



## Integrating Local Media and ICTs into Humanitarian Response in Central African Republic Internews Humanitarian Information Projects

**Partners:** UNOCHA, Ushahidi

**Donor:** Humanitarian Innovation Fund

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### Introduction

This pilot is an innovative system that will foster a initially bounded/closed network of trusted local media organisations to gather real-time first-hand information from affected populations in order to create a two-way communication flow with humanitarian agencies in a way that improves emergency response, community participation and community resilience.

Emergency response is too often undermined because the humanitarian sector does not have the capacity to obtain timely, relevant and up-to-date, quality information about the local context, or possess reliable channels for both receiving and communicating critical information from and to affected communities.

The objective of this pilot project is to increase the efficiency, transparency and accountability of humanitarian relief efforts and increase community resilience by leveraging the relationship that local media have with their communities while being strengthened by technological solutions. It will create a reliable and sustainable system that will allow local media to gather, in real time, first-hand information from populations to channel it to the humanitarian sector, while at the same time establishing a two-way communication flow.

### Challenge(s) Addressed

The project was conceived to address the following challenges:

- Limited capacity to obtain timely, relevant and up to date, quality information about the local context often undermines humanitarian response.
- A lack of reliable channels for both receiving and communicating critical information to and from affected communities similarly limits the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.
- Adequate follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of humanitarian communication efforts are lagging behind advancements in the application of new technologies to the humanitarian context.

### Innovation Factor

This project applies new technologies, particularly mapping, through a partnership with Ushahidi, as well as SMS opportunities, to make better use of crowd-sourced information to understand the local information ecosystem and information needs, improve two-way communication channels, and link local and international institutions to the local media - all while mitigating the risk of data fragmentation by creating a new channel through which existing systems may 'speak to' and enhance each other.

### Added Value

This new media and communication system will increase the efficiency, transparency and accountability of humanitarian relief efforts and increase community resilience by leveraging the relationships that local media have with their communities, while being strengthened in this task by technological solutions.

## Input

The Central African Republic (CAR) presents the humanitarian community with a range of complex and protracted emergencies where access to and the sharing of information with affected communities is essential. On a day-to-day basis, refugees and IDPs need to understand the support and assistance available to them, and be able to hold relevant actors responsible for their safety and well-being to account. With the passage of time, refugees also need channels by which to understand the emerging situation in their home countries. Meanwhile, in an area as volatile as south-eastern CAR, the humanitarian sector can struggle to access accurate information on the current scale and patterns of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacks; this in turn can hamper their response and access to preventative information for the community.

## Key Deliverables / Impact

This project is intended to deliver the following:

- Create a sustainable emergency preparedness and response mechanism that will connect local media, humanitarians and affected populations through a tangible and sustainable two-way communication channel in the context of a protracted and complex emergency, by:
  - Improving relationships between affected communities and humanitarians by creating opportunities for communities to become an active part of an innovative, coherent, user-friendly, high-impact communication system.
  - Equipping humanitarian actors with a meaningful data stream that allows them to improve the quality and timeliness of operational response.

**For more information about the project, please see the following blogs:**

### **Getting the local media and tech components right!** (March 9, 2012)

[www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/getting-the-components-right](http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/getting-the-components-right)

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### **About to land** (March 6, 2012)

[www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/about-to-land](http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/about-to-land)

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### **Putting Local Media At The Core of Innovation In CAR** (February 2, 2012)

[www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/background](http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/background)

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[www.internews.org/where-we-work/sub-saharan-africa/central-african-republic](http://www.internews.org/where-we-work/sub-saharan-africa/central-african-republic)