# A RED CROSS RED CRESCENT GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The greatest acknowledgment goes to all the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement staff and volunteers who have worked with such commitment and passion to improve the way we engage with and are accountable to communities across the world. The revision of this guide has only been possible because of the valuable learning, best practices, and innovations that you have implemented in your programmes, operations, and National Societies. Thanks to your hard work, we have moved forward in challenging the systems in which we work and have created new momentum reflected in this guide. Congratulations to all of you who persuaded your team that a feedback mechanism was necessary, who argued for budget to train staff on community engagement or insisted that there must be time for communities to be part of the planning process. While there is still more work to be done, the Movement needs its community engagement and accountability ambassadors more than ever!

More specifically thanks to all those who took time out of their incredibly busy days, amidst a global pandemic, to review the various drafts of this guide. Your valuable contributions have been critical to shaping and improving the content of this guide.

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# FOREWORD

**“To build trust with communities, we need to understand and act on local knowledge and community feedback. It cannot be optional – we need to do so systematically and effectively. As a Federation of local responders, we have a unique duty to ensure that community engagement is at the core of all we do.”**

—J agan Chapagain, Secretary General, IFRC

**“Affected communities are not only experts on their situations, they are also first responders and agents of change. Enabling inclusive participation of communities at all levels is not a nice to have – it’s imperative. This means putting sustainable and systematic practices in place to seek, listen, act on, and respond to the voices and needs of communities. The ICRC is committed to making this happen.”**

— Robert Mardini, Director-General, ICRC

Welcome to the second edition of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability. Much has changed for the better since the first guide was published in 2016. The Movement Commitments on Community Engagement and Accountability were adopted at the 2019 Council of Delegates, a vibrant network of community engagement and accountability practitioners has developed and flourished, and we have more evidence than ever before that stronger engagement with communities improves the quality and impact of our work[1]. Not least, in our responses to COVID-19 and Ebola, where community trust has been critical to the success of all other interventions[2].

Despite this, a variety of barriers and challenges still exist to institutionalizing a consistent approach to ensuring we really do ‘*put people at the centre*’ by providing support that meets peoples’ needs, doesn’t undermine existing capacities or dignity, and helps to strengthen long-term resilience.

The aim of this revised guide is to help the Movement address these barriers and challenges and ensure we always engage communities, to a high standard, throughout all our activities. Changes to help us achieve this include:

- More focus on institutionalizing community engagement and accountability at the organizational level, as the building block for strong accountability in programmes and operations.
- Greater emphasis on participation and how to practically build this into programmes and operations, so we can move from ‘doing for’ to ‘doing with’ communities.
- Simplifying community engagement and accountability by combining the previous four components into one clear aim; that communities play an active role in designing and managing programmes and operations.
- Reducing the number of minimum actions for community engagement and accountability from 31 to 18, to provide a more straightforward and streamlined approach to integrating community engagement and accountability in our activities.

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. But don’t just listen to us. Here’s what our staff, volunteers, leaders, and community members have to say about the value of good community engagement and accountability:

## Communities

**“We are glad that Zambia Red Cross staff have come back to provide feedback on project implementation, most of the time, no one comes back to us after an evaluation or assessment of any kind. Decisions are made from their offices without engaging us community members on what we really want. We are the ones who can tell our story and what we really want or what is on the ground because we are the ones who live in this community.”**

— Induna, Lyoto Village, Zambia

**“We all live with so much uncertainty here. It’s so important that organizations like the Red Cross are providing clear and accurate information, that they listen to what the community needs and do something with that information.”**

— Saleh, Resident and Red Cross volunteer in Nea Kavala camp for migrants, Greece.

## Our staff and volunteers

**“We have found that communities are very receptive to people who take the time to come into the community, share the information and not just share information, but give time for them to ask questions and to ensure they clearly understand.”**

— Andrea Philips, Project Manager, Guyana Red Cross

**“It is an ethical responsibility that anyone should take to involve people of concern into the process and make sure the process fits them and not the other way around.”**

— Basic Assistance Programme Manager, Lebanon Red Cross

## Leadership

**“Community engagement and accountability during emergency operations helps ensure that we deliver aid based on the most urgent needs of the affected communities”**

— Ritola Tasmaya, Secretary General of the Indonesian Red Cross Society.


**Indonesia 2019** Every time the Indonesian Red Cross provides cash and voucher assistance, they ensure communities have information about the selection criteria and distribution process. This information is shared in a variety of ways, so even those with limited literacy can understand it. © Fajar.dok / IFRC

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is written for Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the IFRC, ICRC and partner National Societies who work with them. It is relevant for anyone who wants to strengthen the way they engage communities in their work and can be used by any sector. It provides guidance and tools to adopt a more systematic and reliable approach to engaging with and being accountable to communities. It does not replace existing good practices, but rather helps to address any gaps or weaknesses where they exist. Case studies are included throughout highlighting examples of good practice (and cautionary tales) from across the Movement. Practical tools and training packages support this guide, which are linked to throughout.

This guide is organized in seven modules, which can be used individually as needed:

**Module 1: Introduction** provides an overview of community engagement and accountability and how it supports Red Cross Red Crescent work, including the different roles and responsibilities and wider trends in the humanitarian sector.

**Module 2: Movement-wide commitments** presents the community engagement and accountability commitments adopted at the 2019 Council of Delegates.

**Module 3: Institutionalization** explains why it is important to embed community engagement and accountability within policies, procedures, and ways of working, with guidance and tools on how to do this.

**Module 4: Integration in programmes** outlines the minimum actions to achieve good community engagement throughout the programme cycle, with guidance and tools on how to implement each action.

**Module 5: Community engagement in emergencies** explains how to achieve a good level of community engagement when there is greater urgency, less time and often more complexity.

**Module 6: Community feedback mechanisms** provides step-by-step guidance on how to set up community feedback mechanisms within a programme, operation or as part of institutionalization.

**Module 7: Working with closely related sectors** focuses on the links between community engagement and accountability and protection, gender and inclusion and behaviour change and risk communication and explains how these areas should best work together.

## Feedback on this guide

This is the second edition of the Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability. It has been revised and updated based on experience and lessons learned since the pilot version was launched in 2016. This version will be field tested throughout 2021 and refined and finalized in 2022, so please share your feedback on this guide and how we can make it more useful, practical, and easy to use. Send your feedback to CEA.Geneva@ifrc.org.

**All tools in this guide are available at https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/**

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **AAP** | Accountability to Affected People or Populations |
| **ACAPS** | independent specialists in humanitarian needs analysis and assessment |
| **ABC** | Assisting behaviour change |
| **ALNAP** | Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action |
| **ATM** | Automatic-teller machine (bank cash machine) |
| **BOCA** | Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment |
| **CBS** | Community-based surveillance |
| **CEA** | Community engagement and accountability |
| **CBAT** | Community-based action teams |
| **CDAC** | Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network |
| **CHS** | Core humanitarian standard |
| **CP3** | Community Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness programme |
| **CRC** | Community resilience committees |
| **CVA** | Cash and voucher assistance |
| **CWC** | Communication with communities |
| **CWG** | Community working groups |
| **C4D** | Communication for development |
| **DAPS** | Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety |
| **DRR** | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| **eCBHFA** | Evidence-based community-based health and first aid |
| **eVCA** | Enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessment |
| **ECV** | Epidemic control for volunteers |
| **EcoSec** | Economic Security (ICRC) |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| **FAQ** | Frequently-asked questions |
| **FGD** | Focus Group Discussions |
| **HR** | Human resources |
| **HQ** | Headquarters |
| **IASC** | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| **IEC** | Information, education and communication |
| **ICRC** | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| **IFRC** | International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent |

| | |
|---|---|
| **IM** | Information management |
| **IT** | Information technology |
| **KAP** | Knowledge, attitudes and practices |
| **KII** | Key informant interview |
| **KPI** | Key performance indicator |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and evaluation |
| **MHM** | Menstrual hygiene management |
| **Movement** | The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement |
| **NS** | National Society |
| **NGO** | Non-governmental organization |
| **NS** | National Society |
| **NSD** | National Society Development |
| **OCAC** | Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification |
| **PASSA** | Participatory approach to safe shelter awareness |
| **PDM** | Post-distribution monitoring |
| **PHAST** | Participatory approach to hygiene and sanitation behavioural change |
| **PMER** | Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting |
| **PGI** | Protection, Gender and Inclusion (IFRC) |
| **PRP** | Physical Rehabilitation Programme |
| **PSEA** | Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse |
| **Q&A** | Question and answer |
| **RCCE** | Risk communication and community engagement |
| **RFL** | Restoring Family Links |
| **SEA** | Sexual exploitation and abuse |
| **SDB** | Safe and dignified burial |
| **SGBV** | Sexual and gender-based violence |
| **SOPs** | Standard Operating Procedures |
| **TiP** | Trafficking in persons |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNOCHA** | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| **WASH** | Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion |
| **WHO** | World Health Organization |

**Kenya 2019** Kenya Red Cross, in partnership with government authorities, is harnessing the power of youth to help tackle disease outbreaks. School clubs have been developed to empower young people to become "champions" in their community to prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks. © Corrie Butler / IFRC

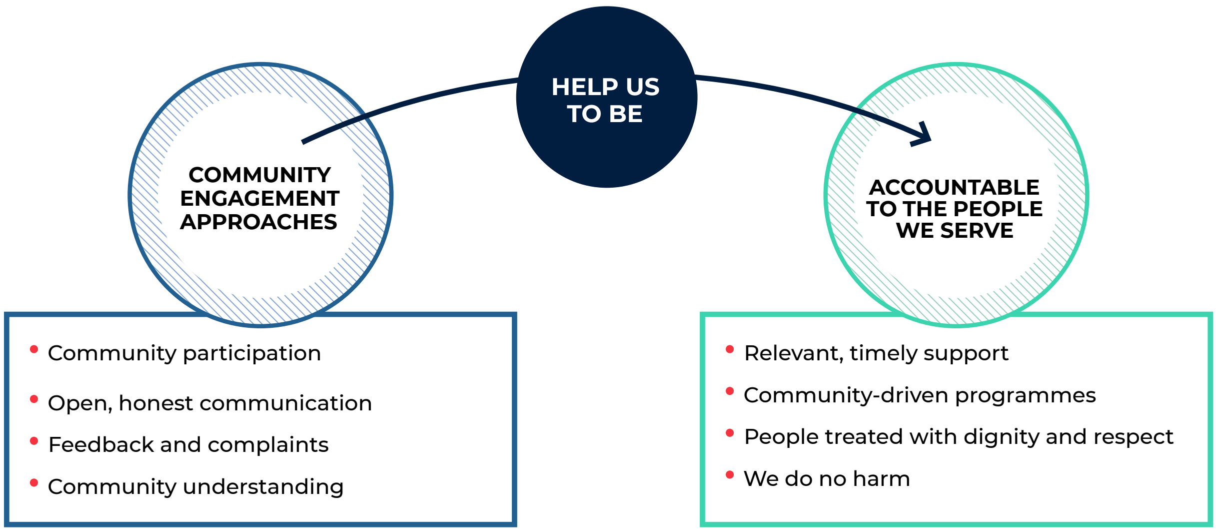
# MODULE 1
# INTRODUCTION

## What is community engagement and accountability?

Community engagement and accountability 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.

**What community engagement and accountability is not…**

- **Something new** – the Red Cross Red Crescent has always worked with communities, but we don't always do it as well as we should and adopting a more systematic approach could improve quality and prevent gaps in how we engage communities
- **A separate programme or activity** – community engagement is a mindset or a way of working that should be part of everything we do, integrated within all our work
- **One person's job** – accountability cannot be outsourced to one person or department; we all have a responsibility to ensure we engage communities well in our work
- **An extra burden or box to be ticked** – it's part of our core commitments and critical to the quality of our work and the impact we can have.



## WHO IS THE COMMUNITY?

The term 'community' is used throughout this guide and refers to the group of people affected by the organization's activities, programmes, or operations – including those who receive support and those who don't. The community can be defined geographically or by personal characteristics, such as age, gender, or status (e.g., pregnant women).

Not everyone in the community is the same and within and across communities there will be a wide range of needs, capacities, and risks. Therefore, when you see the word 'community' in this guide, it refers to all the diverse groups who make up a community, including women, men, boys, and girls, older persons, people with disabilities, different ethnic groups, sexual and gender minorities and marginalized or at-risk groups. This also includes community representatives, such as local leaders, organizations, and authorities.


**Colombia 2014** The ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross have implemented "education brigades" in several schools in town, where pupils learn to live together without violence in this very uncertain environment. © Didier Revol / ICRC

# Why do we need to engage communities?

1. **To understand the community context and needs**

We need to engage with all groups and individuals in the community to understand their specific needs, preferences, and context. If we assume we know what people need or how things work in their community, we risk getting it wrong and providing support that doesn't help, or even worse, doing harm. For example, by inflaming existing tensions or excluding already marginalized groups.

2. **For better, more effective programmes and operations**

Nobody knows the community better than the people who live there. When we draw on that local knowledge and expertise to plan and manage programmes and operations, we're much more likely to get it right and provide support that is useful, timely, relevant and of a high quality. Listening to community feedback gives us an early warning when things aren't working and provides valuable insights on how we can improve.

3. **To build trust, access, and acceptance with communities**

Open, honest communication and listening and acting on what people tell us, is a mark of respect which builds trust. Without trust people may not want to speak to us, use our services, believe the information we share or welcome our volunteers and staff safely into their community. When people don't trust us, our ability to help them becomes harder and even impossible.

4. **To strengthen community ownership and resilience**

People affected by crisis are not helpless. They are usually the first responders in a crisis and have knowledge, skills and capacities which can help to ensure aid is relevant and sustainable. When we design and manage programmes and operations in partnership with communities, it facilitates local ownership and self-reliance. When we don't engage them, we are treating them as passive recipients of aid, which undermines our efforts to strengthen community resilience.

5. **To uphold our own commitments**

Working in partnership with communities is at the core of who we are. We commit to involving people in the management of aid, holding ourselves accountable to those we seek to assist, and building on local capacity in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief[3]. The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance[4] commit to including transparent communication and feedback mechanisms in emergency responses. In December 2019, the first set of 'Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability'[5] was approved at the Council of Delegates (see page 21).

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

There are lots of different names to describe the process of community engagement and accountability - for example Accountability to Affected People or Populations (AAP), Beneficiary Communications, Accountability to Communities (AtC), Communication with Communities (CwC) or more recently and within health and epidemic response, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE). While it shouldn't matter what it's called so long as it happens, the range of different terminologies used across agencies can be confusing. Just keep in mind, all these terms are essentially describing the same thing - the process of working in a transparent and participatory way with communities that improves the quality of programmes and operations.

# How well are humanitarian organizations engaging communities?

Global evidence shows there are still significant gaps in how aid organisations engage communities, despite increased awareness and commitments to accountability. The following data, collected by Ground Truth Solutions[6], represents the views of nearly 10,000 people across 10 countries affected by disaster and crisis[7].

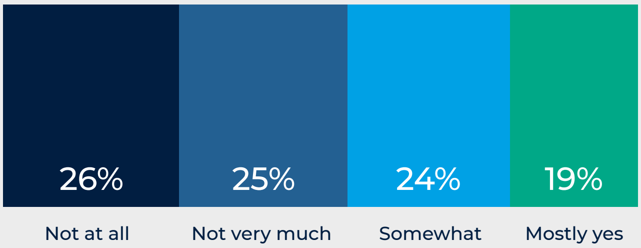
## Commitments to accountability are not being put into practice

> **Any transformative shift towards giving affected populations strategic influence over how aid responses are designed and implemented remains far off."**
>
> —Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report, 2020[8]

> **Participation and incorporating the views of crisis-affected people into programme design was a gap in 2012, 2015 and is still a gap in 2018."**
>
> —The State of the Humanitarian System, 2018[9]

> **Feedback is collected, but with little impact on the design of programmes"**
>
> —Humanitarian Accountability Report, 2020[10]

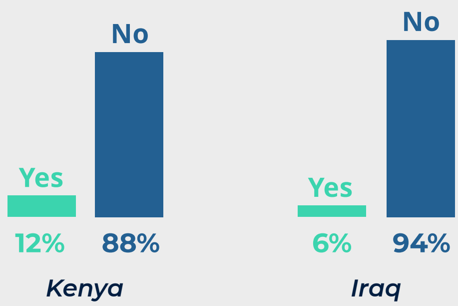
### Does the aid you receive meet your priority needs?



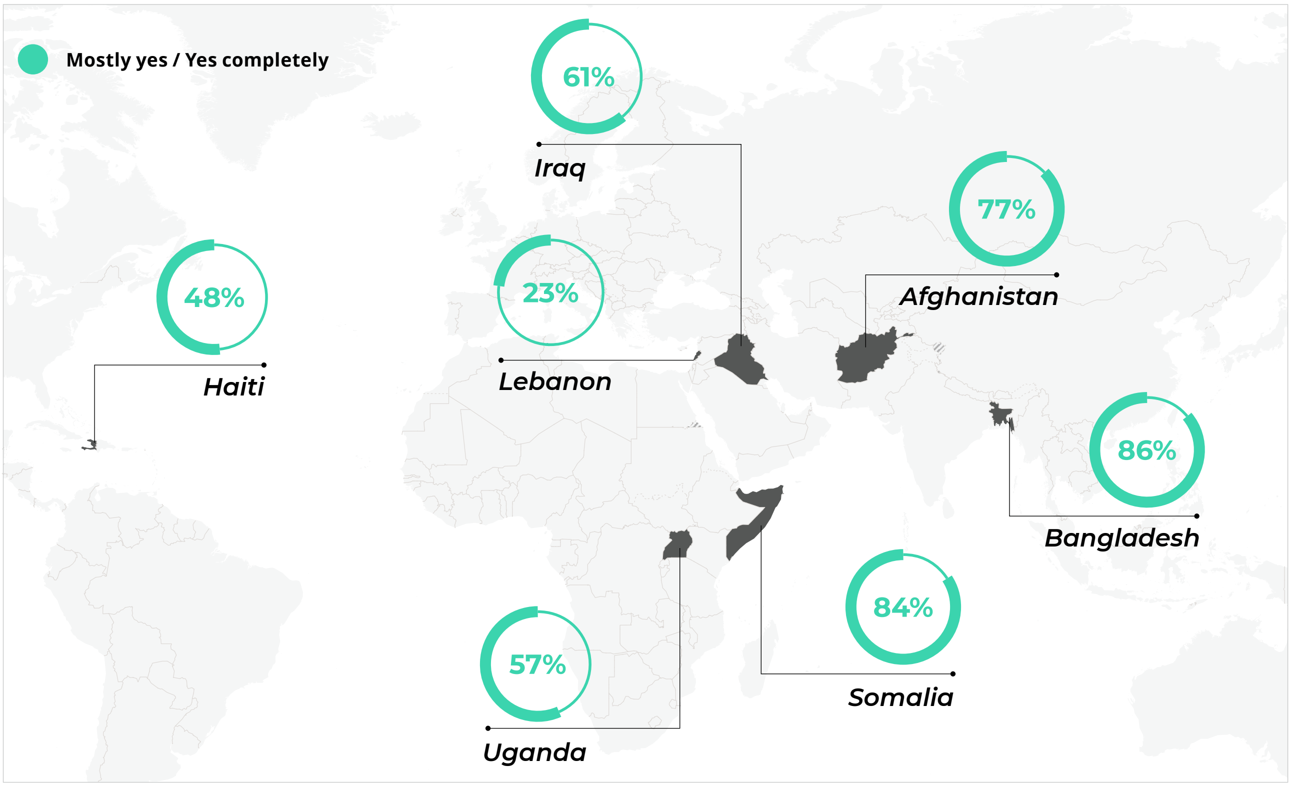

### Do aid organizations communicate well about their plans and activities?


*Source: Survey of 5000 people for the State of the Humanitarian System 2018*

### Do you know how aid agencies decide who receives support and who does not?

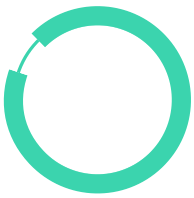


## Do you feel aid providers take your opinion into account when providing aid?




## Feedback mechanisms are not as effective as we think

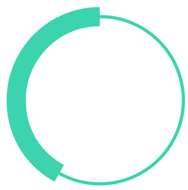
*Do you think if affected people make a complaint to your organisation, they will get a response?*



Aid responders
**93% Yes**

*Have you received a response to a suggestion or complaint?*

Affected people
**42% Yes**



## But hard evidence that participation does correlate with better programmes and better relationships with the community

The 2018 State of the Humanitarian System[11] report found a statistically significant correlation between:

- **Participation and better programming:** People who reported they were consulted and able to give feedback were two to three times more likely to be positive about the relevance and quality of aid received, than those who had not
- **Being consulted and feeling respected:** People who were consulted and able to give feedback were more than three times likely to say they were treated with dignity and respect than those who had not.

# How can I help strengthen community engagement and accountability in my role?

## LEADERSHIP

*module* 3

**Institutionalize community engagement and accountability approaches within your organization:**

- Recruit staff to manage this work and allocate funding for it
- Task a working group to lead institutionalization, including developing a CEA policy and integration in strategies, plans, budgets, and proposals
- Make accountability one of the organization's key performance indicators and discuss progress against these in meetings

## PROGRAMMES AND OPERATIONS

*modules* 4 5 6

**Ensure your programme or operation engages communities well:**

- Include community engagement activities in plans, budgets, and proposals, including mechanisms to share information, facilitate participation, and listen to and act on feedback
- Be flexible enough to respond to changes in needs and context
- Integrate community engagement sessions into trainings
- Monitor how well your programme or operation is meeting peoples' needs and if they feel informed and engaged

## CEA STAFF

*all modules*

**Lead and support efforts to strengthen community engagement and accountability in your organization:**

- Provide training and technical support to staff and volunteers at all levels
- Establish and manage a community feedback mechanism
- Develop community engagement and accountability policies and plans, including integration into other sector's policies, tools, and trainings

## PGI STAFF

*module* 7

**Work with CEA, to support programmes and operations:**

- 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

## VOLUNTEERS

*modules* 4 5 6

**Be the link between the community and the National Society:**

- Engage communities during your work by sharing information, answering questions, and reporting any feedback to the branch
- Involve community members in planning and delivering activities

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT / BRANCH MANAGERS

*modules* 4 5 6

**Ensure good engagement with volunteers and communities:**

- Good community engagement in branch activities
- Meet regularly (e.g., monthly) with volunteers and listen to and act on their feedback about what is happening in the community
- Treat volunteers the way we expect them to treat the community, by keeping them informed and involved in plans and activities

## PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

*modules* 3 4 5 6

**Integrate community engagement and accountability into PMER:**

- Flag when community engagement is missing in plans
- Include indicators to measure the quality of community engagement in monitoring plans and evaluations
- Include community feedback in monitoring and reporting
- Support previous learning to be used to inform new programmes

## SUPPORT SERVICES

*modules* 4 5 6

**Ensure our processes and procedures support community engagement:**

- Logistics should input to plans so we don't make unrealistic promises to communities about what we can provide and when
- Finance, logistics and administration procedures should be flexible enough to allow for changes as community needs evolve
- Information management and IT can support with equipment, software, and data management for feedback mechanisms

## HUMAN RESOURCES

*modules* 3 6

**Integrate community engagement responsibilities into HR processes:**

- Include community engagement in staff and volunteer inductions
- Integrate community engagement responsibilities and competencies into role descriptions and hiring processes
- Support investigations into sensitive complaints

## NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

*module* 3

**Support institutionalization of community engagement:**

- Include accountability to communities in organizational development processes and assessments[12]
- Include in organizational strategies, mission statements and values

## IFRC, ICRC AND PARTNER NATIONAL SOCIETIES

*all modules*

**Support National Societies to strengthen accountability in their work:**

- Provide technical support and funding for community engagement and accountability
- Include indicators in programme and operation plans to monitor accountability
- Advocate to National Society leadership on the importance of accountability
- Institutionalize community engagement and accountability in your own organization
- Coordinate with Movement partners so support to National Societies is also coordinated and complementary.

**Turkey 2020**
Houda Al-Fadil is a Syrian refugee who enjoys cooking. Her new culinary adventure began when she enrolled in a traditional Turkish cooking course offered at a community center run by the Turkish Red Crescent
© Elif Irmak Erkek / Turkish Red Crescent

# Accountability within the humanitarian sector

The Movement is not alone in its efforts to strengthen community engagement and accountability. There are several global initiatives also working to support this aim. These shared commitments support collective action on improving community engagement across agencies. These include:

## The Core Humanitarian Standard[13]

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out nine commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. They cover the quality and relevance of humanitarian aid, accountability to affected people, coordination, learning, people management and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and fraud and corruption. The Red Cross Red Crescent minimum commitments and actions for community engagement and accountability are aligned with the CHS.

## Interagency Standing Committee Commitments on Accountability to Affected People[14]

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for coordinating the work of agencies involved in humanitarian assistance. Its Commitments on Accountability to Affected People bind responders to inform, as well as solicit, hear, and act on the voices, priorities, and feedback of affected people (including in relation to complaints and allegations of SEA), and to ensure that different groups within the affected population can play an active role in decision-making.

## Grand Bargain Commitments[15]

The Grand Bargain, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016, is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations who have committed to better humanitarian outcomes for affected populations through enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, and greater accountability, in the spirit of Quid pro Quo as relevant to all. Originally the Grand Bargain had eight workstreams, with two focusing on localization and participation. In 2021, the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework was approved, which sees localization and the participation of affected communities as one of two enabling priorities and accountability and inclusion one of the four outcome pillars.

# Sources of community engagement and accountability support

## The Community Engagement Hub[16]

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

## The CEA toolkit[17]

The CEA toolkit accompanies this guide and is hosted on the community engagement hub. The toolkit includes templates, checklists, and detailed guidance. Throughout the guide we indicate which tools can support you to put the minimum actions into practice.

**Democratic People's Republic of North Korea 2016** Jo Kum Ju plays a key role in managing the greenhouses supported by the DPRK Red Cross under its integrated community development programme. She provides training on cultivation techniques to members of neighbouring communities who are looking to start their own greenhouse project. © Benjamin Suomela / Finnish Red Cross

# MODULE 2
# MOVEMENT-WIDE COMMITMENTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Movement-wide Minimum Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability (CR/19/R1) were adopted at the Council of Delegates on 08 December 2019. These overarching, strategic commitments aim to ensure a consistent approach to how we engage with and are accountable to people and communities across the Movement. All members of the Movement, including every National Society, ICRC delegation and IFRC office, is responsible for meeting and upholding these commitments and they are relevant and applicable to all staff and volunteers throughout the Movement regardless of their role.

**Commitment 1:** All Movement components **commit to integrating community engagement and accountability** in their strategies, policies and procedures.

**Commitment 2:** All Movement components **commit to regularly conducting an analysis of the contexts** they work in to better understand and address the diversity of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the people and communities they seek to serve and assist.

**Commitment 3:** All Movement components **commit to facilitating greater participation** of local people and communities, including National Society volunteers, and helping them to apply their knowledge, skills and capacities to find appropriate and effective solutions to their problems.

**Commitment 4:** All Movement components **commit to systematically listening to, responding to and acting on feedback** from the people and communities we aim to serve.

**Commitment 5:** All Movement components **commit to greater transparency in our communications** and relationships with people and communities we aim to serve.

**Commitment 6:** All Movement components **commit to strengthening knowledge, skills and competencies in community engagement and accountability at all levels**, and systematically incorporating this learning into our work.

**Commitment 7:** All Movement components **commit to coordinating their approaches to community engagement and accountability when working in the same context**, including with relevant external partners, in order to increase coherence and consistency, avoid duplication and improve effectiveness and efficiency.

# Minimum actions for community engagement and accountability

## INSTITUTIONALIZATION

1. Strengthen community engagement and accountability understanding and capacity at all levels in the National Society
2. Allocate resources, including funding and staff, to strengthen and institutionalize community engagement and accountability
3. Integrate community engagement and accountability into all National Society strategies, values, plans, policies and tools so it becomes a standard way of working for all staff and volunteers
4. Establish a community feedback mechanism for the National Society, with processes for managing sensitive complaints

**Needs assessment and context analysis**

1. Search for existing information about the community
2. Involve the community in planning the assessment
3. Brief or train volunteers on the purpose of the assessment and how to communicate clearly and honestly
4. Take time to understand the context, people's needs and capacities
5. Include questions about how best to engage communities in needs assessments

The 18 minimum actions below explain how to put the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability into practice.

## PROGRAMMES

### Planning and design

**6**
Community members and key stakeholders must be involved in planning the programme, including men, women, boys and girls and marginalized or at-risk groups

**7**
Cross-check plans with the community and other stakeholders before implementing to make sure they match needs and expectations

**8**
Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in programme plans and budget, outlining how information will be shared, community participation supported, and feedback managed

### Implementation and monitoring

**9**
Regularly share information about the programme with community members, using the best approaches to reach different groups

**10**
Enable active community participation in managing and guiding the programme, including marginalized and at risk groups

**11**
Collect, analyse and respond to community feedback, ensuring people know how they can ask questions, make suggestions or raise concerns about the programme

**12**
Review and adjust programme activities and approaches regularly based on community feedback and monitoring data

### Evaluation and learning

**13**
Involve communities in planning the evaluation and discussing the findings

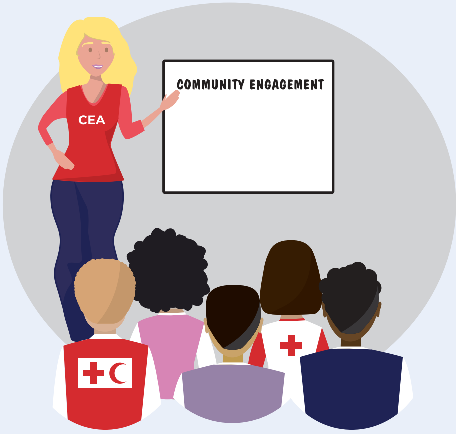
**14**
Ask community members if they are satisfied with the programme, how it was delivered and what could be improved

## EMERGENCIES

These are the most important minimum actions to focus on in emergency operations:

1. Community engagement is integrated across the response
2. Understand needs, capacities, and context
3. Carry out the assessment with transparency and respect for the community
4. Discuss response plans with communities and key stakeholders
5. Discuss and agree selection criteria and distribution processes with communities
6. Include community engagement activities and indicators in response plans and budgets
7. Regularly share information about the response with the community
8. Support community participation in making decisions about the response
9. Listen to community feedback and use it to guide the response
10. Include the community in the evaluation

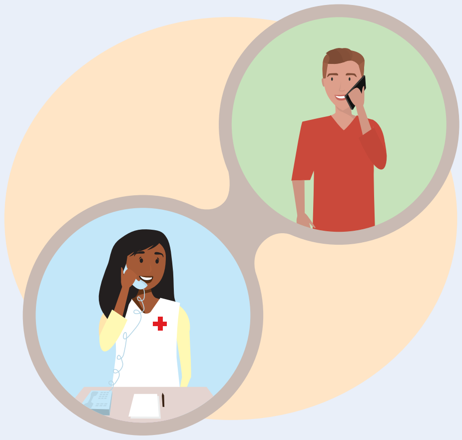
# Minimum actions to institutionalize community engagement and accountability




1. **Strengthen community engagement and accountability understanding and capacity at all levels in the National Society**


2. **Allocate resources, including funding and staff, to strengthen and institutionalize community engagement and accountability**


3. **Integrate community engagement and accountability into all National Society strategies, values, plans, policies and tools so it becomes a standard way of working for all staff and volunteers**



4. **Establish a community feedback mechanism for the National Society, with processes for managing sensitive complaints**

## Tools to help you institutionalize community engagement and accountability

1. **Tool 1** CEA briefing for leadership
2. **Tool 2** CEA Policy template
3. **Tool 3** CEA self-assessment and planning workshop
4. **Tool 4** Template CEA Strategy
5. **Tool 5** Template CEA workplan
6. **Tool 6** CEA budgeting tool
7. **Tool 7** CEA M&E tool
8. **Tool 8** CEA job descriptions
9. **Tool 9** CEA briefing for new staff and volunteers
10. **Tool 10** Code of Conduct Briefing
11. **Tool 11** CEA checklist for plans
12. **Tool 12** CEA case study template
15. **Tool 15** Feedback kit

# MODULE 3
# INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## What is institutionalization?

Institutionalizing community engagement and accountability means making it part of the organisation's DNA, or business as usual. It means integrating community engagement into strategies, policies, plans and ways of working until it becomes a predictable, systematic part of every activity, at every stage of the programme or disaster response cycle. To achieve this, the National Society needs to make strengthening accountability to communities an organizational priority, with adequate funding, staff time and leadership support. The actions below **are not the responsibility of one specific person** (i.e., the community engagement and accountability lead) but **for the whole National Society** to work on together.

## Why institutionalize community engagement and accountability?

**So that community engagement…**

- Happens in all programmes and operations, to the same high quality
- Is understood to be essential for effective programming
- Is not dependent on the personality of the programme or operation manager
- Is no longer a choice, add-on, or just 'nice to have'
- Cannot be dropped when there isn't enough funding or time
- Doesn't end when the programme or operation ends
- Doesn't stop when those championing it leave the organization
- Is understood by all staff and volunteers, including what's expected of them.

**Yemen 2017** Volunteer Abdulhakim and a woman make the OK sign after he instructed her about how to avoid cholera disease. © EPA

# Minimum actions and guidance to institutionalize community engagement and accountability

## 1 Strengthen community engagement and accountability understanding and capacity at all levels in the National Society

### How do I do this?

**» Build leadership buy-in**

- If leadership do not see accountability as a priority, then neither will their staff, and it will not be integrated into strategies, policies, and budgets
- Brief leadership on the benefits stronger community engagement can have on issues of importance to them. For example, it can improve the National Society's reputation; build trust with partners; attract new funding; improve efficiency; and contribute to financial sustainability.

**Tools:** 1 CEA briefing for leadership

**» Develop a community engagement and accountability policy**

- Hold a workshop with key people in the organization to develop a community engagement and accountability policy that sets out what the National Society commits to and provides direction to staff and volunteers
- Use the Movement-wide Minimum Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability as the basis for the policy (page 21)
- In the spirit of good community engagement, the policy should be developed through consultation with a range of staff and volunteers. This will drive ownership of the policy and improve implementation.

**Tools:** 2 CEA Policy template

**» Develop a community engagement and accountability strategy or plan**

- Including activities, timelines, responsibilities, indicators, and budget
- Develop this with key people across the organization, including branch staff and volunteers. Being accountable to communities is a shared responsibility, so it's important the plan to achieve this is also shared
- Add a fourth day to the community engagement and accountability training[18] to carry out a self-assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in how the National Society engages communities, and guide which areas to focus on in a strategy and workplan
- Review and update the plan or strategy regularly.

**Tools:** 3 CEA self-assessment and planning workshop 4 Template CEA Strategy 5 Template CEA workplan 6 CEA budgeting tool

## » Adopt key performance indicators (KPI) to measure how the National Society is being accountable to communities

- KPIs support accountability to be owned, driven, and monitored by leadership, and supports action to be taken when targets are not met
- Discuss with leadership, PMER, NSD and programmes and operations staff which KPI(s) make most sense for the National Society
- Include the KPI in the community engagement and accountability policy and plan, and organizational strategy and annual plan.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool

## » Train staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability

- All staff, from volunteer to head of department, need the understanding, knowledge, and capacity to engage communities effectively in their work
- Deliver the three-day community engagement and accountability training to management and staff to support integration in programmes and operations, and institutionalization
- Roll out the two-day training for branch staff and volunteers, to support them to practically engage communities
- Add community engagement sessions to other relevant trainings
- **Don't stop at trainings!** Make sure staff are supported and mentored to improve community engagement, from setting up a feedback mechanism to using participatory planning approaches.

All training packages are on the community engagement hub[19]

**United Kingdom, 2021** At Heathrow Airport, British Red Cross volunteers have been welcoming Afghan families relocating to the UK. Gloria is among those who have been handing out food, clothing and toys to arriving families, while also providing emotional support.
© Alicia Melville-Smith / British Red Cross

## Examples from the Movement

### Kenya Red Cross' find timing is critical for institutionalization and leadership buy-in

Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) began institutionalizing community engagement and accountability by first piloting new accountability approaches in one programme, and then using this learning to develop a strategy to mainstream accountability across the organization. Activities included training all staff and volunteers; setting up a national feedback and complaints system; adding accountability measures as standard to all new programmes and operations; integrating accountability into KRCS' new strategic plan; and adding accountability responsibilities to staff job descriptions and appraisals. An operational case study found that KRCS had increased its trust with communities, improved the impact of programmes, and built stronger community ownership and project sustainability. Find out how KRCS institutionalized community engagement, including the challenges and lessons learned, read the report[20] or watch the video[21].

### Burundi Red Cross learns the importance of training branch volunteers

Burundi Red Cross decided to roll out trainings on community engagement to branch staff and volunteers, in recognition that it is branches who work most closely with communities. One Branch Secretary explained the change he saw after these trainings: *"The way we were working before was that we would stay in our office and think about the problem in the community and then we would try to solve the problem. But when we went to the community, we would find that the most pressing needs in the area was not what we thought. Before we used to see the community as the beneficiary. But now we know they are partners and participants."*

**Burundi, 2009** Local volunteer workers of The Red Cross are checking in a village if the mosquito nets are still properly used after some weeks or months. © Bob van Mol / IFRC

## 2 Allocate resources, including funding and staff, to strengthen and institutionalize community engagement and accountability

### How do I do this?

#### » Allocate core funds to institutionalize community engagement and accountability

- Allocate a percentage of the National Society's annual core funds to non-project-related community engagement costs such as staff positions, National Society-wide feedback mechanisms, or training for branches with no donor funds – for example 5%
- Include a percentage for community engagement in all programme and operation budgets and make sure this can be used flexibly
- Include community engagement in donor proposals. If donors refuse, explain this is an organizational commitment and not an optional extra and share the community engagement and accountability strategy
- Ask partners if they would help the National Society to institutionalize accountability. With the increased focus on this by donors, many partners would likely respond positively to this ask.

**Tools:** 6 CEA budgeting tool

#### » Identify staff to lead community engagement and accountability

- Who can champion the approach, deliver trainings, and lead on work to integrate it across the National Society
- Community engagement leads must have the skills, passion and time to drive this forward, rather than it being one of many 'hats'
- Position the role at the right level and location in the organization to be able to influence colleagues and leadership
- Identify community engagement focal points in every branch.

**Tools:** 8 CEA job descriptions

## Examples from the Movement

### Community engagement staff and focal points drive it forward within Hellenic Red Cross

Following the migration response, the Hellenic (Greek) Red Cross (HRC) established a Community Engagement and Accountability Coordinator position within the Social Welfare Division. The CEA coordinator is a cross-cutting position that works in close cooperation with all HRC divisions and programs, providing technical support and advice to integrate and mainstream community engagement. The position has been key to the development of official Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for community engagement and accountability, which set out the minimum standards for every HRC program. The SOPs took six months of meetings, discussions, feedback, and revisions from all relevant focal points in the National Society, creating a comprehensive yet simple document endorsed by the majority of HRC programs. A case study[22] found that the positive attitude, passion and commitment of CEA staff and focal points within HRC contributed to mainstreaming stronger accountability into the National Society's goals and strategies.

### Importance of a partner's support to Nepal Red Cross

A learning review[23] into Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) found that a strong commitment to resourcing community engagement and accountability by the National Society and its partner, British Red Cross, was critical to success. This support enabled the recruitment of dedicated CEA staff, training and orientation of more than 650 people on community engagement, and funding for a range of community engagement activities. This helped drive the institutionalization of community engagement and accountability within NRCS, including embedding it into grant applications, developing tools and training and developing accountability frameworks.

**Greece, 2016** With the support of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and National Societies around the world, Hellenic Red Cross continues to provide relief, healthcare and psycho-social support to the migrants arriving to Greece.
© Mirva Helenius / Finnish Red Cross

**Mexico 2018**
Sandra Patricia Estrada Fuentes walks with Florina Flores Carmona near her home, which was partially engulfed by a wildfire after an earthquake. Mexican Red Cross volunteers provided food, water, shelter, medical assistance, temporary shelter, psychosocial support, personal hygiene items, household clean-up kits, blankets, mattresses, stoves, and more.
© Daniel Cima / American Red Cross

## 3 Integrate community engagement and accountability into all National Society strategies, values, plans, policies, and tools so it becomes a standard way of working for all staff and volunteers

### How do I do this?

**» Include commitments to accountability in National Society mission statements, statutes, core values, organizational strategy, and policies**

- This helps to embed it in organizational culture and sends a message to staff and partners that this is a priority for the organization
- Add transparency, participation, and responsiveness to the National Society values, mission statement or statutes. Use the Movement-wide Commitments for CEA on page 21 to help you
- Include community engagement and accountability when the National Society organizational strategy is being revised
- Add commitments to accountability when new policies are being developed, or existing ones revised.

**» Integrate community engagement and accountability in National Society annual plans, budgets and technical sectors' plans, tools, and guidelines**

- This means staff don't have to look elsewhere for advice on what's expected of them, and highlights this is a cross-cutting approach
- Include community engagement activities, timelines, indicators, and budget in the National Society's annual plan
- Check if community engagement could be more clearly included in other sectors' plans, tools, and guidance, and include in any new tools or guidelines.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool 5 Template CEA workplan

**» Include expectations to engage and be accountable to communities in staff and volunteer job descriptions, inductions, and appraisal processes**

- This helps community engagement to be seen as part of everyone's role and makes it clear to staff and volunteers what is expected of them
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are briefed on, understand, and sign the Red Cross Red Crescent and/or National Society Code of Conduct
- Include community engagement responsibilities and competencies in all relevant role descriptions, and assess performance during appraisals
- Include a briefing on community engagement and accountability in inductions for new staff, volunteers, and governance members

**Tools:** 8 CEA job descriptions 9 CEA briefing for new staff and volunteers
10 Code of Conduct Briefing

### » Include community engagement and accountability in PMER processes

- All plans are checked before being approved to make sure they include activities and budget for engaging communities
- All plans include indicators to measure levels of accountability
- Community feedback is included and reviewed with monitoring data
- Reports include a section on community feedback and how the National Society is meeting accountability commitments
- Data should be sex, age, and disability disaggregated (at a minimum) for a better understanding of the different needs and gaps across groups. See the PGI minimum standards[24] in emergencies and toolkit [25]
- Capture examples where community engagement approaches have improved the quality and impact of programmes and operations.

**Tools:** 11 CEA checklist for plans 7 CEA M&E tool 15 Feedback kit
12 CEA case study template

## 4 Establish a community feedback mechanism for the National Society, with processes for managing sensitive complaints

## How do I do this?

### » See Module 6: Community Feedback Mechanisms (page 103) for step-by-step guidance to set up a feedback mechanism

A permanent, National Society-wide, feedback mechanism means the National Society does not have to set up a new feedback mechanism for every programme and can continually collect and respond to community feedback.

**Tools:** 15 Feedback kit

## Examples from the Movement

### Integrating community engagement in Malawi Red Cross strategic plan sends a message to staff

Malawi Red Cross (MRC) capitalized on a period of transformation to establish community engagement and accountability as an organization-wide way of working. Community engagement was linked to programme quality and embedded within the new Planning, Quality and Learning (PQL) department. Management included increased commitments to be accountable to communities into their 2019–2021 Strategic Plan. This raised the profile of the approach among staff, who are now more eager to integrate it into their work. One programme manager explained: "Programs cannot move forward without the strategic plan, and we put community engagement and accountability into that. So, now the emphasis is on this, and we can reflect it in our programmes." Senior leadership explained that they were swayed to increase commitments to community accountability because it contributed to National Society integrity.

### Myanmar Red Cross integrate minimum standards to accountability across the organization

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) included an objective in its strategic plan that 'all programmes should include a community engagement component based on a set of minimum standards for accountability'. To build organizational-wide buy-in to implement this, MRCS held a workshop that brought together people from all departments and branches, including branches not involved in running programmes or operations. As well as the strategic plan, community engagement has now been integrated across MRCS' frameworks, tools, and guidelines, including the National Society's Partnership Framework, PMER Framework and tools, Communications Policy, Disaster Management SOPs and response tools, training packages, community-based programme guidance and branch plans and reporting templates. Read the full report[26].

### Integration of community engagement in IFRC and ICRC guidelines

IFRC's Safe and Dignified Burial (SDB) Implementation Guide for Field Managers[27] and ICRC's Restoring Family Links (RFL) Strategy[28] are both good examples of community engagement and accountability being well integrated into another technical sector's guidelines and resources. CEA staff fed into the development of the SDB guidelines drawing on lessons learned from the Ebola responses in West Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo. The importance of community engagement is integrated throughout and there are specific sections on involving the community and including a community engagement person within the SDB team. ICRC's RFL strategy includes community participation as one of its key enablers and specifies that services must be developed and delivered flexibly together with affected people.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS TO MEASURE INSTITUTIONALIZATION

*(For more options see* Tool 7: CEA M&E tool)

This is a menu of indicators to measure institutionalization, including a choice of key performance indicators. Not all of these need to be used but try to include some that monitor performance through the eyes of community members. Data collected from community members must be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (at a minimum) so any gaps can be identified.

**Key performance indicators**

- % of community members who feel support provided by the National Society currently covers their most important needs
- % of community members who feel the National Society takes their opinion into account when providing support
- % of National Society programmes and operations that have community engagement activities and budget included (e.g., activities on information sharing, participation and feedback)
- % of National Society policies, strategies and procedures that have integrated the Movement-wide commitments or minimum actions for CEA (for example, disaster response, health care, gender, protection, communications and staff and volunteer management)

**Institutionalization indicators**

- % of staff, volunteers and leadership trained in community engagement and accountability
- % of National Society annual funds spent on institutionalizing community engagement and accountability
- # of months with a community engagement and accountability staff lead
- National Society strategy and/or annual plan includes goals, indicators and budget for community engagement and accountability
- % of feedback comments received and responded to by the NS
- % of people who received a response to their feedback.

# Creating an enabling environment for community engagement and accountability

Being truly accountable to communities requires an organizational culture that values and supports two-way communication, participation, transparency, and power-sharing[29].

## Walking the talk: Good internal accountability supports external accountability

Poor internal communication can act as a barrier to stronger community accountability by limiting information sharing. Volunteers have reported feeling frustrated because plans and information are not shared with them, and managers don't listen to their inputs. An internal fear or reluctance to give and receive feedback amongst staff and managers undermines the importance of community feedback. However, when staff and volunteers personally experience the benefits of improved engagement within their working lives, it becomes easier to reflect this approach in the way they work with communities. Essentially, we need 'to walk the talk' internally to be accountable externally.

**How?**

- Strengthen internal communication between leadership, staff, and volunteers, across departments and between HQ and branches. For example, through regular staff and volunteer meetings (with time for two-way discussion) or an internal newsletter
- Provide skill-based training, e.g., communication and facilitation skills, and include these skills in job descriptions and assess for these competencies when hiring
- Establish an internal feedback mechanism for staff and volunteers, where leadership welcomes feedback, acts on issues raised, and uses it as a tool to improve. For example, an online survey was shared with National Society volunteers across Africa to ask about their experiences volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic[30].
- National Society planning processes should give time and space for staff and volunteers to actively participate, including for strategies, annual plans, and new programmes
- National Society volunteer and member composition should reflect the diversity in communities and a credible effort made to ensure any marginalized, at risk, or underrepresented groups, are included within the volunteer base.

## A culture of learning

Good accountability means not repeating previous mistakes. However, this relies on a culture of learning and sharing, where past successes and failures are documented, easily accessible to all, and shared widely across the organization, and with partners.

**How?**

- Develop an information management system to ensure best practices, lessons learned, evaluations, monitoring data, assessments and community feedback from previous interventions are readily available to inform the design of future programmes and operations
- When things don't work, investigate why, and share the learning widely within the organization so others can learn from the experience and avoid the same mistakes.

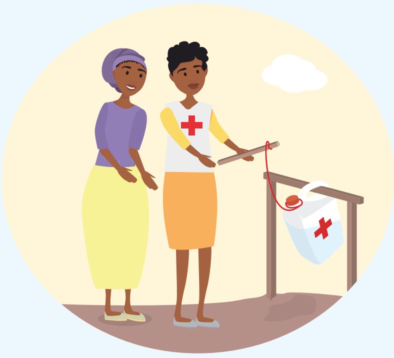
# Minimum actions for community engagement and accountability in programmes

## 1 Needs assessment and context analysis

1. Search for existing information about the community
2. Involve the community in planning the assessment
3. Brief or train volunteers on the purpose of the assessment and how to communicate clearly and honestly
4. Take time to understand the context, people's needs and capacities
5. Include questions about how best to engage communities in needs assessments


## 2 Planning and design

6. Community members and key stakeholders must be involved in planning the programme, including men, women, boys and girls and marginalized or at-risk groups
7. Cross-check plans with the community and other stakeholders before implementing to make sure they match needs and expectations
8. Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in programme plans and budget, outlining how information will be shared, community participation supported, and feedback managed



## 3 Implementation and monitoring

9. Regularly share information about the programme with community members, using the best approaches to reach different groups
10. Enable active community participation in managing and guiding the programme, including marginalized and at risk groups
11. Collect, analyse and respond to community feedback, ensuring people know how they can ask questions, make suggestions or raise concerns about the programme
12. Review and adjust programme activities and approaches regularly based on community feedback and monitoring data

## 4 Evaluation and learning

13. Involve communities in planning the evaluation and discussing the findings
14. Ask community members if they are satisfied with the programme, how it was delivered and what could be improved

## Tools to help

- 5 **Tool 5:** Template CEA work plan
- 6 **Tool 6:** CEA budgeting tool
- 7 **Tool 7:** CEA M&E tool
- 10 **Tool 10:** Code of Conduct briefing
- 13 **Tool 13:** CEA in Assessments tool
- 14 **Tool 14:** Q&A sheet for volunteers
- 15 **Tool 15:** Feedback kit
- 16 **Tool 16:** FGD guide
- 17 **Tool 17:** Community meetings tool
- 18 **Tool 18:** Participatory approaches to selection criteria
- 19 **Tool 19:** Communication methods matrix
- 20 **Tool 20:** Exit Strategy guidance

# MODULE 4
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PROGRAMMES

This module covers the 14 minimum actions to integrate community engagement across the programme cycle, from assessment to final evaluation. Practical guidance is provided on how to meet each action, with links to supporting tools. These actions can be integrated into any type of programme within any technical sector and can be used as a checklist to ensure a programme has a good level of engagement with communities.

**Keep in mind:**

- Not all 14 actions will be new – most National Societies are already implementing many of these actions within their programmes. Use this guide to cross-check what is already being done and identify where community engagement could be improved
- If not all 14 actions are possible, don't worry – start small, build on existing good practices, and do what is possible, and build it up gradually
- It's best to include community engagement from the start of a programme, because then it is planned and budgeted. However, if the programme has already started, use this guide to assess what actions can be strengthened or added now to improve community engagement
- The actions and guidance here are applicable for emergency operations but recognising that 14 actions might be overwhelming in the early stages of a response, the next module in this guide outlines key actions to focus on when time is limited
- Regularly assess if there could be any unintended negative consequences. For example, by destabilizing markets through large-scale food distributions or putting communities at risk by sharing their feedback with governments, or discussing sensitive issues on social media.

## COLLECTING AND USING COMMUNITY DATA IN AN ETHICAL WAY

All community data needs to be collected, stored, and used in an ethical way, including data from assessments, feedback mechanisms, monitoring, and evaluations. This includes:

**Data protection:** Store peoples' personal data safely and securely and in a way that does not put people's safety, dignity, or privacy at risk. Follow the National Society's data protection policy or see the ICRC data protection handbook[31] or IFRC's data protection policy[32]

**Informed consent:** Respondents need to give informed consent before interviews. Informed consent means they understand why their information is being collected and how it will be used, how long it will take them to participate, their right to confidentiality and to withdraw.

For a list of **key standards and practices for ethical data collection**, refer to IFRC's Project/Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Guide[33] (page 20) and IFRC Framework for Evaluations[34].

# Assessments and context analysis

The minimum actions for community engagement and accountability during the assessment phase support the assessment to be open, participatory, and transparent and ensure it captures a full understanding of the community context, needs, priorities and capacities.

## 1 Search for existing information about the community

Assessments are time consuming, so it's worth checking what data already exists. This saves time and funding, helps to eliminate unnecessary questions, builds understanding of the community context and prevents assessment fatigue in communities[35].

### How do I do this?

#### » Look internally

- Look internally for needs' assessments, context analyses, monitoring data, community feedback or evaluations from previous programmes and operations in similar locations
- Speak to branch staff and volunteers to get their insights on how the community functions and issues to be aware of
- Check Movement document libraries and resources:
  - IFRC Go https://go.ifrc.org/
  - Operational Learning dashboard on Go https://go.ifrc.org/preparedness#operational-learning
  - IFRC document library https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document-library/
  - Community engagement hub https://www.communityengagementhub.org/

#### » Look externally

- Ask other agencies or the Government to share any reports or data
- Look externally for any joint needs' assessments, evaluations, stakeholder data or publicly available research. Check:
  - CDAC's Media & Telecommunication landscape guides https://www.cdacnetwork.org/media-landscape-guides
  - IASC Accountability and Inclusion Portal https://aap-inclusion-psea.alnap.org/resources-iasc
  - ACAPS https://www.acaps.org/
  - ReliefWeb https://reliefweb.int
  - Demographic health studies www.dhsprogram.com
  - UN websites have country profiles for specific areas e.g., FAO for food security, OCHA for emergency response, WHO for health etc.

**Tools:** 13 CEA in Assessments tool

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NEEDS' ASSESSMENT AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS?

**A context analysis** seeks to understand the broader environment in which the community lives. Including the social, political, environmental, and economic structures, the role of different groups and the power dynamics between them, cultural and social values, who is marginalized or at-risk, and what capacities exist. The context analysis should be an ongoing process and not a one-off event

**A needs' assessment** seeks to understand the current needs and priorities in the community and includes questions to help plan the programme

Both processes are needed to ensure programmes are accepted by the community and have a positive, lasting impact. However, they are not separate processes and are likely to overlap.

## Examples from the Movement

**Secondary disaggregated data and context analysis are key to understanding the barriers women with disabilities face in accessing physical rehabilitation services**

When a global study found that less women use Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP) centres than men, the ICRC's PRP team in Niger decided to investigate if this was a problem in Niger and if so, why. The team analysed service user data collected by the orthopaedic department at the National Hospital, which revealed that more male than female patients were registered in the PRP centres in 2018. To understand why, the team conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with women and girls with disabilities. They revealed that a lack of women's empowerment in Niger and attitudes about the limited capacity of women with disabilities, led women to develop internal barriers and they did not feel able, or have the resources, to make independent choices about their medical needs. The team conducted a workshop with women with disabilities to share and validate the findings from the report and to establish action plans to address the barriers. By analysing existing sex and age disaggregated data, the PRP team were able to identify a problem, and then use primary data collection to find out why.

**Niger 2006** The IFRC begian distributing 2,030,000 long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets in Niger in an effort to protect 3.5 million children from malaria. © John Haskew / IFRC

## 2 Involve the community in planning the assessment

Community members can advise on the best way to carry out an assessment, flag any issues or power dynamics to be aware of, including how best to reach marginalized groups. This supports a smooth assessment and builds ownership in the community from day one.

### How do I do this?

#### » Speak to the community first

- Meet with community leaders and representatives, and community volunteers, to discuss how the assessment should be carried out, including timings, methods and how to reach different groups
- Speak to a diverse range of community representatives to ensure the assessment doesn't miss groups out or put anyone at risk
- Start to collect information about the community context, including different groups present, power dynamics and if leaders are trusted
- Ask if other organizations have carried out any assessments in the community
- Explore options for community members to help carry out the assessment (if it won't bias the results), e.g., as data collectors
- Discuss assessment plans and findings with other stakeholders, such as local authorities or NGOs.

**Checklist of information to share with communities before an assessment:**

- Introduce the National Society and its mandate – don't assume everyone knows the Red Cross Red Crescent
- Explain the purpose of the assessment and what happens next
- Manage expectations by being honest about limitations. For example, if a programme is not guaranteed or limited to one sector, or there could be a long delay between the assessment and a programme starting
- Explain the behaviour people can expect from staff and volunteers
- Explain how people can ask questions or raise concerns and provide details for people to contact the National Society if needed
- Be clear participation in the assessment is voluntary and does not affect whether a person receives support or not.

**Tools:** 13 CEA in assessments tool 14 Q&A sheet for volunteers

## Examples from the Movement

### Sierra Leone Red Cross builds community ownership from the start of a programme

When Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SRCS) start working with a community, the first step is always to introduce themselves. Volunteers call the local authorities, community leaders, women's leaders, youth representatives, the Imam, and the pastor, to share information on themselves and the National Society, the programme, and what they would like to do, and ask the community representatives to share how they see the situation and what their preferences and expectations are. This has led to better sustainability and stronger community ownership. For example, even though a community-based health programme on Ebola has now ended, the volunteers are still active in their communities encouraging safe and healthy behaviours. SLRCS Director of Programmes explained: *"We talk a lot about sustainability, for me sustainability does not come at the end, it comes right from the beginning. Once you involve a person, the person is aware, space is created for that person to influence decisions, provide input, bring out ideas, and community participation is increased."*

**Sierra Leone 2017** PSS volunteers with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society conduct a group PSS session for those affected by flooding. As part of its response the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society has trained and retrained volunteers already deployed during the Ebola outbreak, and deployed them to support in several areas, including the provision of psychosocial support. © Katherine Mueller / IFRC

## 3 Brief or train staff and volunteers on the purpose of the assessment and how to communicate clearly and honestly

Staff and volunteers need to be able to answer community' questions clearly and honestly and avoid raising expectations or making false promises about the support they will receive. Good communication skills also get the relationship with the community off to a good start.

### How do I do this?

#### » Prepare the assessment team

- Brief all staff and volunteers on the assessment purpose, process, how data will be used, and what happens next, so they can answer questions from the community and avoid raising expectations. This should include a (re)briefing on the Code of Conduct, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and anti-fraud and corruption. Use the PSEA manual[36]
- Train or refresh staff and volunteers on good communication skills and how to respond to feedback. Use the one-day training course on good communication skills and feedback handling[37]
- Consider training teams on how to communicate with specific groups in an unbiased way, for example, people with disabilities, children, marginalized groups, or how to work through interpreters
- Staff or volunteers who will be speaking to people about sensitive issues linked to conflict, protection, gender and diversity should be properly trained to do this safely and sensitively[38]
- The assessment team should be gender balanced, speak any local languages, and be accepted and trusted by the community.

**Tools:** 10 Code of Conduct briefing 14 Q&A sheet for volunteers

## Examples from the Movement

### Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Red Cross take a careful approach to assessments

When Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross carried out a situation and context analysis to better understand the needs, skills, and capacities of migrants, they learned two valuable lessons. Firstly, as the surveys were being conducted, the National Society received many requests for support, which went beyond their capacity to meet. However, the assessment team took time to explain to community members one-on-one while doing the research, that these discussions were not promises of support, but an opportunity for the National Society to learn and address the most vulnerable. As a result, trust was maintained in the National Society and people were willing to participate in the programmes that followed. Secondly, by reaching out and creating relationships with long-time Venezuelan migrants, the Red Cross was able to build bridges with communities who can find it hard to trust. Read the full case study[39].

### Volunteers and communities frustrated by a lack of information

In Uganda, volunteers were sent to carry out a household registration of South Sudanese refugees. Volunteers were not briefed about the purpose of the registration and so could not explain to communities why their details were being taken. This raised expectations amongst the community and when the National Society returned to distribute the items, there was a lot of anger and frustration amongst those who did not receive anything. During a focus group discussion, one man said: "*Everyone was registered but only some people got help – why take our details if you are not going to help us?*" As a result, the National Society rolled out community engagement training to volunteers across all its operations.

**Trinidad and Tobago** The Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross team prepares seedlings for a COVID-19 food security program in the country. © TTRC / IFRC

## 4 Take time to understand the context, including people's risks and capacities

Programmes that don't understand the 'bigger picture' often fail, or worse, have negative unintended consequences[40]. Context analysis should be an ongoing process to monitor how the situation is evolving and the impact it could have on the programme.

## How do I do this?

### » What's in a context analysis?

- Community demographics and profile
- Mapping all community leaders, groups, and associations
- The power dynamics between different groups, including who makes decisions and who is excluded or marginalized
- Levels of social cohesion and trust amongst people
- The role gender and diversity plays in people's lives
- Mapping any conflict or tensions in the community
- Culture and beliefs in the community, particularly for issues related to the programme
- Existing capacities and strengths in the community
- Stakeholder analysis of other agencies providing services

### » How to carry out a context analysis

- The information above can be collected through secondary data, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, community mapping, direct observation etc. Some useful toolkits include:
  - IFRC PGI in emergencies toolkit has tools to carry out PGI analysis[41]
  - ICRC Safer Access Framework and Practical Toolbox have tools on stakeholder mapping and conflict and violence analysis[42]
  - IFRC Enhanced Vulnerability Capacity Assessment has mapping and seasonal calendar tools[43]
  - CDA Collaborative Learning's Conflict Sensitivity & Public Health Emergencies[44] includes mapping and assessment worksheets.
- Understanding the context takes time and sensitivity. Consider what questions are asked, how, to whom and who else is listening or watching. Do not put anyone at risk of harm or stigmatization. Local volunteers can be a valuable source of guidance and information.

**Tools:** 13 CEA in assessments tool 16 FGD guide

## Examples from the Movement

### Understanding both cultural and practical context of menstruation proves critical

To improve menstrual hygiene management (MHM) support in disasters, Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) took part in a study to better understand the context of menstruation in communities. Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews with women and girls led to many key findings, which would have been missed in a simple needs' assessment. For example, women and girls reported feeling ashamed and embarrassed if men know they are having their period, so it's important they have private areas to wash. MHM kits also need to be distributed separately from other non-food items, and not handed out by men, so that women and girls feel able to ask questions. Restrictive practices during menstruation, like not being able to cook, travel or tend the garden, may limit a woman's ability to engage in activities such as attending distributions, communal cooking in evacuation centres or replanting gardens. This cultural understanding is helping VRCS to improve its disaster preparedness and response plans. Read the full study[45].


**Vanuatu 2018** The Vanuatu Red Cross Society carried out research to identify opportunities to strengthen programming and interventions to support menstural helath management among women and girls in disaster contexts. The study aimed to identify the locally-preferred items for inclusion in an MHM kit and to explore the socio-cultural aspects of menstruation likely to impact MHM in disaster settings in Vanuatu. © Vanuatu Red Cross Society

## 5 Include questions about how best to engage communities in needs assessments

This ensures effective approaches to share information, facilitate community participation, and manage feedback are built into programme plans and budgets.

## How do I do this?

### » Community engagement information to collect as part of need's assessments[46]

- People's needs, opinions and priorities
- Literacy rates
- Trusted sources of information - people and channels
- Information needs in the community
- Access to communication equipment
- Barriers to participating in events or accessing information
- Frequency and type of community meetings and events (and who attends, who speaks, and who is excluded)
- Decision-making processes in the household and community
- Preferred ways to share feedback and raise complaints
- Knowledge, capacities, and beliefs
- Perception of and trust in the National Society

### » How to collect data

- Include data collection methods that allow people to talk openly about their needs and priorities, such as focus group discussions or key informant interviews. Surveys only allow people to pick between pre-set options, so there's a risk important information may be missed
- Some groups might not feel comfortable speaking in front of others so speak to them separately – for example young women might not feel comfortable speaking in front of their elders
- All data should be sex, age and disability disaggregated to allow for a better understanding of the different needs and preferences across different groups. The PGI toolkit[47] has guidance on this
- Don't collect more data than needed. Large assessments are time-consuming, stressful for the community, and raise expectations about the size of programme that is coming

### » How to analyse data

- Analyse needs' assessment and context analysis data together. Commonly used models for analysing data include stakeholder, SWOT, or problem tree analysis. The IFRC's Analysis Framework[48] helps guide teams through the process of collecting and analysing information. Although developed for emergency operations, it can also be used for programmes and provides a useful way to organize and store data and identify any gaps or trends in the information collected
- When analysing assessment data, be aware of:
  - Any gaps in the data – does the assessment provide a good understanding of the community context, needs and capacities and how to best engage with different groups? If not, follow-up visits to the community may be needed to collect the missing data

- Any groups missed - are there any groups who are present in the community but not represented in the data? If so, further effort may be needed to speak to these groups
- Inconsistencies – are there differences in needs, preferences, or capacities of different groups? For example, do male community leaders list different priorities to other groups. These will need to be addressed during participatory planning.

**Tools:** 13 CEA in assessments tool 16 FGD guide

## Examples from the Movement

### Turkish Red Crescent Society assess community needs and knowledge for COVID-19

To understand refugee and local communities' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP), along with their information needs and trusted and preferred channels of communication on COVID-19, Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS), with support from IFRC, conducted a KAP assessment from March to April 2021. The assessment helped TRCS to understand what people know, what they believe, and what they do in relation to COVID-19 and is being used to help the National Society improve its work. Knowing what information people have heard already, how they reacted to it, and why they might be resistant to change, will help TRCS to develop effective, targeted information, engage in dialogue with communities, and promote positive behaviour. The assessment also provides an understanding of people's perception and attitude towards a COVID-19 vaccine and their willingness to get vaccinated. Questions were also included to ensure risk communication and community engagement activities reach all groups, and do not unintentionally create or exacerbate existing tensions and inequalities. Read the full report[49].


**Turkey 2021** Nezila is a 64-year-old Syrian refugee living in Gaziantep, Turkey. She is being asked about her needs and satisfaction with the cash assistance provided by Turkish Red Crescent through the EU funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme.

# Planning and design

The minimum actions for community engagement and accountability during planning and design support communities to play a meaningful role in planning programmes and ensure community engagement activities are integrated into programme plans and budgets.

### Levels of community participation – where is your National Society?

The level of community participation possible, will depend on the context. However, be honest and always push yourself by asking: *'Is there more I could do to give a stronger role and voice to communities in designing and managing this programme?'*

**1**

**Stage 1 - Inform**

**Community receives information, such as noticeboards**

An essential first step but cannot be considered participation by itself, as this is only one-way information sharing.

**2**

**Stage 2 - Consult**

**Community is asked about their needs, priorities and opinions, such as assessments**

But answering questions is a limited form of participation as they no involvement in making decisions.

**3**

**Stage 3 - Involve**

**Community provides input to key decisions, such as community meetings**

However, while the community provides input, the organization makes the final decisions.

**4**

**Stage 4 – Collaborate**

**Community and National Society plan and decide together, such as project committees**

The National Society still has the final say, but they are much more accountable to the community for decisions made.

**5**

**Stage 5 – Empower**

**Community plan and manage the project, such as community-led action plans**

The best form of participation as communities lead projects, with only technical or financial support from the National Society.

*Based on IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum, 2014*

## 6 Community members and key stakeholders must be involved in planning the programme, including men, women, boys and girls, and marginalized or at-risk groups

Programmes designed with communities are more likely to meet their needs and run smoothly. This also builds trust and ownership, which supports sustainability. Conversely, programmes designed in offices without community input, risk not being needed or accepted, which wastes time, funds and effort.

### How do I do this?

#### » Make time for community participation in the planning process

- Often the time allocated to planning is so short there is no time for participation (see the participation challenges box for solutions to this on page 56)
- Discuss plans with formal and informal leaders first and ask for their help to establish contacts with the wider community. Failure to meet those recognized as leaders can result in hostility and mistrust, which can slow implementation and undermine the relationship with the community
- However, don't speak only to leaders as it can't be guaranteed they genuinely represent the needs of all community members. Speaking only to leaders is **not** community engagement and puts the National Society at risk of favouring certain groups, adding to existing inequalities, and giving more power to already powerful voices
- Use the understanding developed through the context analysis to plan how best to involve different groups. For example, if people with physical disabilities struggle to attend community meetings think about other ways to engage them, such as interviews in their homes
- Tap into community volunteers' local knowledge to plan programmes
- Coordinate with other stakeholders and partners during the planning process, such as government, NGOs, and local organizations

#### » Participatory methodologies

- Different technical sectors have participatory methodologies including:
  - Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness[50]
  - Enhanced Community based health and first aid[51]
  - Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment[52]
  - ICRC Participatory techniques flipbook[53]
  - Participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation[54]
  - Child hygiene and sanitation training[55]
  - Community-led total sanitation[56]
  - Moving towards children as partners in child protection in COVID-19 guide[57]
  - ALNAP and Groupe URDs Participation Handbook for Humanitarian Field Workers[58] provides a lot of useful, detailed guidance and examples of participatory approaches
- Use the methodology you are most familiar with in your sector or follow the general steps for participatory planning below. Links are included to some of the tools from the methodologies above, which are most easily adapted to any technical area.

**Tools:** 16 FGD Guide 17 Community meetings tool 18 Participatory approaches to selection criteria

## STEPS TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN PROGRAMME PLANNING AND BUILD OWNERSHIP

### 1 Identify and prioritize solutions together

- Present the assessment findings and verify the National Society's understanding of the main needs and priorities is accurate
- Brainstorm potential solutions to the main needs. A useful tool is the problem/solution tree from the VCA toolkit[59]
- Let community members suggest solutions first so they are not influenced by the organization's suggestions, who they may view as the 'experts'
- Together, assess each solution based on:
  - Level of impact it would have
  - If the resources exist to implement it e.g., funding, technical expertise, time, materials. Be honest about the programme's limitations in these areas
  - If it complements and builds on existing practices and capacities in the community
  - It can be sustained after the programme ends i.e., it won't need funds or technical expertise to maintain it
  - It will not have a negative environmental impact
- Agree a final list of priority solutions to focus on, using discussion or a voting process if different groups have different priorities.

### 2 Agree the programme outcomes, activities, roles, and responsibilities


- Ask communities what outcomes they would like to see at the end of the programme
- Plan the activities that will need to be implemented to achieve these outcomes, and discuss:
  - Who will lead which activities?
  - The resources needed and who can provide them
  - The timeline and order of implementation. Are there seasonal limitations or events like elections upcoming?
  - Any selection criteria and targeting approaches being used to reach specific groups (see page 89 in the emergencies module for more guidance on this)
  - What role will external stakeholders play? How can activities build on existing efforts?
- Activity 6 'Planning for change' from PASSA[60] or PHAST provides a good tool for planning activities and agreeing roles and responsibilities with community members
- Discuss how progress will be measured and agree some indicators based on community expectations. Activity 8 'Monitoring Plan' from PASSA[61] provides a tool to develop a monitoring plan with the community
- Discuss if community members can carry out some of the monitoring, but not if they would be viewed as 'police' or 'spies' by the wider community
- Discuss what will happen when the programme ends and what support the community would need to take over activities.

### 3 Agree how the National Society and the community will work together during the programme

- Plan how the community will participate in managing the programme. Questions to discuss include:
  - Will participation happen through existing committees and representatives, or will new ones need to be set up for the programme?
  - If new ones are set up, how will members be selected so that everyone is represented? See page 64 for guidance on working with community committees
  - How will the wider community be kept engaged? Through which approaches and how often?
  - How should other stakeholders participate?

- Discuss what programme information should be shared, how often and through which channels
- Agree how community feedback will be collected, responded to, and acted upon. See page 103 for more on feedback mechanisms.


**Jordan, 2014** Jordan has a history of opening it's arms to refugees, of a population of roughly 12 million it is estimated that around 5 million of these are originally refugees and migrant workers. Palestinians, Iraqis and more recently Syrians live throughout the country in huge numbers. 1.2 million Syrians have crossed into Jordan from Syria since the conflict began 3 years ago, 80% of those live outside the refugee camps within the Jordanian community, many experiencing a difficult existence. © IFRC

## Examples from the Movement

### Community Participatory Appraisal to understand migrant needs and capacities

Ecuador Red Cross (ERC) uses an approach called community participatory appraisal to understand the problems faced by different migrant groups and work with them to plan relevant, contextualized, and holistic programmes. Participatory appraisal allows the community to share their knowledge and find solutions to address the problems identified. ERC organised participatory appraisal workshops with both adults and children and included Provincial Boards to ensure interventions would be jointly designed by the programme team, communities, and branches. Gender considerations were mainstreamed throughout, for example by having balanced male and female participation and collecting disaggregated data. The adult workshops used a range of activities, including one session named "Family-Community", which allowed participants to identify problems and challenges, their causes and relationships, as well as actions to overcome them. The child workshops used play to explore their perceptions and emotions about themselves, their families, and their relationship with the host community. Before each workshop, participants were given information on the purpose of the session, how information would be used, what would happen next, and that participation was voluntary. Meetings were also held with participants to share the findings. Read the full report[62].

### Using co-production to improve refugee and asylum seeker services

The AVAIL project[63], led by the British, Italian, Irish and Latvian Red Cross and IFRC, used co-production to engage refugees and asylum seekers in designing services and advocating for changes in policies and attitudes. For example, in Glasgow, Scotland, the British Red Cross (BRC) engaged people who had previously been through the asylum process to help design workshops for new arrivals. The co-design workshop[64] used fictional characters to explore how different identities experience the asylum process in different ways. Each participant created a map to visualise their characters journey, including positive and negative experiences and emotions. Participants then shared their maps and discussed key stages where the character would benefit from more information and support from the Red Cross. A similar approach was used to co-design and deliver a Life Skills course[65] for newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.

### Communities participate in monitoring community health services in Tanzania

Tanzania Red Cross Society uses the community score card approach to bring policy makers, community leaders, opinion leaders, service providers and diverse community groups together to monitor and improve health services. Each participant assesses their role in providing community health services and ranks their performance. The scores are then discussed and agreed jointly and steps for improvement identified. An action plan is developed, with clear roles and responsibilities, which is reviewed on a quarterly basis. Read the full report[66].

## 7 Cross-check plans with the community and other stakeholders before implementing to make sure they match needs and expectations

This can help to identify any potential problems, build widespread community ownership and understanding, and prevent duplication with other agencies.

### How do I do this?

#### » Share and discuss plans

- Present plans in community meetings and ask for feedback
- Post plans on noticeboards, with an option to provide feedback through a telephone hotline or volunteers
- Ask community committees or representatives to discuss plans with people and provide feedback to the National Society
- Share plans in coordination meetings with government and others to check for duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration.

**Tools:** 17 Community meetings tool

## Examples from the Movement

### Cross-checking the contents of Menstrual Hygiene Management kits before distribution in Iraq

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) had previously adapted the global menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits to the Iraqi context at the national level but decided to go further and check if any regional variations would be needed before distributions in one province. Together with the French Red Cross (FRC), IRCS conducted focus group discussions with women and girls to cross check the list of iterms included in the MHM kits. Findings showed important differences in needs based on age and whether women lived in urban or rural locations. For example, schoolgirls preferred single-use disposable pads in order not to have to carry their used pads until they came home to wash them, while women and girls in rural villages preferred reusable pads because of their limited access to markets. Read the full case study[67].

## PARTICIPATION CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

| CHALLENGE | SOLUTIONS |
|---|---|
| **There is no time to consult the community – the proposal is due next week** | • Hold one day rapid community consultations using focus group discussions and key informant interviews in a handful of locations<br>• If branches have the skills and experience, they could lead the consultations and spread the workload<br>• Consult community-based volunteers on their views<br>• Speak to key community representatives via telephone<br>• Use online methods to get feedback, such as WhatsApp or social media<br>• Hold virtual focus group discussions in contexts where people have access to internet and smartphones, using apps like Jitsi[68]<br>• Use any secondary data available from the same locations<br>• Build flexibility into the donor proposal, by either saying plans will be updated following more extensive community consultations or including flexible budget lines such as 'community project', which can be used to respond to community needs. |
| **We don't have funds to consult the community during proposal development** | • Create a small fund that can be used for community consultations, which can be replenished once funding has been awarded<br>• If branches have the skills and experience, they could carry out consultations close to the branch, which reduces costs<br>• Use online methods to get feedback, such as WhatsApp or social media[69]<br>• Speak to key community representatives via telephone<br>• Hold virtual focus group discussions in contexts where people have access to internet and smartphones, using apps like Jitsi. |
| **There is no physical access to the community e.g., conflict or COVID restrictions** | • Speak to key community representatives via telephone<br>• Use online methods to get feedback, such as WhatsApp or social media<br>• Hold virtual focus group discussions in contexts where people have access to internet and smartphones, using apps like Jitsi<br>• Use any secondary data available from the same locations<br>• Work with volunteers who are based in the community, who could carry out consultations for the programme |
| **The programme outcomes are already set by the donor so there's no flexibility** | • Be honest about limitations, if the donor says funds can only be used for health-related activities, explain this to the community<br>• Document community feedback and share it with the donor to help persuade them to be flexible to requests from the community<br>• Stakeholder analysis can identify if other agencies or government could meet needs that fall outside the programme. |

| CHALLENGE | SOLUTIONS |
|---|---|
| **The leader doesn't want us to speak to other people in the community** | • Explain to community leaders that the National Society has fundamental principles, which it must abide by<br>• Work with community leaders, but also use approaches to communicate with the whole community. In Haiti project committees were set up with leaders, but community meetings also took place to share decisions and collect feedback more widely<br>• Ask volunteers from that community for advice on how to convince the leader to allow wider engagement<br>• Ask for advice from other stakeholders such as community-based organizations or NGOs already working there<br>• Establish a feedback mechanism<br>• Explain it is a donor requirement that everyone is consulted. |
| **How to ensure women's meaningful participation** | • Establish separate participation spaces for women<br>• Consider gender roles and dynamics. For example, avoid meetings at times women might be preparing meals or doing housework and ask women about barriers they might face participating and how to overcome these, e.g., providing childcare during meetings<br>• Encourage men in the community to support women's participation<br>• Ensure women can meaningfully participate e.g., they feel comfortable speaking in meetings and their contributions are taken seriously. |
| **How to ensure marginalized or at-risk groups can participate** | • Create smaller sub-groups to give individuals a chance to speak without the presence of more vocal or powerful members<br>• Advocate to decision-makers that the opinions of these groups are important and should be considered<br>• Partner with disabled or older people's organizations if specialist communication is required e.g., sign language<br>• Choose meeting venues that are physically accessible and safe for people with mobility limitations or visual impairments<br>• Support carers' attendance at meetings. |
| **What people want clashes with our professional opinion e.g., they request water supply methods that are not suitable for their environment or sustainable** | • Be prepared to listen to the community's concerns and compromise<br>• Have an open conversation about the issue and explain why the National Society would be reluctant to implement the requested solution – i.e., it won't help people or can't be sustained<br>• Explain what alternatives exist and ask if the community would be willing to try something new. Provide a sample or demonstrate new approaches<br>• Ask other communities who have adopted the proposed solutions to share their experiences. |

## 8 Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in programme plans and budgets, outlining how information will be shared, community participation supported, and feedback managed

This helps to ensure community engagement isn't forgotten or seen as a stand-alone programme.

### How do I do this?

#### » Include community engagement activities in the programme plan

- At a minimum, include activities that:
  - Keep communities informed of programme progress, activities, changes or delays, including what information will be shared with who, through which methods, by whom, and when
  - Establish and maintain processes for facilitating regular, meaningful community participation in decision-making, including who will participate, how, when and on what issues
  - Collect, analyse, and respond to community feedback, ensuring people know how they can ask questions, make suggestions, or raise concerns about the programme
- For some programmes, there may be other community engagement-related activities included, such as:
  - Activities that support social and behaviour change communication, such as feedback mechanisms to monitor perceptions of a disease or mobile cinemas and radio shows to increase knowledge and encourage safer practices
  - Activities that support rapid sharing of information with communities that can save lives, reduce risk, and mitigate the negative impact of a disaster, crisis or disease outbreak
  - Activities that support community-led advocacy on issues of priority that cannot be addressed by the National Society.

**Tools:** 5 Template CEA work plan

#### » Include community engagement indicators in the monitoring plan

- Monitor if community engagement activities are happening as planned, effective and supporting the programme to be accountable
- See below for some examples of core indicators to include.

**Tool:** 7 CEA M&E tool

#### » Include community engagement costs in programme budgets

- Community engagement does not have to be expensive, and approaches can be adapted to suit the available funds
- The budget required will depend on the approaches being used but typically a programme budget should include funding for:
  - Community engagement and accountability training or refreshers
  - Volunteer per diems and fuel costs for community visits

- Workshops, focus group discussions and meetings in the community
- A community feedback mechanism
- Any communication tools being used, such as radio or TV airtime, mobile cinemas, printing for posters and leaflets, noticeboards, SMS costs, social media, etc.

**Tool:** 6 CEA budgeting tool

## Examples from the Movement

### ICRC integrate community engagement and accountability into Economic Security programmes

The ICRC's Economic Security (EcoSec) Programme has developed Practical Guidelines for Integrating the Principles of Accountability to Affected Populations into its programmes. Community engagement and accountability is included in all trainings organized by EcoSec and key performance indicators are included in monitoring tools such as post-distribution monitoring. If EcoSec teams are working through partners, they ensure that partner staff are also aware of and have the capacity to implement the 'minimum practices' to ensure accountability to affected people. This includes raising partner staff awareness and providing additional material resources to enable partners to spend sufficient time and pay repeated visits to affected people, use different communication methods, and set up an efficient feedback and complaints mechanism.

**Colombia, 2012** An ICRC team organizes two days of vaccination and workshops to explain how to properly care of the animals as part of an economic security programme. The ICRC bring the necessary equipment from the nearest town, from more than 3 hours away. © ICRC

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS FOR PROGRAMMES

(*For more options see* Tool 7: CEA M&E tool)

This is a menu of potential programme indicators. Not all of them need to be used, but it's important to include some that monitor progress through the eyes of community members. Data collected from community members must be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (at a minimum) so any gaps in engaging specific groups can be identified.

**Monitor community engagement activities**

- # / % of programme staff and volunteers trained on community engagement and accountability
- Programme is informed by a context analysis
- # and type of methods established to share information with communities about what is happening in the programme
- % of programme feedback received and responded to by the National Society
- # of programme decisions made based on community feedback

**Monitor levels of programme accountability to communities**[70]

- % of community members who feel support provided by the programme currently covers their most important needs
- % of community members who feel the support provided by the programme is helping them to become more self-reliant / live without support in the future
- % of community members who feel treated with respect by programme staff and volunteers
- % of community members who feel the programme has communicated well about plans and activities
- % of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during programme planning and decision-making
- % of community members who know how the programme decided who should receive support and who does not
- % of community members, including marginalized and at-risk groups, who know how to provide feedback or make a complaint about the programme
- % of people who received a response to their feedback about the programme

# Implementation and monitoring

The minimum actions for community engagement and accountability during implementation ensure communities continue to play a meaningful role in guiding and managing the programme, receive regular information on progress and activities, and can provide and receive responses to their feedback – and that the programme can monitor this is happening, and is flexible enough to adapt and improve based on feedback.

## 9 Regularly share information about the programme with community members, using the best approaches to reach different groups

Poor communication between the National Society and the community causes frustration and limits participation. Good communication means the programme can benefit from valuable community insights, be warned of changes in context or security issues, and build stronger community ownership – all of which increases programme quality and impact.

### How do I do this?

#### » What information should be shared?

- Information about the National Society, including mandate, ways of working, staff and volunteer code of conduct
- Programme aims and timelines
- Programme activities and how they will be managed and delivered
- Processes for any distributions, including when these will happen, how they will be managed, and the process people need to follow
- Details of delays or challenges
- How people can participate, including who the committees or representatives are and what their roles and responsibilities are
- Details of the feedback mechanism, including how to access it, what happens with feedback, and when people can expect a reply
- Action taken because of community feedback, and an explanation when changes can't be made
- When the programme will end and what will be handed over
- Take care that any information shared is honest and accurate.

## » When should information be shared?

- Information should be shared regularly with communities throughout the programme. A good rule of thumb is:
  - Monthly for longer programmes lasting six months or more
  - Weekly or every two weeks for fast-paced programmes, lasting only a few months
- There are key times when it's important to communicate:
  - At the start of implementation. Remind people of the programme aims, activities and timelines, especially if there has been a gap between planning and implementation or changes have been made to the plans
  - Before the start of activities, including distributions, construction, clinic opening or health or hygiene campaigns
  - When there are delays, problems, or changes
  - When specific activities are stopping
  - When the programme is ending
- Information should be shared in time for people to prepare and act i.e., don't share information about a distribution on the day it's happening.

## » How should information be shared?

- Use the communication channels and sources suggested by the community during the assessment and planning phase
- Use clear, simple words in local languages, avoiding technical terms
- Be aware of who might be excluded. For example, can people with disabilities attend meetings? Does everyone have access to a phone? Will male leaders share information with women? Does information need to be adapted to be suitable for children?
- Information can be a source of power, so don't rely on one person to share important information. Find ways to communicate openly with the whole community, such as noticeboards or meetings
- Consider the impact the choice of communication channel might have on people's trust in the National Society and the information being shared. For example, using a religious radio station could suggest the National Society is religious. Posting information at the local administration office can suggest the National Society is allied with Government
- Check every few months the programme is still using the most effective channels, approaches and languages to reach different groups and that information is received, understood and useful.

**Tools:** 19 Communication methods matrix 7 CEA M&E tool

## » Information should also be shared with volunteers and partners

- Community volunteers must be kept informed so they can answer questions accurately when they're delivering activities
- Discuss programme developments and activities with partners and stakeholders to avoid duplication or conflicting activities.

**Tools:** 14 Q&A sheet for volunteers

## Examples from the Movement

### A whole programme grinds to a halt because of a lack of communication in Madagascar

A WASH programme in Madagascar learned the damage poor communication can do to programme implementation when delays in funding led to a well not being completed. The hole for the well had been dug, but delays in receiving ongoing funding from the back donor, meant it could not be completed as planned. The WASH programme did not go back to the community to explain the reason for the delay and the community assumed the National Society had broken its promise, and lost trust in the organization. Anger in the community meant the community volunteers were too embarrassed to keep up door-to-door hygiene promotion activities. Community members who had committed to build their own latrines became demotivated. As one man commented: “when you finish, we’ll finish”. However, when the WASH team explained why the well had not been completed, the community were very understanding and thanked them for the explanation. If the WASH team had visited or phoned the community volunteers to explain the delay, the rest of the programme activities could have continued.

### Good communication critical during water supply renovations in Myanmar

When Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and ICRC planned extensive renovations to five surface water ponds in an urban area, they knew good two-way communication with the community would be key to building acceptance for the project. The team held meetings with a range of formal, informal, and religious leaders and then shared information about the ICRC and the National Society with the wider community through meetings and by distributing a factsheet, which included the telephone number of the ICRC hotline. Special emphasis was given to explaining why the project was necessary and worth the short-term disruption it would cause, including details of the alternate sources of water during the construction period, and key contact points in the community. The community were also supported to establish pond renovation committees to oversee the project and share information between the community and the National Society and ICRC, including complaints, questions, and suggestions for improvements.


**Myanmar** © Joe Cropp / IFRC

# 10 Enable active community participation in managing and guiding the programme, including marginalized and at-risk groups

Community participation helps the programme to run more smoothly by allowing issues to be identified quickly, problems to be solved collectively, and activities implemented with the full support, input, and even resources, of the community.

## How do I do this?

### » Prepare for good participation

- Set up and maintain the participation mechanisms agreed during planning e.g., community committees or representatives, regular focus group discussions with different groups, town hall meetings etc
- Successful community participation needs everyone in the team to have the right attitude, so train staff and volunteers, and ensure they understand the value of participation and treat people with respect. Use the community engagement branch level training package[71].
- Community participation is based on trust so prioritize spending time in the community and actively listening to and engaging with people
- Community volunteers should also participate in decisions - but their participation cannot be a substitute for community members.

**Tools:** 16 FGD Guide 17 Community meetings tool 20 Exit Strategy guidance

### » What decisions should be discussed with communities?

- How activities should be implemented, including who should do what, where, when, for how long, etc
- Locations and designs for any construction or installations
- Selection criteria, targeting, and distribution processes
- Any changes to the programme, including activities, timeline etc
- How to overcome challenges, including delays, funding constraints or activities not working
- Issues raised through community feedback and how to act on them
- Programme closure and hand over to the community.

### » Tips for working with community committees

- Check the committee is trusted by the wider community and has a balanced membership that represents all groups, i.e., not just older men – and if not, find ways to engage more widely with other groups
- If a new committee is being set up, those selected should represent all groups and have gender balance. Ideally the committee should be chosen by the community using safe and fair processes
- Be clear about what is expected of the committee. A written terms of reference can provide clarity and be a useful reference point
- Consider offering training to the committee, for example on communication and feedback skills
- Monitor that the committee are fulfilling their role and information is flowing between the committee and the wider community
- Still communicate and be available to the wider community, for example through open community meetings or feedback mechanisms.

## Examples from the Movement

### Advisory committees strengthen services and social cohesion in Turkey

To ensure Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) community centres are providing services relevant to people's needs, advisory committees have been formed at each community centre, comprising members of the local community, migrants, and other vulnerable groups. The committees meet once a month, and bring together the National Society, local government, and community members. They are an opportunity to discuss how to adjust community centre activities and to advocate on wider issues to relevant stakeholders. At the first meeting, a one-pager to explain the objectives, responsibilities and working modalities of the committee was discussed and agreed. Read the full report[72].

### Importance of supporting, training, and monitoring community committees

In Madagascar the National Society establishes community committees called KOIF. The KOIF identify needs in the village and then the whole community prioritise which ones to focus on. The KOIF develops a village action plan which sets out what the community can do alone and where they need support. The plans are discussed in community meetings and endorsed by the whole community. In one community this worked very well. The KOIF members were well supported by the National Society and provided with training. They eventually took over management of activities and started to implement their own initiatives. For example, they improved the road between the village and the main road which increased peoples' access to local markets, schools, and healthcare. However, in another community, the KOIF was not supported as well, and during a focus group discussion with women in the community, very few knew about the KOIF. One woman admitted to being on the KOIF but explained she would be called to meetings with no warning and was given no explanation of what her role should be.

**Madagascar 2021** Madagascar Red Cross discuss selection criteria and targeting with communities as part of the response to drought and COVID-19. © Malagasy Red Cross

## 11 Collect, analyse, and respond to community feedback, ensuring people know how they can ask questions, make suggestions, or raise concerns about the programme

Feedback helps the programme to understand community perceptions, identify what is not working, and how to improve impact. A feedback mechanism can also help to identify and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and corruption by staff and volunteers.

### How do I do this?

#### » If the National Society already has a feedback mechanism in place

- Use this for the programme, rather than setting up something new
- Discuss with the team who manage the feedback mechanism how it could be used to support the programme
- Train programme staff and volunteers on how the mechanism works
- Discuss the mechanism with communities, including any potential barriers to using it and any adaptations that may be needed
- Advertise the feedback mechanism widely in the community.

**Module 6 has guidance on setting up a feedback mechanism on page 103**

**Tool:** 15 Feedback kit

**Lebanon 2006** Lebanese Red Cross Youth volunteer, Sarah Moukarcel, speaks with an IDP in Mount Lebanon district (near Beirut) to collect data. Many IDPs are staying in schools where they receive assistance.The Lebanese Red Cross is visiting communities to find these IDPs, determine their needs and help meet them. © ICRC / Marko Kokic

## 12 Review and adjust programme activities and approaches regularly based on community feedback and monitoring data

When problems or suggestions raised through feedback and monitoring are ignored, it causes frustration and can lead people to disengage. Programmes need to be continually reviewed and adjusted to ensure they are still relevant, effective, and meeting the needs.

### How do I do this?

#### » Monitor performance formally and informally

- Monitor if the programme is meeting people's needs, reaching the right people, and supporting self-reliance and make changes if needed
- Monitor that people are satisfied with the quality of information, participation and influence they have over the programme, and make changes if needed
- Include questions in formal monitoring processes, but also ask these questions informally during community meetings
- Holding focus group discussions every six months with key groups in the community is a good way to check-in and proactively identify any issues or suggestions for improvements
- Discuss community feedback and monitoring data in programme team meetings as a standing agenda item, including how to act on it
- If the same issues are raised repeatedly, they still need to be addressed by making a change to the programme or explaining more clearly to the community why the issue can't be solved
- Meet regularly (e.g., monthly) with community volunteers to capture any informal feedback they are hearing in communities, discuss challenges faced, and listen to their suggestions for improvements
- Keep coordinating with other partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration and avoid duplication.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD Guide 17 Community meetings tool 15 Feedback kit

## Examples from the field

### Italian Red Cross monitor migrant perceptions to improve services

Italian Red Cross and IFRC partnered with Ground Truth Solutions to monitor the perceptions of migrants arriving in Europe. A short simple survey was developed, tested with migrants, and then refined to capture information on migrants' access to information; understanding of the asylum system; ability to meet basic needs; sense of safety; trust in Red Cross staff; ability to have a say in the support received; and sense of empowerment. Data was collected by volunteers through face-to-face interviews and after each round of data collection, the findings were discussed internally with all teams and with migrants. The surveys and the subsequent discussion identified practical, concrete improvements Italian Red Cross could make to its services. For example, migrants had reported not understanding the asylum procedure so, reception centre staff began sharing information about the asylum process in smaller doses, spread over several days, to allow the information to be absorbed and better understood. Following the initial round of data collection, Italian Red Cross rolled out the perception surveys independently and incorporated regular feedback collection into the management guidelines for its reception centres. Read the full report[73].

### Creating feedback loops in Cameroon

In Cameroon, the National Society created a successful feedback loop where data collected through multiple channels was analysed and used as a tool to continually adapt and improve its COVID-19 response. With support from IFRC, the National Society established mechanisms to collect feedback through social media, the National Society hotline, volunteers and FGDs and KIIs in communities. All data was analysed using the IFRC's COVID-19 feedback tools[74] to highlight key trends and challenges, which the team then discussed how to respond to. For example, feedback highlighted that some people did not believe COVID-19 was real, so volunteers were briefed on how to address this in communities during social mobilization. Feedback also alerted WASH teams to locations where people had limited access to safe water.. When it became clear that young people believed COVID-19 only affected older people, the National Society engaged youth influencers to help tackle this and encourage more mask use. Finally, feedback is used to shape the topics and content of the National Society's radio chat shows on COVID-19, where calls and SMS received, are also logged, and analysed within the feedback mechanism. Read the full case study[75].

**Italy 2016** Migrants are asked about their experiences and perceptions by Italian Red Cross volunteers at the Teobaldo Fenoglio reception centre. © Emiliano Albensi / Italian Red Cross

# Evaluation and learning

The minimum actions for community engagement and accountability during evaluation and learning help to ensure communities are consulted on how the evaluation should be carried out, and that the programme is evaluated through the eyes of community members. These actions are relevant for mid-term, real-time or end line evaluations.

## 13 Involve communities in planning the evaluation and discussing the findings

This will improve the quality of the evaluation and maintain a good relationship with the community, making it easier to work together again in the future.

### How do I do this?

#### » Planning the evaluation

- Evaluations should be understood as an objective process aimed at identifying areas for improvement, and not about finding faults
- Use existing participatory mechanisms to involve the community in planning the evaluation e.g., community committees
- Include data collection methods that allow people to speak confidentially and safely

#### » Topics to discuss with the community include

- The purpose of the evaluation
- Key questions that should be asked
- Best methods for data collection
- Who should collect the data
- When it should be carried out, considering days, times, and season, and what it will require from community members
- How to discuss and share findings with the community
- Any limitations, such as funding or issues that must be covered because of donor requirements

#### » Who to involve

- Discuss with diverse groups to ensure nobody will be excluded. For example, are there times of day when women can't participate?
- Consider who collects evaluation data and the impact it could have on how people respond to questions. For example:
  - If the evaluation is carried out by the programme team, will people still share weaknesses or negative experiences?
  - Can women and girls speak freely with male evaluators?
  - Can evaluators speak the local languages?
  - Could the evaluation team's nationality, religion, or ethnic group lead them to be less trusted, seen as biased, or party to one side of a conflict?

## » If feasible, consider an evaluation led by the community

- Indaba is a community-centered video tool for monitoring and evaluation, where communities can make their own video stories using a simple, easy-to-use application and mobile phone. IFRC's PMER unit has piloted the Indaba approach for baselines, monitoring and evaluations and has a manual, tools and examples of community videos[76]
- The Most Significant Change is a participatory approach to evaluations where communities are asked to share stories about major changes they have seen because of the programme. These stories are discussed together, and the community evaluates the most significant impacts the programme has had on their lives[77]
- Use the IFRC Framework for Evaluation[78] for more guidance.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool

## » Communicating about the evaluation

- Ensure communities understand the purpose of the evaluation and what happens next to manage expectations, as sometimes people can think an evaluation is an assessment for a new programme
- Explain how the evaluation will happen, when, who will carry it out and assure people that the information they share is confidential
- Make sure the evaluation team are trained to communicate clearly and respectfully and can answer questions about the evaluation
- Every time the evaluation team speaks to a new group of people, they should explain who they are and the purpose of the evaluation
- Discuss evaluation plans with stakeholders and partners.

**Tools:** 19 Communication methods matrix

## » Sharing the findings

- Discuss evaluation findings and next steps with communities, for example through meetings or workshops
- When presenting the results of an evaluation, be careful not to put anyone at risk by exposing their views publicly
- Be careful that findings are not interpreted as promises by being clear about which recommendations can be acted on and which cannot
- Share evaluation findings with colleagues and partners to ensure others can benefit from lessons learned and avoid repeating mistakes. For example, through a lesson learned workshop.

**Tools:** 17 Community meetings tool

## Examples from the Movement

### Sharing evaluation findings with communities leads to solutions for Zambia Red Cross

Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) and their partner Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) shared the results of a midterm evaluation for a Pneumonia Reduction Project through community meetings, which brought together traditional community leaders, mothers, fathers, and traditional healers. A key finding in the evaluation was that communities were not constructing the improved cook stoves promoted as part of the project due a lack of clay soil, so ZRCS was considering abandoning this activity. However, by discussing the findings, the community were able to suggest alternative ways of constructing the stoves using locally available soils and materials. Secondly, the community really valued this approach, and helped to increase community ownership over the programme; "*We are glad that ZRCS staff have come back to provide feedback on project implementation, most of the time, no one comes back to us after an evaluation or assessment of any kind. Decisions are made from their offices without engaging us community members on what we really want*." Read the full report[79].

**Zambia 2013** A mother and daughter are among the 1500 people displaced by groundwater flooding in central Zambia in January, cook in the relocation camp where they will spend the next few months. © Stanley Ndhlovu / IFRC

## 14 Ask community members if they are satisfied with the programme, how it was delivered and what could be improved

If the programme hasn't worked for the community, it hasn't worked at all – no matter how many awareness sessions delivered, or boreholes constructed. Evaluations should not be a box-ticking exercise for the donor, but an important tool to help us learn and improve.

### How do I do this?

#### » Questions to include in the evaluation

- Include questions in the evaluation to assess if:
  - The programme met people's needs and helped them to become more self-reliant
  - Support was relevant, timely, effective and of a high quality
  - People felt treated with respect and dignity
  - People are satisfied with the quality of information, participation and influence they had over the programme
  - The community engagement approaches chosen, such as the type of feedback mechanism, were effective and appropriate
  - There is anything community members would change or improve about the programme if it was to be delivered again
- Use similar questions to those in the programme baseline and monitoring to allow for changes over time to be tracked
- Include some methods of data collection that allow for open conversation to capture aspects that may be missed in surveys
- Collect disaggregated data to understand the experience of different groups and if anyone was underserved or excluded
- Try to capture the impact community engagement approaches had on the quality of the programme and relationship with the community. For example, did the feedback mechanism help to identify and solve problems more quickly or did participatory approaches help the programme to benefit from stronger community input.

**Tool:** 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD guide

# Examples from the field

## Evaluating participation and feedback approaches within cash programmes

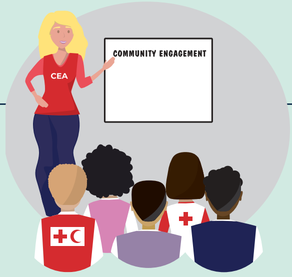
In an evaluation of a cash distribution program in North East Nigeria, ICRC's EcoSec team included questions to evaluate the short-term outcomes of the project and level of community satisfaction, including their involvement in the design and implementation of the program and awareness of feedback mechanisms. All respondents reported that that selection process was fair, but 76 percent recommended that the community should be more involved to support better transparency and accountability. A random verification process was recommended to strengthen selection processes in the future. The survey also showed that 30 percent of respondents were not aware of the feedback mechanism, suggesting more effort needs to be made to ensure all community members are aware of such mechanisms.


**Nigeria 2018** A woman proudly shows the condiment business, that she could install thanks to ICRC support. She lost contact with her family and without support she had to beg for food. Now she can support herself. © ICRC

# Ten actions to engage communities during emergency response operations

## All stages

**1 Community engagement is integrated across the response**




**Minimum**

- Brief staff and volunteers on CEA
- Discuss CEA in operational meetings
- Identify a CEA focal point

**Advanced**

- Train staff and volunteers on CEA

## Emergency Assessment

**2 Understand community needs, capacities, and context**

**Minimum**

- Secondary data review
- Rapid needs and context analysis

**Advanced**

- Detailed needs and context analysis
- Interagency joint assessments

**3 Carry out the assessment with transparency and respect for the community**

**Minimum**

- Discuss assessment plans with community representatives
- Introduce the National Society and explain the assessment purpose
- Brief staff and volunteers on the assessment purpose and process

**Advanced**

- Train staff and volunteers on communication and feedback
- Coordinate with external partners
- Verify assessment findings with communities

## Planning the response

**4 Discuss response plans with communities and key stakeholders**

**Minimum**

- Discuss response plans and ways of working
- Coordinate internally and externally to avoid causing frustration in communities

**Advanced**

- Use participatory planning approaches
- Cross-check plans with communities before implementing

**5 Discuss and agree selection criteria and distribution processes with communities**


**Minimum**

- Explain selection criteria and targeting
- Respond to questions and complaints
- Discuss distribution processes

**Advanced**

- Agree selection criteria together
- Use community-based targeting
- Plan distributions with the community

**6 Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in response plans and budgets**

**Minimum**

- Plan community engagement approaches with all sectors
- Include activities and indicators in the response plan and budget

## During the response

### 8 Support community participation in making decisions about the response


**Minimum**
- Involve the community in key decisions

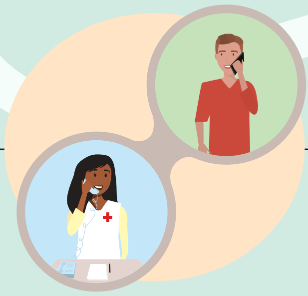
**Advanced**
- Enable active community participation
- Plan the exit with communities

### 7 Regularly share information about the response with the community


**Minimum**
- Keep sharing information about the response
- Communicate exit plans clearly

**Advanced**
- Check communication approaches are effective

### 9 Listen to community feedback and use it to guide the response



**Minimum**
- Establish a simple feedback mechanism
- Check the operation is meeting people's needs
- Monitor for unintended consequences
- Act on feedback and monitoring data

**Advanced**
- Improve the feedback mechanism
- Discuss feedback with partners
- Monitor community engagement approaches
- Collect case studies of feedback being used

## Evaluating and learning

### 10 Include the community in the evaluation

**Minimum**
- Evaluate community satisfaction
- Share evaluation findings internally

**Advanced**
- Communities help plan the evaluation
- Organise a community-led evaluation
- Discuss findings with communities
- Discuss findings with partners

## Tools to help

- 7 **Tool 7:** CEA M&E tool
- 8 **Tool 8:** CEA job descriptions
- 10 **Tool 10:** Code of Conduct briefing
- 12 **Tool 12:** CEA Case Study template
- 13 **Tool 13:** CEA in Assessments tool
- 14 **Tool 14:** Q&A sheet for volunteers
- 15 **Tool 15:** Feedback kit
- 16 **Tool 16:** FGD guide
- 17 **Tool 17:** Community meetings tool
- 18 **Tool 18:** Participatory approaches to selection criteria
- 19 **Tool 19:** Communication methods matrix
- 20 **Tool 20:** Exit Strategy guidance
- 22 **Tool 22:** Developing a CEA emergency plan
- 23 **Tool 23:** SOP for CEA in IFRC emergency operations
- 24 **Tool 24:** CEA checklist for sectors and roles
- 25 **Tool 25:** CEA in emergencies briefing


**Peru 2020** The Peruvian Red Cross have been distributing food supplies, kitchens and utensils to different Ollas Comunes (spaces self-managed mainly by women, where they organize to cook for their community, prioritizing children and the elderly) in different parts of Lima, capital of Peru. This distribution was in Villa Maria del Triunfo.
© Peruvian Red Cross

# MODULE 5
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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 module outlines the key minimum actions for community engagement and accountability in emergency response operations, and how to go further if time, capacity, and resources allow. It also highlights the common barriers and challenges to be aware of, as well as the factors that can help to support an accountable response.

## What helps community engagement in emergency response, and what hinders it?[80]

| WHAT IS WORKING WELL? | WHAT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT? |
|---|---|
| • Feedback mechanisms are helping to identify areas for improvement<br>• Working through local volunteers is enhancing community trust<br>• Working with local structures and groups is improving speed and quality<br>• Community engagement training is improving understanding and capacity | • When staff and volunteers understand the value of community engagement<br>• Dedicated community engagement staff<br>• Leadership buy-in, from the operations manager and the National Society<br>• When it is made a requirement i.e., by donors or in Movement commitments |
| **WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES?** | **WHAT IS BLOCKING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?** |
| • Collecting and analysing community feedback in a systematic and simple way<br>• Weak assessments limit understanding of the local needs and context<br>• Poor two-way continuous communication about the operation<br>• Community engagement is siloed<br>• Providing support that people don't need because of poor assessments or standardized, inflexible response models | • Staff don't understand how to practically engage communities or what their role is<br>• Time pressures and perception that community engagement takes too long<br>• Difficulties with physical access<br>• Lack of skilled, dedicated community engagement staff at the right level<br>• Poor internal coordination causes confusion and unrealistic promises to communities |

# Community engagement preparedness

## Institutionalize community engagement and accountability in the National Society

The most effective way to have good community engagement in an emergency is to institutionalize it within the National Society, by following the actions in module three of this guide. This will mean mechanisms to share information, collect and respond to feedback and facilitate community participation will already be in place, with staff and volunteers trained and ready to go, rather than having to start everything from scratch at the beginning of a response, when time is limited.

## Integrate community engagement and accountability in disaster preparedness and risk reduction

Red Cross Red Crescent approaches to disaster preparedness and risk reduction can help to support good community engagement and accountability. For example:

- The Preparedness for Effective Response[81] assessment process examines a National Society's response system, including any gaps in accountability
- The enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessment[82] can support communities to analyse the risks they face and identify actions to reduce these risks
- Forecast-based Financing[83] works with communities to agree actions to be taken at the first warning signs of an emergency, and who should receive support.

The information gathered and documented during these processes can help to identify gaps in accountability mechanisms, provide valuable secondary data at the start of a response, and facilitate better community participation as there is already an established and trusted relationship.

**Democratic Republic of Congo 2019** DRC Red Cross volunteers regularly engage with students, providing critical information about Ebola and how to prevent other major diseases. It also gives opportunities for students to ask questions and provide feedback to volunteers who share this in the community feedback system set up with IFRC and CDC. © Corrie Butler / IFRC

# How to engage communities during emergency response operations

## How to use this module

The tables below give guidance on how to meet the ten actions all emergency response operations need to implement to achieve an acceptable level of accountability to communities.

Under each action are the minimum measures that should be implemented to meet the action, and advanced measures for when more time, capacity, and resources are available.

The explanation of how to meet each action is short to make it easier to reference when time is limited. However, more detailed guidance on meeting each action is in the accompanying tools or the institutionalization and programme modules

**Generally, the minimum measures will apply:**

- In the early stages of a response i.e., the first few months
- For smaller emergencies, with a shorter timescale i.e., less than six months
- When there is limited community engagement and accountability experience and capacity within either the National Society, or as surge support
- When there is limited funds and human resources available for the response

**Generally, the advanced measures will apply:**

- Later in the response, i.e., from month three onwards
- For larger or protracted emergencies, with a longer timescale i.e., more than six months
- When there is a good level of community engagement and accountability experience and capacity, within the National Society or as surge support
- When the response has a good level of funding and human resources.

# At all stages of the response

## 1 Community engagement is integrated across the response

This helps to ensure community engagement is well understood by all staff and volunteers and consistently integrated within all sectors.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Brief all staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability

All staff joining the response should be briefed on community engagement and accountability, including their responsibilities and the different mechanisms being used within the operation. This supports consistent integration across all sectors. Everyone must sign the Code of Conduct and be briefed on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and corruption.

**Tools:** 25 CEA in emergencies briefing 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles 10 Code of conduct briefing

#### » Discuss community engagement issues in operational meetings

Community engagement should be a standing agenda point in all meetings. This includes discussing the quality of community engagement, any gaps, key issues that need to be discussed with the community and how to address issues raised through community feedback and participation.

**Tools:** 23 SOP for CEA in IFRC emergency operations

#### » Identify a community engagement focal point

Although everyone has a responsibility to engage communities, a focal point can help to ensure it is not forgotten and properly integrated. This person should have community engagement experience, be at the right level to influence sector leads, and have enough time to dedicate to the role. Ideally, there should be a dedicated staff member.

**Tools:** 8 CEA job descriptions

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » Train staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability

Provide community engagement and accountability training using the two-day branch level training[84] or the one-day emergency-specific training packages[85].

## Examples from the Movement

### Training volunteers in Madagascar helps build community acceptance

When Madagascar Red Cross Society (MRCS), with support from Danish Red Cross (DRC), provided unconditional cash grants as part of a cyclone response, the local volunteers were responsible for carrying out home visits, collecting and sharing information and listening to and discussing peoples' concerns, fears, and rumours. To prepare them, the team provided training to the volunteers on the project purpose and aims, and the messages that should be disseminated to community members and how to communicate and respond to questions. The valuable knowledge the community volunteers had of the local environment greatly helped in the formulation of these messages. This ensured community volunteers could talk confidently and accurately about the project, including answering difficult questions about selection criteria. This proved critical when suspicion over the fact that money was being provided for free started to spread. Rumours included that the money was 'dirty' and that accepting the cash would lead to expectations, obligations, or requests to pay it back. The volunteers were able to listen openly to these concerns and address them by providing information about the purpose of the cash grants and why people were receiving them. This helped to reassure the community about a new and unusual practice and ensured the smooth running of the response. Read the full case study[86].

### CEA positions added value to the Hurricane Dorian response in the Bahamas

Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS) and IFRC planned to provide cash and voucher assistance, but when CEA, PGI, IM and case management staff led consultations with communities during the assessment, they found cash might not be the best option for people. With the onset of COVID-19, many people, particularly older adults, expressed concerns at having to use ATM machines and visit busy markets and shops to buy food. Instead, the operation switched to provide food parcels and hot meals, which reduced risk and better met peoples' preferred way of receiving support. The CEA delegate also ensured communities were included as a key data point in the real time evaluation (which had initially not planned any community visits), and supported and advocated for post distribution monitoring, including training the volunteers carrying out the PDMs to answer questions and listen and record any feedback and complaints shared during the interviews.

**Bahamas 2020** The Red Cross is supporting communities in Abaco, Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian. © Robyn-Ryann Barnett/ Bahamas Red Cross/IFRC

# During the emergency assessment

## 2 Understand community needs, capacities, and context

Otherwise, there is a risk the operation will fail to meet people's needs, undermine local capacity, or do more harm than good[87]. This damages the National Society's credibility and leads to a loss of time and resources while mistakes are corrected.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Internal & external secondary data review

Save time and resources, and reduce assessment fatigue in communities, by checking what information the National Society already has about the affected areas. For example, previous programme or operation

#### » Rapid needs & context analysis

Get a basic understanding of the needs, priorities, and context through simple, fast approaches such as direct observation, secondary data, key informant interviews and speaking to local volunteers. Speak to different community representatives and groups. A basic analysis should capture:

- The main needs and best ways to deliver support
- Who the community leaders are, and if they are trusted
- Main community groups and associations
- Other stakeholders, e.g., other NGOs, local authorities
- Demographics and community profile including, livelihoods, religion, poverty levels, gender roles, ethnic groups, literacy levels, languages spoken and any marginalized or at-risk groups
- Main capacities and strengths in the community and how these could be supported and used as part of the response
- Main channels of communication in the community, what people need information about, and how they would feel comfortable asking questions or raising concerns to the National Society.

**Tool:** 13 CEA assessment tool

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » In-depth context and needs analysis

Expand the rapid needs and context analysis, to get a more in-depth understanding of the situation. See page 46 for more guidance on context analysis.

#### » Consider an interagency joint assessment

In larger emergencies, it may be possible to carry out a joint needs and context analysis with other agencies. This can save time and resources and reduce assessment fatigue in communities.

## Examples from the Movement

### Different approaches to get the information needed in Indonesia

Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) - the Indonesian Red Cross – uses a variety of different approaches to gather the critical data it needs to understand communities and plan effective community engagement approaches. For the COVID-19 pandemic and West Sulawesi Earthquake response, questions were included in assessments to understand who the trusted sources of information in the community are, including amongst women and people with disabilities. PMI also used online surveys to collect information on peoples' perceptions of COVID-19, shared through their social media platforms, WhatsApp, and to all community-based actions teams. Because the surveys also asked for demographic data from those replying, PMI were able to notice that only 1 percent of responses were from people over 60 years of age. To address this, they organised focus group discussions with older people to gain a deeper insight into their needs. Through these discussions, PMI identified that radio is a preferred way to receive information for older people – information that would have been missed through the rapid assessments and perception surveys. For the earthquake response, PMI used data collected by Government to complement their own rapid needs' assessments, as it included information from diverse groups, such as pregnant women and children. This collaboration helped overcome geographical limitations and allowed for a better understanding of the needs of different groups.

### Communicating in the right language contributes to a smooth distribution in the Philippines

When responding to Typhoon Mangkhut, the Philippines Red Cross (PRC) included questions in the assessment to understand peoples' communication preferences. When the results showed that people preferred information to be shared in the local dialect, they made sure all community meetings, posters and house-to-house visits were conducted in this dialect. The evaluation found this contributed to community acceptance of the selection criteria and a smooth distribution.

### IFRC and Red Cross National Societies support interagency assessment in the Americas

To better understand the information and communication needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, IFRC and Red Cross National Societies took part in a multi-actor, interagency assessment across fifteen countries. The assessment used a mix of consultations with targeted groups, direct interviews, observation, focus group discussions, online self-administered surveys, and secondary data. The results are helping agencies work together to develop information-sharing tools and preventing duplication of efforts. Read the full report and access all the assessment tools used[88].

## 3 Carry out the assessment with transparency and respect for the community

Start the relationship with the community well by treating people with dignity and respect, listening openly to their needs, answering questions honestly, and not making false promises or raising expectations about what comes next.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Discuss the assessment with key stakeholders in the community

Discuss the assessment in advance with key people in the community, including leaders, heads of community groups and associations, Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers, and local authorities. Ask for advice on how to conduct the assessment and if other organizations have already carried out assessments.

**Tools:** 13 CEA assessment tool 17 Community meetings tool

#### » Introduce the National Society and the purpose of the assessment

Organise a community meeting and provide information on the National Society, the purpose and process of the assessment, what happens once it's completed, staff and volunteer codes of conduct and behaviour, and how people can ask questions or raise concerns.

**Tool:** 14 Q&A sheet for volunteers

#### » Brief staff and volunteers on the assessment

Brief staff and volunteers on the assessment purpose, process and what happens next, so they can answer questions accurately and avoid raising unrealistic expectations about the response. (Re)Brief assessment teams (including drivers) on the code of conduct, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, anti-fraud and corruption, and how to manage feedback and complaints.

**Tool:** 10 Code of Conduct Briefing

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » Train staff and volunteers on communication and feedback

Train assessment teams on good communication skills and responding to feedback, including how to manage expectations. Use the one-day training on good communication skills and feedback handling[89].

#### » Coordinate with external partners and local authorities

Attend external coordination meetings to gather information on what others are doing, and discuss assessment plans and findings, to identify areas for collaboration and avoid duplication. This includes attending community engagement and accountability coordination groups.

### » Verify your assessment findings and analysis with the community

Share the results of the assessment with community representatives and cross-check they are accurate and discuss anything that is still unclear.

**Tool:** 17 Community meetings tool

## Examples from the Movement

### Key groups missed from the assessment led to their needs not being met

During the Bhuj Earthquake in India, staff and volunteers were asked to approach the head of the village or urban community to assess the needs. No other groups were consulted, and the community was not involved in planning the assessment. As the heads were all male, this led to the needs of many groups being overlooked in the response, including women and marginalized Muslim and lower caste groups. A key lesson learned was on the importance of understanding the context before undertaking a community assessment, and of consulting diverse groups so that they are not missed during the assessment.

### Listening openly to the community helped identify the real issues in Bangladesh

In Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, the ICRC conducted community meetings to understand practices and challenges related to the management of the dead due to COVID-19. The sessions shed light on challenges in maintaining the communal burial spaces during flooding in the monsoon season. This information led the ICRC to adapt its original plan to distribute materials for safer management of the dead to working with communities to fix the infrastructural issues related to flooding.

**Bangladesh 2012** Bangladesh Red Crescent volunteers in search and rescue operation in Chittagong mud slide. © Bangladesh Red Crescent

# During planning

## 4 Discuss response plans with communities and key stakeholders

This can save time and resources by confirming activities will meet peoples' needs, highlight any potential obstacles and identify where the community can provide support.

**At a minimum** *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

### » Discuss response plans with key stakeholders in the community

Discuss response plans with a mix of community representatives including leaders, heads of groups and associations, Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers, and local authorities. Check activities will meet the needs and priorities of the community and ask about the best ways to deliver them. If feasible, discuss what should happen at the end of the operation and how the community and/or other stakeholders could take over activities.

**Tools:** 17 Community meetings tool 20 Exit strategy guidance

### » Ask communities how they want the National Society to work with them

Discuss with key community representatives how the National Society should work with them during the operation, including how, when and what information should be shared, how feedback should be managed, and the best approaches for community participation. Involve the community in planning the feedback mechanism and if different approaches are needed for complaints about sexual exploitation and abuse, or fraud and corruption. See module 6 on page 103.

**Tools:** 16 FGD guide 15 Feedback kit

### » Coordinate internally and externally to avoid causing frustration in communities

Internal planning meetings help to make sure sector plans are complementary and won't lead to duplication. Check with finance and logistics that any plans to provide goods or cash are achievable before commitments are made to the community. Plans should also be discussed with government and other responders to avoid duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration and sustainability. This also reduces the risk of making promises to communities to provide support that goes against government policies e.g., providing cash-based assistance when the government has a policy against this.

**Tool:** 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

## Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

### » Use participatory planning approaches

Use participatory planning approaches, such as community workshops and meetings, human-centered design, vulnerability capacity assessments or activities such as ranking, decision trees, mapping, etc. Engage all groups in the community in planning the response. See page 52 for more on participatory planning.

### » Cross-check plans with the community before you start implementing

Organise a community meeting to discuss the final response plan before implementing to ensure it meets community needs and expectations. This is a chance to clarify any misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations, answer questions and agree any contributions from the community.

**Tool:** 17 Community meetings tool

## Examples from the Movement

### Community-led approach to recovery planning in Mozambique

Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) and IFRC adopted a community-led approach to planning recovery following Cyclone Idai in 2019. The process began with a community meeting to introduce the Red Cross, explain the recovery assessment process, and answer any questions. Volunteers were trained on good communication, Code of Conduct and PSEA before carrying out a multi-sector household survey. Data collected in the survey was triangulated through focus group discussions, seasonal calendars, vulnerability, capacity and hazard mapping, and transect walks. This included collecting information to help plan effective community engagement approaches. A series of planning workshops were then held with different groups in the community to present the findings from the assessment. Community members ranked the activities they wanted to see undertaken. As part of this, the community also identified which activities they could implement themselves and where they would need Red Cross' support. Community members and the Red Cross team established a timeline to undertake the activities using pictures, color-coded by sector, to ensure full participation by everyone, regardless of literacy. At this stage, an approach for working together with the community was discussed, which included establishing a community committee (voted on by the community and gender balanced) and setting up a feedback system. It was agreed to meet weekly with the committee and monthly with the whole community. The committee was trained on the Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and PSEA and developed their own terms of reference. Feedback was provided through the committee and a toll-free telephone line operated by WFP. Read the full case study.

**Ecuador 2016** Psychosocial support with young people in the Camarones community, Manabi.
© Vladimir Rodas / Cruz Roja Ecuatoriana

## 5 Discuss and agree selection criteria and distribution processes with communities[90]

Communities rarely know how or why aid agencies choose who receives support and who does not, see page 14. This can cause tension in communities and lead to perceptions the National Society is biased or corrupt, affecting the safe access of staff and volunteers.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Explain selection criteria and targeting processes

- Communicate selection criteria widely and clearly to recipients and non-recipients, using a range of channels and approaches. This helps to prevent rumours and tensions from escalating and threatening access
- While it is often easier and quicker to ask community leaders to select who receives support, this exposes the National Society to the risk of corruption and failing to reach those most in need. If community leaders do carry out the targeting, it's important to verify the lists by checking a percentage to make sure they do meet the selection criteria
- Posting recipient lists in a public place supports transparency and can help identify corruption but discuss it with the community first as it could put people at risk of violence or stigmatization.

**Tools:** 18 Participatory approaches to selection criteria 19 Communication methods matrix

#### » Be ready to respond to questions and complaints

- A feedback mechanism must be in place to respond to questions and complaints about the selection process. See module 6 on page 103
- The most common complaint will probably be from those who feel they have been unfairly missed out, so have a clear process for investigating these cases and provide an explanation of the final decision to the complainant. Failing to deal with type of complaint, can lead to loss of trust, anger, and even security incidents.

**Tool:** 15 Feedback kit

#### » Discuss distribution processes

- Ask community representatives about the best days, times, and methods for distributions.

**Tool:** 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » Agree selection criteria with the community

- If possible, agree selection criteria with the community as they may have different perceptions of who is most in need or vulnerable

- Engage with a wide range of groups, including those who are not likely to receive support
- Keep in mind local power structures and social hierarchies and how they could impact people's suggestions on selection criteria and targeting
- Communities may not agree with or understand why selection processes are needed, so explain why the National Society cannot help everyone equally e.g., limited resources.

**Tool:** 18 Participatory approaches to selection criteria

### » Use community-based targeting

- Depending on the context, it may be possible to carry out targeting with the participation of the whole community. This can help ensure the process is fair and open. However, it's important to discuss this option first and ensure peoples' safety and dignity won't be at risk
- Alternatively, involve different community groups and representatives in identifying who should receive support based on the selection criteria. This is more participatory than relying only on community leaders, but still needs to be cross-checked
- If targeting marginalized groups, ask them how it should be done to avoid stigmatizing them or putting them at risk.

### » Plan distribution processes with communities and key stakeholders

- Discuss with community groups and those being targeted, the safest and most efficient ways to distribute support, whether this is traditional goods in kind, or cash-based assistance
- Ask the community to help manage the distribution, including who shouldn't be involved.

**Tool:** 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

## Examples from the Movement

## Participatory approach to agreeing eligibility criteria for cash and voucher assistance in Nigeria

Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS) established Community Resilience Committees (CRC) to help manage cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as part of a flood response. The CRCs were democratically elected by communities and provided with training on their roles and responsibilities, including communication skills and the importance of accountability and integrity. Selection criteria was agreed jointly between the Red Cross and the CRC members, and a community meeting held to ensure widespread acceptance. The CRC used a mapping exercise to identify who within the community met the agreed criteria. Lists were then posted publicly in the town hall, where community members could view them, and challenge if necessary, through the NRCS toll free telephone line. The CRC was also critical in explaining the eligibility criteria to the wider community, managing rumours, and collecting and helping to respond to complaints. Information was also shared directly with community members on the CVA eligibility criteria, distribution processes, and how to ask questions or make complaints during house-to-house visits and community meetings. NRCS received 134 feedback comments, of which 35 were complaints mainly from households not receiving CVA. In these cases, NRCS explained the rationale for the eligibility criteria including limited resources and the need to reach the most vulnerable.

## Simple steps for a better distribution in Zanzibar

The Zanzibar branch of Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) used simple, inexpensive approaches to ensure good community engagement and accountability during distributions of non-food items to 100 households following floods. Local leaders selected the most affected households, but TRCS carried out household visits to verify they met the selection criteria and issued them with cards with the TRCS stamp and branch coordinator's signature. TRCS then shared information on the selection criteria, distribution dates, locations, and how to contact the branch with questions, through community meetings, household visits and megaphones. On the day of the distribution, flipchart sheets were put up with details of what people would receive and the quantity and a helpdesk was set up where people could submit a feedback form or speak to a volunteer.

# 6 Include community engagement and accountability activities and indicators in response plans and budgets

If community engagement is not in the plan and budget there is a strong chance it will be forgotten in the rush and pressure to respond.

**At a minimum** *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

### » Plan community engagement approaches with the whole operations team

This ensures everyone understands how communities will be engaged and the responsibilities within their sector. This is particularly important for feedback mechanisms as all sectors will have a responsibility to act and make changes based on the feedback received, so buy-in from staff and management is critical. Develop a clear plan for how feedback will be shared and discussed internally and acted on.

**Tools:** 22 Developing a CEA emergency plan 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

### » Include community engagement activities and indicators in the response plan and budget

Explain in the response plan narrative and activity plan how information will be shared with communities, participation supported, and feedback managed. There should be indicators to manage this, and funding allocated in the budget.

**Tool:** 7 CEA M&E tool

## Examples from the Movement

Here are some examples of Red Cross Red Crescent emergency plans of action where community engagement and accountability approaches have been well integrated:

**Lesotho windstorms disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) appeal**

https://adore.ifrc.org/Download.aspx?FileId=446402

**The Bahamas Hurricane Dorian Emergency Appeal**

https://adore.ifrc.org/Download.aspx?FileId=255686%20

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS FOR OPERATIONS

*(for more options see* Tool 7: CEA M&E tool*)*

This is a menu of potential operational indicators. Not all of them need to be used, but it's important to include some that monitor progress through the eyes of community members. Data collected from community members must be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (at a minimum) so any gaps in engaging specific groups can be identified.

**Monitor community engagement activities**

- # / % of staff and volunteers working on the operation who have been briefed on community engagement and accountability
- The operation is informed by a needs assessment
- The operation is informed by a context analysis
- # of different community groups and representatives consulted on response plans, per geographical location
- # and type of methods established to share information with communities about what is happening in the operation, including selection criteria if these are being used
- # of opportunities for community participation in managing and guiding the operation
- # and type of methods established to collect feedback from the community
- # of operational decisions made based on community feedback

**Monitor levels of operation accountability to communities**[91]

- % of community members who feel the aid provided by the operation currently covers their most important needs
- % of community members who feel treated with respect by the operation's staff and volunteers
- % of community members who feel the operation has communicated well about plans and activities
- % of community members who feel their opinion is taken into account during operation planning and decision-making
- % of community members who know how the operation decided who should receive aid and who does not
- % of community members, including marginalized and at-risk groups, who know how to provide feedback or make a complaint about the operation
- % of people who received a response to their feedback about the operation

# During implementation

## 7 Regularly share information about the response with the community, using the best approaches for different groups

Not sharing information with communities about the response can lead to rumours, unrealistic expectations, and a breakdown of trust between the community and the National Society.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Keep sharing information about the response through multiple channels

Systematically share information on operational plans, progress, activities, selection criteria and distribution processes, delays and challenges, and people's rights and entitlements. Advertise the feedback mechanism and any opportunities for community participation. Use multiple communication channels, as one channel will not reach everyone, and make sure information is clear, simple and in local languages. Make sure community volunteers are also kept informed so they can share accurate information with the community. See page 61 in the programmes module for more detailed guidance.

**Tools:** 19 Communication methods matrix 14 Q&A sheet for volunteers

#### » Communicate clearly when the response is ending and other sources of support

Communicate clearly when the operation is ending, what will be handed over, who the community can contact in case of issues and sources or referrals for ongoing support. Staff and volunteers should be kept informed too, so they can accurately answer community questions. Ending the operation without warning, can harm the relationship between the National Society and the community.

**Tool:** 20 Exit strategy guidance

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » Test and review communication approaches

Regularly check the operation is using the most trusted and preferred channels, approaches, and languages to reach different groups and that the information shared is received, understood and useful. Communication approaches may need to be adapted as the impact of the emergency changes and the situation evolves.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool 19 Communication methods matrix

## Examples from the Movement

### Bangladesh Red Crescent Society overcomes COVID-19 barriers to communicating

Traditionally Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDCRS) would use face-to-face methods to communicate with communities. However, the National Society had to scale up its use of social media when COVID-19 placed limitations on how people could meet. The National Society monitored comments on its social media accounts to understand what specific concerns people had and follow up posts were created to address their questions. For example, when BDRCS' announced the vaccination campaign on its Facebook page, people had many questions about registrations and eligibility criteria, so a follow-up post replied with all the details. Before sharing publicly, posts and messages are sent to BDRCS and IFRC staff, volunteers, and their family and friends, to test whether they are understood and adjusted if needed. BDRCS' Facebook page is a 'Facebook verified' source of information on the pandemic, with each post having an average reach of 87,372 people. Posts include images with text, animation, Facebook live sessions with experts, and other videos to encourage people to register for vaccinations and provide information. Questions received from the public are either answered or referred to the Bangladesh Government's vaccination hotline number.

### Good communication in Malawi helps tackle corruption by community leaders

During focus group discussions for a resilience programme, Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) was made aware of issues with community leaders replacing names on distribution lists, made worse by a cultural reluctance to complain in Malawi. So as part of a cyclone response, the National Society implemented three simple measures to stop this practice happening:

1. Volunteers were trained on community engagement approaches, including people's rights, what information to share with communities and how to collect and respond to feedback
2. Awareness sessions were held to explain the objectives of the response, who would be supported, the items being distributed and how people could confidentially share any complaints or concerns. This information was also shared tent to tent by volunteers
3. Feedback and complaints systems were set up including suggestion boxes, a telephone line and face to face with MRCS volunteers. Help desks were also established during all distributions so that any problems on the day could be captured and resolved quickly.

By ensuring people knew their rights and entitlements and how they could safely and confidentially complain, MRCS was able to prevent several cases of corruption or intimidation by community leaders. As well as rolling out training to all volunteers, MRCS is now briefing community leaders too, to ensure they understand MRCS' mandate and zero-tolerance approach to corruption. Read the full case study[92].

## 8 Support community participation in making decisions about the response

Participation leads to better operations by ensuring the community and the National Society work together to overcome any problems that arise. Not engaging communities leads to a top-down approach, lack of trust, and potential security and access issues.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Involve the community in making key decisions

Establish approaches, such as regular community meetings or focus group discussions, to involve the community in key decisions about the operation. Consult a representative cross-section of the community including men, women, and any marginalized groups. For example, ask for suggestions on how activities should be implemented, discuss the location and design for any construction, ask for input on selection criteria and targeting recipients, decisions about which activities to keep or cut, and how to respond to issues raised through feedback. See page 64 in the programmes module for more guidance.

**Tool:** 16 CEA FGD tool 17 Community meetings tool

### Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

#### » Enable active community participation in managing and guiding the operation, including supporting community-led activities and solutions

Establish mechanisms to hand over more decision-making power to communities, for example through community committees or supporting community-led action plans. Discuss ongoing operational issues and ask for community input to key decisions. Check that the committee is trusted and performing its role as the bridge between the community and the National Society. See page 64 for more on community participation and page 122 for more on supporting community-led solutions during an epidemic response.

#### » Plan the exit with communities

Organise planning meetings with community representatives and members to discuss what should happen after the operation ends and agree an exit plan.

**Tool:** 20 Exit strategy guidance

## Examples from the Movement

### Community Based Action Teams in Indonesia plan their own COVID-19 response activities

Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) – the Indonesian Red Cross – regularly work through Community Based Action Teams (CBATs) in Communities. These volunteer groups are trained as first responders in a disaster and act as the link between the National Society and the wider community. To support communities to lead their own response to COVID-19, PMI provided cash grants to CBATs, which they could use depending on the specific needs in their community. PMI provided a broad list of activities the grants could be used for, including contact tracing, health promotion, mask and handwashing station production, disinfection, or surveillance, but the decision on how to use the funding sat with the community. CBATs received orientations and training online, using Zoom and WhatsApp, which covered guidance on the grant, budgeting and monitoring, and prevention of COVID-19. To ensure full community participation in the process, PMI also provided training to CBAT members on how they could receive input, suggestions, and complaints, on how the grants were being used from the wider community.

### Using local capacity to plan and manage distributions in Libya

An ICRC Durable Return Programme in Tripoli, Libya, created Community Working Groups (CWG) to help plan and oversee distributions for essential household items. A leaflet detailing the terms of reference was distributed during household registrations to ensure transparency about the CWG purpose and people were asked to nominate themselves. ICRC used meetings with the CWG to share assessment findings and discuss the plan of action. The CWG took care of all the logistical arrangements for distributions, including mobilising the community and helping to manage expectations. They also supported the team in reaching out to community members, collecting feedback, and correcting rumours. Key lessons learned include the positive impact good communication and joint working with the CWG has had on ICRC's level of acceptance. Community members also expressed their appreciation that the organization was honest about the limitations of the intervention. Recommendations for improvements include setting up the CWG during the assessment phase and ensuring a good understanding of the different groups in the community from the outset of the programme.

**Libya 2012** An ICRC delegate is meeting with an internally displaced family during a mission to assess needs. © ICRC

## 9 Listen to community feedback and use it to guide the response

Community feedback is critical to understand if the operation is meeting peoples' needs and where improvements are needed. Community members will have questions, concerns, and suggestions, whether a formal feedback mechanism is in place or not, so it is important to have a method of managing feedback or it can lead to frustration and loss of trust.

### At a minimum *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

#### » Set up and maintain a simple community feedback mechanism

At a minimum, this mechanism should meet the following requirements:

- Have at least two channels for collecting feedback, e.g., face to face through volunteers or passed on by community representatives
- Everyone in the community should know about the feedback mechanism and feel safe and comfortable to use it, including men, women, boys, girls and any marginalized or at-risk groups
- There should be a means of recording feedback, such as an excel spreadsheet, and tracking which issues have not been responded to
- Community members need to receive a response to their feedback
- How to act on feedback should be discussed in response team meetings
- Issues falling outside the mandate of the National Society should be referred to other organizations, government, and partners
- All staff and volunteers need to understand how the feedback mechanism works and their role and responsibility in supporting it
- It should be capable of handling sensitive feedback safely and securely, e.g., sexual exploitation and abuse, corruption, or protection issues
- Analyse if feedback is coming from a broad cross-section of the community and no one feels excluded from using the mechanism.

**Module 6, page 103, provides detailed guidance on feedback mechanisms.**

**Tools:** 15 Feedback kit 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD guide

#### » Check the operation is meeting people's needs and reaching the most at-risk

Proactively check the operation is meeting people's needs, reaching the most at-risk groups, and support is being provided in the right way. This can be collected through formal monitoring processes or informally through community meetings, meetings with representatives, or focus group discussions with different groups.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD guide 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

### » Monitor operations for any unintended negative consequences

Monitor the impact the response is having in the wider community to ensure there are no unintended negative consequences that could cause harm to people. For example, putting marginalized groups more at risk through selection criteria processes or destabilizing local markets through food distributions.

### » Act on feedback and monitoring data and use it to guide the response

Discuss community feedback and monitoring data as a standing agenda item in staff, volunteer, and management meetings, with enough time to discuss how the operation should be adjusted to act on issues raised by the community.

**Tools:** 15 Feedback kit

## Advanced *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

### » Review and improve the feedback mechanism

Conduct focus group discussion to gather feedback on accessibility and trust in the feedback mechanism across different groups and discuss how the mechanism can be improved, for example by adding additional channels or strengthening response times. Review how feedback is being acted upon internally and discuss in coordination meetings how the use of feedback could be strengthened.

**Tools:** 15 Feedback kit 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD guide

### » Coordinate with external partners on community feedback

Regularly share feedback insights, reports and/or non-sensitive feedback data with other humanitarian stakeholders via email or in coordination meetings. When needed, advocate in coordination or bilateral meetings for collective action to address broader issues raised in community feedback.

**Tools:** 24 CEA checklist for sectors and roles

### » Monitor the effectiveness of community engagement approaches

Check if community engagement approaches are working well and all groups in the community are satisfied with the quality of information, participation and influence they have over the operation - and make changes when needed.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool

### » Collect case studies of how community feedback is being used

Capture examples of when programmes have been adjusted and impact improved because of community feedback.

**Tools:** 12 CEA Case Study template

## Examples from the Movement

### Bahamas Red Cross set up a hotline for hurricane response

Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS), with support from IFRC, established a toll-free, anonymous, and confidential telephone hotline to respond to feedback as part of the response to Hurricane Dorian. The hotline is open from 9.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday and operated by three staff in English and Creole. Initially, the hotline was set up to respond to issues related to prepaid visa cards distributed as part of the hurricane response and was operated across several mobile phones, held by BRCS and IFRC staff. However, the line proved so popular that it was upgraded to one toll free hotline that could receive multiple calls at once to ensure no call was left unanswered. The aim of the hotline is to solve each case during the call and several measures have been put in place to support this, including training for all hotline operators, development of standard operating procedures, providing hotline officers with briefings and presentations from programme staff, and preparing and regularly updating Q&As. To ensure all feedback is tracked and analysed, BRCS tried several different ways of documenting feedback, including Excel and Kobo Toolbox, but finally found a digital feedback form worked best as it allowed feedback to be logged in one place, regardless of the channel used. Other good practices include establishing clear internal and external referral pathways for feedback that can't be responded to immediately and separate databases for storing sensitive feedback, which is then handled by PGI staff. All feedback is analysed and shared on a database, which can also be seen by the public. Feedback reports are shared internally and discussed in coordination meetings and follow up discussions are held in community meetings and through focus group discussions. Read the full case study[93], including tools and lessons learned.

### Listening to community perspectives to improve the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

DRC Red Cross and IFRC, with the support of US Centres for Disease Control, established a system to systematically collect, analyse and act on community feedback relating to the Ebola operation in Eastern Congo. During house visits and community meetings, volunteers captured concerns, rumours and questions using paper forms. The feedback data is coded and analysed locally and shared with local government-led risk communication commissions and Ebola response leaders as well as regional and global partners, to inform strategic discussions and decisions. By the end of the Ebola response, more than 1 million feedback comments had been collected by over 800 Red Cross volunteers. The feedback data helped the Red Cross operation to respond to community concerns and suggestions in real-time, which built trust and acceptance for health interventions. For example, comments received about family members' need for visual confirmation that their loved one was in the body bag led the Red Cross to acquire transparent bags. Using transparent bags also helped address perceptions that the bags were filled with rocks or dirt because body parts have been removed and sold. For more on the feedback mechanism in DRC, see articles in the Humanitarian Practice Network[94] and Global Health Security journal[95].

### A helpdesk helps support distributions of relief items in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), with support from Canadian Red Cross, used a drought response to try new approaches to managing community feedback. The National Society added a feedback desk to their distribution plans. Community members were informed about the desk prior to distributions and volunteers trained on how to collect and respond to feedback, questions, and complaints and how to log these so they could be analysed later. A system was also put in place to follow up on issues during monthly monitoring field visits. A common complaint was that the support provided was inadequate, so ERCS was able to use this feedback to justify an increase to the amount provided to each household. The National Society also took the opportunity to explain the selection criteria again and the limitations in funding faced. Read the full case study[96].

# During evaluation and learning

## 10 Include the community in the evaluation

Community members should be a key source of information in the evaluation. If the operation has not helped them recover, then it hasn't worked, no matter how many aid items were distributed.

**At a minimum** *when capacity, time and resources are limited*

### » Ask community members for their opinions of the operation

Ask a cross-section of community members if they are satisfied with the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of support provided, the way it was delivered, and what could be improved for future operations. Include these questions in the evaluation survey or if no evaluation is planned, ask these through key informant interviews, focus group discussions or community meetings.

**Tools:** 7 CEA M&E tool 16 FGD guide

### » Share evaluation findings internally

Share evaluation findings with colleagues so that others can benefit from lessons learned and avoid repeating mistakes. For example, through a lessons learned workshop or by emailing the evaluation findings to colleagues.

**Advanced** *when there is more capacity, time, and resources*

### » Involve communities in planning the evaluation

Ask community representatives and members about the best way to carry out the evaluation. See page 69 for more on participatory evaluations.

### » Organise a community-led evaluation

Have the community lead and carry out the evaluation process themselves. See page 70 for examples of participatory evaluation tools.

### » Discuss evaluation findings with communities

Go back to communities and discuss the findings of evaluations and next steps with them, for instance through meetings or workshops.

**Tool:** 19 Communication methods matrix

### » Discuss and share evaluation findings with external partners

Share evaluation findings with external partners to ensure others can benefit from lessons learned and avoid repeating mistakes.

## Examples from the Movement

### Kenya Red Cross drought response evaluation has a strong focus on community experiences

Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) used a mix of tools, including household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and most significant change, to evaluate cash transfers provided as part of a drought response. The evaluation spoke to formal, informal, and religious leaders, men and women, those who received support and those who didn't, as well as other key stakeholders. Topics covered in the evaluation included:

- Relevance and whether the cash transfers met people's real needs
- Effectiveness of the response, including safety, if there were any instances of abuse or corruption, whether people felt the targeting was fair, and if people knew about feedback and complaints mechanisms, which channels they used and if they received a response
- Efficiency of the response, including if it was timely and resources were sufficient
- Impact, on those who received support and those who didn't and whether there were any unintended negative consequences

The community-based approach to targeting was identified as a key success, and seen as fair and transparent by all, including those not selected. The feedback mechanism was also appreciated with 93% saying they received a response. Areas for improvement included having a systematic way to capture feedback shared through local leaders and clearer communication about when the transfers would be ending. Read the evaluation, including methodology[97].

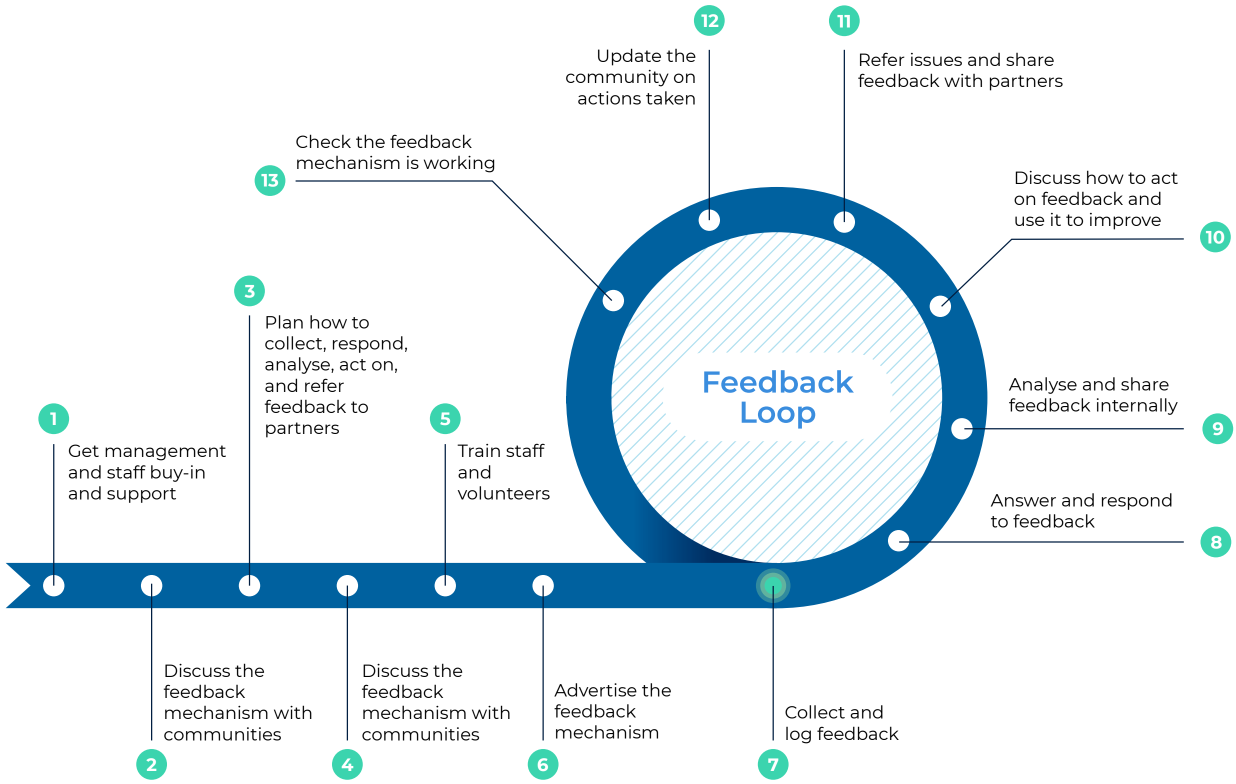
**Kenya 2017** Joyce received her 3,000 KES cash grant during a cash transfer program (CTP) through mobile money with MPesa, as part of the Kenya Red Cross drought response. © Pierre Grandidier / IFRC

**Sudan, 2021**
Sudan Red Crescent engage communities following floods, through their mobile health clinic


# MODULE 6
# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

A feedback mechanism is a system for receiving, analysing, responding, and acting on community feedback, including complaints, questions, requests, suggestions, rumours, or praise.

*Setting up and running a community feedback mechanism*




Feedback can be about the services and support we provide, about a specific topic or issue related to our work (for example a public health concern), or about the behaviour and conduct of our staff and volunteers. This includes sensitive feedback about sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and corruption, and sensitive feedback linked to violence or protection concerns. Feedback can be received informally through conversations between community members and staff and volunteers, or more formally through channels such as a telephone hotline, complaints desk or community committee. What matters most is that feedback is acted on and responded to. Evidence collected by Ground Truth Solutions in 2018 across 6 countries showed less than 50% of those who provided suggestions or complaints received a response (see page 15).

# Why are feedback mechanisms important?

- They help us improve the impact of our work by identifying areas for improvement, which saves us funding and resources in the long term
- They allow us to monitor our performance through the eyes of the community
- Listening to and acting on feedback is essential for building trust with people
- They act as an early warning system by helping us to address problems before they escalate and threaten implementation or the safety and access of our teams.
- They provide a way for communities to safely report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse or corruption by our staff and volunteers
- They provide volunteers with somewhere they can refer difficult questions or complaints they can't easily answer
- People have a right to complain, and we have a responsibility to listen – it's in the Movement Code of Conduct, Principles and Rules for Humanitarian Action and the resolution on community engagement and accountability.

## Examples from the movement

### Collecting feedback from migrants on the move through the AMiRA project

The Action for Migrants: Routes Based Assistance (AMiRA) project provided humanitarian assistance, protection, and information through service points to migrants travelling through Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Egypt on their way to Europe. As part of the project, Burkina Faso and Niger Red Cross, with support from British, Danish and Spanish Red Cross and IFRC, set up a three-stage feedback mechanism to capture migrants' perceptions and satisfaction with the support provided at the service points. Feedback was collected through an exit survey as soon as the person leaves the service point, then a follow-up survey several weeks after the exit survey to capture any changes in perceptions. Finally discussion groups with migrants once exit and follow-up survey data was analysed to deepen understanding of the findings, discuss solutions, and close the feedback loop. Questions included service-specific questions about the relevance and satisfaction with the service points. General questions about their perceptions of the Red Cross, including whether they felt informed about services available, treated with respect, levels of trust in the Red Cross, sense of resilience, preferred communication channels and comfort with using the feedback mechanism. Finally, open questions were also asked in the follow-up discussions to better understand the reasons behind people's answers. The feedback mechanism was supported by Ground Truth Solutions and a guide[98] was produced to help others replicate this kind of proactive feedback mechanism with people on the move.

# Types of feedback mechanisms

There are two main ways to collect community feedback. Through a reactive system where people come to us when they have feedback to share (e.g., a telephone hotline), or a proactive system, where we actively solicit feedback (e.g., focus group discussions). **Both are important and the best feedback mechanisms will use a mix of proactive and reactive methods.**

| | REACTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM | PROACTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM |
|---|---|---|
| What is it? | **People contact us when they have feedback to share**<br>• Telephone hotline<br>• Community helpdesk<br>• SMS system<br>• Suggestion boxes | **We actively solicit feedback by asking questions**<br>• Focus group discussions<br>• House to house visits<br>• Perception or satisfaction surveys<br>• Key informant interviews |

**Some channels can be reactive and proactive.**
**For example: volunteers in communities, community committees, social media**

| | REACTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM | PROACTIVE FEEDBACK MECHANISM |
|---|---|---|
| Pros | • Available when people need to use it<br>• Can capture feedback on anything | • Can collect feedback on specific topics<br>• Some people/cultures may feel uncomfortable raising feedback without being asked for it |
| Cons | • Feedback can be about anything and not the topic we are interested in<br>• If people don't use the system, we don't get any feedback<br>• Needs to be advertised | • By asking specific questions, we might miss feedback on other topics<br>• People might not be able to report issues when they need tow |
| When | • When the National Society wants a permanent feedback mechanism<br>• When people need to be able to contact the National Society quickly with problems e.g., a cash-based assistance | • For capturing and tracking perceptions of a specific topic, e.g., in an epidemic<br>• When it's not possible to set up a more formal mechanism |
| Examples | See the case studies from the Bahamas and Ethiopia (page 99), Burundi, Kenya and Lebanon (page 112) and Peru (page 113) | Italy (page 68), DRC (page 99), and the AMiRA project (page 104) |

## WHAT IS SENSITIVE FEEDBACK?

Sensitive feedback is any information shared by community members that can put them or others at risk and needs to be handled with care. It can relate to any breaches of national or international law concerning communities' safety, dignity and rights, or any violation of our code of conduct or safeguarding policies. Sensitive feedback includes:

- **Safeguarding concerns in the community**
  - Any feedback received about violence, conflict or protection concerns in the community, including sexual and gender-based violence, child safe-guarding or corruption by community members or leaders.
- **Concerns about the behaviour of Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers, or persons associated with humanitarian organizations**
  - **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA):** staff or volunteers asking for sex or sexual favours in exchange for money, jobs, goods or services, sex with children (>18), paying for sexual services, or the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
  - **Corruption:** staff or volunteers stealing funds, favouring family and friends with jobs or aid, or bribing community members in exchange for aid or support
  - Any other serious **breach of our code of conduct**.

This type of feedback needs to be managed sensitively, carefully, and confidentially to ensure the person sharing the feedback is not put at risk of further harm or retaliation. It may have to be managed differently from other types of feedback, with separate channels for reporting and recording and a special referral process for ensuring cases are managed quickly and confidentially. Staff with expertise in protection and prevention of SEA and violence should be part of the team setting up the feedback mechanism. See Tool 15: Feedback kit, the PGI minimum standards in emergencies guide and toolkit[99] and the PSEA manual[100] for more guidance.


**Mexico 2018** Juan Jose Valverde Bona (center) and other families in Morelos, Mexico are receiving humanitarian aid from the Red Cross in the wake of a 7.1 earthquake. Daniel Cima / American Red Cross

# Steps to setting up a feedback mechanism

The guidance below outlines the main steps in setting up a functioning feedback mechanism – for a National Society as a whole, for a programme, or an emergency operation. More detailed guidance on how to implement each step is provided in Tool 15: Feedback kit.

**Tool 15: Feedback kit** provides the guidance and tools needed to systematically use community insights to improve programmes, operations and work more broadly. It includes the first steps to setting up a basic feedback mechanism, as well as guidance on how to conduct community perception surveys, how to analyse qualitative feedback comments, how to handle sensitive feedback, and ensure all feedback is handled responsibly.

## 1 Get management and staff buy-in and support

A feedback mechanism requires staff time, funding, and a commitment to make changes based on what the community say, so it's important everyone is on board and understands their role.

- If management support the feedback mechanism this sends a strong message to the rest of the organization. Highlight the benefits a feedback mechanism provides and point out that communities will have feedback even if there is no feedback mechanism, so better to have a system in place to manage feedback positively and use it as a tool for improvement
- Discuss the feedback mechanism in meetings and workshops, explaining why it's needed and collecting input on how it should work.
- Involve the following key teams early:
  - **Programme and operations staff**, including the best way to share feedback findings so they can be easily understood and acted on
  - **Information management** to help manage and visualize feedback data so it can be used for tracking and decision-making
  - **IT** staff if specific equipment or technology is needed
  - **PMER** so feedback data can be included in monitoring
  - **PGI staff** to ensure safe and confidential processes for managing and referring sensitive feedback
  - **HR and legal staff** to support investigations into complaints about SEA or fraud and corruption by staff or volunteers.

## 2 Discuss the feedback mechanism with communities

It's critical to involve communities in planning the feedback mechanism, otherwise you risk setting something up that doesn't work, isn't trusted, or can't be used by all groups in the community.

- Ask people what they want from a feedback mechanism, their preferred ways of providing feedback, how they would like to receive responses and what mechanisms exist already in the community for resolving issues
- Not everyone will want to share feedback the same way, so speak to different groups, including men, women, girls and boys, older people, people with disabilities, and any marginalized or at-risk groups
- Sensitively discuss with different groups how they would feel safe and comfortable sharing sensitive feedback linked to SEA, violence, or corruption. See the PSEA manual[101] for more guidance and the policy and resources on child safeguarding[102].

## 3 Plan the feedback mechanism

Plan how feedback will be collected, responded to, analysed, acted on, and referred if necessary, and what needs to be in place to manage this successfully.

### » Collecting feedback

- Use the channels preferred by the community, but also consider the capacity within the National Society, programme, or operation in terms of time, funding, and human resources
- Start with one or two channels (ideally one reactive and one proactive) and check they work, and build up gradually if needed
- Options for receiving feedback include help desks, telephone hotlines, volunteers, focus group discussions, community committees, community meetings, social media etc
- Consider which channels are accessible to which community groups, and allow people to share sensitive feedback safely.

### » Responding to feedback

- When possible, feedback should be responded to immediately. Training and having a frequently asked questions guide can help volunteers to answer common questions
- Questions that can't be answered immediately should be logged and responded to later – don't make an answer up
- Response times will depend on the context but should not be more than 2 weeks. Sensitive feedback should be referred quickly and acted on immediately
- If feedback can't be acted on, it's important to tell people this and explain why nothing can be done or they'll lose trust in the mechanism
- How a response is provided depends on community preference, the type of feedback, and National Society capacity. For example:
  - Specific questions or complaints can be answered directly to the individual who made them
  - Common issues raised by lots of people, can be responded to publicly through a community meeting or noticeboard
  - Sensitive feedback should always be responded to confidentially, by a trained expert
- Taking action is the best response as it shows the National Society has listened – but tell people what action was taken to reinforce trust in the mechanism.

## Analysing and acting on feedback

- All feedback, regardless of how it was received (e.g., face-to-face through volunteers or via a telephone hotline), should be logged in the same place so it can be analysed regularly for trends. For example, consolidate all feedback in a database, such as excel, where you can code different types of feedback and track responses and actions
- Sensitive feedback should be stored and handled separately
- Ensure all feedback is stored safely and meets data protection guidelines
- Look for differences based on location, age, gender etc
- Plan how feedback will be discussed and acted on. For example, it could be a standing agenda item in team and management meetings with enough time to present the feedback trends and decide how to act on them
- Community feedback should be seen as a part of monitoring, and reviewed alongside other monitoring data
- Regularly share updates on community feedback across the National Society, including with volunteers.

## Referrals and advocacy based on feedback

- Plan how to refer feedback that goes beyond the scope of the National Society or concerns other agencies or organizations. For example, by sharing feedback in external coordination meetings or mapping other organization's feedback mechanisms or focal points
- Plan how sensitive feedback will be referred and managed internally. This should be linked to relevant policies, such as Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Child Protection, Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing and Code of Conduct[103]
- People sharing sensitive feedback may need follow-up support, such as mental health and psychosocial support, medical care and legal or social assistance so work with PGI colleagues to do a mapping of specialist services for referrals. See the module on sensitive feedback in Tool 15: Feedback kit and the PGI toolkit[104] and PSEA manual[105] for more guidance on this.

## Planning resources

- Ensure there is enough staff to successfully run the feedback mechanism, including feedback handlers and data input and analysis. This might include staff and volunteers who will hear feedback as part of their work in communities
- Identify any equipment and resources needed, such as laptops, software, telephones, quiet office space, transportation, and training costs etc
- Ensure the feedback mechanism can be delivered within the resources available, and if not, advocate for more resources or scale it down
- Include a mix of men and women in the feedback collection team
- Ensure enough funding for at least the first 12 months of operation.

## 4 Discuss the feedback mechanism with communities (again)

Revisit communities to check the planned feedback mechanism meets peoples' expectations and they will feel comfortable using it.

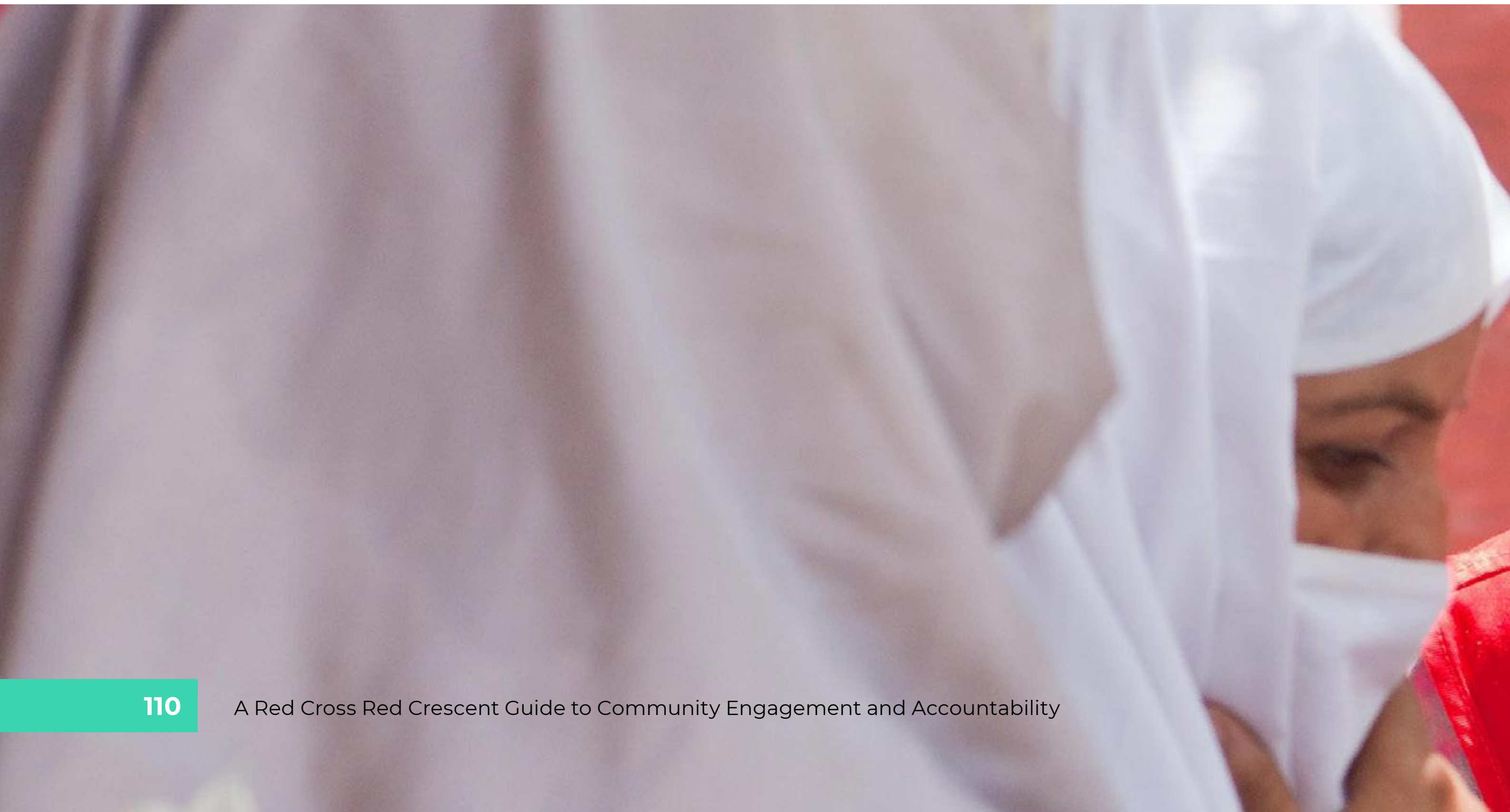
- Discuss the proposed feedback mechanism during community meetings or focus group discussions and identify any areas for improvement
- Discuss the feedback mechanism in meetings with community volunteers as another means of checking for any potential problems.

## 5 Train staff and volunteers

It's important everyone involved in the feedback mechanism understands how it works and what their role is, for it to run smoothly.

- Brief all staff and volunteers on how the feedback mechanism works so they can explain it accurately to communities. Address any concerns or fears staff have that feedback will be used to criticize their work and stress it is a tool to help the organization improve
- Train all those involved in running the feedback mechanism on how it works and what their role is. Include training on soft skills such as listening and communication for those involved in collecting feedback
- Training on protection and PSEA can help staff and volunteers to better recognise and respond to sensitive feedback.

**Pakistan** Sadia Jamil, a volunteer with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, interviews patients at a health clinic in northern Pakistan. Sadia is part of the CEA team which disseminates vital information to those affected by disaster. Based on feedback received, the Red Cross Red Crescent can then better tailor its programming to ensure needs are being met. © IFRC



## 6 Advertise the feedback mechanism

Communities need to know the feedback mechanism exists and how to access it.

- Advertise the feedback mechanism through communication channels commonly used by the community, for example radio, social media, community committees, posters, through community volunteers etc
- Make sure communities understand they have a right to provide feedback and that even negative feedback is welcomed as it helps the National Society to improve its services
- Stress there will be no negative consequences if people complain
- Manage expectations by being clear about what type of feedback the system can respond to and how long it will take to respond
- Assure people sensitive feedback is welcomed and will be handled safely and confidentially.

## 7 Check the feedback mechanism is working

Carry out regular checks to make sure the feedback mechanism is working, and people still feel comfortable using it.

- If the amount of feedback received is declining over time or other monitoring is highlighting issues not being raised through the feedback mechanism, this could be a sign the mechanism is not working as well as it should
- Look for differences in the amount of feedback received from different locations or groups. For example, if less feedback is received from women this could indicate they are not comfortable with the mechanism
- Discuss with communities if they are still comfortable with the way feedback is collected, responded to, and acted upon
- Include indicators to monitor the feedback mechanism's performance
- If no sensitive feedback is received, don't assume this means there are none – discuss the issue again with communities to check they feel safe to share this type of feedback.

**Examples from the Movement**
National Society-wide feedback mechanisms

## Burundi Red Cross branches establish feedback mechanisms

Following the launch of its Community Engagement and Accountability Strategy, Burundi Red Cross started setting up community committees in all branches to manage feedback and complaints and participate in planning branch activities. A meeting was held with branch staff and communal secretaries to secure their support for the community feedback committees, discuss how these would be set up and linked to existing branch structures, and how feedback would be documented and managed. Next, meetings were held with local leaders and community volunteer leaders to discuss the purpose of the feedback committees and ensure their support. Following this, a meeting was held with all community volunteers and community members, where it was agreed to elect a team of trusted people who would be the feedback and complaints unit and would run a helpdesk in the community. They then agreed what to call the feedback mechanism and discussed its roles, responsibilities, and mandate. Read the report[106].

## Kenya Red Cross experience of setting up a national hotline

The previously mentioned Kenya Red Cross case study[107] on institutionalizing community engagement and accountability also documents the process they went through to establish a national feedback and complaints hotline, including key challenges and lessons learned.

## Growing a pilot National Society feedback mechanism

In 2014, the Lebanese Red Cross Society (LRCS) piloted a small hotline to support a cash and voucher assistance (CVA) project, supported by British Red Cross. Initially managed by the disaster management team, it was soon handed over to the PMER team as the number of calls grew. The mechanism has now been systematized and rolled out to cover most LRCS programmes and operations and the number of calls has grown each year. The most common calls are requests for assistance, programme related issues, requests for information, positive and negative feedback, and a relatively small number of formal complaints. LRCS advertises the feedback mechanism through a variety of channels including SMS, during activities in communities, posters and flyers and through partner organizations. Key benefits from the feedback mechanism include LRCS can now respond much more quickly to problems, such as lost cash cards or liquidity issues with agents. Programme staff also report the information provided by the mechanism is extremely useful to assess and adapt their services to better meet peoples' needs. Some of the feedback mechanism's success is attributed to the fact it started small and has been continually improved and adapted based on experience. Read the full report[108].

**Examples from the Movement**
Programme feedback mechanisms

## Using WhatsApp in Peru to respond to COVID-19 questions and requests

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Peruvian Red Cross (PRC) and IFRC to suspend face-to-face activities with the Venezuelan migrant population, they needed to find a new remote way to provide assistance and respond to feedback. A previous assessment had found that 78 percent of Venezuelan migrants in Peru have access to a mobile phone and 99% use WhatsApp and Facebook to receive information. So, a WhatsApp business line was set up to answer questions or doubts about the pandemic, provide information on prevention, and identify, monitor, and address rumours or fake news related to COVID-19. A set of key messages on COVID-19 prevention and response, along with a question-and-answer sheet, were prepared in advance to be used by the WhatsApp line operators. Initially the line was launched with two community engagement operators, but later medical staff were brought in to support with certain questions. A WhatsApp group was also created between operators to help coordinate replies and guidelines developed to log and track responses. Since its launch, the line has proven very popular and now responds to a much wider range of enquiries, including supporting the Peruvian population. Read the full report[109] to find out how the line was set up and access lessons learned and tools.

**Colombia 2018** Two Venezuelan migrants call for the first time their families after they left Venezuela. © Erika Pioeros

**Nepal, 2014**
Kabilash Secondary School runs a Red Cross programme with Junior Red Cross Volunteers (JRCVs) who learn about disaster preparedness and what to do in an emergency. The children have built a retaining wall to help protect their school from earthquakes and landslides, studied basic first aid and practiced evacuation and other emergency procedures.
© Rob Few / IFRC

# MODULE 7
# WORKING WITH CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

## Protection, gender and inclusion

Both community engagement and accountability (CEA) and PGI aim to ensure that all Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes and emergency operations are people-centred, inclusive, trusted, and safe. Although they have a shared goal, CEA and PGI focus on different aspects of quality programming. While CEA provides approaches and tools to ensure the voices of community members are clearly heard and used to guide our work, PGI works to ensure we 'do no harm' and that no one is left behind, left out, or left unsafe. Therefore, both CEA and PGI approaches are needed to ensure good quality programmes and operations that have a lasting, positive impact, for communities.

### What is PGI?

Protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) describes the IFRC's approach to addressing the causes, risks and consequences of violence, discrimination and exclusion in an integrated way.

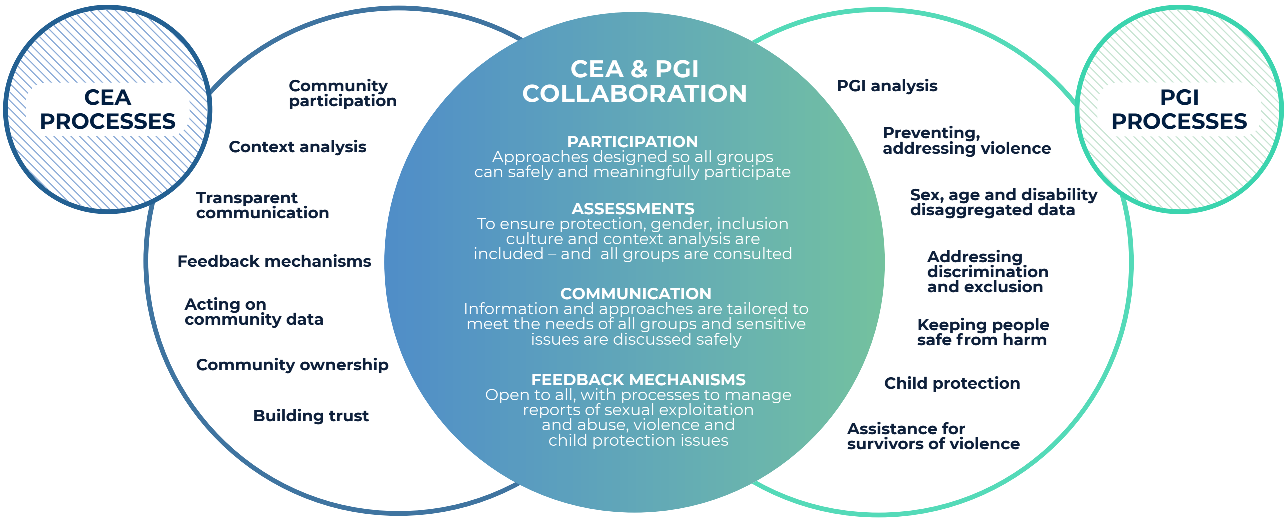
"Protection" and "inclusion" refer to specific actions that are taken for the benefit of people at risk. "Gender and diversity" refer to the multitude of intersecting factors that we consider to ensure protection and inclusion work to be carried out effectively.

This approach jointly addresses the interrelated factors that affect the risks and consequences of violence, discrimination, and exclusion. At the heart of the PGI approach is an analysis of how each individual is affected differently by shocks and crises, based on pre-existing power relations, structures and access to basic resources and how this leads to different levels of vulnerability, capacity, risks, and exposure to violence. This ultimately impacts their access to assistance and protection and their capacity to cope and to recover.

IFRC's work to address PGI concerns is underpinned by the following four guiding principles, Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS) which are the cornerstone around which the "IFRC Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies[110]" is built.

PGI includes a range of specialised services, which should only be delivered by those with the relevant training and technical skills, including disability inclusion, inclusion of sexual and gender minorities, gender equality, combatting racism, child protection, prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and trafficking in persons (TiP).

For a description of CEA, see page 11.




## Collaboration between CEA and PGI

### How can CEA help PGI?

- When conducting gender and diversity analysis include questions to better understand trusted and preferred channels and sources of information by different gender and age groups in the community, including how people from different groups would feel most comfortable sharing feedback
- Guidance and tools on participatory planning and project management approaches to ensure communities can play an active and meaningful role in designing, implementing, and guiding PGI programmes and activities
- Guidance and tools on how to practically work with community committees and programme representatives and ensure they are fulfilling their role
- Tools and support for establishing community feedback mechanisms, to capture feedback on PGI services, as well as sensitive feedback
- Training for PGI staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability approaches
- Guidance and tools for monitoring community satisfaction and levels of engagement and accountability within PGI activities and programmes.

### How can PGI help CEA?

- Tools and guidance to conduct a gender and diversity analysis (as part of a context analysis – see page 46), which aims at understanding how people's gender, disability, age, ethnic origin, nationality or citizenship, language, religious beliefs, political opinion, social background, sexual orientation, physical appearance, and colour; impacts the level of barriers they face in their efforts to meet basic needs, to be recognized and included, and to be safe from harm
- Help to ensure the systematic collection of sex, age, and disability disaggregated data
- Guidance and support on developing and adapting information to better reach different groups, for example children, women, and people with disabilities
- Guidance on how to engage with communities safely and without doing harm on sensitive topics, such as SGBV, gender roles, discrimination of marginalised groups, or child safeguarding
- Guidance and support to ensure that sensitive feedback linked to PSEA, child safeguarding, victims of violence, including SGBV and other protection issues, are connected to an internal protection mechanism and referral pathways and are correctly handled in accordance with a survivor-centred approach
- Support and techniques to address challenges to the active and safe participation of women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups in designing and guiding programmes and operations – and that we are not contributing to existing inequalities and increased protection risks in communities through the approaches we use.

## Examples from the Movement of CEA and PGI working together

### Tackling SGBV in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

When an assessment found the COVID-19 pandemic was exacerbating SGBV, child labour, and trafficking in persons, within the Cox Bazar refugee camps, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's (BDRCS) CEA and PGI teams worked together to create and share information on how to prevent SGBV, trafficking, on good parenting during the pandemic, and about free services and referral pathways in the camp. PGI led sessions in the community and the CEA team helped circulate the information through loudspeakers, information hubs, and household visits.

### Supporting relief teams to strengthen CEA and PGI during distributions in Mozambique

As part of the response to Cyclone Idai, CEA and PGI staff worked together to create a combined checklist for relief distributions. The checklist helped relief staff by providing a one-page overview, with practical actions to take before, during and after distributions to meet both the minimum standards for CEA and PGI.

### PGI tools to help you

- PGI in a nutshell[111]
- PGI minimum standards[112]
- PGI in emergencies toolkit[113]
- Inclusive programming framework[114]

**Bangladesh 2020** Kyoko Miyamoto, PSS delegate with Japanese Red Cross interacts with young girls at a child-friendly space in the Hakimpara camp in Bangladesh. © Victor Lacken / IFRC

# Behaviour change and risk communication and community engagement

Participatory approaches are an important part of health, WASH and disaster risk reduction behaviour change programmes, including eCBHFA[115], epidemic control for volunteers (ECV)[116], 8 Steps for Hygiene Promotion Action[117]and Climate Smart Programming and Action[118], as well as responses to health emergencies. However, **all** Red Cross Red Crescent programmes and operations must still ensure they are meeting the minimum actions to achieve good community engagement and accountability covered in module four (see page 38) and five (see page 74). These actions can be used as a good reminder or tool to 'cross-check' what is already being done and to identify any gaps or areas where community engagement could be strengthened. This module outlines some of the most common ways community engagement and accountability tools and approaches can be used to improve the quality, impact, and sustainability of behaviour change programmes and epidemic response, drawing on lessons learned from across the Movement.

## What is behaviour change?

Behaviour change aims to improve a situation by supporting community members to adopt safe and healthy behaviours. For example, by enabling people to use long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets or washing their hands at key times. However, changing a behaviour is not a one-time event: it is a process that goes through several stages. The stages start from learning about the problem (1 = knowledge), having a positive opinion about a change of behaviour to tackle the problem (2 = approval), the development of an intention to change behaviour (3 = intention), incorporation of the new behaviour into one's habits (4 = practice) and finally promotion of this behaviour to others (5 = advocacy). See the IFRC Behaviour Change Guidance[119] for more on this topic.

## What is risk communication and community engagement?

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)[120] is a key part of the overall health response to an epidemic and refers to the processes and approaches to systematically engage and communicate with people and communities to encourage and enable them to adopt healthy behaviours and prevent the spread of infectious diseases during an outbreak. This includes:

- Establishing systematic community feedback mechanisms to understand the beliefs, fears, rumours, questions, and suggestions circulating in communities about the disease and use this to inform the response.
- Sharing timely, accurate information about the epidemic through the most trusted channels, to support people to adopt practices that reduce the spread of infection and to reduce fear, stigma, and panic by addressing rumours and misinformation.
- Identifying and supporting community-led solutions for preventing the spread of infection and bringing the outbreak under control, as it will be the actions of community members that will end – or sustain – an outbreak.

RCCE helps to build trust in humanitarian responders, which is particularly important during an outbreak when fear, misinformation and rumours make it harder for people to identify which information is reliable and trustworthy. This can lead people to adopt ineffective prevention measures, which increase their risk of infection. Communities who do not understand or accept health interventions, or perceive them as a threat, have also been known to turn to violence, as demonstrated during the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This lack of trust limits community involvement and people may not cooperate in activities designed to halt the spread of infection, such as rapid reporting and isolation of cases.

## WHY IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AN IMPORTANT PART OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND RISK COMMUNICATION?

1. **We can't change people's behaviours for them**

   They need to be actively engaged, understand, and support the process.

2. **Behaviour change is complex**

   It is rarely as simple as telling people what to do, and they do it.

3. **The community knows best**

   Communities know better than anyone what would be needed to successfully encourage safer, healthier practices and what might prevent them.

4. **Trust is a key ingredient**

   If communities do not trust us, they will not listen or contribute to programmes or follow the actions needed to control an epidemic and may even react with hostility and violence.

5. **We need to listen and act**

   Feedback is crucial to understand community perceptions and adapt our programmes and responses to stay relevant and effective.

**Thailand 2019** Thailand 2019 As part of a school-based disaster risk reduction project, Thai Red Cross' Relief and Community Health Bureau teach first aid skills to school pupils. © TRCS

## How can community engagement support behaviour change programmes and RCCE?

1. **Gain a deeper understanding of the community beyond specific behaviours**

   By incorporating questions from the community engagement and accountability assessment tool into behaviour change and epidemic response assessments. For example, questions to understand which sources of information different groups trust and use, how they would feel most comfortable providing feedback, their perceptions of the Red Cross Red Crescent, or levels of social cohesion between different groups.

   - See page 40 for guidance on assessments and context analysis
   - Use Tool 13: CEA in assessments and Tool 16: FGD guide

2. **Communicate about the programme aims – not only behaviours or risks**

   Providing information about the organization and the purpose of a programme or response is a key pillar of accountability and improves trust between the organization and the communities it serves. Traditionally National Societies are very good at communicating about health, hygiene and DRR issues, but sometimes forget to explain who the National Society is, programme or operation aims and timelines, and delays, challenges, or changes.

   - See page 61 and 93 for more on transparent communication
   - Use Tool: 17 Community meetings tool and Tool 19: Communication methods matrix

3. **Strengthening community participation and supporting community-led solutions**

   Behaviour change programmes are already very participatory in their approach. However, some of the tools and checklists from this guide can help to strengthen participation throughout the programme cycle. For example, through guidance on setting up balanced and representative community committees, agreeing selection criteria and targeting, and ensuring participation throughout programme implementation. During an epidemic, it is critical to work with communities to find local, practical solutions to preventing the spread of infection. Community members understand the unique challenges facing their community and how public health measures like physical distancing, surveillance systems such as contact tracing, and isolation could be adapted to work within their context.

   - See page 42 for guidance on participation in assessments
   - See page 52 for guidance on participation in planning and design
   - See page 89 for guidance on participation in discussing and setting selection criteria
   - See page 64 for guidance on participation during implementation and monitoring
   - See page 69 for guidance on participation in evaluations
   - Use Tool 16: FGD guide, Tool 17: Community meetings tool and Tool 18: Participatory approaches to selection criteria
   - See the guide to developing community-led solutions to COVID-19[121]
   - See the guide on promoting children's participation in the COVID-19 response[122].

4. **Setting up community feedback mechanisms**

   Proactive feedback mechanisms[123] help behaviour change programmes and epidemic responses to monitor community beliefs, fears, rumours, questions, and suggestions, both about the issue being tackled and about the organization. Listening and acting on community feedback builds trust in the intervention. It also helps strengthen impact, as information and messages shared with communities can be regularly updated to address the latest concerns, perceptions, and rumours circulating in the community. This includes supporting volunteers to have more meaningful discussions with community members and allows information to be tailored to the specific needs or concerns of different groups. Community feedback mechanisms can also help capture issues with hardware, such as latrines, handwashing facilities or treatment centres, which could limit people's capacity to put safer, healthier behaviours into practice.

- See page 103 for guidance on setting up a feedback mechanism
- Use Tool 15: Feedback kit
- See the COVID-19 community feedback package[124]

**5. Amplifying social mobilization efforts through mass media and digital communication**

Mass communication approaches such as radio, TV, and social media can help to expand the reach of traditional face-to-face social mobilization by targeting large numbers of people in a short time. Examples include, radio chat shows with expert guests where listeners can call in with questions, mobile cinema shows with short films, WhatsApp groups with experts on hand to answer questions, or using social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter to run campaigns.

- Use Tool 19: Communication methods matrix
- See the community and engagement hub for training packages on using radio, mobile cinema and social media[125]
- See the COVID-19 guide on using social media for risk communication [126.]

**6. Training staff and volunteers on community engagement and accountability**

All staff and volunteers need to have the understanding, knowledge, and capacity to meaningfully engage communities in programmes and operations. Community engagement training packages can provide useful modules or activities which can be used to augment health, WASH and DRR training packages. For example, the two-day community engagement training for branches has modules on transparent communication, participatory approaches, and feedback mechanisms. For the COVID-19 response in Africa, the health and community engagement and accountability teams developed a joint ECV and RCCE training package which was delivered to a mix of health, community engagement and accountability, WASH, and disaster management staff.

- See the community engagement hub for a range of volunteer, branch and program manager level CEA training packages[127]
- Download the COVID-19 ECV and RCCE training package[128]

## COMMON MISTAKES OR CHALLENGES?

- Community engagement and accountability should not lead on IEC (information and education communication) materials and key messages – these need to be developed by the relevant health, WASH, and disaster risk reduction technical experts
- Too much focus on one-way messages as a way to change behaviours
- Community feedback is only used to change what we say (messages), not what we do (changing programme activities)
- Not coordinating community engagement, social mobilization, health promotion, hygiene promotion and risk communication activities, which leads to duplication, wasted resources and confusion in communities. This also causes confusion amongst volunteers, as its often the same volunteers who are asked to do all these activities
- Not being clear who should lead on what activities in a programme or response, but as there is usually always enough work for everyone, this can be resolved by good coordination across sectors and teams and the development of shared work plans
- Reinventing the wheel when there is a wealth of excellent resources already available – see the list below for links to useful behaviour change and RCCE resources within health, WASH and disaster risk reduction.

## WHAT ARE COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS AND WHY SHOULD WE IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT THEM?

Lessons from humanitarian and health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the West Africa and DRC Ebola outbreaks, have taught us that constructive and meaningful engagement with local communities and trusted leaders is essential for disease prevention measures to be adapted, accepted, well understood and successful. Impractical or enforced response measures and a lack of dialogue with communities instead leads to frustration, resistance, and non-compliance, which adds to the spread of infection.

For example, when the government in Liberia imposed a quarantine on parts of the capital Monrovia during the West Africa Ebola outbreak, they did not consult the communities. When people were unable to access food, water, or healthcare they escaped the area and the quarantine had to be abandoned. In other parts of the country where community leaders were actively involved, they helped by introducing new by-laws and taskforces to help stop the spread of the virus. Prevention efforts included, banning strangers from entering the community, prohibiting visitors from sleeping in one's home and mandating a 21-day waiting period for those who wished to move into the community to ensure they were Ebola-free. Community task forces were established to alert community members to cases of Ebola, ensure those in quarantine and isolation were provided with food, water, and medicines, refer new cases to health facilities, and identify efforts to conceal sickness or burials. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf concluded that the quarantine had been a mistake, and asserted, "*Now I know that people's ownership, community participation, works better in a case like this. I think that experience will stay with us.*"

Examples of community-led solutions supported by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies as part of the response to COVID-19 include the grants provided by the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) to Community-Based Action Teams to implement public health measures based on the specific needs in their community (see page 96), training communities and providing them with locally-available materials to build their own handwashing stations, training market associations to run radio shows and promote safe practices, supporting communities to make their own facemasks and working with people living in high density settings, such as camps and urban informal settlements, to find creative solutions to physical distancing and isolation of sick people. For more see the COVID-19 community-led solutions guidance note, examples and webinar recording[129].

**Timor Leste 2013** Red Cross volunteer, Agostoa Do Santos Riberio, makes a household visit to a member of his community in Bitirai, Timor Leste in order to explain the importance of using mosquito nets. "When we distribute nets we teach people to prioritize pregnant women and children", Augustu explains..© Victor Lacken / IFRC

## Community engagement and behaviour change resources and tools to help you

**Tool 21: Behaviour change and RCCE resources**[130] provides and overview and links to the some of the most useful and adaptable behaviour change and RCCE resources produced across the Movement for both programmes and responses to epidemics such as Ebola, COVID-19 and Zika. This tool includes behaviour change programme guides, example behaviour change and RCCE plans, training packages, guidance on using tools like radio and mobile cinema, feedback and perception survey guides and templates, and guidance notes on issues such as tackling mistrust or vaccine hesitancy.


**Rwanda 2018** Rwanda Red Cross volunteers set up the mobile cinema show in Rwamagana community. The cinema sensitizes the community on hygiene practises, malaria prevention and other health-related issues. © Aija Kuparinen

## Examples from the Movement

### A volunteer on every street in Libya leads the fight against COVID-19

When COVID-19 movement restrictions limited the Libyan Red Crescent Society's (LRCS) community health volunteers from accessing communities, the National Society's Benghazi Branch came up with the volunteer on every street initiative. The approach aimed to recruit local community members to lead COVID-19 social mobilization in their own neighbourhoods. A volunteer guide and video were produced with information on COVID-19, safety precautions, the role of the volunteer and communication skills. A survey was then launched through social media to better understand community perceptions and knowledge of the virus. The information collected was used to develop a frequently asked questions guide based on the main beliefs, rumours, and knowledge gaps in communities. A campaign to recruit volunteers was launched through posts and videos on social media, and following an assessment test, 202 volunteers were recruited to either provide COVID-19 information in their neighbourhood or support remotely with tasks such as analysis, translation, research, and material design. The new volunteers were given an induction to the Movement and assigned to one of 18 community teams across Benghazi and began door-to-door visits in their neighbourhood. Telegram was used for coordination and to provide ongoing support to the volunteer teams. As the volunteers were known and trusted by their neighbours, they were effective at tackling rumours and misinformation and proved invaluable in reaching vulnerable members of the community, such as older people or those with limited access to other sources of information such as TV or the internet. One community member commented: "*In the beginning, there were too many rumours around the virus, which made me feel lost about to deal with it, but after the volunteers' visit, I understood the virus and felt more comfortable to prevent it.*" The approach is now being rolled out in Libya and Egypt and being considered as a method to help address other health concerns in the community. Read the full case study[131].

**Libya 2020** Libyan Red Crescent volunteers provide support to migrants as part of their COVID 19 response operations. They have run awareness campaigns targeting internally displaced people and migrants outside detention centres. © Libyan Red Crescent

## Using innovative approaches for behaviour change and RCCE: Chatbots, mobile cinemas, mobile radios, and radio chat shows

National Societies around the word use a range of different approaches to engage communities on health, WASH and DRR topics. To meet public demand for information on COVID-19, the Red Crescent of Kazakhstan launched a chatbot service that could automatically respond to people's question via social media, direct them to the service they need, or forward the comment to someone in the National Society via email. The chatbot was adopted following a survey that showed social media and television were amongst the most trusted sources of information in the country. The chatbot is now being used to not only share information about COVID-19, but also how to apply for social assistance and contact information for branches. Feedback on how the chatbot is being used is helping the Red Crescent of Kazakhstan to understand what information people need most. Read the full report[132]. In Rwanda, the National Society uses mobile cinemas and radio shows to engage communities on health, WASH and DRR topics, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Mobile cinema shows include demonstrations, question and answer sessions with the community and local experts, and short animations on different topics, while mobile radio has pre-recorded shows played through speakers on the back of a motorbike that can move from village to village. The National Society also broadcasts ongoing monthly radio chat shows through several of its branches. One man who attended the mobile cinema commented: "*Last time I came to the mobile cinema, I learned about waterborne diseases, how they are spread and how to prevent them. I learned a number of things that I can put into practise. For example, how to clean the utensils well and let them dry before using them, how to clean the food well before preparing it, and I learned about the importance of washing hands well. So, I have changed my behaviour based on the things I learned.*" Read the full report[133]. See more case studies and templates on radio[134] and mobile cinema[135] on the community engagement hub.

## The importance of first building trust in Indonesia

Since 2018, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), with support from IFRC, has been helping communities prepare for and prevent the spread of diseases through the Community Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness programme (CP3). This has included establishing community-based surveillance (CBS) to support early detection and early action in the event of potential disease outbreaks. PMI used the six months between the roll-out of its two training packages, which included a module on community engagement, to strengthen relationships with local authorities and communities, build trust, and conduct health education and promotion activities. This staged approach contributed to a smoother establishment of CBS with greater uptake and better results as stakeholders were engaged and committed to the programme, and communities were already receiving the benefits and seeing the Red Cross volunteers as a valuable source of health information. As a result, communities were more motivated to inform volunteers of serious illnesses and volunteers were more adept at notifying local health authorities of CBS alerts. Read the full report[136].

## Participatory approaches to solving waste management problems in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) used a ten-step participatory approach called 'assisting behaviour change' (ABC) to tackle an issue of menstrual waste at a school. During a monitoring visit, SLRCS volunteers observed large piles of garbage in and next to the school, which included used sanitary pads. Following the ABC approach, SLRCS first sought to understand why the problem exists by holding facilitated group discussions with community influencers, such as male and female teachers, parents, and schoolgirls. They found that when the bins in the female latrines become full of sanitary pads, the male cleaners did not want to handle them and the waste piled up around the school. A user-centered design process was used to solve three key issues; 1) How to burn the menstrual waste, 2) How to prevent men from handling the sanitary pads, 3) How to ensure privacy of girls. The solution was an incinerator installed next to the female toilet where girls could deposit the pads with privacy and male cleaners would burn the waste without having to move it. A third consultation with parents and school staff was held to decide who would do what, with male parents agreeing to help with the construction and installation. Ongoing improvements have been made to the process and following its success, the same approach has been adopted by other schools in the area. Read the full case study[137].

# ANNEX 1

## CEA toolkit

| # | CEA TOOL | PURPOSE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | CEA briefing session for senior leadership | A short PPT session for senior leadership to explain what CEA is, and the benefits it can have for the organization's reputation, funding and partnerships, efficiency, quality, and financial sustainability. |
| 2 | CEA policy template | A template to help you develop a CEA Policy, with guidance on what should be included in each section and some content to help you get started. A CEA Policy sets out what the organization commits to and the roles and responsibilities of different departments. |
| 3 | CEA self-assessment and planning workshop | This tool provides facilitator notes, worksheets, and PowerPoint slides to deliver a one-day CEA self-assessment and planning workshop. This workshop can be added to the three-day CEA training with the aim of developing a clear action plan for how the National Society can strengthen CEA institutionally and within programmes and operations. |
| 4 | Template CEA Strategy | A template to help you develop a CEA Strategy, with guidance on what should be included in each section and some content to help you get started. A strategy sets out how the organization will strengthen CEA over the coming years. |
| 5 | Template CEA work plan | A template to help you develop a CEA annual workplan, including log frame and activity plan, with example outcomes, outputs, activities, indicators, and timelines. |
| 6 | CEA budgeting tool | Template CEA budget, with guidance on what should be included and how to calculate costs. |
| 7 | CEA M&E tool | A comprehensive M&E tool for CEA, which includes indicators, questions, means of verification and suggested targets for monitoring CEA at the institutional level and within programmes and emergency operations. Each tab includes priority indicators, and a broader choice of options if needed. There is also a tab with indicators for IFRC, ICRC and partner National Societies to monitor levels of CEA within their own organization, the quality of CEA support provided to National Societies and global indicators to measure progress against the minimum commitments to CEA. There is also a tab with questions and answer options for baseline surveys and evaluations. |
| 8 | CEA job descriptions | Includes examples of CEA responsibilities that can be added to job descriptions, sample CEA-specific job descriptions, CEA competencies and CEA surge role profiles. |
| 9 | Briefing on CEA for new staff and volunteers | A template briefing document that can be given to new staff outlining what CEA is, the minimum commitments and actions, CEA activities and contacts within the country or region and where people can get more information and resources. |
| 10 | Code of Conduct briefing | A briefing for new staff and volunteers on the Code of Conduct and what this means for their behaviour in communities, including an overview of safeguarding policies such as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, child safeguarding etc. |
| 11 | CEA checklist for plans | A simple checklist for programme managers, sectors, department heads, and PMER staff to use to assess if a programme plan has sufficiently included CEA. |
| 12 | CEA Case study template | A template and guidance for writing a CEA case study to document the CEA approaches or activities implemented, the impact they had, and any lessons learned. |

| # | CEA TOOL | PURPOSE |
|---|---|---|
| 13 | CEA in Assessments tool | An outline of the type of data that should be collected for CEA during an assessment, including methods for collection, priority questions to include in assessment surveys, tips for data collection and sources of secondary data. The tool also 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. |
| 14 | Q&A sheet for volunteers | A simple frequently asked questions and answer sheet to give to volunteers to help them respond accurately to questions from community members. |
| 15 | Feedback Kit | Provides the guidance and tools needed to systematically use community feedback to improve programmes, operations and work more broadly. It includes the first steps to setting up a basic feedback mechanism, as well as guidance on how to conduct community perception surveys, how to analyse qualitative feedback comments, how to handle sensitive feedback, and ensure all feedback is handled responsibly. |
| 16 | FGD Guide | Guidance on running an effective focus group discussion, including organization and roles and responsibilities, plus questions to ask to help plan and monitor community engagement approaches. |
| 17 | Community meetings tool | Guidance on running an effective community meeting, including organization, how to document questions and feedback, and potential challenges and how to mitigate these. |
| 18 | Participatory approaches to selection criteria | Practical guidance on different participatory approaches and techniques to agree selection criteria with the community and to identify who should receive support, including do no harm considerations. |
| 19 | Communication channel matrix | Outlines the advantages and disadvantages of different channels of communication, including what channels are best suited for what type of activities and tips for using them. |
| 20 | Exit strategy guidance | Guidance on engaging communities in planning programme closures, including ensuring they are well informed, can participate in decisions about what happens next, and have opportunities to provide feedback or ask questions. |
| 21 | Behaviour change and RCCE resources | Provides an overview and links to behaviour change and RCCE resources produced across the Movement for programmes and responses to epidemics such as Ebola, COVID-19 and Zika. This includes behaviour change programme guides, example behaviour change and RCCE plans, training packages, guidance on using tools like radio and mobile cinema, feedback and perception survey guides and templates, and guidance notes on issues such as tackling mistrust or vaccine hesitancy. |
| 22 | Developing a CEA emergency plan | 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. |
| 23 | SOP for CEA in emergencies | Overview of the main tasks and responsibilities of CEA staff and delegates working in emergency operations, including timeframes for actions and who is responsible. |
| 24 | CEA checklists for sectors and roles (in emergency response) | Guidance on the practical actions that staff from different sectors should take to ensure a good level of engagement throughout different stages of an emergency response. These checklists help to identify any gaps or areas where community engagement could be strengthened. |
| 25 | CEA in emergencies briefing for staff | A briefing 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. |

# ANNEX 2

## Community engagement and accountability training courses

All training materials can be downloaded through www.communityengagementhub.org

| TRAINING COURSE | OBJECTIVE | TARGET AUDIENCE | LENGTH OF TRAINING | AVAILABLE RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CEA three-day training curriculum** | For National Societies, IFRC, ICRC and partner National Society staff who want to strengthen CEA within their programmes, operations, and institutional ways of working.<br>Content:<br>Purpose and benefits of CEA<br>How to integrate CEA throughout the programme cycle<br>CEA in emergency operations<br>Institutionalizing CEA | Those with responsibility for planning and managing programme and operations. For example, senior management, sector heads, programme managers, disaster response managers, PMER, PGI, organizational development managers, branch managers. | Three days. Option for senior leadership to join for the first half day introduction to CEA session. A fourth day can be added to carry out a self-assessment and planning workshop. | Three-day CEA training pack in English, French and Arabic.<br>Includes training guide, PowerPoints with speaker notes; group exercises; facilitator notes; choice of scenario case studies.<br>CEA Tool 3: Self-assessment and planning workshop includes facilitator notes, worksheets, and PowerPoint slides to deliver a one-day CEA self-assessment and planning workshop. |
| **Community engagement training for branch staff and volunteers** | To support branch staff and volunteers to improve levels of community engagement within their work.<br>Content:<br>What is community engagement and why does it matter?<br>Communicating with communities<br>Community participation<br>Community feedback and complaints | Branch staff and volunteers, programme assistants.<br>Anyone involved in delivering programmes and operations, but not planning or managing them. | Two-days | Community engagement branch-level training available in English, French and Arabic. |

| TRAINING COURSE | OBJECTIVE | TARGET AUDIENCE | LENGTH OF TRAINING | AVAILABLE RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CEA in emergencies training courses** | Covers the basics that all sectors need to know to achieve a good level of CEA within an emergency response operation.<br>Content:<br>CEA approaches and how they contribute and support response operations<br>Minimum actions to integrate CEA into operations for each sector<br>Resources and support available to support CEA in emergencies | All sectors involved in planning and delivering emergency response operations.<br>For example, health, disaster management, WASH, shelter, relief, food security and livelihoods, cash, MEAL, branch managers. | One-day or 3 hour version available | One-day and three-hour training packs are available in French and English.<br>Includes PowerPoints with speaker notes; group exercises; facilitator notes; choice of scenario case studies. |
| **CEA one-hour introduction** | A basic introduction to CEA, its role in supporting quality programming, and minimum actions to integrate it in our work. | Awareness raising session aimed at staff and senior volunteers. | One hour | Presentation in English, French and Arabic, with speaker notes. |
| **CEA briefing session for senior leadership** | A short PPT session for senior leadership to explain what CEA is, and the benefits it can have for the organization's reputation, funding and partnerships, efficiency, quality, and financial sustainability. | Senior leadership within the Movement, including secretary generals, directors, heads of sectors and departments, and board and governance | 30-60 minutes<br>Hidden slides which can be included depending on time available | Tool 1: CEA briefing session for senior leadership includes PPT with speaker notes and a guidance note on preparation and delivery |
| **One-day communication and feedback skills training** | To support community volunteers to improve their communication skills and manage difficult questions or situations in the community.<br>Content:<br>Why it's important to engage well with communities<br>Fundamental principles and how they apply to our work with communities<br>Communication skills<br>Responding to community feedback | Volunteers working with communities | One-day | Training pack, with PowerPoints, games, and facilitator notes in English, French and Spanish. |

| TRAINING COURSE | OBJECTIVE | TARGET AUDIENCE | LENGTH OF TRAINING | AVAILABLE RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CEA Surge training** | The CEA Surge course trains and prepares potential CEA delegates for deployments in emergency operations. The course covers IFRC surge procedures and how to integrate CEA into emergency assessments and planning, as well as core CEA technical skills such as transparent communication, participatory approaches, feedback mechanisms and risk communication. Cross-cutting issues such as protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and building the capacity of volunteers is also covered. | Red Cross and Red Crescent staff with experience in community engagement and accountability, with a focus on emergencies | Eight days, fully residential | This training is delivered globally by the CEA team. For more information contact CEA.Geneva@ifrc.org |
| **Mobile cinema training** | Train participants how to plan and run a mobile cinema show to support risk communication and community engagement or social and behaviour change communication. | National Society staff and volunteers at headquarters and branch level. Those involved in delivering health, WASH and disaster risk reduction programmes. | Four days | Training pack with PowerPoints and exercises in English and French. Includes delivery of a live mobile cinema as practice. |
| **Radio chat show training** | Train participants how to plan and run a radio chat show, to share information with communities on a wide range of topics and receive calls and messages from listeners. | National Society staff and volunteers at headquarters and branch level. Those involved in delivering health, WASH and disaster risk reduction programmes. | Four days | Training pack with PowerPoints and exercises in English and French. Includes delivery of a live radio show as practice. |

# ANNEX 3

## From the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability

- **Accountability –** Accountability refers to the mutual responsibility of all components of the Movement to use their power and resources ethically and responsibly. It requires them to put the interests of the people and communities they serve at the centre of decision-making. That ensures that humanitarian actions lead to the best possible outcomes and results for them, while protecting and preserving their rights and dignity and increasing their resilience to face situations of vulnerability and crisis. This includes people's rights to equitable access to assistance in proportion to their needs, priorities and preferences, the right to information, and the right to provide feedback and participate in decisions that affect them.

  Accountability also includes the responsibility to ensure Movement staff and volunteers comply with all legal and ethical obligations. They are obliged to protect and safeguard the integrity and dignity of those we seek to serve, prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and corruption and misuse of resources, and to take timely and appropriate corrective action to deal with situations that compromise principled humanitarian action.

- **Community Engagement –** Community engagement refers to ways of working collaboratively with people and communities. It ensures that Red Cross and Red Crescent actions are effective, inclusive, sustainable and accountable. It enables the Movement to support and enable people and communities to lead and shape positive, sustainable changes in their own lives and on their own terms. Community engagement includes processes to systematically listen to, engage and communicate with people and communities. It lets the Movement:

  - better understand the diverse needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the people it supports
  - gather, respond to and act on feedback and input about their priorities and preferences
  - provide safe and equitable opportunities to actively participate in decisions that affect them.

  This also includes the responsibility to communicate transparently and in an appropriate, accessible manner about Movement principles and values, the aims and objectives of Movement action and advocacy, what they can expect from us, and how people and communities can participate in and provide their inputs about issues and decisions that affect them.

- **Protection –** The concept of protection encompasses: all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender).

# ENDNOTES

1 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Report-All-the-Evidence-We-Need-CDA-FINAL.pdf

2 https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/hs.2020.0195

3 https://www.ifrc.org/document/code-conduct-international-red-cross-and-red-crescent-movement-and-ngos-disaster-relief

4 https://www.ifrc.org/document/principles-rules-humanitarian-assistance

5 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/movement-wide-commitments-for-cea/

6 Ground Truth Solutions surveyed 4971 people across seven countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Haiti, Lebanon, Uganda and Somali) to assess progress against the Grand Bargain commitments. See: Ground Truth Solutions (2019) Briefing Note Grand Bargain: Field Perspectives 2018. Ground TruthSolution/OECD, Vienna, https://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/perspectives-on-the-grand-bargain/ and https://groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/cash-barometer/.,

7 ALNAP commissioned GeoPoll to survey 5000 aid recipients across five countries (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Kenya, Ethiopia, Kenya and Iraq) for the 2018 State of the Humanitarian System report. See https://www.alnap.org/help-library/the-state-of-the-humanitarian-system-sohs-2018-full-report.

8 Metcalfe-Hough, V., Fenton, W., Willitts-King, B., Spencer, A. (2020) Grand Bargain Independent Annual Report 2020. HPG/ODI, London

9 ALNAP (2018) The State of the Humanitarian System. ALNAP Study. ALNAP/ODI, London. See https://sohs.alnap.org/.

10 CHS Alliance (2020) Humanitarian Accountability Report. Are We Making Aid Work Better for People. CHS Alliance, Geneva. See https://www.chsalliance.org/get-support/resource/har-2020/

11 ALNAP (2018) The State of the Humanitarian System. ALNAP Study. ALNAP/ODI, London. See https://sohs.alnap.org/.

12 For example, the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification process (OCAC), Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) and Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) processes.

13 See https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard

14 See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-2-accountability-and-inclusion

15 See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain

16 https://communityengagementhub.org/

17 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/

18 https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/3-day-cea-training-package/

19 https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/

20 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/M-AtC-A4-EN-LR.pdf

21 https://youtu.be/5Cct-_z75Jo

22 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Case-Study-Institutionalising-CEA-in-HRC.pdf

23 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/03/LearningReview-CEA_NRCS-FINAL.pdf

24 https://www.ifrc.org/document/minimum-standards-pgi-emergencies

25 https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/Tool1-0PGI_iE_Toolkit_Introduction_LR-web_0.pdf

26 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/myanmar-red-cross-mrcs-community-engagement-and-accountability-minimum-standards-and-key-actions/

27 https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/IFRC_BurialGuide_web.pdf

28 https://shop.icrc.org/restoring-family-links-strategy-for-the-international-red-cross-and-red-crescent-movement-2020-2025-including-legal-references-pdf-en.html

29 For more on organizational factors that enable or hinder stronger accountability to communities see the IFRC Africa Strategy to Strengthen Community Engagement and Accountability. https://communityengagementhub.org/cea-africa-strategy/

30 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/perceptions-of-a-pandemic-africa-red-cross-red-crescent-volunteer-perceptions/

31 ICRC Data Protection Handbook https://www.icrc.org/en/data-protection-humanitarian-action-handbook

32 https://www.ifrc.org/document/ifrc-framework-evaluation

33 https://www.ifrc.org/document/projectprogramme-monitoring-and-evaluation-guide

34 https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-Framework-for-Evaluation.pdf

35 Assessment fatigue is when communities are asked the same questions multiple times by different organizations leading them to become frustrated and no longer willing to engage with organizations.

36 https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/PSEA_operational_manual_v4.pdf

37 https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/bite-sized-training-packages/

38 See the IFRC PGI in emergencies guide and toolkit https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit

39 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/garden-to-kitchen-listening-to-communities-a-trinidad-and-tobago-case-study/

40 Unintended negative consequences are outcomes of the programme that were not intended or unforeseen and have a negative impact on the community. For example, damaging local markets through the distributions of aid item, or making a conflict situation worse by giving the majority of support to one side or the other.

41 https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit

42 https://saferaccess.icrc.org/ and https://saferaccess.icrc.org/practical-toolbox/

43 https://www.ifrcvca.org/

44 https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020_CDA_DNH-in-PHE-and-Conflict-pilot-version.pdf

45 https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210106_CaseStudies_ONLINE.pdf

46 Some of this information may be collected through the context analysis. As noted, there is no hard line between information collected in the context analysis versus the needs assessment, so adapt to suit the situation.

47 https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/protection-gender-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit/, see Tool 2.4.1 PGI Assessment question library

48 https://fednet.ifrc.org/FedNet/Resources_and_Services/Disasters/Disaster%20and%20crisis%20management/Assessment%20and%20Planning/Analytical%20framework%20(Extract%20from%20LEAP%20approach%20document%20Sept%202018).pdf and for more resources on assessments see: https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/disasters/disaster-and-crisis-mangement/assessment--planning/

49 https://sites.google.com/view/kap3-turkey/home?authuser=0

50 https://www.ifrc.org/document/participatory-approach-safe-shelter-awareness-passa-manual

51 https://ecbhfa.ifrc.org/

52 https://www.ifrcvca.org/

53 https://www.icrc.org/en/document/different-ways-have-different-conversations-different-people

54 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/63812/WHO_EOS_98.3_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

55 https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wash-in-schools/

56 https://sanitationlearninghub.org/resource/handbook-on-community-led-total-sanitation/

57 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Moving-Towards-Children-as-Partners-in-Child-Protection-in-COVID-19-Guide-From-Participation-to-Partnerships.pdf

58 https://www.urd.org/en/publication/participation-handbook-for-humanitarian-field-workers/

59 https://www.ifrcvca.org/problem-tree

60 https://www.ifrc.org/document/participatory-approach-safe-shelter-awareness-passa-manual (page 57)

61 https://www.ifrc.org/document/participatory-approach-safe-shelter-awareness-passa-manual (page 67)

62 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Caso-estudio-Ecuador_EN.pdf

63 https://communityengagementhub.org/what-we-do/co-production-and-participation/

64 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Co-Design-of-the-UK-Asylum-Process-Course-Glasgow.pdf

65 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/Case-Study-AVAIL-Life-Skills.pdf

66 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Engaging-communities-in-Tanzania_-Case-Study.pdf

67 https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210106_CaseStudies_ONLINE.pdf

68 https://meet.jit.si/

69 Online methods should not be used to collect data that could cause harm, such as personal data or protection-related data

70 Questions taken and adapted from Ground Truth Solutions Humanitarian Voice Index and Cash Barometer work.

71 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-branch-level-training-2/

72 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/03/Advisory-Committees-TRCS.pdf

73 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/IFRC-Tracking-Migrant-Perceptions-Case-Study.pdf

74 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/covid-19-community-feedback-kit/

75 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cameroon-red-cross-all-against-covid-19-a-case-study/

76 See https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15aBgMeEaVFjfqbBu_8fqXpqCkh8q8LjU?usp=sharing or https://indaba.dev

77 There are guides and tools on the Most Significant Change approach in ALNAP's help library. For example, https://www.alnap.org/help-library/participatory-video-the-most-significant-change-a-guide-for-facilitators and https://www.alnap.org/help-library/the-most-significant-change-msc-technique-a-guide-to-its-use

78 https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-Framework-for-Evaluation.pdf

79 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Sharing-Evaluations-Zambia-RC-Case-Study.pdf

80 Drawn from a research project in Africa to better understand community engagement in emergency response operations, comprising three field visits, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and workshops.

81 https://go.ifrc.org/preparedness

82 https://www.ifrcvca.org/

83 https://www.forecast-based-financing.org/

84 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-branch-level-training-2/

85 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-one-day-training-package-english/

86 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/CEA-in-CTP_Madagascar-Case-Study_DRC-IFRC-FINAL-1-1.pdf

87 For example, by providing items people don't need so they sell them in the market and damage local businesses and the economy.

88 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/REGIONAL-INFORMATION-AND-COMMUNICATION-NEEDS-ASSESSMENT.pdf

89 https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/bite-sized-training-packages/

90 Although this is part of participatory planning, it has been made as a separate action to emphasize its importance and address the fact that it is often one of the biggest gaps in emergency response operations.

91 Questions taken and adapted from Ground Truth Solutions Humanitarian Voice Index and Cash Barometer work.

92 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/MRCS-fighting-corruption-case-study.pdf

93 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/Case-Study-The-Dorian-Feedback-Hotline-Bahamas-Red-Cross-3.pdf

94 https://odihpn.org/magazine/bringing-community-perspectives-decision-making-ebola-response-democratic-republic-congo/

95 https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/hs.2020.0195

96 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/03/Ethiopia-CEA-Case-Study-003.pdf

97 https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/about-us/international/evaluation-of-the-drought-cash-transfer-programme-in-kenya.pdf

98 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/03/AMiRA-Final-Report-feedback-mechanism-ENG.pdf

99 https://www.ifrc.org/document/minimum-standards-pgi-emergencies and https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit

100 https://www.ifrc.org/media/12628

101 https://www.ifrc.org/media/12628

102 https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/child-safeguarding/

103 For IFRC and ICRC versions of these policies, see https://www.ifrc.org/document/policy-prevention-and-response-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse, https://www.ifrc.org/document/ifrc-child-safeguarding-policy, https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/Whistleblower-protection-policy_August-2015_EN.pdf, https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/code_of_conduct_may_2018.pdf, https://www.icrc.org/en/document/code-conduct-employees-icrc

104 See tool 3.2: Guidance on basic referral mapping and case management https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/protection-gender-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit/

105 https://www.ifrc.org/media/12628

106 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/BURUNDI-SETTING-UP-COMMUNITY-COMMITTEE-FOR-FEEDBACK-AND-COMPLAINTS-.pdf

107 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/mainstreaming-of-accountability-to-communities-an-operational-case-study/

108 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/PMER_CRM-CaseStudy.docx

109 https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/Li%CC%81nea-WhatsApp-empresarial-COVID-19_EN.pdf

110 https://www.ifrc.org/document/minimum-standards-pgi-emergencies

111 https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/IFRCSharing/EfDAw6shNFJFhsrKhg1oOhIBO_GTo01ijuicCdoFgpjbVQ?e=MZzVvp

112 https://www.ifrc.org/document/minimum-standards-pgi-emergencies

113 https://www.ifrc.org/document/protection-gender-and-inclusion-emergencies-toolkit

114 https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/IFRCSharing/EYGPgmsilhNGiBw4iWPQ_bcBSVQVrkFka5AcUrRQVKRmhw?e=rke2lm

115 https://ecbhfa.ifrc.org/

116 https://ifrcgo.org/ecv-toolkit/

117 https://watsanmissionassistant.org/hygiene-promotion/

118 https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/drr-climate/climate-smart-programming-action/

119 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PU0ZjgUx-iTgwl0KOOQfDdaY7MMGOqux/view

120 The term RCCE is used to align with WHO, UNICEF and others and helps the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement better coordinate and collaborate with other agencies when responding to epidemics.

121 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/community-led-solutions-package-webinar-recordings-and-resources/

122 https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Moving-Towards-Children-as-Partners-in-Child-Protection-in-COVID-19-Guide-From-Participation-to-Partnerships.pdf

123 Proactive feedback mechanisms are when the National Society actively solicits feedback on a specific issue or topic from communities, for example during house-to-house visits, through FGDs, or during community activities. See page 105 for more on proactive feedback mechanisms.

124 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/ifrc-covid-19-community-feedback-package/

125 https://communityengagementhub.org/guides-and-tools/

126 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/tips-for-using-social-media/

127 https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/

128 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/updated-epidemic-control-training-package-for-volunteers/

129 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/community-led-solutions-package-webinar-recordings-and-resources/

130 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit

131 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/volunteers-in-every-street-a-lybian-red-crescent-and-benghazi-branch-case-study/

132 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/chatbots-a-conversation-with-the-community-a-kazakhstan-case-study/

133 https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/engaging-communities-for-behaviour-change/

134 https://communityengagementhub.org/guides-and-tools/radio-programming/

135 https://communityengagementhub.org/guides-and-tools/mobile-cinema/

136 https://www.ifrc.org/document/case-study-community-based-surveillance-indonesia

137 https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210106_CaseStudies_ONLINE.pdf

# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

### Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

### Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

### Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

### Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

### Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

### Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

### Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

IFRC

**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers.** Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.