



Designing Crisis Communication for Multicultural Communities

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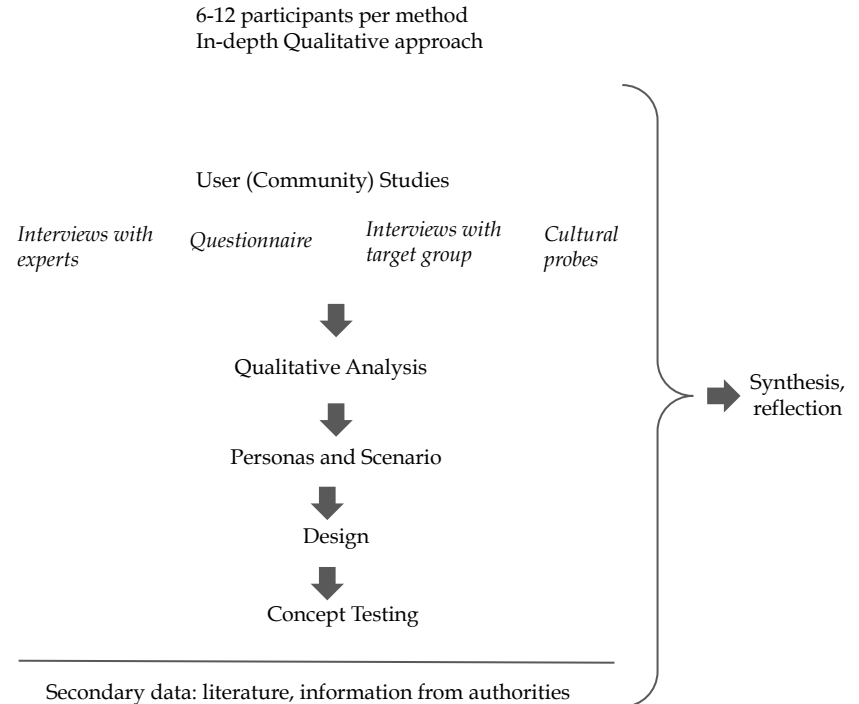


Background

Objective: This study seeks to explore and comprehend the dynamics of crisis communication within multicultural suburbs of Sweden, specifically focusing on areas characterized by lower socio-economic status and labeled as Vulnerable Areas.

Target Group Context: Our investigation primarily revolves around individuals with foreign cultural backgrounds residing in these areas, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of crisis communication directed towards them and elevate their level of trust in information disseminated by authorities.

Significance: Effective crisis communication is crucial, especially in diverse and multicultural settings, where misunderstandings and mistrust can significantly impede the swift transmission of vital information during emergencies.

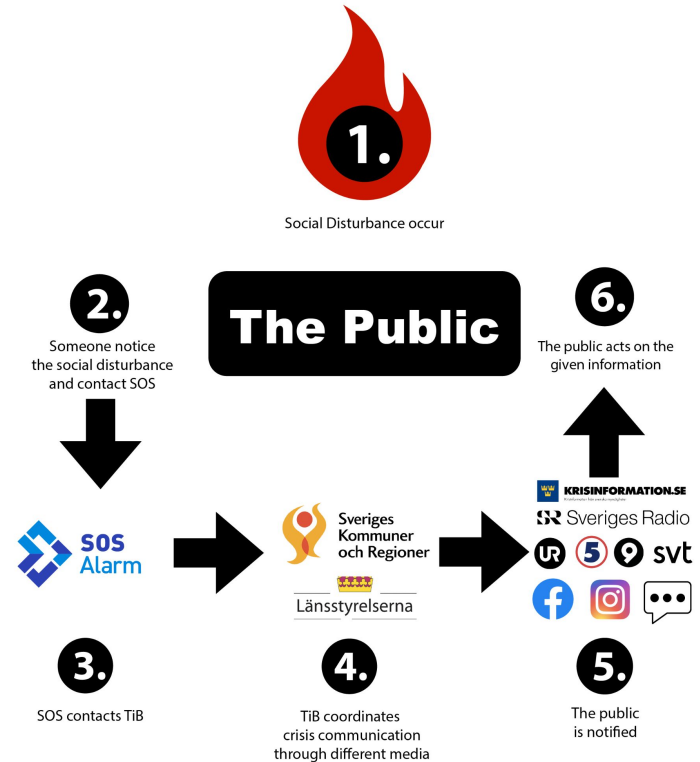


Background: Swedish Crisis Communication System & Target Group

Swedish Crisis Communication System: Sweden employs a structured, top-down approach to crisis communication, which primarily involves the dissemination of vital information by the authorities during emergencies.

Target Group Description: Our focus lies on individuals with foreign cultural backgrounds residing in multicultural suburbs characterized by lower socio-economic status, also known as Vulnerable Areas. The unique social and cultural contexts of these individuals necessitate tailored communication strategies to ensure the effective conveyance of critical information.

Communication Challenges: These regions often witness a heightened degree of skepticism and trust deficits towards Swedish authorities, primarily due to cultural disparities, social norms, and perceived experiences of unfair treatment.



Identified Problems: Challenges in Crisis Communication

Information Vacuums: A prevalent risk exists of information voids at the municipal level, leading to a disconnect between the authorities and the communities.

Inaccessible Digital Channels: The extensive reliance on digital channels often fails to reach everyone, notably the target group, all the time.

Unmet Communication: The current channels and strategies utilized by communicators aren't effective in reaching and engaging the target group.

Mutual Understanding Deficit: There's a struggle between communicators and the target group to comprehend and empathize with each other's contexts and perspectives.

Unheard Voices: The target group often feels overlooked and unheard, fostering feelings of alienation and mistrust.

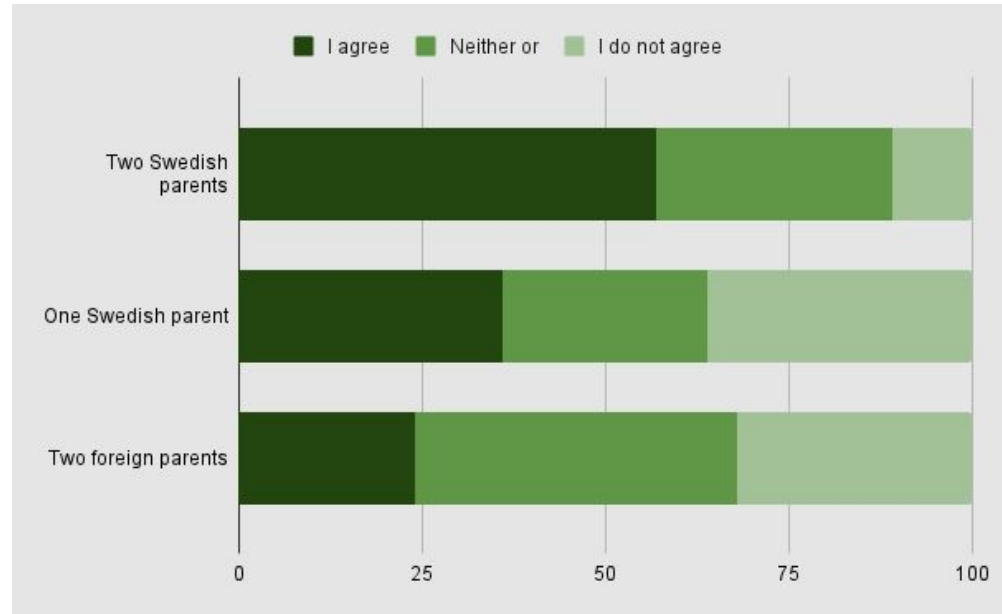
Information Seeking & Understanding: The target group, due to various barriers, often doesn't seek, understand, find, or trust the provided information, preferring alternative sources viewed as more reliable.



Navigating Trust and Language: Identifying Barriers in Communication

Trust Deficits: The target group generally exhibits lower levels of trust towards Swedish authorities, influenced by social norms, cultural variances, perceived unfair treatments, and existing social distances.

Language Barriers: The proficiency, or the confidence in proficiency, in the Swedish language within the target group is often lower, leading to difficulties in understanding crucial information disseminated by authorities during crises.



I trust that the Swedish authorities have been truthful during the pandemic.

Facing the Hurdles: Communicator Challenges in Crisis Communication

Lack of Resources: Communicators often operate under constraints with limited resources impacting their outreach and engagement capabilities.

Deficit in Knowledge: A pronounced knowledge gap exists, hindering communicators' understanding and adaptation to the diverse needs of the target group.

Absence of Insights: The communicators often lack profound insights into the social and cultural contexts of the target group, resulting in unmet communication needs and diminished trust levels.



Exploring User Profiles and Their Environment

Personas: Six distinct personas were meticulously developed, each providing insights into diverse user profiles, including their background, skills, attitudes, and abilities. Each persona represents a unique set of characteristics, goals, and challenges, aiding in a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse target group.

Gårdsby Scenario: Gårdsby is a meticulously crafted fictional suburb, reflecting the historical, social, and geographical settings typical of metropolitan areas in Sweden. It serves as a contextual framework, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of the personas within a relevant environment.

GÅRDSBY

SOFIA

INTRODUCTION
Sofia is 68 years old and lives with her husband in a tenancy in the district Gårdsby, where they have lived since the 80s when they fled to Sweden together. The two grown up children also grew up here. Sofia has been retired for three years after a working life in elderly care.

The best thing about Gårdsby is that the family lives close by and the green area nearby. However, Sofia feels disappointed that Gårdsby has become increasingly insecure in the last ten years or so and avoids going outdoors after nightfall. In addition, she feels that the houses in the area have not been maintained for a long time.

SKILLS AND PERSONALITY
With her long life experience, Sofia has good knowledge of crisis preparedness in general because it was important in her home country. On the other hand, she is unsure of her linguistic ability, mainly when it comes to understanding written communication from, for example, various authorities, despite the fact that she has sufficient oral Swedish skills. If there is something she does not understand, she asks the children for help. She does not think it is a problem, because they have always done so in the family. She is not entirely comfortable using digital aids to carry out errands, but rather talks to a person.

VALUES
As a resident, I become insecure when crisis information is communicated via news in the mallbox, because I think it can be difficult to know if I have understood the information correctly.
As a user, I want to understand how to act during a social disturbance and know where shelters are located. In addition, I want to be able to talk to a natural person I trust, a family member or someone in Gårdsby.
During a social disturbance, I believe I can contribute with my long experience in geriatric care.

ATTITUDES
Sofia consumes news from Swedish news channels on TV and from her home country. If the news or information differs in the Swedish reports against the foreign ones, she trusts the foreign news more, because she understands them better. But it certainly creates some confusion. In addition, there was some teaching of crisis preparedness in primary school in her home country, so Sofia feels that she has a high level of knowledge about crisis preparedness but thinks Sweden can be a little too late to its crisis preparedness and communication sometimes.

During the Corona pandemic, Sofia often became unsure whether she understood the written information correctly. Then she asked her children for help. Sofia started using mouth guards long before Sweden recommended it and has tried as much as possible to stay indoors.

When there is something I don't understand from material that the authorities send me, I ask my children for help.

Digital Capacity 1 2 3 4

Community Trust 1 2 3 4

Self-Confidence to Communicate Ability 1 2 3 4

Willingness to Engage in Healthier Habits 1 2 3 4

tract that emerged during the 1960s and is part of a metropolitan area built within the framework of the Million Program. By 2020, the inhabitants. The plan of the city planners was to create a new area with greenery, spaciousness and freedom from disturbance.

rental properties and a large proportion of foreign-born, but not for a long time. There is a great variety of ages in the area, with high-income earners, high numbers of income support, and a lower level of education than the average in Sweden.

different associations that create a positive feeling of safety for residents. There are many green areas nearby.

ents that the area is neglected and not prioritized. This is especially in the evenings and at night. The area is perceived as an "exposed area".

*Community trust (swe: lokalsamhället) is defined as trust in people and authorities in the area where you live.

Bridging the Gap: A Knowledge Transfer Solution

Knowledge Transfer Process: Introducing a seamless process designed to enhance the mutual understanding between communicators and the target group, focusing on cultural nuances and unique communication needs.

Role of Facilitators: Empowering trusted individuals from the target group's social context, facilitators act as mediators, enhancing the flow of crisis information and addressing trust deficits.

Addressing Trust & Communication Issues: This proposed solution targets the prevalent communication barriers and trust issues, ensuring that critical information is tailored, resonant, and reaches the intended recipients effectively.

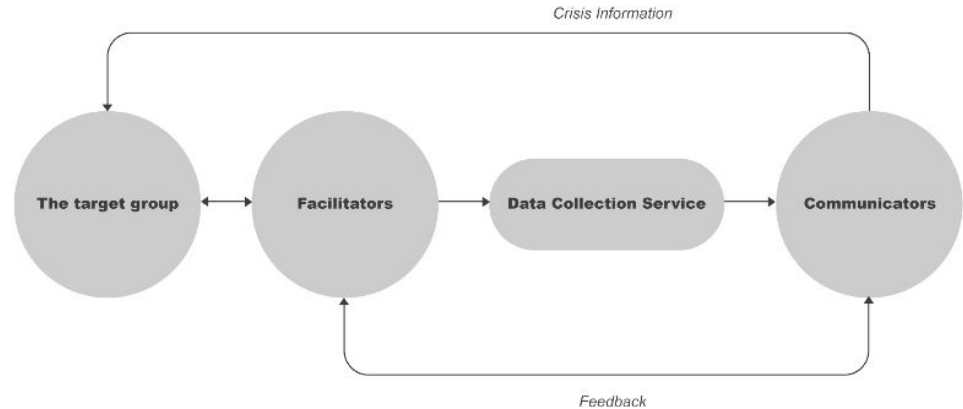


Enhanced Interaction: The Importance of Two-Way Communication

Bilateral Dialogue: Establishing a dynamic, two-way communication stream fosters a deeper understanding and collaboration between the communicators and the target group.

Multilingual Approach: Adapting communications to a multilingual format ensures broader reach and inclusivity, catering to the diverse linguistic needs of the target group.

Improved Crisis Management: Through an enhanced interaction model, critical information is more accurately conveyed and received, facilitating more effective crisis response and management.

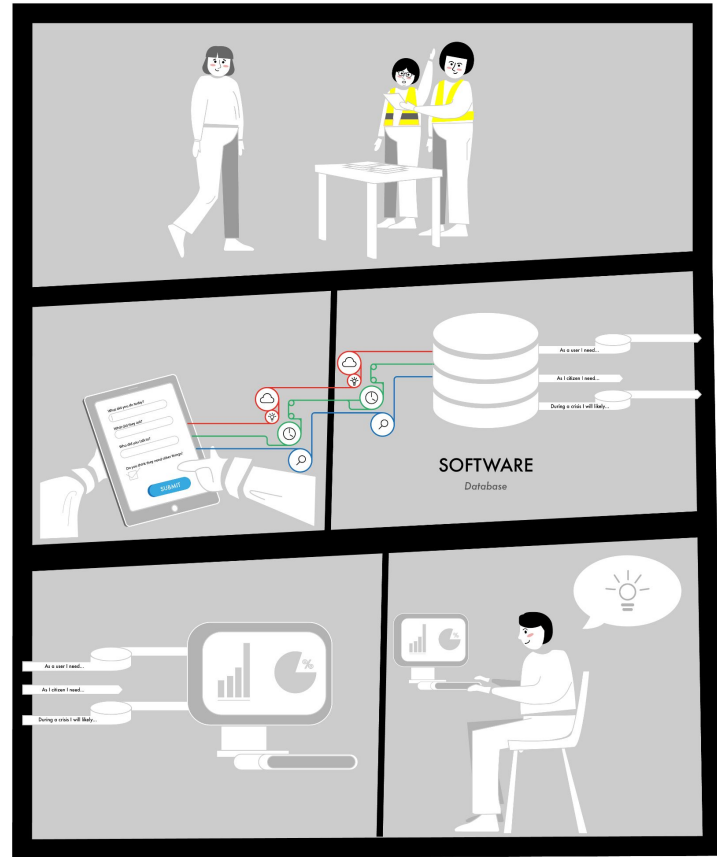


Bridging Trust Gaps: Adaptive Communication Strategies

Cultural Sensitivity: Adaptation of communication to respect and reflect the cultural nuances and societal norms of the target group fosters a sense of respect and mutual understanding.

Informed Adaptation: By being attuned to the social and cultural contexts of the target group, communicators can present information in a more relatable and comprehensible manner, increasing the effectiveness of the communication.

Trust Enhancement: Culturally informed and socially sensitive communication can significantly boost the trust levels between the target group and the communicators, fostering a more harmonious interaction.



Enhancements and Progressions in Trustful Communication

Process Enhancements: Exploring refinements and advancements in the knowledge transfer process to boost effectiveness and inclusivity in communication.

User-Centered Approaches: Focusing on user-centered design principles to further adapt and customize communication strategies to the diverse needs of the target group.

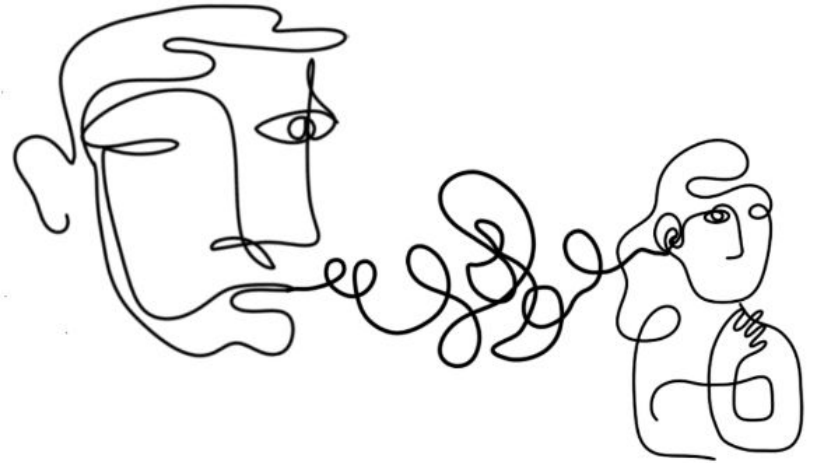
Action Research: Conducting ongoing research and evaluations to assess the impact and effectiveness of new strategies and to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to evolving needs.



Where to focus

Trust and Understanding

Knowledge Transfer Process



Thank you!