



PRACTICAL SHEET

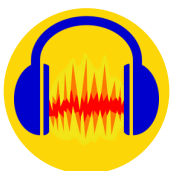
USING AUDIO COMMUNICATION

CREATING AUDIO MATERIALS DOES NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRE A LOT OF EXPERTISE OR RESOURCES. HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW EASY IT CAN BE TO CREATE AUDIO CONTENT USING LOW-COST SOLUTIONS.



SIX THINGS YOU WILL NEED

- A computer (laptop or desktop)
- A microphone (even the inbuilt mic on your computer)
- Audio recording software (don't panic, more below)
- A quiet room for recording (the smaller the better to reduce echo)
- Your message(s)
- The person you are recording (hopefully they've practised)



AUDACITY: AUDIO RECORDING

[Audacity](#) is a free, open source audio recording and editing tool. The interface and functions are relatively quick to learn. Audacity has developed [a comprehensive Wiki with FAQs and tutorials](#). You can also read [a quick 'getting started' guide](#) created by the UNHCR Innovation Service which includes screenshots and key steps to help initial navigation of the software.

Using Audacity (a quick summary of the guide):

- You can download Audacity to your computer [here](#) (**this is the only time you need an internet connection**. Once downloaded, you can share the installation package with others using a flash player).
- Once installed, open Audacity and **check that it can hear your microphone** - you need to click on 'start monitoring' and make sure you have selected the correct input (depending on whether you are using an internal or external microphone).
- **You will probably be familiar with the other navigation buttons** (record, fast forward, rewind, pause) as Audacity uses the same control symbols as many other devices. The big red circle is the "record" button - press it, start talking and you will record your voice.



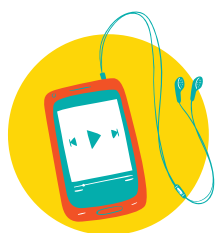


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- When you record, you create an audio track with a visible sound wave (or waveform). **The higher the waveform, the louder the sound.** The guide shows you how to select parts of the audio track for deletion or reordering - the concept is very similar to that of Cut, Copy and Paste in Microsoft Word (as you become more comfortable with the software, you will notice that the keyboard shortcuts are the same).
- **Audacity also allows you to manipulate the audio track** by fading in/out and has a "menu of effects" that you can apply (for example, amplification, noise reduction and echo). Experiment with these effects as some can be very useful!
- **You can also import other audio files** (for example, music in MP3 format) using the "import" menu option. The imported files appear as an additional audio track. If the tracks overlap (if they appear on your screen at the same point on the timeline), they will play simultaneously. While managing multiple tracks may seem tricky at first, you will soon get used to moving tracks around and controlling which one plays when.
- **Finally, don't forget to save as you go!** As with Microsoft Word, you can choose where to save the file on your computer. Audacity saves files in .aup format. To create a file in MP3 format that can be listened to on another device, you will need to use the "export" function.

Don't wait until the last moment. The software is free, download it now and try it out. You will feel more comfortable with the different options. Refer back to [the full online guide](#) if you have any problems.



5 TIPS FOR CREATING AUDIO MESSAGES

1. **Content created by communities themselves is often the most appropriate and engaging.** In many contexts, you will find that there are already groups within the community developing their own content.
2. **Don't be afraid of having fun** – audio information can include musical and comedy interludes (listen to what the local radio stations are using, and ask people what catches their attention). Nobody wants to listen to a monotone voice and the same 'message' on repeat.
3. **Once you've recorded your message, test it with a target group.** Ask this group to unpack what they have understood from the information they have heard, this will test comprehension and highlight any misconceptions. If there is any doubt, record again to avoid confusion.



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4. **Establishing (or strengthening) listening groups** will be an opportunity for the community to debate the issues and provide feedback on the information they are listening to. Community groups should identify the best times for them to listen and can be supported to cascade information to other members of the community.

5. **Modify the content for different groups** – ensure you address age, gender differences by developing messages with specific groups. Be sensitive to the languages you choose and avoid prioritising information sharing in only one language as this may create tensions.



WHEN TO USE TEXT COMMUNICATION?

Sometimes it is better to use images and text (leaflets, banners, billboards, etc.). This decision should be based on **an assessment of current and preferred communication practices** - it should take into account the level of literacy.

For more information on creating and using text-based materials, please see this [factsheet on making communication more inclusive](#).