Case Management

Over 250 CRS programs across all sectors use CommCare for case reporting and case management. This tracks repeated interactions with program participants, changes in conditions, and delivery of goods or services.

Needs Assessment

CRS has pre-configured forms libraries for needs assessments and baseline surveys in CommCare and the Cash and Assets Transfer Platform (CAT) using Red-Box Collect.

Supply Chain (pre-nagat)

In emergency supply chains, supply chain managers can be challenged to track or restrict/delay due to lack of power. However, it is possible to create a supply chain information system that works with SMS (short message service, or text messaging) only. With this you can communicate inventory needs, inventory status, deliveries, and distribution of goods. CRS recently deployed a test supply chain tool to maskar commodities in Congo.

Cash / Vouchers

Addressing secondary impacts of communities affected by COVID-19 may include cash and voucher assistance. "Cash in lieu of distributions" allow for cash and Assets Transfer Platform (CAT) to be tracked for tracking cash and distributions that can be tracked with financial controls. HRD has a pre-configured MDA survey library for MCI/SC and CommCare for rapid responses. Deployable CAT templates are also available. See CAT user portal.

Frontline Workers

Community health workers can use mobile apps to log their interactions, adhere to medical protocols, and track responses. The NetHealth Mobile Application, developed by NetHope, is one of CRS’ longest running health programs and has accrued a wealth of evidence about the impact of using digital tech.

Surveillance & Tracking

Data visualization helps field teams, partners, and other stakeholders work from the same page of the story. There are many examples using Power BI to show COVID-19 Impact and a variety of data sources that can be integrated into dashboards. NetHope’s Artificial Intelligence Workgroup and Humanitarian Response Information System (HRIS) support the Community Impact Dashboard.

Reports, Dashboards

Dashboards visualize hotspots, lines, partners, and other stakeholders work from the same page of the story. There are many examples using Power BI to show COVID-19 Impact and a variety of data sources that can be integrated into dashboards.

Social and Behavior Change Communication

Social and behavioral change communications can use chatbots to emulate human conversation through pre-defined or dynamic scripts. They can be embedded in tools such as WhatsApp, Skype, social media, or simple SMS. To the user, it will feel like speaking with a real person. However, it is an automated call in the conversation to a human. Chatbots use automation to scale quickly.

Artificial Intelligence

NetHope’s Artificial Intelligence Workgroup is working to ensure digital technologies and machine learning can be used for COVID-19 response from RAGs, subject matter experts and technology partners.

Bulk SMS

CRS works with a variety of tech partners who can implement social behavior change communication using mediums such as automated SMS messaging. CRS uses bulk SMS in India to deliver reminders to community health workers and in Nigeria to deliver messages.

Automated Calls

CRS has several tech partners who offer interactive voice response (think robocalls). For example, in Rwanda CRS used bulk SMS to deliver messages on complementary feeding practices to caregivers with children.

Informed Practices

NetHope’s Artificial Intelligence Workgroup is working to ensure digital technologies and machine learning can be used for COVID-19 response from RAGs, subject matter experts and technology partners.

Best Practices

Design with the User

Understand the Existing System

Design for Scale

Build for Sustainability

Be Data Driven

Use Open Standards, Open Data, Open Source, and Open Innovation

Reuse and Improve

Address Privacy and Security

Be Collaborative

Lessons from Ebola

A wealth of experience was accrued using digital tools in the West Africa Ebola response. Many lessons were captured in this guide: Fighting Ebola with Information: Learning from the Use of Data, Information, and Digital Technologies in the West Africa Ebola Outbreak 2014-16. This guide reiterates the importance of digital health investments, interoperability, and scale to begin registering technologies and where they are used. Organizations responding to COVID-19 can refer to the case studies to see what digital tools are used and where.

Integrate with National Strategies

Most countries have a digital health strategy. For example, strategies for 42 countries in Africa are linked to NetHope. The Digital Health Atlas aims to strengthen the value and impact of digital health investments, improvements, and adoption, and facilitate and scale up registering technologies and where they are used. Organizations responding to COVID-19 can refer to the case studies to see what digital tools are used and where.

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Emerging Technologies

The Digital Health Atlas provides guidance for using technology in humanitarian response. CRS committed to, and formally endorsed, the principles in 2016.

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