UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

**TOOL:**

# USING TELEVISION SCREENS: CREATING INCLUSIVE CONTENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

## Introduction

In many contexts, humanitarian agencies use digital screens or displays to share important information with communities. These screens can be useful channels to engage communities – but care is needed to minimise excluding groups and exacerbating a 'digital divide'. When developing television program content with and for communities, there are two areas which should be considered to ensure that persons with disabilities can access and understand the material:

The presentation of text and graphics

Services that will enable people with sensory impairments to access content

## For persons with hearing impairments

Oral content must be accompanied by an written narrative – consider using open captioning when developing video content.

### Open captioning

- Captions are on-screen text descriptions that display a video's content that is otherwise inaccessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Captions are synchronized with the video image so that viewers have equivalent access to the content that is originally presented in sound, regardless of whether they receive that content via audio or text.

### Creating open captions:

- Use a consistent style to display captions;
- Use one or two lines of text;
- Use a sans serif font, such as Helvetica, and proportional spacing;
- Caption the exact wording of the video content (some edits may be necessary to facilitate reading speed);
- Describe sound effects that contribute to the understanding of the content;
- Use italics to indicate the narrator, off-screen voices, sound effects, and other vital information;
- Synchronize captions with the aural content;
- Maintain a consistent location of captions on the screen;
- Consult language style guide and dictionary for standard conventions regarding numbers, grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
- Allow adequate reading time.

### Programs to create open captions:

- iMovie;
- MacCaption.

## For persons with visual impairments

Video content on TVs should include an audio-narrated description of key, visual elements – consider providing spoken output of on-screen information.

### Be clear, concise, conversational

- Speak clearly and at a rate that can be understood.
- Prepare in advance and/or use transliterations to indicate pronunciation.
- Learn the proper pronunciation of foreign names and words used in a production.

### Creating audio narration:

- Deliver description in present tense, active voice.
- Describe what the viewer needs to know.
- Describe what is seen.
- Take into account what the viewers already know.

## For persons with intellectual disabilities

Written information should be in an easy-to-read format[1]. The Emergency Lab should consider the following when creating easy-to-read content. Note that easy- to- read content also benefits people with low literacy or less familiar with reading complex information.

### Easy-to-read information is:

- information that is clear and easy to read and understand;
- developed to support people with intellectual disabilities better understand written information;
- written information, supported by pictures;
- uses everyday words and has no jargon or acronyms.

### Creating easy-to-read content:

- Ensure that text and graphics appear within the area of the screen that can be clearly seen;
- Use a clear typeface and lettering for easy on-screen reading;
- Use a large and clear font (i.e. Arial, Helvetica);
- Recommended font size is a 24 line minimum for body text and 18 minimum for upper-case text on a 576 line display;
- Use wide spaces between words;
- Use numbers instead of words (i.e. 8 not eight);
- Carefully choose colours and colour combinations;
- Ensure that there is sufficient contrast between text and the background;
- Adopt a lay-out that makes reading easy;
- Consider using pictograms or symbols for words when appropriate.

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[1]  'Making it Clear' is an organization that produces easy read information for a number of international organizations- https://makingitclearuk.com/