



## Report

# Training Workshop on the Effective and Responsive Communication for Data Desk Officers of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction



Cross Section of the Participants

Training held at the dRPC Training Centre, Abuja Nigeria  
13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> August 2025

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## Introduction

***“Let me at this juncture appreciate the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, for graciously approving the collaboration that led us to today's training, the Minister of State and the Permanent Secretary for the quality leadership they provided. The work we do in this Ministry is not just a job; it is a calling... This training, facilitated by our valued partners at dRPC, is a crucial step in that direction. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to dRPC for their partnership and for putting together this comprehensive and timely training. Your commitment to strengthening institutional capacity is truly commendable.”***

*Permanent Secretary of the FMHA&PR*

On August 13 and 14, 2025, the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC), in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, convened a two-day capacity-building workshop in Abuja on *“Effective and Responsive Communication for Public Relations and Data Desk Officers.”* The workshop brought together officers responsible for managing data and communication within the Ministry, providing them with an opportunity to strengthen their skills in strategic communication, data presentation, and public engagement. The training aimed to enhance the Ministry's overall communication system to ensure clarity, timeliness, and responsiveness in disseminating information related to humanitarian and poverty

The initiative was designed by dRPC drawing on lessons from two research programmes Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) and Data and Evidence to End Extreme Poverty (DEEP) implemented by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK, with support from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). As part of the implementation of these programmes in Nigeria, dRPC has produced a body of evidence since 2023, including two policy briefs, two crisis trajectory issue briefs, one political economy analysis, six research briefing notes, and one working paper. Collectively, these outputs underscored the significant data and evidence gaps that continue to affect the effectiveness of humanitarian and poverty reduction interventions. Recognizing the critical role of effective communication in bridging these gaps and in promoting transparency, accountability, and public trust in government programmes, dRPC developed this training as a strategic response.

## Methodology

The workshop brought together 24 participants 15 men and 9 women including Directors and senior officials of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction. The training was structured around six modules designed to enhance participants' communication skills for more effective public service delivery. The modules were carefully developed to address both the technical and practical dimensions of humanitarian communication, with a particular focus on leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), improving transparency, and countering misinformation in the context of humanitarian and poverty reduction interventions.

The sessions were facilitated by experts from the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), the Digital Bridge Institute, the United Nations Association of Nigeria, and BBC Africa. The methodology emphasized interactive learning through case studies, peer exchange, and hands-on exercises.

## Evidence from Training Needs Assessment

The recent training needs assessment among staff of the Ministry highlights clear communication gaps:

- Capacity and Training Gaps: Respondents reported limited professional skills in crafting audience-sensitive narratives, weak capacity in data visualization and reporting, and poor ability to manage social media and digital communication
- Training Exposure: In the past three years, staff attended 57 government training workshops, but only 15 (26%) were communication-focused, indicating an insufficient investment in strengthening communication competencies.
- Expectations of Training: Officers expressed strong demand for knowledge in evidence-based storytelling, crisis and humanitarian communication, use of AI and ICT, data visualization, and effective dissemination of information
- This demonstrates that while staff have benefitted from general training, there remains a gap in specialized, responsive, and data-driven communication, particularly critical for humanitarian and poverty reduction work.

## Strategic Importance of Effective Communication for the Ministry

The Ministry's communication function is guided by principles of empathy, transparency, and accountability, with a mission to counter misinformation, promote national unity, inform the public, and support rapid response during crises. For data desk officers, effective and responsive communication is essential to:

- Translate complex data into simple, compelling narratives and visuals for policymakers, the public, and vulnerable groups.
- Strengthen the Ministry's credibility and visibility by countering misinformation and negative narratives.
- Improve transparency and accountability through timely dissemination of accurate information.
- Provide rapid, reassuring communication during humanitarian crises and emergencies.

## Data One Presentation

### **Session 1: Understanding the Basic Concepts of Social Protection & Humanitarian Communication**

The session facilitated by Dr. Judith Ann Walker was all about building participants' understanding of the basic concepts of social protection and humanitarianism, and how these frameworks connect to real-world crises. Participants were introduced to the foundations of social protection its definitions, objectives, and four core types (social assistance, social insurance, social care, and labour market programs) alongside tools such as cash transfers, social safety nets, and contributory schemes. They also examined humanitarian concepts including poly-crises, complex humanitarian emergencies, humanitarian communication, and ethical dilemmas in representation, with emphasis on dignity, impartiality, and accuracy. By the end, participants developed a clearer appreciation that humanitarian and social protection systems are not just technical instruments but also ethical and communication practices designed to save lives, reduce vulnerability, and uphold human dignity



**Participants Identifying Basic Concepts**

Table 1: Basic concepts

Concept	Definition
<b>Social Protection</b>	"SP encompasses all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized... with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups."
<b>Social Assistance</b>	"SA is direct, regular and predictable cash or in-kind resources transfers to poor and vulnerable individuals or households. It is usually provided by the state and financed by national taxes... Transfers are non-contributory, i.e. the full amount is paid by the provider."
<b>Social Safety Nets (SSNs)</b>	"SSNs are non-contributory transfer programmes that seek to prevent the poor and people vulnerable to shocks and poverty from falling below a certain poverty level... criticized because they leave so many people – including workers in the informal economy – without social protection."
<b>Objectives of Social Protection</b>	"The objectives vary widely, from reducing poverty and vulnerability, building human capital, empowering women and girls, improving livelihoods, and responding to economic and other shocks... Longer-term goals include improving opportunities for inclusive growth, human capital development, and social stability."
<b>Four Types of Social Protection</b>	"1. Social assistance – non-contributory transfers in cash, vouchers, or in-kind (including school feeding)... 2. Social insurance – contributory schemes... 3. Social care services for those facing social risks... 4. Labour market programmes – active or passive."
<b>Cash Transfers (CTs)</b>	"CTs are direct, regular and predictable transfers that raise and smooth incomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) are for the beneficiary to decide how to spend."
<b>Social Insurance</b>	"These are contributory programmes where participants make regular payments to a scheme that will cover costs related to life-course events... Social insurance includes contributory pensions; health, unemployment, or disaster insurance; and funeral assistance."
<b>Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)</b>	"Are direct, regular and predictable transfers that raise and smooth incomes to reduce poverty that are given with the requirement that the beneficiary meets certain conditions – often related to human capital development, such as visiting a health clinic or ensuring children go to school."
<b>Poly-crisis</b>	"A type of crisis refers to the simultaneous occurrence of multiple crises that interact and amplify each other's negative effects... not only do multiple crises take place at one time, but they amplify the devastating effects of one another."
<b>Complex Humanitarian Emergency (CHE)</b>	"CHEs are severe crises involving a combination of factors like armed conflict, political instability, and natural disasters, resulting in widespread human suffering and requiring international aid."
<b>Humanitarian Communication</b>	"Refers to a specific form of communication... to create awareness and encourage response to humanitarian crises... aims to establish emotional relationships and reactions, and its purpose is to mobilize interest and/or action."
<b>Ethical Dilemmas in Humanitarian Communication</b>	"There are ethical dilemmas... especially in relation to the choice of images, texts, and [linguistic] sound... responsibility to ensure that all narratives reflect and protect the dignity of those portrayed."
<b>Criteria for Humanitarian Communication</b>	"1. Those engaging... are crisis-affected populations or organizations assisting them. 2. The communication activities uphold the four core humanitarian principles. 3. The fundamental purpose... must be to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain and protect human dignity."
<b>Emergency Relief</b>	"This refers to the immediate assistance provided to individuals and communities facing crises... It aims to save lives, alleviate suffering, and stabilize affected populations until longer-term recovery efforts can be implemented."

## Session 2: Effectiveness of Official Humanitarian Communication & Social Media Outreach

The session, facilitated by C'Emeka Nzeih, Head of Learning & Development at Digital Bridge Institute, provided ministry participants with an analytical review of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction's digital communication strategy. Drawing on a systematic review of the Ministry's

website, social media platforms, and stakeholder perspectives, the presenter showed that while official channels provide credibility and authority, they are hampered by outdated content, poor mobile

responsiveness, and limited human-interest storytelling. On social media, participants learned that the Ministry relies too heavily on press releases and event photos, resulting in low engagement despite large follower counts. As the facilitator underscored, *“Openly communicating our work builds public trust and credibility”*.

A central insight for participants was the importance of narrative-driven and interactive communication. The presentation contrasted the Ministry’s current broadcast-heavy approach with best practices that emphasize storytelling, visual content, and two-way engagement. Participants saw how shifting to human-interest stories, infographics, and



**Mr. Nzeih facilitating the session**

short-form video could make humanitarian work more relatable and engaging to citizens. Specific weaknesses such as inconsistent messaging, lack of a unified content calendar, and limited responses to public inquiries were highlighted as barriers to building trust. The message was clear: communication is not just about information delivery but about shaping perception and enabling dialogue.

The session also examined platform-specific strategies and the role of analytics. Participants were taught how different social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok) demand tailored content strategies to maximize impact. They also explored the use of KPIs to distinguish between *vanity metrics* (likes, followers) and actionable indicators like engagement rate, amplification rate, and audience growth. As the presenter explained, *“High engagement signals to algorithms that your content is valuable, increasing its organic reach”*. Understanding these metrics was framed as critical for ensuring that digital communication contributes to humanitarian outcomes rather than simply generating visibility.

The training offered practical recommendations for strengthening communication capacity. These included establishing a dedicated response team to engage citizens, implementing a consistent content calendar, and organizing live Q&A sessions or polls to foster dialogue. Visual content optimization, audience segmentation, and use of scheduling tools like Meta Business Suite and Buffer were proposed to streamline communication. The presentation concluded with a clear call to action: *“A more effective digital presence will lead to greater public trust, enhanced program impact, and a more resilient Ministry”*. Participants left the session with a renewed understanding that digital communication is central to humanitarian credibility and that improving outreach requires both technical planning and human-centered storytelling.

Participants praised the session for exposing the weaknesses in current humanitarian communication practices, especially the over-reliance on press releases and event photography. They noted that learning about content calendars, storytelling, and platform-specific strategies gave them practical tools to improve engagement.

### Session 3: Misperception and misinformation Around the National Social Register

The session led by Nwanze Okonkwo, Head of Value-Added Services at DBI, provided ministry participants with an in-depth analysis of the public discourse and misinformation surrounding the National Social Register (NSR). Drawing on social media analysis from January 2024 to March 2025, the presentation demonstrated how the NSR has become a lightning rod for criticism, distrust, and reform demands. Participants learned that negative sentiment accounted for 38.5% of online conversations, compared to 26.27% positive and 35.13% neutral. The suspension of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs in January 2024 and subsequent audit leaks triggered spikes in online activity and entrenched skepticism. One citizen's post captured this distrust: *"NSR is full of ghost names. My community has not received anything"*. One of the key learning points was the contrast between myths and facts. The presenter clarified that much of the anger directed at the NSR comes from misperceptions. Common myths included claims that the NSR is a list of corruption beneficiaries, that politicians freely add names, or that everyone on the register automatically receives cash. These were systematically debunked: *"NSR is a registry; funds flow via programme-specific rules... inclusion follows community-based processes"*. Participants also saw how specific rumors such as NIN/BVN data being sold online, ₦28,570 NIN correction fees being portrayed as extortion, or biometric verification delays blamed for CCT disbursement distorted public understanding.



**Mr. Nwanze facilitating his session**

The training further examined why misinformation spreads and persists. Participants learned that low institutional trust, delayed and overly technical government communication, and the complexity of NSR reforms created fertile ground for rumors. The role of influencers and media outlets was emphasized: these actors amplified both genuine concerns and false claims, often without context. As the presentation stressed, *"communication gaps increase rumor risks... clear messages rebuild trust"*. Early narratives on social media, whether accurate or not, were shown to have disproportionate impact in shaping beliefs, with hashtags like #NINLeak and #CashTransferFake rallying points for negative discourse.

Participants were urged to strengthen transparency by publishing clear updates on NSR reforms, counter fake news actively through campaigns like #NSRFacts, and implement robust data security safeguards to reassure the public. Engagement with trusted influencers and civil society was highlighted as a necessary step to shift the narrative, while interactive communication, rather than one-way announcements was presented as key to restoring credibility. The concluding message was unequivocal: *"Restoring trust through security and communication is essential for long-term success"*. Ministry staff left the session with a sharper awareness that the credibility of the NSR depends not only on technical accuracy but on how it is explained, defended, and communicated in the digital public sphere.

Participants found this training timely and eye-opening, given the controversy around the NSR. They appreciated the breakdown of myths versus facts, especially the clarification that the NSR is a registry, not a cash distribution list. The analysis of Twitter sentiment helped them see how misinformation gains traction and why early narratives matter.

#### **Session 4: Communicating Forecasts of Humanitarian Crisis Communication Targets, Formats, Channels & Expected Impact**

The session facilitated by Musa E. Umar, PhD, mni NIPSS Kuru emphasized the urgent need for the FMHAPR to shift from a reactive model of crisis management to a proactive, foresight-driven approach. Participants were reminded that Nigeria's humanitarian environment is shaped by overlapping crises climate change, insecurity, displacement, and market shocks but responses remain largely reactive, often at great human and financial cost. As the facilitator stressed, judgment and decision-making are shaped by context, and in humanitarian governance, *"humanitarian intelligence is only valuable when it is communicated early, framed persuasively, and channeled into concrete actions before disasters peak"*. A key case study came from the Benue State case study, which illustrated how recurring crises such as farmer-herder conflict, flooding, and displacement have devastated livelihoods and eroded institutional trust. Using the Delphi methodology, stakeholders identified past crises, anticipated emerging ones, and mapped gaps in preparedness. Participants learned that over 80% of rural farmers in Benue reported loss of livelihoods due to conflicts, while annual flooding displaced over 100,000 people in 2022 alone. This case highlighted the compounded nature of crises and the necessity for anticipatory planning rather than piecemeal emergency responses.



**Professor Musa, facilitating his session**

The session underlined the importance of turning forecasts into actionable intelligence. Participants were shown that forecasts must be synthesized into concise, decision-ready briefs, prioritized by urgency and socio-economic impact, and translated into time-bound action plans for specific Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). For example, a drought forecast should trigger coordination with Agriculture, NEMA, and FMHAPR's safety nets. Officers were challenged to act as both *interpreters and brokers of intelligence* so that forecasts move beyond academic exercises and directly influence life-saving policies.

Another focus area was on communication pathways and formats. Participants learned that effective forecasting only achieves its purpose when delivered to the right actors, at the right time, and in the right format. Policy briefs, real-time dashboards, inter-ministerial memos, and joint situation room meetings were recommended as channels to ensure forecasts are transformed into action. Critically, the training emphasized framing: data must not be presented as abstract statistics but in terms of security stability, economic costs, and political credibility to compel timely responses.

The session concluded by challenging directors and senior officers to expand the Ministry's role from being disaster reporters to risk forecasters and mobilizers of inter-agency action. Embedding preparedness, coordination, and resilience into core operations was described as a prerequisite for safeguarding lives, protecting development gains, and rebuilding public trust. As the final message put it, *"proactive humanitarian governance is not an aspirational choice, it is a prerequisite for sustainable development and national security in the twenty-first century"*. Participants left with a clear mandate: to institutionalize foresight, strengthen early warning systems, and communicate forecasts in ways that drive coordinated national action.

Feedback from this session emphasized its usefulness in shifting mindsets from reactive to proactive crisis management. Participants valued the Benue State case study as a concrete example of how recurring crises intersect and why foresight is essential. They noted that the Delphi methodology and the emphasis on turning forecasts into *"decision-ready briefs"* gave them practical direction. Many agreed with the presenter's conclusion that *"proactive humanitarian governance is not an aspirational choice, it is a*

prerequisite for sustainable development and national security”, saying it gave weight to their responsibility as senior officers.



**Dr. Desmond Facilitating his session**

### **Session 5: Application & Utilisation of AI and New Media for Accuracy & Real Time Communication, and Countering Disinformation**

The session facilitated by Desmond Okocha, PhD Chair, Unan Abuja Branch, opened with an introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and New Media, highlighting their transformative role in modern communication. Participants learned that AI is no longer futuristic but a practical tool already shaping industries, including humanitarian work. AI chatbots, automated summarization tools, and real-time translation systems were presented as ways to ensure that citizens receive timely and accurate information, especially during emergencies. New Media

platforms such as Twitter/X, blogs, podcasts, and streaming services were positioned as essential channels for reaching audiences instantly, amplifying both accurate updates and, if unchecked, misinformation.

A major focus was the humanitarian impact of AI-driven communication. The facilitator showed how AI can save lives by verifying claims, debunking fake news, and directing people to safe shelters during floods or disease outbreaks. Participants saw real-world applications, such as the UN's use of AI to track refugee movements and WHO's Epidemic Intelligence platform detecting early signs of health crises. Case studies illustrated AI's ability to predict famine in East Africa, deploy drones for flood rescues in India, and provide real-time monitoring of relief operations. As the presenter emphasized, *“During crises, accurate and timely information can save lives.”*

The session also examined AI in social media monitoring and disinformation control. Participants learned how algorithms can flag conspiracy theories, scams, or hate speech before they spread widely. Tools that track trending topics and conduct sentiment analysis were presented as critical for detecting harmful narratives early and understanding public reactions to humanitarian policies. For example, AI tools used during COVID-19 relief tracked misinformation about food distribution and vaccination centres, allowing agencies to quickly push out corrected information. This illustrated that AI can act as both an early warning system and a reputational safeguard.

Equally important were the challenges and ethical concerns surrounding AI. High costs, data privacy issues, algorithmic bias, and resistance to adoption were identified as barriers. Ethical risks such as misuse for deepfakes, manipulation of public opinion, and cultural insensitivity were discussed in detail. Participants were introduced to best practices, including starting with pilot projects, training staff, embedding human oversight, and following ethical guidelines like UNESCO's AI Ethics recommendations. The key message was that *“AI and new media are not just technologies; they are tools for social good when guided by human values and ethics.”*

The session was concluded with a call for AI-human collaboration in communication strategies. While AI provides speed, scale, and analytical power, humans bring empathy, cultural understanding, and ethical oversight. Participants were urged to integrate AI into their communication frameworks while maintaining transparency, accountability, and trust. The final takeaway emphasized that proactive, AI-powered communication, coupled with human judgment can prevent harm, protect vulnerable populations, and strengthen trust in institutions. As summarized in the closing message: *“The goal is not only to inform but to protect, empower, and save lives.”*

Participants were enthusiastic about this training, describing it as both innovative and practical. They especially valued the case studies, AI drones in disaster zones, famine prediction in East Africa, and WHO's early outbreak detection which demonstrated how AI is already transforming humanitarian communication. At the same time, they raised concerns about data privacy, high costs, and cultural misinterpretation, showing they internalized the ethical dimension of the discussion.

### **Session 6: Data Visualisation for Effective Humanitarian Communication**

The training introduced participants Damilola Ojetunde Data/Interactive Journalist, BBC, to the fundamentals of data visualisation as a critical tool for humanitarian communication. They learned that presenting information through visuals such as charts, graphs, infographics, and dashboards makes complex data easier to understand, improves recall, and enhances transparency. The facilitator emphasized that in the humanitarian sector, where misinformation can spread quickly, clear visuals are vital for building public trust, ensuring accountability, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. As



**Mr. Damilola facilitating his session**

highlighted, *"citizens understand spending and policies of government better when data is communicated visually"*. Participants also explored the current limitations of FMHAPA's communication approach, which is dominated by text-heavy website updates and photo-driven social media posts. This was contrasted with global best practices, such as the US FEMA dashboard and the UNHCR Data Portal, which use interactive dashboards and infographics to make real-time data accessible. This comparison underscored the need for the Ministry to adopt more dynamic, user-friendly formats to showcase the impact of its interventions and strengthen stakeholder confidence.

The session provided practical knowledge of different visualisation formats and tools. Participants were introduced to charts (column, bar, line), maps (choropleth, heat, and dot maps), and dashboards, with explanations of when each is most effective. They also reviewed accessible design tools such as Infogram, Canva, Piktochart, Datawrapper, Flourish Studio, Power BI, and Tableau. In addition, the use of "bite-sized communication" data cards, quote cards, carousel posts, and reels, was presented as an innovative way to engage citizens through social media. These examples demonstrated that visualisation can be both sophisticated and accessible, depending on the audience and platform.

Participants also learn about the stepwise work plan for implementation. Phase 1 involves auditing existing data assets and defining key indicators such as poverty levels, IDP numbers, and cash disbursements. Phase 2 focuses on developing a pilot dashboard with maps, trends, and explanatory notes, tested internally for usability. Phase 3 covers rollout and communication, embedding dashboards on the Ministry's website and using bulletins or teasers to engage the public. Participants recognized that this structured approach would move the Ministry from static reporting toward interactive, real-time communication. The session concluded with the case study of OCHA, reinforcing the message that *"data visualisation is not decoration but a driver of accountability, trust, and effective humanitarian action"*

## Day Two Presentation:

### Session 1: Core Photography Skills for Humanitarian Storytelling

Jackson Odeh, the facilitators explored why strong photography matters in humanitarian communication, linking images directly to storytelling, advocacy, fundraising, and donor engagement. Participants learned that photographs are not only visual records but powerful narratives that can mobilize support, shape public perception, and highlight dignity amidst crisis. Through group discussions, they reflected on their own past work, identifying images that resonated most with audiences, pleased supervisors, or succeeded on



**Mr. Odeh facilitating his session**

social media. This introspection set the stage for understanding photography as both a technical and ethical practice.

Participants were then introduced to the principles of framing a shot and storytelling through different perspectives. They practiced with techniques such as the rule of thirds, leading lines, wide framing, negative space, and depth of field to strengthen composition. Different types of shots wide, medium, close-up, extreme close-up, two-shots, and point-of-view framing were analyzed for their narrative power. For example, wide shots provided environmental context, while close-ups conveyed intimacy and emotion. These technical skills were emphasized as essential for ensuring that humanitarian stories are visually compelling while maintaining authenticity.

The session also highlighted the importance of lighting and ethical editing in humanitarian photography. Participants learned to differentiate between key, fill, back, and ambient lighting to achieve clarity without artificial dramatization. Editing tools like Snapseed, Lightroom, and Photoshop Express were recommended for subtle adjustments, but participants were cautioned against unacceptable edits such as adding or removing elements, over-smoothing faces, or altering cultural colors. As Odeh stressed, *"alteration equals misrepresentation,"* reminding participants that accuracy and dignity are non-negotiable in humanitarian imagery. The session provided practical shot lists for humanitarian contexts, guiding participants on how to capture events, field visits, and social media impact stories. Examples included wide establishing shots of IDP camps, candid interactions between officials and beneficiaries, close-ups of hands exchanging relief materials, and before-and-after images that highlight impact while preserving dignity. The session concluded with humanitarian context rules: no dramatization of suffering, no alteration of symbols or dress, and always keeping original files for accountability. Participants left with a clear framework that combined technical competence, ethical responsibility, and narrative sensitivity,

equipping them to tell humanitarian stories that inspire action without exploitation.

### Session 2: Humanitarian Photography

The facilitated Theophilus Abbah, PhD, Data Visualisation training, introduced participants to how visual tools such as infographics, dashboards, charts, and maps can transform humanitarian communication from being text-heavy and inaccessible to engaging, transparent, and trustworthy. Participants learned that visualization builds transparency, accountability, and public trust by making government spending, IDP figures, or cash transfer disbursements clear to citizens.



**Dr. Abbah Facilitating his session**

They were shown global models like the US FEMA Dashboard and the UNHCR Data Portal, which illustrated how real-time dashboards help track crises and performance. As Ojetunde stressed, *“Citizens understand spending and policies of government better when they are presented visually”*.

Participants also learn practical formats and tools that ministries can adopt, including Infographics, bar and column charts, line graphs, and heat maps were showcased as tools for different types of data stories from trend analysis to geographical variations. Participants explored easy-to-use platforms like Canva, Infogram, Flourish, Tableau, and Power BI, highlighting that impactful visual storytelling does not require overly complex software. They also learned the value of bite-sized formats such as data cards, quote cards, carousels, and reels for social media engagement, enabling humanitarian agencies to reach broader audiences with concise, shareable content.

In the Humanitarian Photography training, participants were taken through the ethical foundations of photography in humanitarian contexts. Dr. Abbah emphasized that humanitarian photography must never exploit suffering but instead promote dignity, resilience, and inclusivity. Through case studies such as Kevin Carter’s Pulitzer-winning but ethically fraught photograph of famine in Sudan, the training provoked debate about the line between documentation and exploitation. Participants also reflected on how humanitarian principles humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence guide ethical photography. Discussions focused on consent, vulnerability, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed practices, reinforcing that every image carries consequences for the subject as well as the audience

Finally, participants were equipped with practical guidelines for responsible image-making. They learned that vulnerable persons children, refugees, IDPs, the elderly, and the disabled require extra safeguards, including informed consent, anonymization where necessary, and secure data storage. Cultural awareness was presented as essential: respecting dress codes, gender norms, and sacred spaces in communities affected by conflict. The training also encouraged inclusive representation by avoiding stereotypes, exoticism, and Western-centric gazes, and by highlighting agency over pity. As the facilitator concluded, *“Humanitarian photography depicts social challenges not to exploit, but to protect, empower, and uphold dignity”*

## Conclusion

The two-day training successfully equipped participants with advanced knowledge and practical skills to strengthen the Ministry’s communication capacity. Through sessions on humanitarian communication, misinformation management, crisis forecasting, AI and new media, data visualization, and photography, participants gained both technical and ethical tools to enhance accuracy, transparency, and responsiveness in their daily work. The feedback confirmed that officers left with a sharper appreciation of communication as a strategic driver of credibility, public trust, and effective humanitarian action, rather than as a support function. By combining foresight, storytelling, digital tools, and ethical practices, the training positioned data desk officers to better counter misinformation, engage diverse audiences, and translate complex data into compelling narratives.

## Next Steps

Going forward, the Ministry will consolidate these gains by institutionalizing continuous professional development on communication, prioritizing investments in modern tools (dashboards, AI-driven monitoring systems, and digital storytelling platforms), and creating a dedicated communication response unit to counter misinformation in real time. The integration of visual dashboards, ethical photography, and AI-powered analytics should be piloted within selected departments before scaling across the Ministry. In line with participant feedback, future trainings should include longer, hands-on workshops and inter-agency collaborations to harmonize communication standards. Embedding these practices will ensure that communication is not only effective but also anticipatory, inclusive, and resilient reinforcing the Ministry’s mandate to protect the most vulnerable and strengthen public trust in government interventions.

## Annex: Details Analysis of the Baseline Assessment

### 1. Pleaselist2 expectations that you have of this training workshop?

Participants' expectations for the training workshop were diverse but clustered around six categories, with the highest emphasis on Information Dissemination & Principles of Communication (20%) and Social Media & Online Presence (20%), followed closely by Evidence-Based Storytelling (16%), Artificial Intelligence & ICT (16%), and Crisis & Humanitarian Communication (16%), while Data Visualization & Reporting accounted for 12%. In total, 25 expectations were recorded, showing that participants were equally eager to strengthen both their technical communication skills (storytelling, AI, data visualization) and their strategic communication capacity (crisis response, social media, stakeholder engagement).

Table 2: Participant training expectation

Category	Expectations	Frequency	%
Evidence-Based Communication & Storytelling	Gain knowledge on crafting evidence-based narratives Integrate data in storytelling grounded in the humanitarian ecosystem Improve video storytelling Improve photo quality	4	16%
Information Dissemination & Principles of Communication	Learn basic principles of information sharing Acquire skills to communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders Better understand role and best practices in emergency communication Explore effective communication approaches Broader knowledge of communicating humanitarian crises effectively	5	20%
Social Media & Online Presence	Use social media to promote ministry activities Anchor events of principals within laid-down rules Increase performance of ministry's social media handles & website Grow ministry's social media (organically and inorganically) Counter negative perspectives on social media	5	20%
Artificial Intelligence & ICT	Gain new ideas about AI in communication Understand fundamentals of AI and apply to work Learn recent trends in AI and media reporting Improve use of ICT in managing poverty reduction	4	16%
Data Visualization & Reporting	Enhance skills in data visualization Transform complex data into clear reports & infographics Better understanding of communication and data visualization reporting	3	12%
Crisis & Humanitarian Communication	Proactive rather than reactive response to humanitarian crises Address misrepresentation of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Improve communication to underserved grassroots communities Communicate effectively to target audience in humanitarian contexts	4	16%
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2. In the past three years how many training workshops have you attended in government? Hoe many of which is communication focused

In the past three years, the 17 respondents collectively attended 52 government training workshops: 4 participants attended once, 6 attended twice, 3 attended three times, 3 attended six times, and 1 attended nine times. Out of the 52 trainings attended in the last three years, 15 were on communication 26% of all trainings.

Table 3: Past Training on Communication

Times attended	Participants	Attendance subtotal	Communication focused	% communication focused
1	4	4	3	75%
2	6	12	4	33%
3	3	9	2	22%
5	1	5	1	20%
6	3	18	4	22%
9	1	9	1	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26%</b>

### 3. When were the communication workshops you attended and what topics did, they cover?

- Communication & photography
- Social media engagement for public outreach/advertising
- News writing; official correspondence (letters, memos, reports)
- Modern trends in counter-terrorism & crisis communication
- Strategies for managing information dissemination
- Synergy between aides and staff of the Ministry of HMS&SDA
- National security and national interest (communication focus)
- Information technology for communication
- Effective workplace communication; strategic communication
- AI for effective reporting

### 4. For any future communication training workshop (not this one) how long would you like a future training to be and what topics would you want to be covered?

For any future communication training workshop, participants indicated that the preferred duration should range from at least two to three days, up to one week, with a one-month option for intensive courses.

Table 4: Suggested Topics for Future Communication Training Workshops

Thematic Area	Specific Topics
AI and Data-Driven Communication	Use of AI in information dissemination AI for effective reporting, including counter-terrorism contexts AI applications in humanitarian and poverty space Data analysis and management
Strategic Communication	Enhancing ministry effectiveness through communication strategies Development of policy briefs Reporting, editing, and anchoring skills
Digital & Social Media Skills	Social media management (aligned with global best practices) Growing social media handles organically New media and technology use Social media usage for government communication
Technology and Inclusive Communication	Tools and strategies for hearing-impaired and visually-impaired communication Transition from analog filing to modern digital procedures
Operational & Workplace Skills	Handling operational computers Junior staff relations in the workplace
Creative & Media Production Skills	Photography (tools, post-production, and ethical image editing) Video and photo editing (one-month intensive option)

### 5. What, in your view, is the most significant challenge faced by the Ministry in relation to its communication function?

The participants mentioned that the most significant challenge faced by the Ministry's communication function lies in the intersection of capacity gaps and structural barriers, where staff lack adequate training

and professional skills while also being excluded from critical decision-making processes. Compounded by limited funding, weak dissemination channels, and shortages of skilled professionals, these challenges hinder the Ministry's ability to craft engaging, audience-sensitive stories and to respond proactively to humanitarian and poverty issues.

Table 5: Ministry current challenges

Challenge Area	Specific Issues Identified
Capacity and Training Gaps	Lack of adequate training for staff Insufficient capacity building opportunities Limited professional skills in managing social media and communication Inability to craft audience-sensitive and appealing stories
Funding and Resources	Inadequate funding for communication activities Limited budgetary allocation for outreach programmes Lack of professional tools and modern equipment Insufficient resources for proactive and reactive communication
Human Resources and Staffing	Shortage of skilled communication professionals Low staff morale Inadequate manpower to manage social media handles and platforms
Institutional and Structural Barriers	Communication team not involved in critical decision-making processes Weak synergy and collaboration between units Resistance from older staff to allow innovative ideas from younger staff Slow pace of response to emerging issues
Technical and Strategic Issues	Weak dissemination channels Limited use of modern technology in responding to humanitarian and poverty issues Poor ability to craft clear, catchy, and engaging content
Awareness and Sensitivity	Limited cultural and psychological awareness in communication - Lack of political buy-in for communication functions

**6. Please list out 4 audiences in terms of priority that the Ministry's communication function should target?**

The Ministry's communication priorities are clearly centred on Vulnerable Groups (score 72), reflecting their role as the primary beneficiaries who require accessible, inclusive messaging. Secondary priorities include the General Public (18), Youth and Women (18), and Government/Policy Makers (17), showing a balanced strategy between addressing grassroots needs, building public trust, empowering key demographics, and securing institutional support.

Table 6: Ministry's Target Priority

Priority	Audience	Score	Rationale
1st	Vulnerable Groups	72	High frequency and critical focus as primary beneficiaries; messaging must address specific needs like accessibility and inclusion.
2nd	General Public	18	Key for building trust and awareness; requires broad, accessible messaging to ensure widespread support and understanding of Ministry initiatives.
3rd	Youth and Women	18	Specific demographic with high potential for social and economic impact; targeted campaigns can empower these groups and align with development goals.
4th	Government/Policy Makers	17	Essential for securing policy support, funding, and approvals; communication must be precise, evidence-based, and aligned with governmental priorities.

Note: Methodology a weighted scoring system assigns points based on priority position (1st = 4 points, 2nd = 3, 3rd = 2, 4th = 1) and frequency. Audiences are categorized into groups and the top four are selected based on composite scores and contextual relevance.

**7. Please identify 4 communication outputs that the Ministry's communication units should produce on a regular basis?**

- Press Releases & Media Advisories: To provide timely updates on ministry actions, policies, achievements, and urgent issues.

- Newsletters (Monthly or Quarterly): To share success stories, ongoing programmes, completed projects, and upcoming events with stakeholders and the general public.
- Social Media Updates & Reports: Regular posts (daily/weekly) across platforms, plus monthly/quarterly reports to track engagement, reach, and impact.
- Success Stories & Short Videos : Human-interest stories, case studies, and visual showcases of ministry interventions, programs, and impact.

### 8. What is the guiding philosophy and mission statement of the Ministry's communication function?

Participants mentioned that the Ministry's communication function is anchored on empathy, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that communication reflects integrity, inclusiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens especially vulnerable populations.

They also mention the mission of the Ministry's communication function to include:

1. Develop and maintain a robust information and communication system that counters misinformation and promotes national unity, growth, and development.
2. Inform and educate the public about the Ministry's initiatives, programmes, and services, particularly in humanitarian response and poverty reduction.
3. Disseminate timely and accurate information on government interventions and commitments to provide social protection and support to all citizens.
4. Engage stakeholders effectively while addressing concerns of vulnerable populations, ensuring inclusive participation in the Ministry's work.
5. Support rapid response communication during humanitarian crises and disasters.
6. Safeguard the privacy and integrity of government information, while ensuring transparency in dissemination where necessary.

### 9. Please describe your key communication functions in the Ministry?

Participants mention that the Ministry's communication functions span strategic policy development, media relations, stakeholder engagement, knowledge management, and crisis response, ensuring that information flows effectively both internally and externally. These roles emphasize not only promoting visibility and building trust but also delivering timely, audience-sensitive communication during emergencies, thereby strengthening the Ministry's credibility and responsiveness.

Table 7: Key Communication function of the Ministry

Area	Key Roles & Responsibilities
<b>Strategic Communication &amp; Policy Development</b>	Develop and implement communication strategies and policies to guide information flow. Provide technical support and guidance on communication matters to ministry leadership and departments.
<b>Public Information &amp; Media Relations</b>	Draft and disseminate press releases, advisories, and official statements. Provide coverage and publicity for ministry activities, programmes, and events. Manage media engagement to enhance the image and visibility of the ministry.
<b>Public Engagement &amp; Stakeholder Relations</b>	Build and maintain cordial relationships with stakeholders, partners, and the public. Conduct sensitisation and awareness campaigns, especially targeting vulnerable groups. Inform, educate, and engage the public on the ministry's interventions, programmes, and policies.
<b>Knowledge Sharing &amp; Documentation</b>	Serve as a tool for knowledge and data dissemination within and outside the ministry. Capture, document, and archive ministry activities on a daily basis for accountability and institutional memory. Provide accurate, timely, and professional communication that addresses public concerns.
<b>Crisis and Humanitarian Communication</b>	Support rapid response communication during emergencies and humanitarian crises. Ensure messages are tailored to reassure the public and provide solutions in times of crisis.