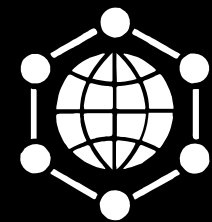


Global and regional case studies of localised communication strategies

Frameworks

Local Partnerships

Community Voices



**Localisation, when embedded
in strategy, can shift the quality and
ownership of communication.**

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Refugee led radio networks in Uganda

From a strategic standpoint, the refugee-led radio initiative in West Nile offers three key lessons for localisation in communication:

1. **Ownership drives relevance** – When refugees select topics and lead production, content aligns closely with lived realities.
2. **Linguistic and cultural adaptation boosts trust** – Broadcasting in community languages, with idioms and storytelling styles rooted in local culture, enhances both reach and credibility.
3. **Flexible financing enables responsiveness** – Budget structures that allow reallocation of resources foster agility in message delivery, especially during crises.

A rapid participatory evaluation by BBC Media Action (2021) found that listenership rates exceeded 80% in targeted settlements, and trust in local radio as an information source had risen by 25% within six months.

Institutionalising a localised approach into the programming design from the start rather than adopting a retrofitted approach after rollout provides better results. (case study of Uganda's West Nile refugee response and Ethiopia's Gambella refugee camps approach during Covid 19 pandemic)

Coproduction—agencies like *BBC Media Action & Internews* partnered with refugee journalists, community elders, women's groups, & youth leaders to produce multilingual programs in Kakwa, Lugbara, & Juba Arabic ensuring nuance accuracy in dialect, idioms, & cultural references.

Locally resonant story telling: COVID-19 updates on mask use, handwashing, and distancing were embedded in locally resonant storytelling formats, e.g short call in shows, folktale adaptations recasting local community heroes.

Budgetary flexibility: the budgeting model allowed radio teams to reallocate airtime and resources towards emerging priorities.

Middle East

Zaatari Camp Hygiene Promotion Campaign

The Zaatari Hygiene Promotion Campaign, initiated in partnership between UNICEF, Oxfam, and local refugee committees, offers a case study in localised, culturally sensitive communication tailored to a complex humanitarian setting

01

Training of Hygiene Champions

Champions were empowered not just to deliver pre-defined messages, but to adapt them to the social norms, dialects, and household realities of the camp's districts

02

Integration of participatory visual tools

Instead of relying solely on written or verbal instructions, Champions co-created illustrated flipcharts depicting common hygiene challenges (appealed to low literacy households.)

03

Decentralisation of response budgets

small discretionary funds provided to each Hygiene Champion team. This enabled them to procure locally sourced props—soap, buckets, or handwashing station materials—without waiting for central procurement

06

Mixed Method Impact assessment

A six-month monitoring report by UNICEF (2020) showed a 17% increase in consistent soap use across the camp and a 22% reduction in diarrhoeal disease incidence among children under five.



The Zaatari case reinforces three critical principles for localisation in humanitarian communication:

1. **Empowering community intermediaries enhances uptake**
– Training refugee leaders to adapt and deliver messages increases both trust and relevance.
2. **Visual participatory tools transcend literacy barriers**
– Culturally accurate illustrations help bridge communication gaps in diverse, multilingual populations.
3. **Budget decentralisation fosters innovation** – Providing small, flexible funding at the community level enables quick adaptation to local needs.

Latin America

Refugee-Led Community Theatre in Peru

The Refugee-Led Theatre for Social Change initiative, launched in 2020 by a coalition of Peruvian community-based organisations and Venezuelan refugee groups, sought to address rising tensions between host and refugee communities

01

Narrative Ownership

Content development started with story - telling workshops in which participants shared personal accounts of migration, discrimination, & adaptation. From these responses facilitators guided these narratives into short dramatic scenes

02

Cultural Hybridity in performing

Plays deliberately incorporated elements from both Venezuelan and Peruvian performance traditions—such as the *décima* (a poetic form common in Peru) and *gaita zuliana* music from Venezuela.

03

Budgeting for flexibility

Funding was structured using a modular budgeting approach, with core costs (venue rental, technical equipment) supplemented by flexible micro-grants for each performance cycle. This allowed local theatre groups to adapt themes to emerging issues

04

Audience Engagement

Performances took place in public plazas, school auditoriums, and community centres, deliberately choosing open and accessible spaces to attract passers-by. Each show was followed by post-performance dialogue for real time feedback loops



Comparative and global insights

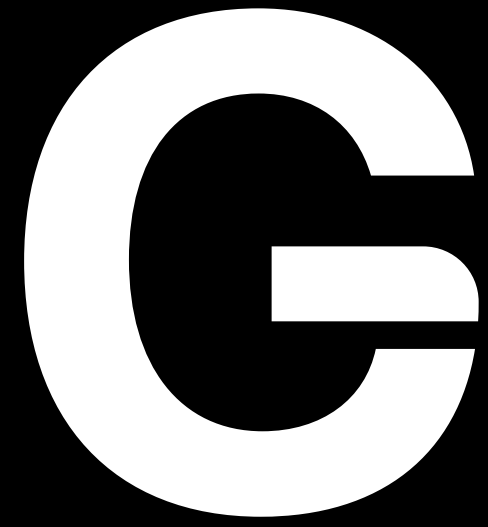
The Peruvian theatre model stands out for its embodied, in-person engagement. While digital approaches offer scale, live theatre delivers immediacy and relational depth, enabling audiences to interact directly with performers. This personal contact appears especially valuable in contexts where prejudice thrives on a lack of direct interaction between groups.

Moreover, the Peru case illustrates how localisation in communication can go beyond message delivery to create shared spaces of cultural co-production, an approach that may be particularly adaptable to other Latin American host contexts such as Colombia and Ecuador, where Venezuelan migration continues to reshape social dynamics.

Crosscutting Lessons

Localisation in communication not only strengthens programme relevance and community ownership but also directly advances the global policy agenda on efficiency, accountability, and equity

Area	What has been learned	Example from Practice
Actors	Local actors as decision-makers, not merely implementers	In Peru, community theatre groups held authority over script content and delivery, adjusting performances to respond to emerging issues voiced by their audiences
Acculturation	Anchoring of messages in linguistic and cultural realities	In Bangladesh, for example, humanitarian actors working with Rohingya communities found that embedding health and protection messages within Islamic parables created deeper resonance than abstract development slogans
Budgeting	Flexible and adaptive budgeting mechanisms.	The most effective localised strategies rejected rigid financial structures in favour of modular or micro-budgeting approaches that allowed for swift reallocations. In Uganda, refugee-led radio stations could pivot airtime towards urgent topics such as food distribution changes
Multi Media	Online and offline communication ecosystems	The strongest programmes deliberately bridged these spaces. In Jordan, digital campaigns were reinforced through in-person outreach at markets and youth clubs
MEL	Embedded Feedback loops	In Bangladesh, media teams monitored WhatsApp groups to gauge the impact of their broadcasts in real time. In Uganda, radio producers responded directly to call-in questions



More case studies can be found in Chapter 14 of
Communicating for change: Strategic Communication for
Social and Development Impact (Edition 1)

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By framing localisation as a driver of effectiveness rather than merely a compliance requirement, practitioners can more effectively secure resources and institutional support for these approaches.