CLEAR Global

The Basics - Core considerations

Meaningful two-way communication

Questions relevant for meaningful two-way communication to discuss with crisis-affected people

Meaningful two-way communication depends on understanding how people communicate in their daily lives, which languages they use and prefer, and which channels are accessible and trusted within the community.

This set of questions supports conversations that help identify communication barriers, inclusion gaps, and opportunities for participation, particularly for people who may need additional outreach or support to engage.

By exploring past experiences with providing feedback and the practical realities of access to devices and connectivity, these questions aim to inform communication approaches that are responsive, inclusive, and designed to enable genuine exchange rather than one-way information sharing.

1. Facilitator guidance

These questions are designed to help facilitators understand how communication works in practice within a community, rather than to assess people's access or capacities. Approach these conversations with curiosity and openness, recognising that language preferences, communication channels, and comfort with providing feedback are shaped by context, experience, and power dynamics.

Create space for people to describe how they usually receive and share information in their households and communities, and listen carefully to differences between spoken and written language preferences. Be mindful that language choice can affect who feels included or excluded, and avoid assuming that official or dominant languages are always the most appropriate or trusted.

Pay attention to who may face additional barriers to participating in communication processes, such as people with disabilities, women, older people, adolescents, or those without regular access to devices or connectivity. Use the questions to identify where extra outreach, alternative formats, or adapted channels may be needed to enable meaningful participation.

When discussing feedback and communication channels, acknowledge past experiences—especially negative ones—and avoid placing responsibility on individuals for not engaging. Clearly explain how feedback will be used, what follow-up people can expect, and how ongoing communication will be maintained. The goal is to support communication approaches that are accessible, respectful, and genuinely two-way, rather than focused on information delivery alone.

2. Practical checklist for facilitators

Before the conversation

- [ ] I do not assume languages, literacy levels, or access to technology.
- [ ] I have considered alternative formats (oral, visual, audio).
- [ ] I understand that the goal is to listen, not just to inform.

During the conversation

- [ ] I ask how people actually communicate in their daily lives.
- [ ] I distinguish between spoken language and preference for written information.
- [ ] I explore reliable channels (people, meetings, radio, WhatsApp, calls, etc.).
- [ ] I identify who needs more support or other formats to participate.
- [ ] I speak openly about previous experiences of giving (or not giving) feedback, without judging.
- [ ] I avoid technical language and adapt the pace of the conversation.

After the conversation

- [ ] I adjust channels and formats based on what I hear.
- [ ] I verify that I am not excluding people without regular access to devices.
- [ ] I define how to maintain communication on an ongoing basis, not just on an ad hoc basis.
- [ ] I ensure that communication remains two-way, not just informative.

2

3. The questions for meaningful two-way communication

✳ What is the main language you and other members of your community speak at home in your household and in your community?

✳ What other languages do you and people in your community speak?

✳ Which languages do you prefer for written and spoken communication?

✳ Who in your community has specific needs and might need more outreach to be able to contribute to the development of a digital tool?

✳ Through which channels would you prefer to communicate with us?

✳ Do you own a phone? Is it a smartphone?

✳ If you do not own a phone, would you have access to one so this project could send you updates via text messages or call you to ask a question or invite you to an activity to develop technology tools?

✳ Have you ever given feedback on humanitarian action?

✳ If not, what has stopped you from doing so?