Communications Cluster – Responding to Typhoon Bopha - Davao, Philippines

Terms of Reference

Background:
The Information Group was established at Davao level on 28 December, 2012 jointly by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Mindanao in collaboration with the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organisations. The broad aim of the group is to improve two way communications with disaster affected communities. The group will endeavour to: facilitate listening and responding to feedback arising from affected men, women and children; facilitate the communications of the same to communities; and improve the sharing of information regarding the response to those affected. Further, the group aims to inform the non-affected populace on ongoing humanitarian responses and rehabilitation of those affected calling them to action to contribute to these efforts.

Objectives:
• Bring together all actors working in communications, including the private sector and local media, to develop an effective and fully coordinated system for sharing information with disaster survivors and listening to their concerns.
• Ensure a two-way communication flow with disaster-affected communities through the most appropriate channels.
• Design and support ways in which those affected by this disaster can access the information they need about available assistance from all actors.
• Design and support ways in which humanitarian responders can listen more effectively to the needs and concerns, especially concerning information, of those affected
• Advocate across the response for more systematic and well-designed information sharing with those affected.
• Provide technical support to clusters and agencies, including the government, where required to improve their capacity to share information with those affected.
• Ensure consistency in information and advice provided to affected communities, particularly by working with relevant line ministries and clusters (e.g. advice on how best to secure a tarpaulin, or home-treat basic illnesses).
• Work together to research and understand the communications environment in order to ensure that communications work is based on a sound understanding of how different communities within the response share, access and evaluate information.
• Source and share existing best practice and research work in communications (e.g. knowledge attitudes and practices studies).
• Support transparency and accountability initiatives (e.g. by supporting dissemination of information about government hotlines or other sources of information).
• To consult, plan and implement dynamic public information messages, activities and products on all aspects of the humanitarian community and government response.

Frequency/Timing of meetings:
• The group will meet at least once a week – schedule can be reviewed depending on needs.
• Location – DSWD offices.

Expected Results:
• Information about the response, particularly concerning available services, is shared systematically with survivors in appropriate formats.
• Information needs of survivors are systematically and regularly identified and met.
• Feedback from survivors is systematically collected and shared with responders, and thus influences project design and humanitarian policy.
• The capacity of individual agencies (including government bodies) to deliver good quality communication work as an integral part of the response is improved.
• Beneficiaries, including persons with specific needs, take part in decision-making process through two way communication.

Chairpersons:
The DSWD office will chair the group with UN OCHA taking the co-chair role in addition to drafting, dissemination of minutes and follow-up on action points.