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**Awareness-raising**

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## Foreword

The United Nations (UN) Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism strives to improve the UN's ability to work as one in delivering effective policy, programming and advice to Member States on curbing the illicit trade, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Established by the Secretary-General in 1998 with the task of coordinating the small arms work of the United Nations, CASA today unites more than 20 UN bodies active in policy development and/or programming related to small arms and light weapons.<sup>1</sup>

Building on previous UN initiatives to develop international standards in the areas of mine action (International Mine Action Standards)<sup>2</sup> and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards),<sup>3</sup> the United Nations has developed a series of International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) with the aim of providing clear and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on fundamental aspects of small arms and light weapons control. The present document constitutes one of more than 20 ISACS modules that provide practical guidance on instituting effective controls over the full life cycle of small arms and light weapons (all ISACS modules can be found at [www.smallarmsstandards.org](http://www.smallarmsstandards.org)).

ISACS are framed by existing global agreements related to small arms and light weapons control, in particular the

- *UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects* (UN PoA);
- *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons* (International Tracing Instrument);
- *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UN Firearms Protocol); and
- *Arms Trade Treaty*.

Within this global framework, ISACS build upon standards, best practice guidelines, model regulations, etc. that have been elaborated at the regional and sub-regional levels. ISACS seek to cover the fundamental areas of small arms and light weapons control on which the United Nations may be called upon to provide advice, guidance and support.

ISACS were developed, and continue to be improved and supplemented, by a broad coalition of small arms control specialists drawn from the United Nations, governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector (a full list of contributors to ISACS is available at [www.smallarmsstandards.org](http://www.smallarmsstandards.org)).

ISACS modules were drafted in accordance with the rules set out in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, *Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*, under the oversight of the CASA Working Group on ISACS, co-chaired by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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<sup>1</sup> For a full listing of CASA partners, see [www.poa-iss.org/CASA/CASA.aspx](http://www.poa-iss.org/CASA/CASA.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> [www.mineactionstandards.org](http://www.mineactionstandards.org)

<sup>3</sup> [www.unddr.org](http://www.unddr.org)

## Introduction

Raising awareness of the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons is an important step towards putting effective controls in place. Awareness-raising initiatives help to prevent harm, encourage safe behaviour and prepare the ground for effective small arms and light weapons controls.

Awareness-raising has three main components:

- **Risk education** aims to sensitize those most at-risk from the dangers associated with the uncontrolled proliferation, illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons and seeks to instil safe behaviour in those living in an environment of inadequate small arms and light weapons control.
- **Public information** aims to inform the broader general public about the human, socio-economic and other impacts of the uncontrolled proliferation, illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons and to increase public understanding of existing laws and additional control measures that are available.
- **Advocacy** aims to promote effective legislative and policy action in response to inadequate small arms and light weapons control – especially by parliaments, government ministries and local authorities – and can result in legislative, regulatory and administrative measures being taken, including the allocation of funding.

Awareness-raising initiatives aim to minimize and, where possible, eliminate the negative consequences of inadequate small arms and light weapons control by changing behaviour, increasing knowledge and promoting appropriate control measures, all with a view to creating safer communities and countries.



# Awareness-raising

## 1 Scope

This document provides guidance on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives to raise awareness of the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition.

**NOTE** The definitions of “small arm” and “light weapon” used in ISACS encompass their ammunition (see ISACS 01.20, *Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations*). References to “small arms and light weapons” throughout this document should be understood as such.

It is applicable to all situations in which there is a significant risk to civilians of death, injury or other serious harm resulting from the misuse (including criminal use and accidental use) and illegal possession of small arms or light weapons; e.g. in the contexts of crime, political violence, armed conflict, post-conflict weapon contamination, etc.

This document can be used to help raise awareness of

- a) the risks associated with the uncontrolled proliferation, illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons;
- b) the risks and responsibilities associated with the lawful possession and use of small arms, including legal responsibilities;
- c) the control options that exist to address the dangers and mitigate the risks set out in a) and b) above; and
- d) effective practices regarding the safe and secure interaction with small arms (e.g. safe handling, secure storage, etc.).

This document covers small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives at the local, national, and regional levels and focuses on three main elements of awareness-raising – risk education, public information and advocacy.

## 2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISACS 04.10, *Designing and implementing National Action Plans*

ISACS 05.10, *Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys*

ISACS 05.40, *Collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons*

### **3 Terms and definitions**

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISACS 01.20, *Glossary of terms and definitions*, and the following apply.

In all ISACS modules, the words 'shall', 'should', 'may' and 'can' are used to express provisions in accordance with their usage in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

- a) **“shall” indicates a requirement:** It is used to indicate requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted.
- b) **“should” indicates a recommendation:** It is used to indicate that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form, 'should not') a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.
- c) **“may” indicates permission:** It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
- d) **“can” indicates possibility and capability:** It is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or casual.

### **4 United Nations framework**

#### **4.1 General**

This document provides practical guidance on the implementation of commitments related to awareness-raising that are contained in United Nations multilateral instruments related to small arms and light weapons control.

#### **4.2 UN Programme of Action**

In the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN Programme of Action), all UN Member States commit themselves to

- a) “raise awareness of the character and seriousness of the interrelated problems associated with the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in these weapons” (part I, paragraph 21.d);
- b) “develop and implement, including in conflict and post-conflict situations, public awareness and confidence-building programmes on the problems and consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects [...] in cooperation with civil society and non-governmental organizations, with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons” (part II, paragraph 20); and
- c) “promote dialogue and a culture of peace by encouraging, as appropriate, education and public awareness programmes on the problems of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, involving all sectors of society” (part II, paragraph 41).

In addition, all UN Member States urged themselves, regional and sub-regional and international organizations, research centres, health and medical institutions, the United Nations system, international financial institutions and civil society to



- d) “develop and support action-oriented research aimed at facilitating greater awareness and better understanding of the nature and scope of the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (part III, paragraph 18).

### 4.3 Arms Trade Treaty

States party to the Arms Trade Treaty recognise

- a) “the voluntary and active role that civil society, including non-governmental organizations, and industry, can play in raising awareness of the object and purpose of this Treaty, and in supporting its implementation” (preambular paragraph 15).

## 5 Purpose of awareness-raising

The purpose of awareness-raising is to change behaviour in order to

- a) reduce harm to people (i.e. women, men, girls and boys) living in environments where small arms and light weapons already cause significant harm;
- b) prevent harm to people living in environments where small arms and light weapons threaten to cause significant harm; and
- c) prepare the ground for and increase the effectiveness of initiatives that address the uncontrolled proliferation, illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons in order to create safer communities, e.g. through
- 1) controlling the manufacture of small arms and light weapons, including small-scale craft production (see ISACS 03.10);
  - 2) regulating civilian access to small arms and light weapons (see ISACS 03.30);
  - 3) collecting illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons (see ISACS 05.40);
  - 4) destroying small arms and light weapons (see ISACS 05.50);
  - 5) implementing community safety programming (see ISACS 04.20); and
  - 6) enacting and enforcing new laws, regulations and administrative procedures (see ISACS Series 03, *Legislative and Regulatory*).

## 6 Modalities of awareness-raising

### 6.1 General

Awareness-raising works when a messenger delivers a message through a medium to individuals within a target audience, a significant number of which then change their behaviour in a manner consistent with the message delivered. The change in behaviour may be at the level of the

- a) individual (e.g. persuading a gun owner to safely store his weapon when not in use);
- b) community (e.g. encouraging members of a community to engage in community safety programming or to support community policing);
- c) sector (e.g. encouraging a customs agency to intensify efforts to prevent the illicit cross-border movement of small arms and light weapons); or

- d) State (e.g. the enactment of new legislation to control small arms and light weapons).

The behavioural change that is sought shall be the central focus and driving force of an awareness-raising initiative and shall determine the other elements in the awareness-raising chain (i.e. messenger → message → medium → target audience → change in behaviour → safer communities).

## **6.2 Message, messenger and medium**

### **6.2.1 General**

The message, messenger and medium shall be chosen in order to maximise

- a) the penetration and dissemination of the message within the target audience;
- b) the understanding, acceptance and internalisation of the message by the target audience; and
- c) the chances that the target audience will change its behaviour in ways consistent with those set out in Clause 5.

### **6.2.2 The message**

The message to be delivered shall be

- a) clear (i.e. easily understandable by the target audience);
- b) concise;
- c) relevant (i.e. applicable to the situation of the target audience); and
- d) compelling (i.e. designed to persuade the target audience to adopt safer behaviours).

### **6.2.3 The messenger**

The most effective messengers are people or organisations that have a special relationship with individuals in the target audience and who exert strong powers of persuasion over them. Examples of effective messengers are

- a) immediate or extended family members of people in the target audience (e.g. spouses, children or other relatives);
- b) individuals or organisations in the same community as the target audience that command its respect and admiration (e.g. women's groups, girl guides, boy scouts and other youth groups; teachers; religious leaders; community elders; business leaders; local government officials, sports teams; music groups, museums; etc.); and
- c) individuals or organisations outside of the community where the target audience is that command the respect and admiration of the target audience (e.g. national or regional leadership figures in the areas of politics, religion, culture, art, music, sport, etc.).

### **6.2.4 The medium**

The medium is the means by which a messenger delivers a message to a target audience.

**NOTE** Choosing the right communication medium is crucial when raising awareness of the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, since the ambition of the communication is very high — i.e. it aims not only to increase knowledge, understanding, motivation and involvement in the target audience, it also aims to change behaviour in the target audience.

The medium can take various forms, including

- a) face-to-face communication; i.e. any type of verbal or non-verbal communication where the messenger is in the same physical location as the receiver in the target audience;

**NOTE** Face-to-face communication is very powerful. A message can be delivered verbally as well as non-verbally through body language. It allows immediate feedback from the receiver so that the message can be adjusted if necessary.

**EXAMPLES** Community meetings, public performances (e.g. theatre, puppets, dancing, music, etc.); classroom presentations, interactions between relatives (e.g. a child with a parent or a spouse with a spouse).

- b) two-way remote communication; i.e. when the messenger and the receiver are not in the same physical location but are able to receive real-time feedback from each other;

**NOTE** Feedback in two-way remote communication is usually not as good as in face-to-face communication.

**EXAMPLES** Video conferencing, teleconferencing, phone calls, SMS (i.e. texting) and social media.

- c) audio / audio-visual communication; i.e. live or recorded verbal or non-verbal communication where the messenger delivers the message to the receiver via an electronic audio or audio-visual medium;

**NOTE** No real-time feedback is passed from the receiver to the messenger.

**EXAMPLES** Television, cinema and radio advertisements, videos, podcasts, social media, etc.

- d) written communication; i.e. any type of communication that involves the written word and / or illustrations; and

**NOTE** A key distinction between written communication and face-to-face communication is that feedback from the receiver may not be immediate. One of the major benefits of written communication, however, is that it can be used to document what has been said or agreed to and clarify ideas in order to avoid misunderstandings.

**EXAMPLES** Posters, pamphlets, leaflets, letters, email, written advertisements (e.g. newspaper, billboard, web-based, etc.), social media, etc.

- e) social media communication, which combines characteristics of some of the other forms of communication (e.g. written, audio-visual and two-way remote communication) via social media platforms.

**NOTE 1** Social media communication allows for real-time feedback with a written record of what has been communicated. What makes social media so powerful for awareness-raising is the way it enables team collaboration.

**NOTE 2** Social media campaigns can target specific audiences, in terms of both language and content (e.g. a post discouraging celebratory gunfire during sports events can be targeted at fans of specific sports teams).

**NOTE 3** Costs of advertising space on social media can be significantly lower than in traditional media.

**EXAMPLES** Instant messaging, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.

## **7 Key principles**

### **7.1 General**

Initiatives to raise awareness of the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons should

- a) empower affected communities and minimize marginalization of groups or sectors of society;
- b) gather, analyse, disseminate and use data (disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age and socio-economic or ethnic group / nationality) on the impact of small arms and light weapons on women, men, girls and boys, as well as the impact of small arms and light weapons control programmes;
- c) follow good practice in project and programme design and implementation, e.g. they should
  - 1) begin with a needs assessment (which may include a feasibility study by the proposed implementer);
  - 2) develop a plan based on the needs assessment, which includes clear, sex-disaggregated indicators to support monitoring and evaluation; and
  - 3) be amended during implementation if monitoring indicates that they are not proving effective.

### **7.2 Implementation during or following armed conflict**

Awareness-raising initiatives that are implemented during or following armed conflict

- a) shall do no harm;
- b) shall follow good practice applicable to all such humanitarian and development interventions;
- c) and should be carried out in accordance with the *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*.

### **7.3 Linkage to related programmes**

Awareness-raising initiatives may be linked to related programmes, including those focused on

- d) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants;
- e) mine and explosive remnants of war risk education; and
- f) collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons.

## **8 Needs assessment**

### **8.1 Purpose**

The purpose of a needs assessment is to

- a) ascertain the extent of the problem associated with the uncontrolled proliferation, illegal possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons;
- b) identify the groups and communities at greatest risk from small arms and light weapons, including any coping mechanisms they may have developed to mitigate this risk;

- c) identify community attitudes to small arms and light weapons, including any harmful social practices involving them (e.g. related to gender) that may increase risk to the community;
- d) identify the level of knowledge that exists regarding laws and regulations pertaining to small arms and light weapons, as well as other practical control measures.

A needs assessment shall form the basis for planning an awareness-raising initiative.

If an impact survey has been carried out as part of a broader small arms and light weapons survey in accordance with ISACS 05.10, *Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys*, this may be used as the basis of an awareness-raising needs assessment.

Clause 6 (ownership and follow-up) and Clause 7 (security, sensitivity and ethics) of ISACS 05.10, *Conducting small arms and light weapons surveys* shall guide the design and implantation of an awareness-raising needs assessment.

The scope of an awareness-raising needs assessment may be local, national, or regional in its coverage.

## 8.2 Issues to be covered

A needs assessment should allow for the following to be determined:

- a) the nature of the problem, including the
  - 1) principal drivers behind the demand for and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including gender dimensions,
  - 2) profile of those misusing weapons (disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age and socio-economic or ethnic group / nationality),
  - 3) ways in which weapons are being misused (e.g. in crime, gang violence, intimate partner and family-related violence, armed conflict, terrorist attacks, misuse by law enforcement officers, celebratory gunfire, etc.),
  - 4) types of weapons being misused,
  - 5) geographical locations of and patterns of violence in high-risk areas (including micro and macro locations), and
  - 6) ways in which women and men are differently affected by the misuse of small arms (e.g. as victims and perpetrators and in terms of injury / mortality ratios and misuse of small arms in the context of intimate partner and family-related violence);
- b) community perceptions (positive and negative) of the ownership and use of small arms, including those based on gender-related perceptions;
- c) community practices (social and traditional) that promote dangerous or harmful use of small arms or, on the other hand, that promote avoidance of or safe interaction with small arms, including gender-related practices (e.g. related to predominant expressions of masculinity)
- d) the main channels through which the intended target audiences of the awareness-raising initiative communicate and learn, as well as any additional channels of communication that could sustainably be introduced to facilitate message delivery;
- e) the approaches, messages and methodologies most likely to induce behavioural change in the target audiences;

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- f) the availability of local institutions, groups and structures that could support awareness-raising initiatives and contribute to their longer-term sustainability (e.g. traditional leadership structures, civil society organisations, media outlets, youth and women's groups, faith-based organisations, etc.);

**EXAMPLE** A small arms awareness-raising component could be added to an existing initiative that raises awareness on other issues and that already has access to the desired target audience.

- g) the availability of human and financial resources to carry out the awareness-raising initiative;
- h) the nature of local, national and regional small arms and light weapons control programmes, if they exist, including national legislative frameworks;
- i) the existence of political factors and actors that could influence, positively or negatively, an awareness-raising initiative; and
- j) the appropriate timeframe for the awareness-raising initiative.

### 8.3 Analysing and sharing results

Subject to any requirements for confidentiality:

- a) The results of an awareness-raising needs assessment, along with its analyses, should be shared with the National Authority on small arms and light weapons of the State or States that are covered, in whole or in part, by the needs assessment. Where such a National Authority does not exist, the results should be shared with the equivalent competent authority of the State (e.g. the ministry responsible for internal/home affairs, internal security, etc.).
- b) The National Authority on small arms and light weapons should, in turn, share the results and analyses with members of the national coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons control.

**NOTE** For further guidance, see ISACS 03.40, *National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control*.

- c) The results of a localised awareness-raising needs assessment, along with its analyses should also be shared relevant local administrative institutions, including traditional institutions and structures.

## 9 Planning and implementation

### 9.1 General principles for planning

The planning of an awareness-raising initiative shall be informed by a needs assessment (see Clause 8) and should be carried out in support of the National Action Plan on small arms and light weapons control or, where a National Action Plan does not yet exist, should be linked to its development in accordance with ISACS 04.10, *Designing and implementing National Action Plans*.

The planning of awareness-raising initiatives should involve members of affected communities and should be linked to community development initiatives and/or community safety programming where they exist, in order to promote community ownership of responses to any problems associated with small arms and light weapons. The plan should explicitly reflect the priorities of the people and organizations directly concerned and should be informed by the balanced participation of men and women in the planning process.

**NOTE** For further guidance, see ISACS 04.20, *Designing and implementing community safety programming*.

The awareness-raising plan shall set specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related (SMART) objectives using clear, sex-disaggregated indicators in order to facilitate project monitoring and evaluation (see Clause 11). Each objective should be linked to a specific target audience or set of target audiences.

## 9.2 Key planning and implementation issues

### 9.2.1 Risk education

Risk education should instil safe behaviour in individuals and groups that are exposed to risks from small arms or light weapons. It should be based on a communication strategy that is socially and culturally appropriate to promote the adoption by members of the public of safe behaviour around small arms and light weapons. The risk education communication strategy should contain the following elements:

- a) descriptions of the risk-taking behaviours to be addressed, together with an analysis of the drivers of the behaviours, including those based on perceptions and expectations based on gender;
- b) profiles of the intended recipients of the risk education;
- c) key messages to be delivered in order to attempt to change risky behaviour;
- d) the medium (or media) to be used to disseminate the message;
- e) a mechanism to monitor changes in behaviour through the measurement of relevant, sex-disaggregated indicators; and
- f) an exit strategy to ensure sustainability of risk education following the completion of the project.

#### 9.2.1.1 Children, adolescents and youth

Children, adolescents and youth may be the focus of awareness-raising initiatives and, specifically, of risk education in relation to small arms and light weapons. In addition to spreading awareness among their peers, children, adolescents and youth can also serve to convey key messages to their parents, relatives and the wider community.

NOTE See ISACS 06.20, *Children, adolescents, youth and small arms and light weapons*

In areas facing widespread and protracted problems with small arms and light weapons proliferation and misuse, risk education should be integrated into school curricula. In situations where the level of school enrolment is low, special efforts should be made to provide risk education to children, adolescents and youth who do not attend school.

In situations where gang violence is a concern, risk education initiatives should address the question of how to divert children, adolescents and youth away from gang involvement. This may include preventive work in schools, e.g. the teaching of conflict resolution; having former gang members communicate an anti-gang message and raising awareness of available methods of witness protection.

Risk education and awareness-raising among children, adolescents and youth should be integrated into and should support, where they exist,

- a) initiatives to build confidence in and promote constructive interaction with law enforcement officials (e.g. in the context of community-oriented policing); and
- b) peace and/or disarmament education programmes.

Where such initiatives and programmes do not exist, risk education and awareness-raising on the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons may be used as initial steps in establishing such broader programmes.

### **9.2.1.2 Women**

Women can be both a target audience for an awareness-raising initiative (e.g. if small arms are widely available in homes) and an effective medium through which messages can be delivered to other target audiences (e.g. politicians, community leaders, children, spouses, partners, etc.).

NOTE 1 Globally speaking, women constitute a small minority of owners of small arms, as well as of the perpetrators and victims of small arms-related violence, which are predominantly men. However, since women are several times more likely to be victims than perpetrators of small arms-related violence, they are disproportionately affected by the misuse of small arms.

NOTE 2 In many communities, women are especially vulnerable to the threat and use of violence, including with small arms and frequently by male intimate partners (or former partners), family members and friends. The presence of a small arm in the home greatly increases the likelihood that intimate partner or family-related violence will result in a fatality. Prolonged exposure to intolerable levels of violence in the home can also drive a victim to commit suicide, which is facilitated by the presence of a small arm in the home.

NOTE 3 In countries with high levels of small arms violence, the risk that violence against women will involve firearms is higher than elsewhere.

### **9.2.1.3 Men**

Most owners and users of small arms are male, as is the majority of people who work in professions that use small arms and light weapons (e.g. armed forces, law enforcement, private security, etc.). The majority of the victims and perpetrators of small arms-related violence are also male.

Men, therefore, constitute an important target audience for awareness-raising on the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Men constitute the group that most needs to change is behaviour if communities are to be made safer from small arms-related violence and accidents.

## **9.2.2 Public information**

Public information should inform the general public of the impact of the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and should increase public understanding of the behavioural and control options that are available to address this, including obligations under national law. Information provided should include

- a) actions people can take to reduce risk to themselves and their communities and to contribute to controlling and reducing the negative impacts of small arms and light weapons;
- b) an overview of the various impacts – human, socio-economic, environmental, etc. – at the local, national and/or regional levels;
- c) an explanation of how this impact is experienced differently by men, women, boys and girls;
- d) details of national legislation governing the possession and use of small arms by civilians;
- e) details of local, national and regional small arms and light weapons control programmes;
- f) details of international laws, agreements and standards relating to small arms and light weapons control; and
- g) the benefits that would accrue from a reduction in the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.



### 9.2.3 Advocacy

Advocacy, in the context of awareness-raising initiatives related to small arms and light weapons, should

- a) stimulate action by all relevant stakeholders to address the problems associated with the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (e.g. at the level of local communities, local authorities, national governments, regional or international organizations, etc.);
- b) promote respect for national and international laws and norms related to small arms and light weapons control;
- c) where necessary, promote the adoption of additional laws and norms to curb the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons; and
- d) promote a culture of peace and a society free of the misuse of small arms and light weapons.

### 9.2.4 Support for weapons collection programmes

The collection of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition shall be conducted in accordance with ISACS, 05.40, *Collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons*.

The awareness-raising component of a small arms and light weapons collection programme shall be carried out in accordance with the present document read in conjunction with Clause 11.1 of ISACS 05.40.

Awareness-raising initiatives can play an important supporting role in weapons collection programmes. The early and ongoing sensitization of potential participants in such programmes can be essential to their success. Awareness-raising initiatives in support of weapons collection programmes should begin well before the actual collection begins and should continue throughout the collection process.

Awareness-raising initiatives can support weapons collection programmes in the following ways:

- a) Risk education: Sensitize potential participants in the collection programme (i.e. those people who may hand in weapons or ammunition) to the risks involved, including by providing advice on the
  - 1) safe handling of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition; and
  - 2) types of weapons, ammunition and explosives that are not to be interacted with or handed in under any circumstances (see Clause 11.1.2 of ISACS 05.40, *Collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons*).
- b) Public information: Provide practical information on the collection process, including
  - 1) the collection locations, dates and times,
  - 2) the government bodies and/or other organizations that will run the collection centres,
  - 3) the practical procedures to be followed when handing in weapons and ammunition, and
  - 4) regular public updates on the numbers of weapons and rounds of ammunition collected and on progress in disposing of collected weapons.
- c) Advocacy: Encourage participation in the collection programme by
  - 1) explaining the reasons for it,

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- 2) specifying its objectives,
- 3) describing its benefits,
- 4) explaining how, when and where collected weapons will be disposed of,
- 5) clarifying legal issues (e.g. if an amnesty is involved), and
- 6) providing information on incentives to participate (if applicable).

NOTE For further guidance on weapons collection programmes, see ISACS 05.40, *Collection of illicit and unwanted small arms and light weapons*.

### 9.3 Messages and their means of delivery

The key messages to be delivered as part of an awareness-raising initiative should

- a) be capable of effecting the intended behavioural change on the part of the target audience; and
- b) be clear, relevant, realistic, socially acceptable and easily understandable by the target audience.

The channels of communication through which the messages are passed should be those most appropriate for the intended recipients. More than one channel of communication may be used to reach a single target audience. Where multiple channels of communication are available, a cost/effectiveness analysis shall be used to choose the most appropriate ones.

Before they are finalized, the effectiveness of messages, and their means of delivery, should be tested, in pilot projects, on representative samples of the target audience. The messages and their means of delivery should be modified, if necessary, as a result of this pilot testing.

NOTE Failure to conduct pilot tests can result in messages that are meaningless or culturally offensive to the intended recipients, or that lead to the production of materials that many members of the target audience cannot access.

After they are finalized, the effectiveness of messages and their means of delivery should be monitored in order to ensure that messages continue to reach their intended recipients and are being understood, accepted and acted upon by them. Where monitoring indicates that the messages are no longer being delivered, or are not resulting in the intended behavioural change, the messages and their means of delivery shall be revised accordingly.

### 9.4 Media and materials

Particular care shall be taken when adapting materials that have been used in awareness-raising initiatives in other contexts since applying them to a different context may result in ineffective messages or in the adapted materials not being accessible to the target audience.

EXAMPLE If literacy rates are low or if there are multiple local languages, text-based materials may have limited effectiveness as a means of communication.

Awareness-raising materials should be agreed upon at the programme level, so that projects operating under a particular programme may use the same materials. This may delay work in the short term but will reduce costs and avoid the risk of conflicting messages being disseminated.

## 10 Coordination

### 10.1 General

Effective coordination ensures the systematic and harmonious functioning of different inter-related components of a small arms and light weapons control programme. Likewise, awareness-raising initiatives should complement and support other elements of small arms and light weapons control programmes.

### 10.2 Coordination mechanisms and tools

Awareness-raising initiatives should be managed within a broader small arms and light weapons control programme, where one exists, rather than as a stand-alone initiative. Organizations conducting awareness-raising initiatives should participate in an established coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons control, where one exists (see ISACS 03.40, *National coordinating mechanisms on small arms and light weapons control*). Where no effective coordination mechanism exists, organizations conducting awareness-raising initiatives should together develop their own coordinating mechanism.

## 11 Monitoring and Evaluation

### 11.1 General

The implementation of a small arms and light weapons awareness-raising project shall be monitored and its impact on behaviour evaluated.

Monitoring is the continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an awareness-raising initiative in order to track its compliance with the original plan (see Clause 9.1) and to take necessary action to improve performance. Monitoring should be conducted throughout the course of the initiative based on measurements of sex-disaggregated indicators agreed during the planning stage (see Clause 9.2.1).

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an awareness-raising programme that analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

The purpose of an evaluation is to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results.

Evaluations, either internal or external, of awareness-raising initiatives shall be carried out following the completion of the initiatives and may be carried out upon the completion of significant phases of the initiative.

### 11.2 Key elements to monitor

Monitoring should check that awareness-raising initiatives are being carried out in accordance with their original plan and that they remain relevant to the needs of affected communities. Key elements to monitor include

- a) the continuing relevance, to the target audience, of the messages being delivered;

- b) the continuing effectiveness of the channels of communication being used to deliver the messages to the target audience;
- c) relevant behavioural change in the target audience in response to the messages received;
- d) changes in the profile of those misusing weapons;
- e) changes in the number and profile of casualties;
- f) the emergence of counter-messages or counter-narratives that run contrary to the message being promoted by the awareness-raising initiative; and
- g) political, socio-economic and other developments that could alter the ability of people to manage safely the threat posed by the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

### **11.3 Key elements to evaluate**

Evaluations of awareness-raising initiatives should measure the extent to which risk education, public information and advocacy have resulted in a reduced exposure of members of the public to risks associated with small arms and light weapons. Such evaluations should measure, in particular, five specific elements: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

#### **11.3.1 Relevance**

An awareness-raising initiative may be deemed relevant if it has

- a) correctly identified problems, needs and priorities at the local level;
- b) operated in line with the National Action Plan or other relevant policy of the government of the country in which the awareness-raising initiative was carried out; and
- c) complemented and enhanced overall small arms and light weapons control efforts.

#### **11.3.2 Effectiveness**

An awareness-raising initiative may be deemed effective if it achieved its objectives or if, on the basis of existing outputs, it is on track to achieve its objectives.

#### **11.3.3 Efficiency**

An awareness-raising initiative may be deemed efficient if it provided value for money, i.e. if similar results could not have been achieved by other means at a lower cost.

#### **11.3.4 Impact**

An awareness-raising initiative may be deemed to have had a positive impact if it contributed to reducing the extent and/or consequences of inadequate small arms and light weapons control at the local, national or regional levels (e.g. a reduction in firearms-related injuries, accidental shootings, gang violence, etc.).

#### **11.3.5 Sustainability**

An awareness-raising initiative may be deemed sustainable if its benefits are set to continue after donor funding and/or technical assistance have been withdrawn, i.e. if local administrations, traditional institutions, communities, etc. have the capacity to sustain high levels of awareness of the risks associated with the possession, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

## 11.4 Using the results of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are only useful if their results are used to improve the effectiveness of current and future awareness-raising initiatives.

The results of monitoring exercises should be used to increase the effectiveness on ongoing awareness-raising initiatives by ensuring that they are carried out according to the original plan, but also, where necessary, by modifying the original plan to ensure that it will meet its objectives.

The results of evaluations should be used to ensure that future awareness-raising initiatives, or future stages on an ongoing initiative, learn from and apply the lessons of past ones.

The results of monitoring and evaluation exercises should be disseminated widely to all stakeholders in the broader small arms and light weapons control programme within which the awareness-raising initiative is embedded.

NOTE For further guidance, see ISACS 04.40, *Monitoring, evaluation and reporting*.

## 12 Roles and responsibilities

### 12.1 Governments of affected countries

Government authorities, both at the national and local levels, are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of those under their jurisdiction. Stimulating public discussion and providing informed leadership are key responsibilities of governments in the process of reducing armed violence. Accordingly, government authorities should conduct, support, and/or facilitate, as appropriate, small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives. If necessary in order to do so, they should seek technical and financial assistance from other governments or organizations in a position to provide it.

### 12.2 United Nations

The United Nations works extensively at the local, national, regional and international levels to curb the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The UN should seek to ensure that the small arms and light weapons awareness needs of affected communities are addressed and that appropriate small arms and light weapons awareness components are integrated into all new and existing small arms and light weapons control programmes run or supported by the UN.

### 12.3 Awareness-raising specialists

The organization or body that implements small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives shall establish an appropriate and effective management system and apply it throughout the small arms and light weapons awareness project.

An appropriate management system is one that enables meaningful decisions to be taken on planning and implementing small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives on the basis of the best available data. Effective management means that small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives are contributing positively to a reduction in the extent and/or impact of inadequate small arms and light weapons control.

### 12.4 At-risk communities

At-risk communities – i.e. the members of the public living directly with the risks posed by the easy availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons – bear an important responsibility for ensuring their own protection. Many develop local coping mechanisms, which may be more or less effective. Small arms and light weapons awareness-raising operators shall seek to understand and support at-

risk communities in their efforts to minimize risk and reduce harm and assist them in establishing sustainable means to maintain awareness at a high level.

### **12.5 Civil society**

Civil society (e.g. non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based groups, academic institutions, etc.) have an important role to play in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of small arms and light weapons awareness-raising initiatives and, in particular, in ensuring that such initiatives are sustainable over the longer term. Relevant civil society organisations should be engaged in all stages of the awareness-raising process and their capacity to engage themselves in risk education, dissemination of public information and advocacy should be enhanced.

### **12.6 Donors**

Donor agencies should contribute to the effective management of small arms and light weapons control programmes and projects and, as such, have a responsibility for ensuring that the projects they fund are managed effectively and in accordance with national and international standards. Donors should ensure that small arms and light weapons awareness-raising operators chosen to implement such projects are competent and that they apply international standards.

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