments, and affected communities.

As the world tackles the upcoming challenges of the ongoing crisis, including the rollout of an unprecedented global immunization campaign, RCCE is essential to success.

To deliver this, **two key challenges need to be addressed:**

1 | RCCE EFFORTS NEED TO INCREASE

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response found in January 2021 that despite the proven impact of RCCE work, “community engagement in the response has not to date been as widespread or effective as it could have been”¹.



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A collective approach is essential: previous health emergencies and responses, particularly the recent Ebola outbreaks, have demonstrated beyond doubt that collective working leads to better results. The context of COVID-19 makes this challenge

2 | RCCE EFFORTS MUST BE COORDINATED

for COVID-19 and other concurrent epidemics (e.g. Ebola) worldwide. These efforts must be coordinated and supported by a system that strengthens best practice, facilitates partnerships, increases efficiency, and provides systematic and quality support to governments and partners in their work to adopt community-centred approaches.

current and urgent but it also offers opportunities to create new and better ways of working, improving preparedness and response to future humanitarian and health emergencies.

¹. Collective Approaches to Communication and Community Engagement: Models, Challenges and Ways Forward, HPG Oct 2020

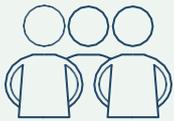
WHAT IS THE COLLECTIVE SERVICE?

The Collective Service is a collaborative partnership between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO), which leverages active support from the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), and key stakeholders from public health and humanitarian sectors. It was launched in June 2020, after endorsement by the Inter- Agency Standing Committee Principals in April 2020, and with

support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The aim of the Service is to ensure that the complementary strengths of all partners are supported and leveraged to deliver the greatest impact, and to bring together a wide range of organisations involved in RCCE policy, practice and research to provide practical support to those delivering on the ground.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Collective Service is supporting the delivery of the **Global Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy** and the **WHO COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan 2021**. To make this possible, the Collective Service works across four strategic priorities to:



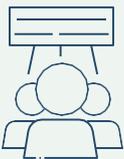
BE COLLABORATIVE

Catalyse collaborative RCCE approaches, to increase quality, harmonization, advocacy, optimization, and integration of RCCE.



BE DATA-DRIVEN

Generate, analyse, and use evidence on community perspectives to systematically inform policy and programming, and improve effectiveness and efficiency.



BE COMMUNITY-LED

Improve the quality and consistency of community engagement approaches, towards more responsive and flexible actions that fit the diverse needs, views, and capacities of communities.



REINFORCE CAPACITY

Reinforce national capacity for improved local solutions, through training, mentoring, peer learning and resources sharing between practitioners, researchers, national governments, and local actors.

WHAT IS THE COLLECTIVE SERVICE?

Since June 2020, the Service has built coordination and support services at global and regional level, particularly focusing on Africa regions. The Service now brings together over 50 partners globally through several different mechanisms including biweekly calls and [regular webinars](#). In 2020, 74 per cent of participants polled found this service 'very useful', they particularly valued the access to partners, resources, and the ability to keep up to date on operational information. Tools, resources, and services include best practice guidance on a range of issues from tips for community engagement in Contact

Tracing to preparing communities for COVID 19 vaccines, [the COVID-19 Global RCCE Strategy](#) with core indicators and a common list of questions to measure social and behavioural drivers and the RCCE knowledge hub (www.rcce-collective.net), a one-stop shop for resources, guidance, case studies & data, and dedicated regional libraries (e.g. <https://coronawestafrica.info>). At regional levels, dedicated interagency teams have been established in West and Central Africa and Southern and Eastern Africa, providing direct support to country level stakeholders, based on needs identified.

THE WAY AHEAD

It is now time for the Service to scale up. Building on the findings of an independent learning review conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and consultations with partners, the Service' short-term focus is to deliver on COVID-19 response, expanding support to two more regions and as many priority countries as possible and building partnerships especially with those working on vaccine delivery. In the longer

term, the Service will build on the COVID-19 response models to embed systemic models and capacities to deliver RCCE support to future emergencies. We have the opportunity to transform how the public health and humanitarian sectors coordinate, implement, monitor and resource collaborative approaches to RCCE in the long term, leading to more efficient, effective and impactful responses.

THE SERVICE IN ACTION: WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



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In the West and Central Africa region, the Service is delivering practical support and coordination services across this part of the continent. Countries have expressed needs and we have been able to support them. The fact that we had a dedicated team has really helped - now we can respond to the different countries based on their needs. For example, we have been able to provide technical surge capacity.

One country that asked for our support last year was Burkina Faso. We organised a simulation exercise between the different pillars of their COVID response and to see how the national RCCE groups could better coordinate with the wider response. After that they requested help on developing Standard Operating Procedures for RCCE and last week we started planning a training on RCCE for the different rapid intervention teams at the national level.

We are also working on influencing response models in the longer term. In Central African Republic, for example, the national RCCE group for COVID-19 response no longer exist, but the capacity we built continues, because those we supported are in the Ministry of Health. They are the most sustainable actors, so this knowledge and skillset will remain. This is particularly important to us because we want to think beyond COVID-19 and build relationships with actors who will be responding to future emergencies.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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