**TOOL 25: CEA in Emergencies Briefing**

This tool provides a template briefing document on CEA for staff joining an emergency response operation, including why we need to engage with communities during an emergency, and the roles and responsibilities of all staff in strengthening CEA during a response. This can be used to guide verbal briefings, as a handout after a verbal briefing, or shared electronically with new staff when they join the response. Delete and edit this template as needed for your context.

**Briefing note for Red Cross Red Crescent Movement staff on Community Engagement and Accountability in Emergency Operations**

# **Introduction**

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is a way of working that recognises and values all community members as equal partners, whose diverse needs, priorities, and preferences guide everything we do. We achieve this by integrating meaningful community participation, open and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback, within our programmes and operations. Evidence, experience, and common sense tells us when we truly engage communities and they play an active role in designing and managing programmes and operations, the outcomes are more effective, sustainable, and of a higher quality.

Despite the increased urgency and complexity, it is still important, necessary, and possible to engage communities in emergency response operations. Unfortunately, there are many examples of operations going wrong because they did not sufficiently engage the local population, from aid items being sold in markets, to volunteers and staff being attacked and even killed, because of fear and misunderstanding in the community.

This briefing will cover:

* [Why CEA is important in emergency response operations](#_Why_should_we)
* [CEA within this response](#_CEA_within_the)
* [The minimum actions to achieve an acceptable level of accountability to communities, applicable to all emergency response operations](#_Minimum_actions_to)

* [CEA responsibilities specific to different roles and sectors](#_CEA_responsibilities_specific)
* [CEA contact details](#_CEA_contact_details)
* [Where to get more help on CEA](#_Where_to_get)

# **Why should we integrate CEA into an emergency response?**

* **Do no harm:** make sure we understand the community, and are working with the best representatives, and not putting anyone accessing our services at risk.
* **Protect staff and volunteer safety**: by ensuring communities concerns are acknowledged and acted on, delays or challenges explained, and harmful rumours and misinformation are corrected quickly – all of which can lead to violence if left unaddressed.
* **Save time and resources**: by making sure we don’t provide support people don’t need, or that won’t help them, by building on local knowledge and capacities, and using community feedback and suggestions to improve the response.
* **Support the response to meet its objectives**: by ensuring we understand the needs and can reach the most vulnerable, anticipate local risks or obstacles, adopt the most effective ways to engage and work with communities.
* **Support resilient communities**: by involving communities in planning and managing the response, it builds local ownership, which empowers communities and strengthens capacity and resilience to future shocks.
* **Improve quality, efficiency, and accountability**: by using local capacity and knowledge to deliver the most appropriate and relevant support, by using community feedback and insights to make improvements and respond to changes in needs and context and identifying and responding to cases of misconduct quickly.
* **Improve trust, acceptance, and access**: by showing respect for communities by working with them as equal partners, by working with local staff, volunteers and community groups, and by identifying any causes of mistrust and addressing them quickly.

# **CEA within the <insert name of response>**

**CEA approaches and activities**

<insert name of response> has adopted the following approaches to ensure a good level of accountability to communities: <Insert list of CEA approaches and activities and how they are being implemented>

* <How are communities participating in decision-making about the response? Are there community committees? Community representatives? Regular FGDs or meetings? What is the person being briefed’s role in this?>
* <e.g., Is there a feedback mechanism? How does it work? What are the responsibilities of the person being briefed to this feedback mechanism?>
* <How is information about the response being shared with community members? Are there regular meetings? A radio show? SMS etc? What is the person being briefed’s role in this?>

**Community context and needs**

<Insert any important information about the context and needs in the community that will be important for the person being briefed to know. For example:

* What have communities expressed as their main needs and priorities?
* Community demographics and structures, e.g., religious and ethnic groups, languages, literacy, who the leaders are and if they are trusted/trustworthy, active community groups and associations, other stakeholders
* Community relations and communication, e.g., how decisions are made, which groups, if any, are excluded, how people communicate and access information in the community, how problems are normally resolved, any sources of conflict or tensions, level of trust in authorities
* Culture and beliefs, e.g., role of gender and diversity (if not covered in a PGI briefing), discrimination towards any groups, any social and cultural values or practices relevant for the operation
* Community capacities, e.g., local resources and skills of different groups and how the response is building on these
* Perception of the Red Cross Red Crescent or aid agencies in general, e.g., if there is any mistrust or animosity towards the response in the community.>

**CEA staff, focal points and management**

* <Insert names and contacts details of any CEA staff within the response, and CEA focal points within specific sectors or locations>. How is community engagement being managed within the response? For example, is there a working group? Is it discussed in operational meetings?>

# **Minimum actions to integrate CEA into an emergency response**

These actions set out the minimum standards every Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response operations should aim for when capacity, time and resources limited. For more advanced measures, when more time and capacity are available, or for later stages of the response see the [CEA Guide](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/ifrc-cea-guide/) page 74.

**Throughout the response**

1. **Community engagement is integrated across the response**
* Brief all staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability
* Ensure community engagement issues is included in operational meetings
* Identify a community engagement focal point

**Community engagement in emergency assessments**

1. **Understand the needs, capacities and context of affected communities**
* Review internal and external secondary data on the community
* Conduct rapid situation & needs analysis
1. **Carry out the assessment with transparency and respect for the community**
* Discuss the assessment with key stakeholders in the community
* Introduce the National Society to the community and explain the purpose of the assessment
* Brief and train volunteers on the assessment purpose and process

**Planning the response**

1. **Discuss response plans with communities and key stakeholders**
* Discuss response plans and ways of working with a mix of community representatives
* Coordinate internally and externally to avoid causing frustration in communities
1. **Discuss and agree selection criteria and distribution processes with communities**
* Discuss and explain selection criteria and targeting processes with the community
* Be ready to respond to questions and complaints
* Discuss distribution processes
1. **Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in response plans and budgets**
* Plan community engagement approaches with the whole team
* Include CEA activities and indicators in response plans budgets

**During the response**

1. **Regularly share information about the response with the community, using the best approaches for different groups**
* Systematically share information about the response through multiple channels
* Provide transparent and clear information about the anticipated end of the operation
1. **Support community participation in making decisions about the response**
* Ensure communities are involved in making decisions about the response
1. **Listen to community feedback and use it to guide the response**
* Establish a simple community feedback mechanism
* Proactively check the operation is meeting people’s needs
* Act on feedback and monitoring data and use it to guide the response

**Evaluation and learning from the response**

1. **Include the community in the evaluation**
* Ask community members for their opinions of the operation
* Share evaluation learnings internally

# **CEA responsibilities specific to different roles and sectors**

Community engagement is not one person’s responsibility; we all have a responsibility to make sure that we are engaging with communities throughout the different stages of a response and that we are held accountable to them. Below are some of the key CEA responsibilities that different roles and sectors should lead on:

*<Go through the relevant roles, depending on who is being briefed. From January 2022, this section will be updated with specific checklists for different sectors>*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Responsibility** |
| **Leadership** | * Enforce the implementation of the CEA minimum standards during emergency operations
* Make it clear this is a priority by discussing it in meetings and measuring whether you are meeting accountability commitments
* Recruit community engagement and accountability staff and allocate funding for CEA activities within responses
* Ensure CEA is included in response funding discussions and proposals
 |
| **Operations manager/ HEOPs** | * There are enough dedicated staff for CEA, especially in the beginning of the operation to support the integration of CEA and training of staff and volunteers
* Make sure that everyone joining the operation is briefed on the CEA strategy of this emergency operation and their roles and responsibilities according to their positions.
* CEA is a standing agenda point in internal coordination meetings and action of community feedback is discussed and tracked
* The implementation of the CEA minimum actions is supported and monitored
* The planning process is collaborative, based on an appropriate understanding of the community context, and all technical sectors inform each other of the activities planned in which communities
* Ensure CEA plans and strategies are well reflected in the overall strategy of the operation
* Discuss and agree what should happen at the end of the operation and what support the community will need to take over
* Measure how well the operation is meeting peoples’ needs and if they are happy with their level of participation
 |
| **Sector leads and staff** | * Integrate community engagement sessions into all trainings and ensure your teams understands the concept and added value of CEA
* Understand the local context, plan together with communities and ensure to complement and use local capacities to provide support that is most relevant to communities’ needs
* Include community engagement activities in your plans, budgets, and proposals – and build in flexibility to respond to changes in needs
* Discuss community feedback and how to act on it in operation meetings
* Share regular updates on the progress of your activities and any operational changes with communities
* Discuss and agree what should happen at the end of the operation and what support the community will need to take over
 |
| **CEA staff** | * Provide training to staff and volunteers working on the response
* Integrate community engagement and accountability in response plans and budgets – including measures to ensure effective communication, participation, and management of community feedback
* Help colleagues to integrate community engagement in their sector
* Help coordinate sector activities conducted in the same communities
* Understand the process and procedures of the emergency operation and discuss plans with support services to avoid delays of activities due to procedural mistakes or delays
* Participate in inter-agency coordination mechanisms related to CEA
* Share community feedback findings with external partners and relevant stakeholders
 |
| **Volunteers**  | * Share information with people about who the National Society is, and what response activities are being carried out in the community
* Answer community members’ questions
* Share community feedback and concerns with the National Society
* Involve community members in planning and managing activities
* Share and use your knowledge and community insights to help design and improve the operation
* Flag if you anticipate tensions and misunderstandings linked to certain activities with your team leaders
 |
| **Volunteering** **management** **and/or branch** **managers**  | * Keep volunteers informed of what’s happening in the response, and ensure they are informed of operational changes
* Ensure volunteers are aware of what is expected from them, have signed and understood the code of conduct, as well as know their rights
* Brief volunteers on sensitive and serious community feedback and ensure volunteers know how to identify such cases and share it with the right focal point
* Involve volunteers in planning, managing, and closing of emergency operations
* Meet regularly with volunteers and listen to and act on their feedback about what is happening in the community
* Walk the talk - make sure we treat volunteers the way we expect them to treat the community
 |
| **Planning,** **monitoring,** **evaluation and** **reporting**  | * Ensure community engagement is integrated in the Emergency Appeal, Operational Strategy, and Implementation Plan – including activities, indicators, and budgets
* Use community feedback as part of monitoring data
* Help ensure previous learning is used to inform new operations – so we don’t repeat past mistakes in communities
* Allocate a section in reports to cover community feedback
* Support the collection of disaggregated data
 |
| **Information management** | * Set up and support processes to collect, manage and analyse community feedback
* Ensure all data is collected and handled in a safe and responsible way
* Support the process of producing information products that are easy to grasp and support operational decision-making
* Support the set-up and use of digital and cellular communication channels with community members
* Support knowledge management systems to ensure findings and lessons learnt are documented and shared across operations and the Movement
 |
| **Security** | * Advocate to response leadership that CEA is important for preventing security incidents
* Ensure community feedback such as threats or warnings are handled urgently and appropriately
* Monitor how the National Society and Movement is perceived by the community and discuss with communities how to build trust
* Help share information about the operation and the role and mandate of the Movement to prevent misperceptions and rumours that could harm the Red Cross Red Crescent reputation and access
 |
| **Support services (logistics, finance, admin, etc)**  | * Logistics should be involved in planning to make sure we don’t make promises to communities we can’t keep on aid items and timelines
* Finance, logistics and administration procedures should be flexible enough to allow for changes as community needs evolve
* Volunteers are paid on time as delays can cause frustration and hinder good communication and collaboration with the community
* Support efforts to ensure volunteers are insured and have the support they need to complete their work safely
 |
| **Human resources**  | * Support the recruitment of local staff
* Include CEA in staff and volunteer inductions and briefings
* Include CEA competencies (listening, empathy etc.) in role descriptions and assess for these when hiring
* Assess how well staff engaged communities during appraisals
* Ensure incoming staff are briefed on and sighed the Code of Conduct, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, anti-fraud and corruption
* Support the process of handling sensitive and serious community feedback and ensure there are focal points with the appropriate experience and capacity in place for acting on the feedback
* Support the set-up and maintenance of internal feedback mechanisms
 |
| **Partnership and Resource Development** | * Ensure CEA is included in funding requests and proposals
* Support the operations team to advocate for and negotiate flexible budgets and plans to allow for support tailored to the local preferences and context
* Share and highlight successful examples of CEA with donors
 |
| **Protection, Gender and Inclusion** | * Include questions on how to engage communities in gender and diversity analysis
* Ensure community engagement approaches are part of PGI work
* Mainstream PGI in community engagement approaches
 |

# **CEA contact details**

**[National Society] – [City], [Country]**

**[Name of Contact]**

[*enter the position contact currently holds*]

Tel. [enter number]| Mob. [enter number] | WhatsApp: [enter number]

Email: [enter e-mail address]| Skype: [enter address for Skype or other communication platform]

**CEA Surge Delegate(s) – [City], [Country]**

**[Name of Contact]**

[*enter the position contact currently holds*]

Tel. [enter number]| Mob. [enter number] | WhatsApp: [enter number]

Email: [enter e-mail address]| Skype: [enter address for Skype or other communication platform]

**[Cluster] Country Cluster Support Team – [City], [Country]**

**[Name of Contact]**

[*enter the position contact currently holds*]

Tel. [enter number]| Mob. [enter number] | WhatsApp: [enter number]

Email: [enter e-mail address]| Skype: [enter address for Skype or other communication platform]

**[Region] Regional Office – [City], [Country]**

**[Name of Contact]**

[*enter the position contact currently holds*]

Tel. [enter number]| Mob. [enter number] | WhatsApp: [enter number]

Email: [enter e-mail address]| Skype: [enter address for Skype or other communication platform]

# **Where to get more help on CEA…**

**CEA Resources for Emergency Response**

[**CEA in assessments**](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) **(tool 13)**

This tool outlines the type of data that should be collected for CEA during an assessment and maps out which data to collect during each stage of an emergency response and has guidance on how to analyse community engagement data using the IFRC analysis framework. This tool is included in the CEA toolkit (link below).

[**SOP for CEA in emergency operations**](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) **(tool 23)**

Overview of the main tasks and responsibilities of CEA staff and delegates working in emergency operations, including the timeframe the actions should be taken and who is the lead responsible for the action.

[**Checklists for sectors and roles *(coming soon tool 24)***](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/)

Guidance on the practical actions that staff and delegates across sectors operations should take to ensure that a good level of engagement with the community is taking place throughout different stages of an emergency response

[**Developing a CEA emergency plan**](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/)**(tool 22)**

Guidance and a template to prepare a CEA strategy and workplan for emergency response operations. Data from this plan can feed into the overall emergency plan of action for the response.

**Templates for procurement processes *(coming soon)***

Templates for procurement processes linked to CEA activities such as, templates for contracts with radio broadcasters, mobile networks, equipment for mobile cinema, etc..

**General CEA resources**

[**The Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability**](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/ifrc-cea-guide/)

The Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to CEA provides practical guidance and support to staff and volunteers across all sectors, including management, to integrate community engagement approaches in their work. It includes step-by-step guidance to meet the 18 minimum actions for good community engagement and accountability, how to integrate CEA into emergency operations, case studies and links to tools and training packages.

[**The CEA toolkit**](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/)

The CEA toolkit accompanies the CEA guide and is hosted on the community hub (below). The toolkit includes templates, checklists, and detailed guidance for longer-term programming as well as emergency responses, including guidance for community dialogues and participatory approaches to selection criteria, templates for CEA indicators and budgets, monitoring and evaluation tool, and guidance and tools to set up feedback mechanisms. These tools support staff and volunteers to put the CEA minimum actions into practice.

[**The Community Engagement Hub**](https://communityengagementhub.org/)

The Community Engagement Hub is a free online platform, hosted by British Red Cross, that provides a ‘one stop shop’ for community engagement and accountability. The hub contains over 300 resources and includes training packages, an e-learning game, an interactive map, a chat forum as well as tools, guides, and case studies on a range of topics from feedback mechanisms to radio programmes. Funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Hub is available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. If you have any questions or suggestions about the hub, please contact Laurel Selby LSelby@redcross.org.uk