

# MODULE 2 COMMUNICATING WITH BENEFICIARIES AND COMMUNITIES

## PART 2 Communications Planning

This chapter will explore Communications Planning.

In this segment, we're going to look at some of the basics of communications planning:

- First and foremost, you need to be clear and honest about *what you need to know from the community you are aiming to aid*. You also need to think about *what the community needs to know about you*.
- You must develop *mutual communication and bonds of trust and respect* to exercise this.
- You should prepare by thinking of the questions you are going to ask to get to know the communities better. Remember to keep your *questions frank, open, and culturally sensitive*.
- You should also consider *what questions the communities might ask you* about the assistance you wish to offer them. To do this, there needs to be an *open, safe and secure environment* in which everyone feels comfortable asking questions and giving answers.
- In many instances, communities feel more comfortable asking questions in person when you or someone from your organization is physically present. *In-person interaction is useful for resolving problems more efficiently, generating long-term relationships, and creating spontaneous opportunities*.
- If in-person communication is not possible due to inaccessible locations, COVID-19 quarantining, or other reasons, then you must ensure that there are *other channels* available for communities to ask questions and for you to raise any queries you have with them.

## Other communications channels can include:

### 1. Amateur radio, citizen band radio, and Family Radio Service

Radios are known to be a reliable means of communication when all other forms are not operating. In times of disaster, communication through amateur radio has led to lives being saved. Citizen Band radios and Family Radio Service devices like walkie-talkies can be used by anyone who is not a member of a foreign government. These are meant for short-range communication and do not require a license.

### 2. Instant messaging via WhatsApp for instance

The concept behind this is that it is a way of quick communication between two or more people due to tools such as knowing when messages are seen or knowing when others are online. Remember though that this often requires a Wi-Fi connection or data usage.

### 3. Email and computer networking

This is possible via wired or wireless interconnectivity. The problem with these networks, however, is that they don't have an unlimited connection span - the reach is somewhat limited. To expand the reach, satellite and cellular networks can be used.

### 4. Telephone conversations

Phones are relatively easy to understand and use and, alongside radios, are the most commonly used in emergency or disaster situations. However, in the case of mobile phones, they require charging.

What you need to remember is that communication is a *two-way process* involving the following elements: a sender, a message, a medium, a channel, a receiver, response, and feedback.

Every element of communications planning is essential to develop open and honest relationships based on *coordination and mutual understanding*.