

TOOL 19: Communications methods matrix

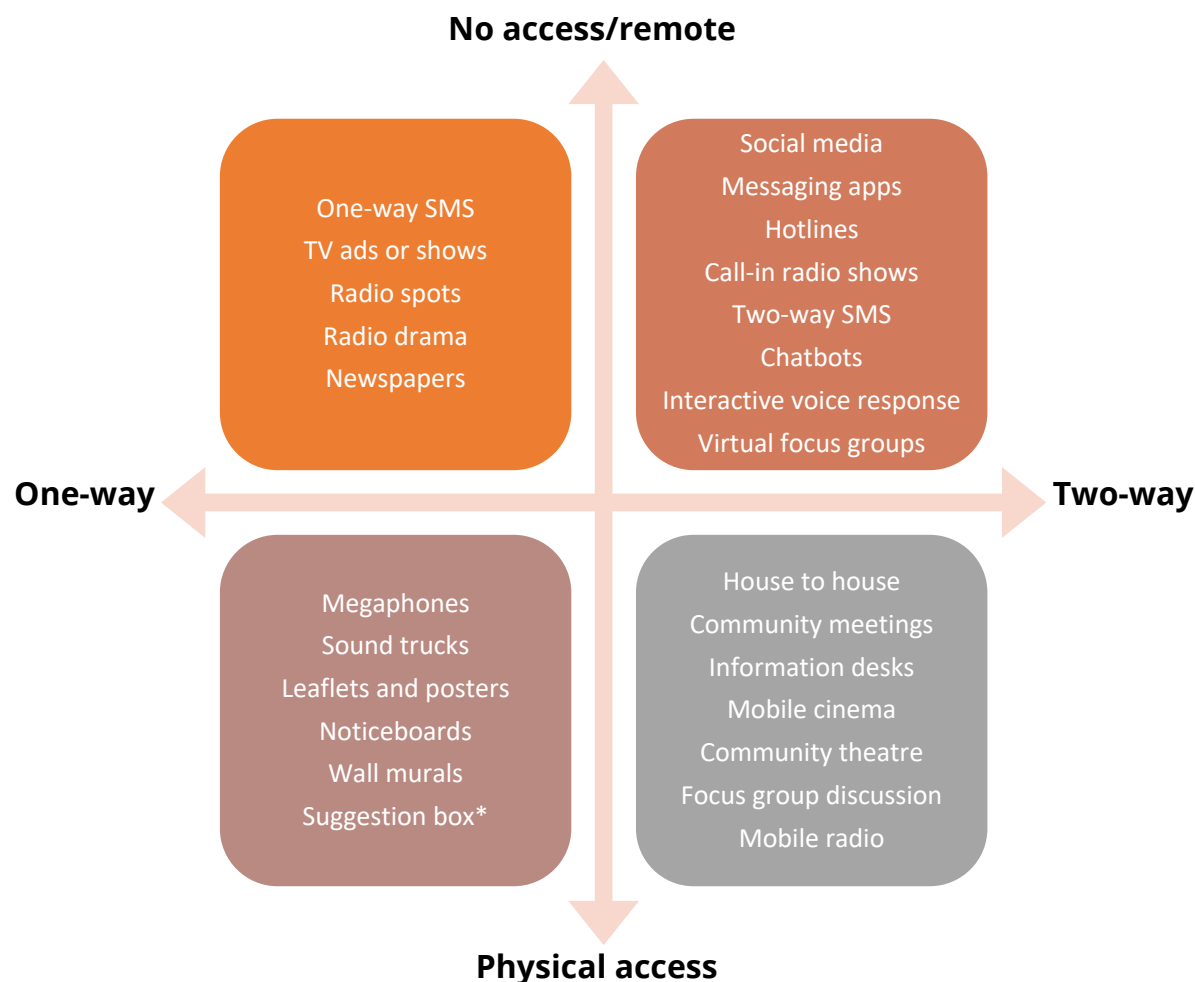
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1. Purpose of this tool

This tool outlines the advantages and disadvantages of different channels of communication, including which channels are best suited for what type of activities and tips for using them. This includes flowcharts to help you decide which channel would work best for your needs and an overview of the strengths, weaknesses and advice on using different channels, along with links to useful resources.

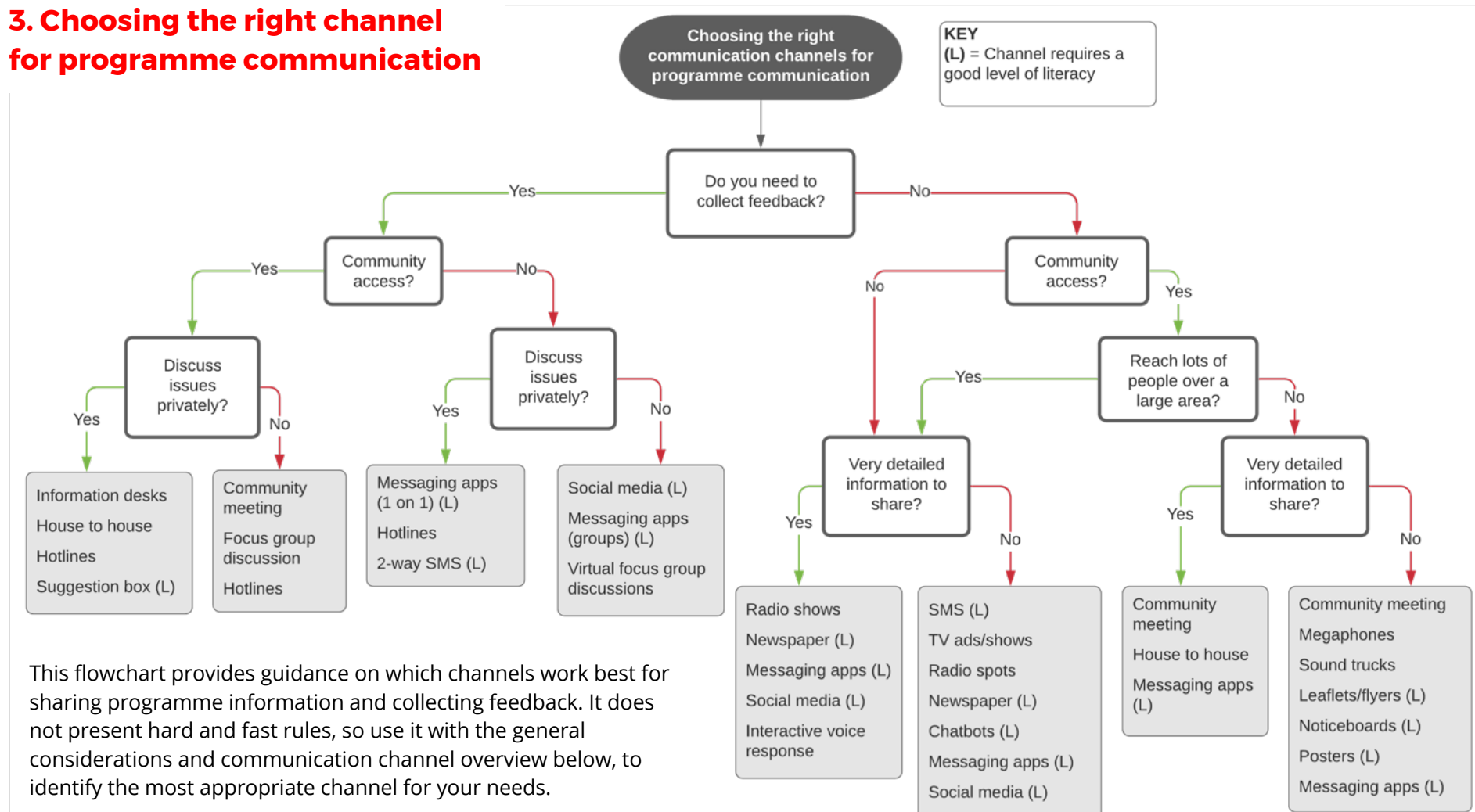
2. Overview of communication channels



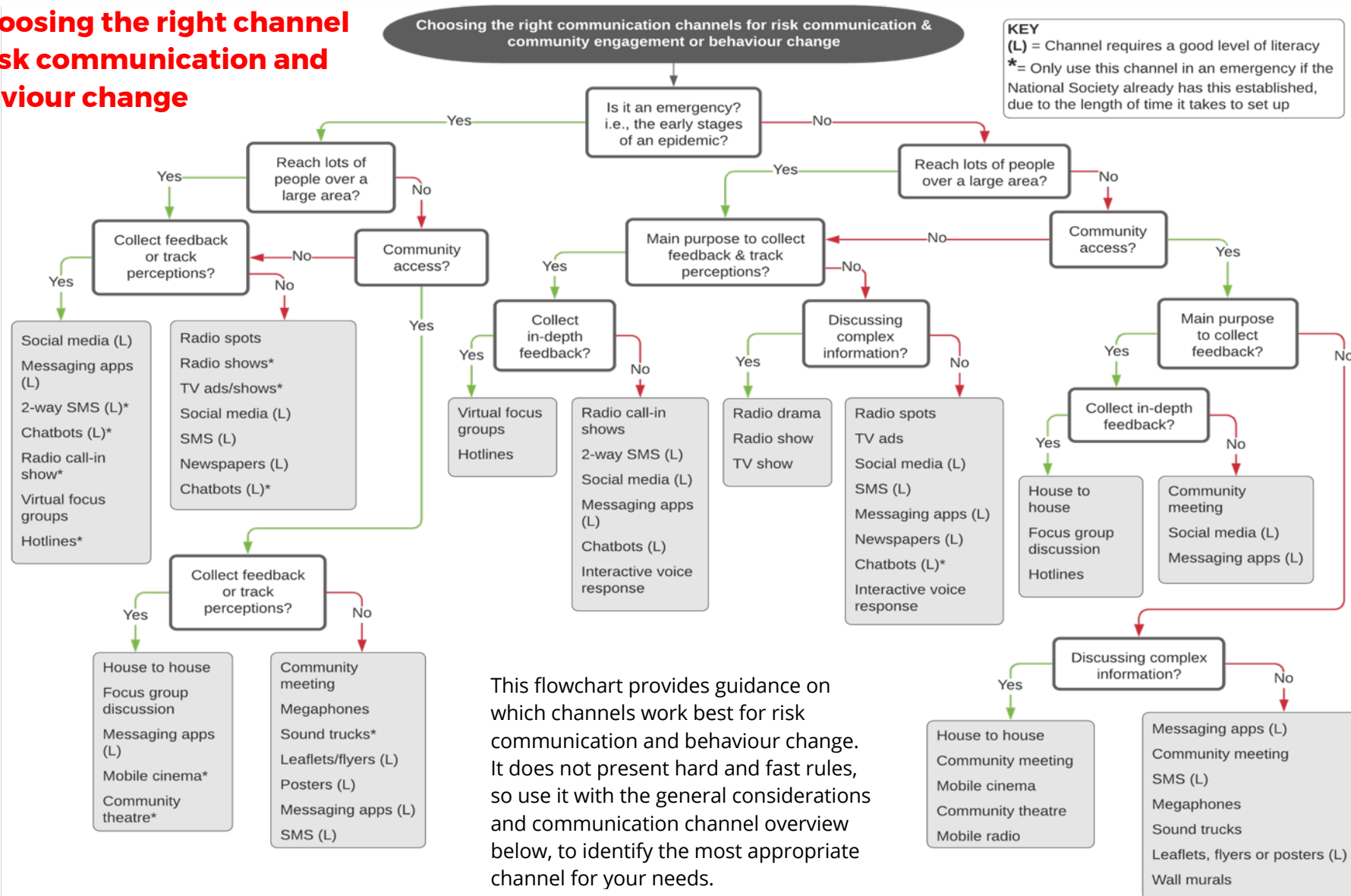
General considerations when choosing a communication channel:

- ✓ Use the channels and sources preferred by the community
- ✓ In general, people prefer face to face communication
- ✓ Levels of literacy in the community
- ✓ Access to communication equipment in e.g., radios, TV, internet, phones, etc
- ✓ National Society capacity – time, funding, experience
- ✓ Urgency of the situation
- ✓ Consider who might be excluded because of the channel chosen e.g., elderly, women, young people, etc
- ✓ Always use a mix of different channels as one approach will never reach everyone
- ✓ Consider the impact the choice of channel might have on people’s trust in the information being shared

3. Choosing the right channel for programme communication



3. Choosing the right channel for risk communication and behaviour change



4. Communication channel overview

CHANNEL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	BEST SUITED FOR	RESOURCES
House to house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports detailed conversations • More private • Can be started quickly and volunteer-led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour intensive • Limited geographical reach • Requires physical access (to the community) • Volunteers need good communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting feedback • Discussing sensitive or complex issues • Behaviour change • Risk communication – but consider 	See the 1-day communication skills training
Community meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can provide feedback, ask questions, and get answers • Transparent, everyone gets the same information at the same time • Low cost and low tech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited geographical reach • Requires physical access • Not everyone will feel able to speak in public meetings • Can exclude those with limited mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing detailed programme information • Discussing programme issues collectively with communities • Collecting general feedback • Explaining complex information, • Behaviour change 	Tool 17: Community meetings tool
Information / help desks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can get a faster response to their feedback • Private • Serves people in the community • Low cost and low tech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited geographical reach • Requires physical access • Some people may not want to be seen using the desk • Helpdesk staff must be trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing programme feedback and complaints • Especially useful during distributions to deal with questions and complaints privately and quickly 	Tool 15: Feedback kit

Focus group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can discuss issues in depth and collect detailed feedback on specific topics • Can target specific groups e.g., women, people with disabilities • Low cost and low tech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to small groups so data not representative • Limited geographical reach • Requires physical access • Requires experienced, skilled facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding context, needs and capacities • Programme planning, monitoring and evaluation • Exploring perceptions and beliefs for behaviour change 	Tool 16: FGD Guide
Community theatre or drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive and engaging • Brings community together to discuss issues collectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs good preparation and training to be effective, or hire an external company • Limited geographical reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour change • Risk communication – but can be slow to get started 	Use local forms of theatre and dance
Mobile cinema – showing films in communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive and engaging • Videos can simplify complex information, e.g., infection spread • Brings community together to discuss issues collectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs good preparation and training to be effective • Requires equipment and technical skills, e.g., projector • Limited geographical reach • Requires quality video content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour change • Risk communication – but not in the first phase of the epidemic as it may be too slow to set up 	See mobile cinema resources on the community engagement hub
Mobile radio – recorded radio shows played publicly in communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using pre-recorded radio shows, it can be labour light • Playing live radio shows is interactive and engaging • People don't need radios • Brings people together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires equipment and technical skills e.g., speakers, vehicle • Requires radio show content • Limited geographical reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour change • Risk communication – but not in the first phase as it may be slow to set up • When face to face contact is a risk e.g., COVID-19 	See how Rwanda Red Cross used mobile radio General radio resources on the hub

Megaphones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach a lot of people simultaneously in busy places Can be started quickly and volunteer-led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-way communication Not very engaging – people may feel shouted at Need to buy megaphones Limited geographical reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing short, simple messages Programme announcements Risk communication, but only at the start of a response 	<p>Consider installing loudspeakers in communities, they can use themselves</p>
Sound trucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach a lot of people simultaneously in busy places Convey information quickly to multiple locations in a day Can play music to draw attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-way communication Not very engaging – people may feel shouted at Messages can be hard to hear if the vehicle is moving Requires vehicle and speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing short, simple messages Programme announcements Risk communication, but only in the early stages of an epidemic 	<p>A sound truck can be as simple as attaching a speaker and PA system to a truck or motorbike</p>
Leaflets and posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be left in the community Supports face to face activities like mobile cinema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-way communication Writing and design can be time consuming Print costs can be expensive Difficult with low literacy Limited impact on behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing programme information – e.g., selection criteria, timelines, etc Simple risk communication or behaviour change messages, but unlikely to work if they are the only approach used 	
Wall murals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colourful and engaging Permanent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-way communication Limited geographical reach Expense and time to find a good artist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple behaviour change messages that don't change frequently, such as handwashing 	<p>See this guide on community murals from the Americas</p>

Noticeboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent • Can be used by the community too • Relatively inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication (unless with a suggestion box) • Labour intensive to keep the noticeboard updated • Not good for low literacy • Can be time consuming and expensive to build and install 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing community-specific programme information e.g., selection criteria and lists, distribution details • Location for behaviour change posters 	<p>See CEA Guide p.61 for a checklist of information to share with communities</p>
Suggestion box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports anonymous feedback • Low tech and low cost – for the National Society and the community • Easy for the community to access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes low literacy • People need writing materials • Limited trust in communities, as they don't know when they will get a response or who sees their feedback • Time consuming to install and collect feedback regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When people want to provide anonymous feedback and there is a high literacy rate 	<p>Only two-way if communities receive a response to their feedback Tool 15: Feedback kit</p>
Call-in radio shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertaining and engaging • Can reach large numbers • Discuss complex topics and collect (limited) feedback and answer caller questions • Works remotely • Radio is popular and common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airtime can be expensive • Running a regular radio show requires staff, time, and funding • Need a steady supply of expert guests • Radio team need to be well trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing risk communication and behaviour change issues • Sharing information about the National Society • Can be used for programme communication if lots of programme users are listeners 	<p>Radio resources on the hub</p>

<p>Telephone hotlines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an immediate response • Can be simple or complex, based on needs & resources • Cover large areas • Private • Works remotely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires budget and human resources to set up and run • Call handlers must be trained • People phones and network coverage • Cost if line is not toll-free • Must be well advertised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting feedback, including complaints, and answering questions about the programme • Can be used to track perceptions, but not ideal as it requires people to contact us 	<p>Tool 15: Feedback kit Hotline in a box</p>
<p>Messaging apps - WhatsApp, Signal etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versatile – can be used with large or small groups, to share & receive information • Share text, images, and video • Works remotely • Wide, fast reach & sharing • Low cost and easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users require internet access and a smartphone • Excludes low literacy • Time consuming to respond to the volume of messages • Cannot control what is shared, so needs constant monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing simple information and answering questions with lots of people over a wide area • Sharing programme updates quickly with specific groups • Collecting feedback and tracking perceptions remotely 	<p>See this guide on using WhatsApp for business in the Americas to support migrants and the case study from Peru</p>
<p>Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versatile – can be used for one and two-way communication, in public, small groups or one on one • Share text, images, and video • Wide, fast reach • Encourages interaction • Works remotely • Low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only works in areas with high smartphone and social media use and good internet access • Excludes low literacy • Need sufficient followers, and regular interesting content • Time consuming to respond to the volume of posts • Cannot control what is shared, so needs constant monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing risk communication and behaviour change information with large groups • Tracking opinions and asking for feedback on specific issues • Running simple opinion polls • Encouraging public debates • Sharing general information about the National Society • Sharing updates with a closed group of programme users 	<p>See the ICRC and IFRC Guide on using social media Tips for using social media for COVID-19 General resources on social media</p>

<p>Two-way SMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach large numbers of people quickly and directly • Works remotely • Works on non-smartphones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires network coverage and phone ownership • Excludes low literacy • Messages must be very short • Two-way SMS system can be complicated to set up • May cost people to respond • Text becoming less common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting simple, rapid feedback remotely from communities who don't have internet or smartphone access • Simple surveys to track perceptions or beliefs where people don't have internet or smartphone access 	<p>IFRC uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Twilio ▪ RapidPro <p>Contact ian.odonnell@ifrc.org for more information</p>
<p>Chatbots Automated services, usually within a messaging app, where people information and get an automatic reply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach large numbers of people, quickly • People can ask for the information they need • Can handle high volume of requests simultaneously • Anonymous, so can answer questions people may be embarrassed to ask in person • Works remotely • Information can be provided in multiple languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users requires internet access and a smartphone • Excludes low literacy • Requires specialist technology to set up • Software needs to be 'trained' to respond accurately, which takes time • Answers are automated, so users may not get the right answer to their question and get frustrated to not speak to a live person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to frequently asked questions from large amounts of people • When there is sufficient time and budget to try new innovative approaches • When physical access to communities is limited • Chatbots can be used to monitor people's information needs based on the questions they ask 	<p>Case study from Kazakhstan</p> <p>Chatbots will require specialist support. IFRC uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Twilio <p>Contact IFRC Geneva, ian.odonnell@ifrc.org for more information</p>

<p>Interactive voice response Hotline with recorded information, and people select what to listen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle large number of calls without need for hotline staff • People select the information they want to listen to • Provides detailed information without need for literacy • Request sensitive information without embarrassment • Works remotely • Information can be provided in multiple languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires network coverage and phone ownership • Requires specialist technology • Time consuming to record and maintain information • People may get frustrated to not speak to a live person • One-way communication and can't respond to feedback • People may have to pay to call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to frequently asked questions from large amounts of people – especially in situations with low literacy • When there is sufficient time and budget to set this up • When physical access to communities is limited • Can be used to monitor people's information needs based on what they listen to 	<p>IVR requires specialist software. IFRC uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RapidPro <p>Contact IFRC Geneva, ian.odonnell@ifrc.org for more information Haiti case study</p>
<p>Virtual focus group discussions Using online platforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote way to carry out FGDs when access is not possible • Can target specific groups e.g., women, youth etc • Relatively simple to use – participants just need to click on a link from their phone or laptop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires access to internet and smartphones • Participants need to be familiar with smartphones • Facilitators need experience with smartphones and facilitating online discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When physical access is not possible and you need to hold more in-depth discussions with communities e.g., for assessments, monitoring etc • When budget/time does not allow in person programme planning with communities 	<p>Tool 16: FGD Guide Try Jitsi: https://meet.jit.si/</p>
<p>One-way SMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach large numbers of people quickly and directly • Works remotely • Works on non-smartphones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires network coverage and phone ownership • Excludes low literacy • Messages must be very short • You need people's numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing short programme updates with communities • Sharing short, simple risk communication messages quickly with large numbers of people 	<p>See SMS guides on the hub IFRC uses Twilio Contact: ian.odonnell@ifrc.org</p>

<p>TV ads or shows 30–60 second adverts on a specific topic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide, fast reach • Engaging and persuasive • Easier to convey complex information visually • Adverts can be broadcast regularly throughout the day on multiple stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to produce and air • One way communication • Time consuming to produce content and usually requires a production company • TV ownership is less common in rural or deprived areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour change or risk communication information – if adverts can be produced quickly • When there is sufficient time and funding 	<p>In some countries, it can be possible to air TV chat shows cheaply on internet or cable TV stations</p>
<p>Radio spots, jingles, adverts 30–60 second adverts on a specific topic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide, fast reach • Entertaining and engaging • Works remotely • Radio is popular and common • Usually quick and cheap to do • Can be in multiple languages • Aired on multiple stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication only • Airtime can be expensive • Spots require recording and editing skills • Can only provide limited information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple behaviour change and risk communication information • Programme announcements if radio listeners correspond well to programme area 	<p>Spots can be produced inhouse, by the radio station, or a production company</p>
<p>Radio drama</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertaining and engaging • Can address complex or sensitive issues in depth • Cover multiple issues over time • Effective at changing behaviours • Radio is popular and common • Works remotely • Aired on multiple stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication – unless combined with a radio call-in show • Airtime can be expensive • Takes time and specialist skills to produce high quality drama so may require a specialist company to this for you • Usually only in one language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex behaviour change communication • Risk communication – later in the response due to the time to set up a radio drama • Consider partnering with other organizations to share the burden of producing these 	<p>For examples see: https://www.developmentmedia.net/ https://www.populationmedia.org/projects/ https://www.soulcity.org.za/media/soul-city-series</p>

Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover large areas • Combine text and pictures • Can provide detailed information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication only • Excludes low literacy • Usually have to paid for • Can be expensive to buy space • Less common outside of urban areas • Can be affiliated with a specific political party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements about the National Society or programme – if readership matches programme area • Simple risk communication or behaviour change information • When physical access is difficult, or you need to reach many people over a wide area 	
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