

Pilot Version

A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

Improving communication, engagement
and accountability in all we do



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**International Committee of
the Red Cross**

19 avenue de la Paix
CH-1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 733 20 57
E-mail: webmaster.gva@icrc.org
Website: www.icrc.org

**International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies**

PO Box 372
CH-1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 730 42 22
E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org
Website: www.ifrc.org

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and accountability in all we do

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

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AAP	Accountability to affected populations	KAPB	Knowledge, attitudes, practices and beliefs
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action	Movement	The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
AtC	Accountability to communities	NDRT	National Disaster Response Team
ATM	Automatic-teller machine (bank cash machine)	NGO	Non-governmental organization
BSCC	Behaviour and social change communication	NS	National Society
CBDRR	Community-based disaster risk reduction	PASSA	Participatory approach to safe shelter awareness
CBHFA	Community-based health and first aid in action	PHAST	Participatory approach to hygiene and sanitation behavioural change
CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities network	PMER	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
CEA	Community engagement and accountability	Q&A	Question and answer
CHS	Core humanitarian standards	RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
CwC	Communicating with communities	SMS	Short messaging service (text message)
C4D	Communication for development	UN	United Nations
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)	UNHCR	The United Nations Refugee Agency
ERT	Emergency Response Team	UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessment
		WHO	World Health Organization

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Foreword

Working in partnership with communities is at the heart of the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). We know that engaging with communities leads to better-quality programming, which supports the goal of reducing vulnerability and building safer, more resilient communities.

This approach is enshrined in the [International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief](#) and [The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance](#). Most importantly, it is put into practice every day by hundreds of thousands of volunteers who are on the frontline of responding to crises of all scales and types.

But we can always improve. Often, in our haste to deliver assistance, we can overlook the capacities of local communities and affected people and, without meaning to, undermine them. While participatory approaches have long been a part of many programmes and operations, we do not always systematically engage communities and, when we do so, we do not always do it in a meaningful way. As we strive to meet the needs of vulnerable populations we must continually reflect on how we can better listen to communities in order to 'do no harm' in our approach to working with them.

This guide does not present a new activity, but rather adds value by offering advice and support to improve community engagement and accountability (CEA) across all programmes or operations. The benefits of adopting a more systematic approach to CEA within the Movement have been highlighted in a number of disaster response operations during recent years, ranging from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami through to the 2014–2015 Ebola outbreak. In each of these operations, CEA approaches and activities (previously known as beneficiary communications) have helped to improve programme quality by increasing their reach, impact and levels of accountability to communities.

This has ranged from the provision of life-saving information to the inclusion of feedback and complaints systems. It has also involved combining the power of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers' outreach work with innovative social media and mass communication technology, such as SMS, to help foster dialogue with communities.

The need to adapt and improve our approach to CEA is also due to the dramatically changing humanitarian landscape. The explosion in access to mobile phones, the internet and social media is changing the way people communicate. Through new technologies, local communities can organize their own response and engage with each other, governments, media and aid organizations more effectively than ever before. This new connectivity also empowers communities to demand greater transparency and participation.

The development of this guide stems from the Movement's commitment to meet these challenges and gain a deeper understanding of the communities we work with. Ensuring a more consistent approach to CEA will enable us to better respond to the needs of the communities we serve, ensure that our assistance does not undermine what already exists, and ultimately contributes to the building of long-term resilience.



Yves Daccord
Director General
International Committee
of the Red Cross



Elhadj As Sy
Secretary General
International Federation
of the Red Cross and Red
Crescent Societies



Introduction

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What is community engagement and accountability?

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is an approach to Red Cross and Red Crescent programming and operations. It is supported by a set of activities that help put communities at the centre of what we do, by integrating communication and participation throughout the programme cycle or operation.

CEA is the process of and commitment to providing timely, relevant and actionable life-saving and life-enhancing information to communities. It is about using the most appropriate communication approaches to listen to communities' needs, feedback and complaints, ensuring they can actively participate and guide Red Cross Red Crescent actions. CEA supports those involved in programmes and operations to adopt innovative approaches to better understand and engage with people and communities and help them address unhealthy and unsafe practices. It maximizes the Red Cross Red Crescent's unique relationship with the community to help them speak out about the issues that affect them and influence decision and policy-makers to implement positive changes.

While CEA is not a new or stand-alone programme, adopting a more systematic approach to CEA contributes to improved accountability to communities, which builds acceptance and trust and supports more sustainable programme outcomes. Ultimately, this helps communities take an active role in building long-term resilience by enabling them to become more knowledgeable, skilled, connected and to bring about the behaviour and social changes needed to address risks and underlying vulnerabilities.



Credit: Christoph von Toggenburg

Community engagement and accountability is:



Community participation and feedback

CEA supports those involved in our programmes and operations to share honest, timely and accessible information with communities about who we are and what we are doing, find ways to engage them in guiding programme design and delivery, and to set up systems for responding and acting on feedback, questions and complaints.



Providing information as aid

In the midst of a disaster or conflict, people need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter. CEA supports those involved in our programmes and operations to share timely, actionable and potentially life-saving information with communities quickly, efficiently and at large-scale, using systems such as SMS, social media or radio broadcasts.



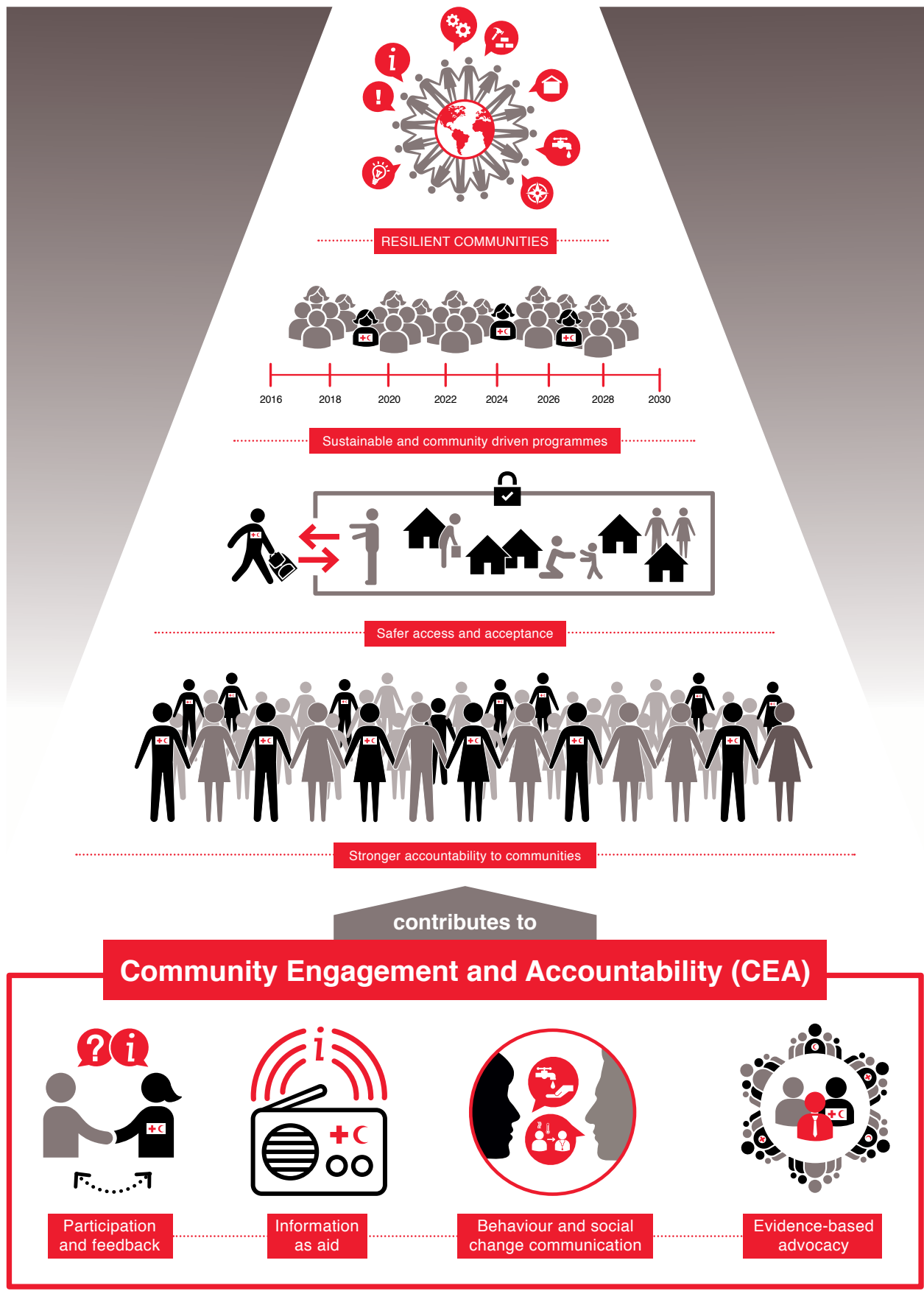
Behaviour and social change communication

CEA helps behaviour and social change programmes to gain an insight into the perceptions and behaviours of different groups, and to develop engaging and targeted messages. It also provides innovative and participatory communication approaches that support communities to adopt safer and healthier practices.



Evidence-based advocacy

Community members are experts on the challenges that affect them and their solutions, but they can find it difficult to make their voices heard by the relevant authorities or organizations. CEA helps create spaces for communities to speak out about the issues that affect them and make their voices heard to influence decision-makers to take action..



Why community engagement and accountability is important

1. Leads to better, more effective programming

Asking and listening to people's needs and opinions, and involving them in designing and delivering programmes, helps us to properly understand the situation and people's priorities, which leads to more responsive, relevant and sustainable programmes.

2. Improves acceptance and trust

Open and honest communication about who we are and what we are doing is a mark of respect and builds trust. It can help address rumours and prevent potential reputational and security risks, all of which enhances acceptance by communities.

3. Feedback and complaints are good

Feedback and complaints provide us with valuable information we can use to improve our programmes and operations. These act as an early-warning system for implementation problems and cases of sexual exploitation, abuse and corruption, allowing us to address these quickly before they escalate. Feedback is also critical to shaping appropriate behaviour and social change communication initiatives.

4. Helps to save lives

Information – such as how to reconnect with your family, which hospitals are functioning or how to make safe drinking water – can save lives, livelihoods and resources.

5. Empowers people and builds community resilience

People affected by crisis are not helpless victims. With the right information, people can make informed decisions, find answers to their problems and connect with others to organize their own response – all of which builds long-term community resilience.

6. Supports positive behaviour and social change

Simply providing information about an issue is rarely enough to change entrenched behaviours. CEA provides innovative approaches to enable us to better understand and engage with communities, and help them adopt safer and healthier practices.

7. Recognizes the community as experts and partners

Local people are the most knowledgeable about their situation and have a right to be active partners in the development, relief and recovery of their communities. Drawing on that knowledge and expertise through participation and feedback can build community resilience and improve the assistance and protection we provide.

8. Supports National Societies to fulfil their auxiliary role

As an auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies play an important role, both to facilitate community participation in decision-making processes and to act as a bridge between communities and authorities at national and local levels. Therefore, National Societies must earn the trust and respect of both communities and public authorities.

9. Contributes to 'do no harm' programming

There is always a risk that our presence and activities can have negative unintended consequences on a community. Good community engagement helps us achieve a solid understanding of the local environment and the role we play, both actual and perceived, whether we operate in a context with high levels of social instability, violence and conflict, or within more stable and predictable settings.

10. Helps to manage communities' expectations

Dialogue with communities is essential in order to anticipate their needs, understand their circumstances and priorities and manage their expectations in relation to what they can expect from the National Society and who is eligible for support.

Statistics from community consultations on humanitarian aid:¹



3/4

Syrians in Jordan report never being asked whether they received the help they needed



2/3

affected people in South Sudan, Jordan and Afghanistan feel they have little or no influence on the aid they receive



9/10

Syrians in Jordan received assistance, but only

3/10

found that assistance helpful



1/2

conflict-affected Ukrainians don't get the assistance they need because they don't know it's available

1. Community consultations on humanitarian aid. Overall findings – World Humanitarian Summit. 2016 Ipsos Public Affairs.

How can this guide help me?

This guide is written for National Society staff involved in delivering programmes and operations, as well as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff who support them. It is designed to provide Movement partners with a common approach to build CEA systematically into our ways of working. The guide provides an overview of CEA approaches and activities that can be applied to any type of programme or operation, at any point in the programme cycle. Readers are expected to adapt the guidance provided to suit their context, needs and resources.

Remember, CEA is not a programme or an activity in its own right and should be integrated into the work we already do to improve its quality and impact.

The responsibility for ensuring CEA is incorporated into the way we work rests with all of us, and in particular those in charge of programmes and operations. However, technical support is available from CEA specialists within National Societies, the IFRC and ICRC.

In this guide, you will find:



step-by-step guidance to integrate CEA into each stage of the programme cycle



a set of CEA tools and templates to support implementation ([Annex 1](#))



a CEA training package and resources



many real-life examples of how National Societies have put CEA into action.



topics that could be of particular interest to National Societies.

For more information and CEA resources please visit this page:
www.ifrc.org/CEA.

How can this guide help me?

Support disaster response managers to understand which channels work best for mass communication about the risks of drinking flood water

Support international delegates to work with their National Society counterparts to integrate improved CEA into programmes or operations

Support disaster law teams to advocate for early-warning systems to be included in national disaster risk management legislation

Support National Societies to build a feedback and complaints system into their programmes or operations

Help community-based health and first aid in action (CBHFA) teams to develop engaging messages and identify different communication channels they can use, beyond face to face, to help promote behaviour and social change

What happened to 'beneficiary communication'?

CEA is the new name for beneficiary communication or 'Ben Coms'. This change acknowledges that communities and people affected by natural and man-made disasters are not passive 'beneficiaries' or 'recipients' of humanitarian assistance, but active agents in their own development, preparedness, relief and recovery. Also, community engagement is not a 'communication' problem, but an operational commitment that needs to be the core of every programme and operation. In this sense, the Movement feels that engagement is a more suitable term to reflect the importance of two-way communication with communities and the integral role it plays in the delivery of high-quality programmes and operations.

What about additional resources?

This guide is not intended to replace existing Movement guidance to participatory approaches, but rather to be used in alignment with them. It is not possible to include all the guidance on participatory approaches, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender and diversity, in one guide. Therefore, in [Annex 2](#) you can find additional resources on specific areas, which are also critical to improving CEA.

The Movement's commitment to investing in CEA is covered in the range of documents, policies and strategies found in [Annex 3](#).

Other organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), have also increased resources and attention on improving CEA, through initiatives such as communicating with communities (CwC), communication for development (C4D) and accountability to affected populations (AAP).

There has also been a growth of inter-agency networks such as the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). Most recently, the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) places a heavy emphasis on CEA, indicating the growing recognition and importance of this within the humanitarian sector. Links to more information on the CHS can be found in [Annex 2](#).



CEA IN ACTION: Using radio to reach out to communities in Bangladesh

“There are certain rice seeds that can be planted after the flood water reduces. We learnt how to preserve and plant these seeds from the ‘Hello Red Crescent’ radio programme.”

Listener, Hello Red Crescent radio programme

Due to its geographical location, Bangladesh is vulnerable to natural disasters, which are increasing in intensity and frequency due to climate change. The coastal regions are affected by cyclones and tidal surges, and flooding occurs every year in the northern region. To build awareness of disaster preparedness among people in Kurigram and Barguna districts, Bangladesh Red Crescent chose community radio stations as a medium of communication and since July 2015, “Hello Red Crescent: We Listen To You!” has been regularly broadcast.

The theme of each radio show is decided through discussion sessions to identify the issues and information that is important to communities. A community-based listeners’ club is formed to share information about disaster preparedness and response. Before each show is broadcast, a Red Crescent youth volunteer informs the listeners’ club members about the topic and broadcasting schedule. The volunteers collect people’s opinions with an audio recorder and the recorded interviews are aired during the show’s regular segment “Voices of the People”. Along with a live question-and-answer session with a guest expert, key messages on related topics are broadcast. At the end of every programme, the best question is selected and the winner is awarded a radio. An address to post opinions and feedback to about the programme is also announced.

Providing vital information as a form of aid through radio adds a new dimension to the overall activities of the Bangladesh Red Crescent. As a result, people are able to take action to protect themselves and their families in disasters.

Reaching out to communities

The series, which began with a discussion on “How to Prepare and Stay Healthy in Winter”, drew so many calls that the community radio station had to extend the show for an additional 30 minutes. Many requests were made by listeners to continue this show in future with an expanded one hour’s running time. It was clear that the information shared with communities was relevant to their context and that communities had a good understanding of the Red Crescent’s humanitarian services.

“The interest in this type of radio show was so much greater than we anticipated,” said Sayeeda Farhana, Senior Disaster Management Officer, IFRC Bangladesh Delegation. “To us, it shows the need to enhance two-way dialogue with disaster-affected communities. Through this platform, people are able to share their experiences and discuss with the Red Crescent how to tackle vulnerabilities in their communities. Based on the response from listeners calling the shows, it is evident that there is growing demand for receiving information, whether on disaster preparedness or associated relief efforts by the humanitarian community. It also supports advocacy efforts to address the underlying risks communities face.”

See the video of [“Hello Red Crescent: We Listen To You!”](#)

Examples of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) activities:



Participation and feedback

Communicate clearly to communities about who we are and what we are doing. Provide opportunities for participation and listen, respond and act on feedback, questions and complaints. For example, who is entitled to receive cash grants and how people can provide feedback about it.

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Information as aid

Share timely, actionable and potentially life-saving information with communities quickly, efficiently and at scale. For example, where and how people affected by emergencies can access services.

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Behaviour and social change communication

Understand people's behaviours and use innovative and participatory communication approaches to support communities to adopt safer and healthier practices. For example, using mobile cinemas to help prevent cholera.

.....



Evidence-based advocacy

Support communities to speak out about the issues that affect them - or speak up on their behalf if that's not possible - to influence decision-makers to take action. For example, organize community meetings to bring communities and government together.

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Integrating community engagement and accountability into the programme cycle

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This section provides guidance on how to incorporate CEA into the programme cycle and is divided into four key sections:



Assessment



Design and Planning



Implementation and Monitoring



Evaluation and Learning

Each section includes a list of tools to help you carry out the actions described and these can be found in [Annex 1](#).

Ideally, CEA should be integrated from the assessment phase of a programme. However, if this hasn't been possible, go to the relevant section for the stage you are at now in the programme cycle.

While the steps included in each of these sections can also be applied in disaster response operations, there is a dedicated short section on CEA basics for emergencies on page 75.



For more information on National Society capacity assessments, see **Tool 4** in **Annex 1**.



Before you get started!

Before deciding which CEA activities to implement it can be very useful to carry out an internal assessment of the National Society's knowledge, skills and experience in relation to CEA. This will help you to select appropriate approaches and activities that match your current skills and capacity. For example, if staff resources are limited it might be too much work to start a daily radio programme.

Minimum actions to integrate CEA into programmes and operations



ASSESSMENT

1. Search for existing information (secondary data) about the local media and telecommunications landscape.
2. Hold an initial orientation meeting to discuss assessment plans with communities and explain who we are, our fundamental principles, code of conduct and contact details.
3. Train volunteers to communicate clearly and honestly with communities.
4. Ask about information needs and preferred communication channels in assessments.
5. Understand how the community functions and who makes decisions, including culture, social dynamics and power relations between different groups.
6. Allow time to listen openly to needs and priorities before the planning programme's aims.
7. Verify assessment findings with the community and consult on measures of success.



DESIGN AND PLANNING

1. Design programmes based on assessment data and previous learning.
2. Provide equal opportunities to everyone to participate in the planning process.
3. Representatives of affected persons are agreed with the community and represent a cross-section, including men, women, boys, girls and vulnerable groups. Clear roles and responsibilities are agreed with representatives and community leaders and committees.
4. Selection criteria are agreed with the community and communicated clearly.
5. CEA activities and indicators are integrated into overall plans and budgets, setting out what we need to engage and communicate on, with whom, how and when.
6. Establish a system to listen, collect, analyse, respond to and act on feedback and complaints. This should be designed with input from the community and staff and volunteers properly trained to manage it.
7. Cross-check plans with the community (to make sure they are appropriate) and with other organizations (to avoid duplication).



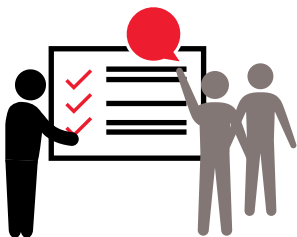
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

1. Collect baseline data so you can measure progress.
2. Timely, accurate and relevant information is shared and discussed regularly with communities, including about programme activities and progress, using the best communications approaches to engage with different groups.
3. Regular checks are carried out as part of monitoring to ensure information shared with communities is understood, relevant and useful.
4. Feedback and complaints systems are advertised clearly and checks carried out to make sure communities know how to raise issues or ask questions.
5. Activities are reviewed and adjusted regularly based on community feedback and monitoring, including people's levels of satisfaction with the programme.
6. Staff and volunteers are trained on CEA approaches and activities.
7. Develop an exit strategy well in advance of the programme end.



EVALUATION AND LEARNING

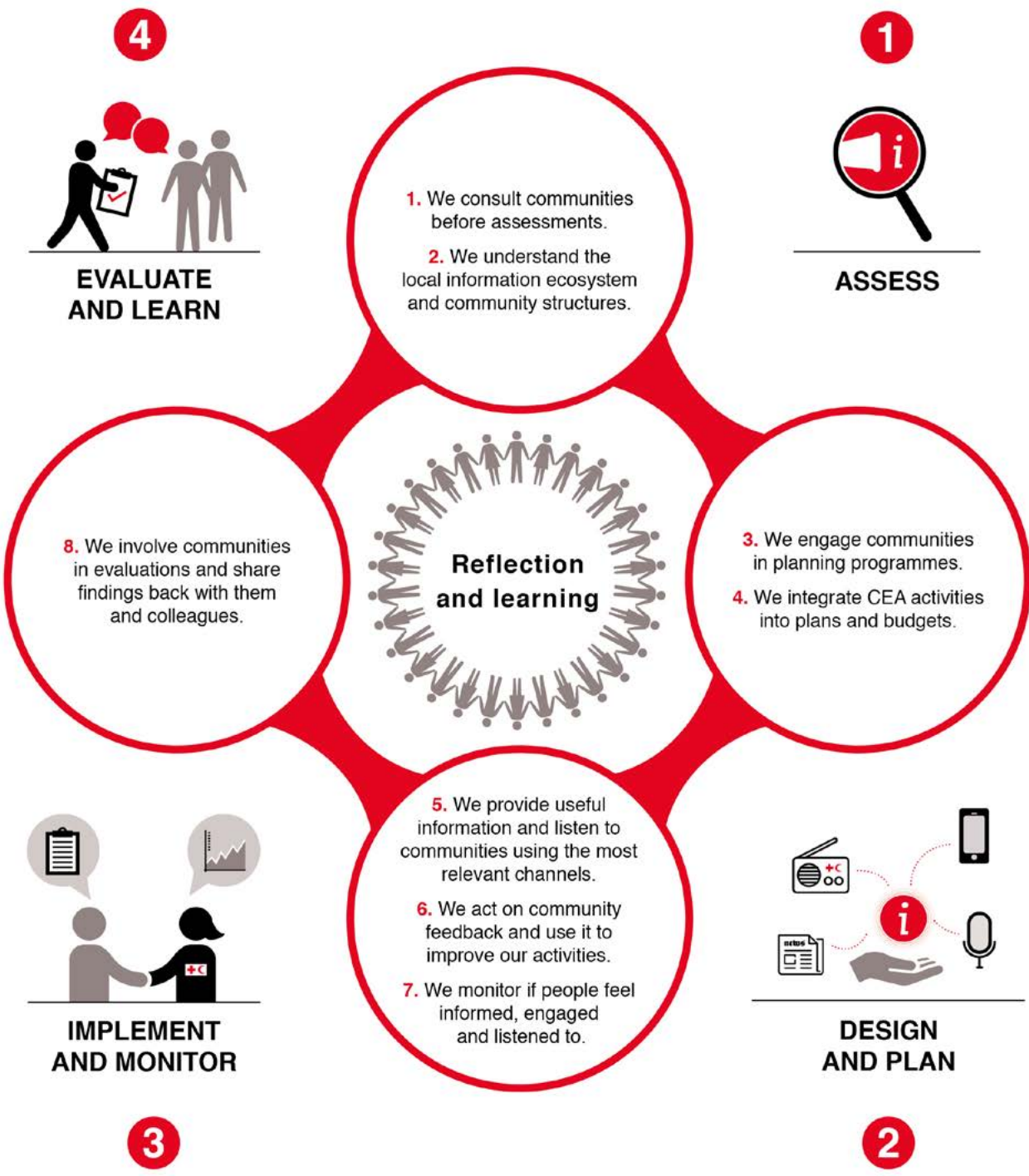
1. The community should be a key source of information in the evaluation, including levels of satisfaction with the programme and how it was delivered.
2. Evaluate whether or not a programme met the minimum CEA actions listed here.
3. Evaluate the impact of CEA activities on the programme and community.
4. Evaluation findings should be shared with communities.
5. Lessons learned should be shared with colleagues and used to inform future programmes.



INSTITUTIONALIZING CEA

1. CEA is integrated into the National Society mission statement, core values and organizational strategy. These documents clearly set out how the organization will approach CEA, who will be responsible and how it will be budgeted for.
2. CEA is included in National Society plans and processes, including the annual planning process, funding proposals, frameworks, policies and standard operating procedures.
3. CEA is included in staff job descriptions.
4. CEA training is provided to staff and volunteers.
5. All staff and volunteers are briefed on and sign the Code of Conduct.

Minimum Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) actions





Programme Phase 1: Assessments

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Human dignity depends on people's autonomy in determining their own needs and finding their own solutions. To enable people to do that, we need to know how we can better listen and engage with them in a two-way dialogue. That's why conducting participatory and respectful needs assessments and understanding the local information ecosystem is critical.

Historically, during needs assessments local communities are asked what they need but rarely what they need to know, what channels of information and communication they have access to, which ones they use and which ones they trust. This has resulted in major gaps in terms of programme effectiveness and accountability. When CEA is integrated from the very beginning of a programme it makes it easier to build CEA activities and approaches into plans and throughout the life of the programme.

Integrating CEA into the assessment phase will:

CEA Approach	CEA Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the assessment process to be carried out in a participatory and transparent way, which supports accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you gather the information needed to plan appropriate CEA activities in support of the programme's aims and objectives and needs of the community, e.g., people's information needs, trusted communication channels and community structures and dynamics.

Assessing CEA needs and channels should be part of the overall programme assessment and not carried out separately.



Step 1: Search for existing information (secondary data review)

Existing information in the public domain can help inform assessments and improve your understanding of how people communicate, what communication channels they use and what channels they trust. This is referred to as secondary data. A secondary data review should identify what information already exists. This may be information previously collected by your National Society or other parts of the Movement or by other organizations.

Examples of secondary data include:

- knowledge, attitudes, practices and beliefs (KAPB) surveys
- demographic health studies (see www.dhsprogram.com)
- assessments carried out by other agencies, such as the UN, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or government
- reports on the media and telecommunication sectors (see www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/media-landscape-guides/).

Assessments are time-consuming, especially KAPB surveys, so always check for existing data before embarking on a new assessment survey. This can save time, funding and avoid assessment fatigue in communities.



Data protection by design

Trust, and subsequently the quality of the data collected, can depend on what people think we do with their data and how we treat it. For the Movement, safeguarding the personal data of individuals, particularly during armed conflicts, is an essential aspect of protecting people's lives, their physical and mental integrity, and their dignity. This needs to be clearly explained from the beginning. People's consent and awareness that their information will be treated confidentially is key to establishing trusting relationships.

Providing services to communities affected by armed conflicts, violence, migration, natural disasters or epidemics requires the collection and processing of large amounts of highly sensitive and personal data. Often this data must travel between different countries.

Therefore, it is important that the Movement takes steps to safeguard people's personal information to avoid doing no (digital) harm. This impacts on all aspects of our work, from field volunteers to office administrators.

This is particularly relevant with today's technology, which offers huge potential for data collection but also increases the risk of digital surveillance and data breaches. To address this, new data protection standards are being developed. For example, the ICRC, through its [Data Protection Office \(DPO\)](http://www.icrc.org/en/document/data-protection) (www.icrc.org/en/document/data-protection), has adopted a set of rules on personal data protection which enables the ICRC to remain at the forefront of international humanitarian action while safeguarding individual personal data, even in the most challenging circumstances



Step 2: Engage the community

It is important that any assessment is carried out in a participatory and respectful way to establish a good and trusting relationship with the community and improve the quality of the information collected.

Actions required:

- ✓ **Speak to the community before doing anything.** Engage the community and relevant stakeholders (local authorities, if relevant) as early as possible. Before starting an assessment, always discuss your plans with the community first and explain clearly who you are and what you are there to do, including the aims of the National Society, the behaviour people can expect from staff and volunteers, how to contact the local branch and what will happen with the information they provide. Always ask community leaders for guidance and technical input, share sample questionnaires if possible, and hold consultation meetings. This engagement will help people to feel ownership of the process and the findings. You can also use this opportunity to gather basic information about the community, such as who the leaders are, other organizations that work in the community, major problems and the best times and means to collect, share and discuss information. In addition, it is critical to confirm whether people are willing to take part in an assessment before beginning the process and that they feel comfortable and safe talking to you. Remind people that they are not obliged to take part and this won't affect whether they receive any assistance or not.
- ✓ **Prepare staff and volunteers.** If you haven't already done this, train the staff and volunteers who are carrying out the assessment on good communication and facilitation skills and how to answer questions from the community appropriately and consistently, including about the National Society, the assessment process, how the assessment data is going to be used, and what happens next. Make sure people know how to contact the local branch so they can reach the National Society when they want to and not just whenever you may be there physically. Be careful to manage people's expectations and be clear that the assessment is intended to better understand the community and its needs. It does not guarantee that a programme will be established and it is important people are aware of this.



For template question-and-answer sheets about the National Society, use **Tool 6** in [Annex 1](#). See also the box on data protection on page 23.



To develop question-and-answer sheets, use **Tool 6**; or for volunteer training packages, use **Tool 14** – both in [Annex 1](#).

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)



For guidance on running a focus group, use **Tool 5** in [Annex 1](#).



For guidance on working with community committees, see [Annex 2](#) CBHFA manual Tools. The case study on page 36 provides an example of how women's participation can be increased through working with community committees.



For guidance on the inclusion of minority and vulnerable groups, see the IFRC's Minimum Standard Commitments for Gender and Diversity in Emergencies and Better Programming Initiative in [Annex 2](#).



For carrying out a stakeholder analysis use **Tool 3** 'Steps to analyse CEA information' in [Annex 1](#).



For guidance on interviewing vulnerable groups and interviewing ethics in general, see the Gender and Diversity commitments, Safer Access Framework and VCA Tools in [Annex 2](#). For guidance on creating a training question-and-answer sheet for volunteers, use **Tool 6** in [Annex 1](#). See [Annex 2](#) for more information on the IFRC's Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) manual, which contains guidance on participatory approaches to assessments.



Listen first, ask later. Allow time to listen openly to communities about their needs and priorities before determining the outcomes of a programme. It is a good idea to hold community meetings and focus groups so that people have the opportunity to tell you information beyond the questions on the survey form. This is also a chance to find out the community capacity and ask for their suggestions on how best to tackle issues, so the programme can build on existing knowledge and practices. Think how awkward it can be for community members to answer a long list of questions asked by a group of outsiders. You may get more revealing insights by listening and talking to people than through a questionnaire.



It's not all about community leaders. Work with formal leaders and community committees (including women's committees if they exist) but don't speak only to those community leaders. You can't be sure they represent all members of the community fairly and you need to check what they tell you is accurate. Seek equal participation of women and men and other groups like the elderly and the disabled by talking directly with them, without putting them into an uncomfortable situation once you leave.



Be inclusive. It is very important you include all members of the community, not just the so-called leaders or the loudest or most visible people, in order to make sure you identify specific needs, capacities, risks and skills of different groups. Be aware of various interest groups and power relations in the target community. How is the community organized; who makes the decisions and who is left out? Does your assessment reach women, people with disabilities, the elderly, children or minority groups? If they are not included in the assessment, the programme might not meet their needs. The objective is to hear directly from all relevant groups, so you can cross-check what the leaders tell you.



You are probably not the only one about to conduct an assessment with the community right now. Take time to find out which other organizations are working with the community, what the local government structure is, and any problems or issues the National Society needs to be aware of. Check if anybody else is carrying out an assessment. Depending on the context, consider whether you can or should take part in joint efforts, or if you can share your findings or use findings from others.



Take special considerations when talking to certain groups. If you plan to speak to children or other vulnerable groups, be aware of the special ethical or confidentiality considerations you must consider in your assessment.



Credit: Alaa Badarneh / ICRC



Engaging with communities in situations of armed conflict

In conflict-affected communities, just like after natural disasters, people need to know what is happening around them, how to reconnect with loved ones and where to find help. Conflict-affected areas, however, pose challenges distinct from natural disasters for both communities and the organizations that provide humanitarian assistance.

In a conflict situation, the local information environment tends to be highly politicized. Not only can damage to the media and telecommunications infrastructure cut off access to information, but also news outlets can be targeted and/or controlled by opposing factions to serve their political agendas. In addition, the provision of information about humanitarian services by aid organizations can be perceived as favoring one side or the other, potentially creating an environment of distrust and even possibly causing harm to aid workers and local communities.

When communities have access to safe and trusted communication with staff and volunteers about National Society activities and programs, it makes a real difference: communities can better reconnect and organize their own response, ask for help, connect with humanitarian organizations, make informed decisions and demand accountability.

When planning CEA programmes in situations of armed conflict, it is important to consider what the perceptions of the National Society and communication activities are by communities and armed groups. The neutral, independent, impartial humanitarian action of the National Society and its communication activities are critical for fostering acceptance and access to deliver aid services, including information.

The *Safer Access Framework for National Societies* (saferaccess.icrc.org) outlines a number of elements that can ensure the neutral perception of our work and links closely with the minimum actions for CEA. Examples include:

- conducting a perception study of the National Society to actively manage the NS's reputation
- conducting continual context assessments of the social, economic and political trends, and also of the media and telecommunications environment to understand power dynamics and how information flows within the community
- ensuring that all staff and volunteers have signed and understand the code of conduct and adequate training on the mandate of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement so they can explain it clearly to communities
- making sure that there is a mechanism for communities to give feedback to the organization and raise complaints
- correctly using the red cross and red crescent emblem for identification purposes.

Remember, amidst violence, communication is a lifeline. So no matter how difficult the circumstances, meeting people's need for programme information and dialogue is never a choice – it's our collective responsibility.



Step 3: Decide what information needs to be collected



Tool 1 in [Annex 1](#) provides a useful assessment checklist and an overview of different methods.




Once you know an assessment is going ahead, you can decide what information is needed from the community to help you plan CEA activities and approaches. This will depend on which components of CEA the programme team wants to implement (see table below). Assessment data should be collected and analysed disaggregated by sex, age and disability to allow the programme to better meet the specific needs of these groups.

If you do not have time to carry out a formal assessment, observing the community and interviewing community members and volunteers can help collect the information you need.



CEA IN ACTION: Deciding what and who to assess and engage

When the Ghana Red Cross carried out an assessment for a programme to increase the number of women delivering their babies in hospital, they didn't only assess pregnant women but also the women's families and the wider society. They found that the decision to deliver in a hospital is shared by the whole family and that a key barrier was transport to the hospital. As a result, awareness activities targeted men as well and an agreement was signed with local taxi associations to secure free transport to hospital for women in labour.

Programme need	Information needed
<p>Improve community participation and feedback</p> 	<p>An understanding of the community structures and power dynamics, how different groups of people perceive the National Society and how they access and share information. This includes understanding what communication channels they use and which ones they trust. This is critical to avoid causing harm through unintended consequences of our activities and challenging our own preconceived assumptions.</p>
<p>Provide information as aid</p> 	<p>The information needs of the different people in the community including the risks they face and which communication channels they have access to and trust. Remember, different groups, such as men, women, children and minorities such as those with disabilities, may have different information needs and use different channels.</p>
<p>Behaviour and social change communication</p> 	<p>The socio-cultural environment, people's knowledge, attitudes and practices, how they access information, current capacities within different groups and, very importantly, what channels they use and which ones they trust. Critically, it is important to understand who are the 'gatekeepers' and more trusted individuals (influencers) within the community as they may have more actual influence than any other or all channels combined. Also bear in mind that different groups in the community may have different capacities and needs.</p>
<p>Plan evidence-based advocacy activities</p> 	<p>Information on the issues affecting the community, the community power relations and who the other stakeholders are.</p>



For a template of CEA questions to include in assessments, use **Tool 2 (part A)** in [Annex 1](#). For ideas on how to collect information on community structure and dynamics, see **Tool 1** in [Annex 1](#). For more information on 'do no harm', see the Better Programming Initiative document listed in [Annex 2](#).



For a template of CEA questions to include in assessments, use **Tool 2 (part A)** in [Annex 1](#).



For a template of CEA questions to include in KAPB surveys, use **Tool 2 (part F)** in [Annex 1](#). **Tool 2 (part F)** includes an example of a complete KAPB survey used for Zika virus.



For help on how to assess stakeholders and community power relations, use **Tool 1** and **3** in [Annex 1](#).



Including gender and diversity in your assessment

A gender and diversity analysis helps us to understand and respond to people's specific needs and should always be integrated into the needs assessment, sector assessments and situational analyses. The following questions and points support such an analysis:

1. What is the profile of the affected group (number of households and household members disaggregated by sex and age; number of single male and female heads of household; number of pregnant and lactating women; and number (male/female) of unaccompanied children, older people, persons with disabilities, chronically ill, etc.)?
2. Besides the groups mentioned above, are there any other potentially vulnerable groups in the community? These might include an ethnic minority, migrant, class or caste group, for example.
3. Have males and females of all ages, including those from marginalized groups, been consulted and involved in the assessment to determine their specific needs, priorities and concerns within the sector-specific programming as they relate to dignity, access, participation and safety?
4. Assessments should be carried out through a combination of observations and questions, including asking females and males separately programme-specific questions. Are mechanisms in place to ensure gender and diversity representation and the participation of different social groups for inclusive analysis of needs and, consequently, more effective responses? If so, what are these?
5. The assistance selection criteria and prioritization must be informed by a gender and diversity analysis. Are people with specific needs – single-head of household, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, children, older people, chronically ill, etc. – included in the selection and prioritization criteria?
6. What are the expected roles of females and males in each sector (e.g., in shelter construction, in the maintenance of water points, latrines and bathing areas, in the collection of water and fuel)?
7. Do the assessment and response teams have balanced or fair male/female and diversity representation? Are specific actions required to create permission and space for women and marginalized groups to participate on response teams? If so, what are these?

If the answer to any of the questions above is 'no' or the relevant information is not available, then this must be noted and details of how the issue will be rectified also included in the assessment.

From the IFRC's Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergencies – see [Annex 2](#) for the link to this document.



Step 4: Analyse CEA assessment data

Once assessment data has been collected, it needs to be analysed carefully. Analysis involves the combination of available information and its interpretation by your team. The analysis of the assessment data will help you define the most appropriate CEA activities and approaches to include in the programme's plans. Assessment data, including information on CEA, should be analysed together by the full programme team so everyone involved can see linkages between different sectors.

The table below outlines questions to consider as you analyse your assessment data.

Programme Need	Considerations
<p>Participation and feedback</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programme information do people need to know and when? • How can different members of the community, including women, men, girls, boys, elderly and people with disabilities be given opportunities to participate and guide the design and delivery of the programme? • What communication channels do people prefer to use? • What strategies can be employed to engage more marginalized groups who are generally less represented in community decisions? It may require special measures to involve and reach everyone successfully.
<p>Information as aid</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do people need to know right now in order to protect themselves? • What are the most locally relevant communication channels to use? Are these different for men, women, children, elderly people, people with disabilities and marginalized groups?
<p>Behaviour and social change communication</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key unhealthy or unsafe behaviours? • Why do people engage in this type of behaviour? • What information do people know now? • Where do they get information (people and channels)? • Which sources do they trust the most? • What other communication channels might work well to reach people and promote discussion?
<p>Evidence-based advocacy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main issues facing the community? • Who are the other stakeholders and organizations? • What are the best ways to reach different stakeholder groups?

Things to keep in mind when analysing data:

- ✓ **Be aware of gaps, caveats and limitations.** Make sure there is enough information to make well-informed decisions about approaches and activities but be realistic about the data and the quality of the data you have. Be honest about gaps in your data, and factor in and explain the reasons for those gaps in your analysis – lack of access, resources, etc. This will help you and others to plan future assessments, build scenarios and allocate resources efficiently.
- ✓ **Look for emerging trends.** Be aware of common needs or problems that arise repeatedly in the assessment data.
- ✓ **Pay attention to the sources of information** to ensure they are reputable.
- ✓ **Consider if what is being requested is within the parameters of the programme, project or response.** Just because a community has asked for something, it does not necessarily mean that it is relevant or within the National Society's capacity to deliver. Never promise to deliver activities that are beyond capacity and always explain why you do or do not carry out certain things – remember to try to manage expectations.
- ✓ **Cross-check** information. Check assessment information against other available data, such as past assessments, other organizations' assessments and mainstream and social media. Look for any major differences or inconsistencies that may need to be checked.
- ✓ **Unanticipated results should not be ignored.** Putting information together will often raise important, unforeseen and relevant issues that may need to be discussed and addressed by the programme team.
- ✓ **There may be some inconsistencies** in the data, especially in relation to answers provided by different genders and age groups. Inconsistencies may exist because people's perceptions of needs are different, some may have better access to information, and sometimes people purposely provide misleading information. If there are inconsistencies that aren't due to gender or diversity and will affect the activities being focused on, then the information will need to be double-checked with the community in an effort to reach a consensus.
- ✓ **Be honest with donors** that plans might change based on feedback from the community. Most donors are happy to approve changes to a programme if it means it will better meet the needs of the community.

You will be expected to present your findings in a user-friendly assessment report. Remember that shorter documents are more likely to be read. Your report should include three sections: findings (including background context); analysis of those findings to explain what is happening; and methodology for how you collected your data and carried out your analysis, including limitations and gaps.



Step 5: Sharing your findings

Community participation doesn't end when the data is collected. Meaningful engagement with communities needs to continue throughout the programme's cycle and this includes sharing the information you collected during the assessment, your analysis and the next steps with them and with other relevant stakeholders. People need to have the opportunity to respond and seek clarification.

Share your findings with the following groups:

- colleagues within the National Society and the Movement;
- coordinators and peers in clusters, government department or other stakeholders;
- local and national authorities; and, last but not least...
- local communities themselves. They've given time to answer your questions and engage with you. Make sure you take the time to share the results back with them.



For help to share and discuss assessment findings with communities, use **Tool 11** on community meetings and **Tool 17** on sharing evaluations – both in [Annex 1](#).



CEA tools to help you during the assessment phase (see [Annex 1](#))

- CEA assessment checklist and methods overview (**Tool 1**).
- CEA questions for assessments (**Tool 2**).
- Steps to analyse CEA assessment information (**Tool 3**).
- National Society capacity assessment (**Tool 4**).
- Guidance on running a focus group (**Tool 5**).
- Standard Q&As for volunteers and staff (**Tool 6**).

Additional resources to be used in the assessment phase can be found in [Annex 2](#).

The CEA library

The CEA FedNet library includes a huge range of materials and templates from CEA programmes around the world. An example of some of the resources you can find there includes:

- template plans and training materials for radio shows on a range of topics from malaria prevention, through to first aid, to disaster risk reduction
- materials for running a mobile cinema show, including the running order for shows, questions to ask the audience, and forms to use for monitoring
- detailed guides and manuals from other organizations on everything from accountability to communicating in emergencies
- sample posters and graphics.

The library can be accessed here: fedteam.ifrc.org/global/collaboration/disasters/bc/default.aspx. (password protected)

The IFRC public library can be accessed here: www.ifrc.org/CEA



Programme Phase 2: Design and planning

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Integrating CEA into the design and planning phase will:

CEA Approach	CEA Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the programme planning process to be carried out in a participatory and transparent way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure CEA activities are included as part of programme plans, budgets and indicators. This prevents CEA activities becoming stand-alone or detached from the rest of the programme.

You may still decide to develop a more detailed plan or logframe for CEA activities for mapping out what needs to be done, by whom and by when. However, these should be developed in close cooperation with the rest of the programme team to ensure they are relevant and in line with the overall programme’s aims and activities.



For a template of CEA plans, indicators and budgets, see **Tool 7** in [Annex 1](#).



Step 1: Involve the community in the planning process

Plans, activities and timelines (and even budgets, if appropriate) should be developed in partnership with the community. There are numerous well-established participatory planning processes within the Movement, such as CBHFA, Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) and VCA, which provide in-depth guidance on how to do this. Additional useful resources for these processes can be found in [Annex 2](#).

The following checklist provides advice on adopting a CEA approach to the programme planning and design process, with the aim of ensuring the programme better fits community needs and involves them in decision-making.

A CEA approach to design and planning checklist

- ✓ The programme design is based on assessment data.
- ✓ The programme design also takes account of learning from past programmes, results of previous community satisfaction surveys or perception studies, and sector best practice.
- ✓ CEA indicators are included in the programme logframe or planning documents.



For examples of CEA indicators, use **Tool 7** in [Annex 1](#).



See the AtB toolkit in [Annex 2](#) and the CEA in action on page 36.



More information on exit strategies is in the next section and see **Tool 16** in [Annex 1](#).



For advice on holding community meetings, see **Tool 11** in [Annex 1](#). For a checklist of information that should be shared with the community, use **Tool 9** in [Annex 1](#).



For a template of terms of reference for community committees, use **Tool 12** in [Annex 1](#). Also, the CB-HFA and Gender and Diversity documents listed in [Annex 2](#) have more information on equal representation of community members.



For a template of community-related terms of reference, use **Tool 12** in [Annex 1](#).



For information on producing a selection criteria poster, use **Tool 13** in [Annex 1](#).



Use the *Better Programming Initiative*, including the conflict-sensitive context analysis, guide listed in [Annex 2](#).



Indicators are discussed with communities and based on community perceptions of success.



Programme plans include an exit strategy. This shows respect to community members, ensures their involvement, supports a smoother exit and increases the likelihood that changes implemented during the programme will be sustained.



Initial orientation and information meetings are held with local communities and provide information on the mandate of the National Society, IFRC and/or ICRC, our Fundamental Principles, expectations for staff and volunteer behaviour and contact details.



Representatives are agreed with the community and represent a cross-section of the population, including women, men, children and marginalized groups. For example, as much as possible ensure community committees have an equal number of men and women.



An agreement is formalized which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the National Society, IFRC and/or ICRC, and the community. Where possible, and appropriate, this should be a written agreement, such as a terms-of-reference, and may also include other stakeholders as necessary.



Programmes have clear selection criteria outlining who will receive assistance. These should be discussed and shared with the community. Where possible, the criteria should be developed in partnership with the community.



Think about any potential unintended consequences of the activities you are planning. Is it possible they could cause someone to be put at risk or increase their vulnerability, through impacting on their safety or dignity, increasing discrimination or limiting access to services and information?



CEA IN ACTION: Involving communities in the planning and design process

Madagascar is the largest island in the Indian Ocean group, with a population of more than 21 million. The country regularly faces major natural hazards, which include cyclones and tropical storms, floods, droughts and locust invasions. Madagascar is also vulnerable to climate change and has seen increasing extreme weather events in recent years. The country has witnessed 46 natural disasters over the past 35 years, cumulatively affecting more than 11 million people.

Despite its best efforts to include all community members in its programmes, Croix Rouge Malagasy noticed that many groups were still being underrepresented in community decision-making processes. To address this issue, a pilot project was initiated with support from the IFRC, as part of an ongoing programme in Fanamby, to create a more contemporary and equitable system of participation and decision-making.

The National Society worked with traditional leaders and chiefs of each village to obtain agreement to extend their current participation systems, in order to provide representation from a wider cross-section of the community. A particular area of concern was the participation of women in the communities. While this was raised as an issue, the programme team discovered that directly suggesting the participation of women in decision-making was often the most likely way to elicit initial resistance, so an effective solution was to negotiate representation of all of the different segments in the community, including women.

The result of these conversations was the development of a new committee system in each participating village, called the 'KOIF'. National Society staff and volunteers worked with the community to build consensus on what groups should be represented in

the KOIF and the result was a broad cross section of community representatives that included farmers and teachers, as well as people from churches and local authorities. Consideration was given to age, gender and disability as well.

In addition to establishing the KOIF, a series of 'women's associations' was proposed as well. These associations were intended to help local women come together, in order to become accustomed to and prepared for increased participation in decision-making processes.

An evaluation of the initiative in December 2015 found strong evidence that the new systems are contributing to a transformation of community dynamics, power structures and building a stronger sense of community cohesion and resilience. One quote from the consultation states: "Before, it was just the leaders involved in decision-making and now all the community are involved."

Despite the initial resistance to women's participation, communities were able to negotiate agreement for the establishment of the women's associations and these have readily been accepted and have had an extremely positive impact for the women. Those interviewed for the consultation claimed that they now have more initiatives as a result of the women's associations and have recently started a livelihoods project, which is earning them money. Others highlighted the ways in which they were more active in the community, and the fact that men listened to their opinions. One participant commented, "Introducing women into the decision-making has changed the way things happen. Since the new system, we are more active and the men listen to us more."



Step 2: Define CEA objectives and audience

CEA activities and approaches should always:

- ✓ help address **community needs or risks**
- ✓ **support the programme** to achieve its aims through the inclusion of information as aid, behavioural change or evidence-based advocacy activities
- ✓ strengthen programme **transparency and community participation**
- ✓ **be specific** by focusing on the change you want to achieve.

As with overall programme plans, CEA objectives and activities should also be developed in participation with the community.





The following two questions can guide you as you develop your CEA objectives:



For guidance on developing objectives, use the template of CEA plans, indicators and budgets in **Tool 7** in [Annex 1](#).

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

What change or impact do you want to support as a result of your CEA activities and approaches? The table below provides some examples of potential CEA activities, linked to different types of programmes.

Programme	Need	Example activity	Desired change
Malaria prevention	Behavioural change communication 	Radio chat show	(1) Increase knowledge and understanding of causes, prevention and symptoms of malaria; (2) Assess people's beliefs and practices in relation to malaria to guide programme activities; and (3) Encourage people to use mosquito nets every night.
Cash transfer	Participation and feedback 	Feedback telephone line	An effective feedback and complaints mechanism is in place. The programme achieves increased levels of community feedback by providing a safe, anonymous method for people (especially women) to make comments and suggestions.
Disaster law and risk reduction	Evidence-based advocacy 	Mobile cinema	Bring the community, National Society and public authorities together to discuss disaster risks in the community and potential solutions to address them, including changes to the law.
Distributions in a refugee camp	Information as aid 	Sending SMS and posting on information boards	(1) Informing people where and when they can access goods and support, which (2) contributes to the security and smooth running of a distribution by making sure the population knows where they need to be and when, and so (3) addresses tensions and frustrations amongst the population.

2. WHO ARE THE TARGET AUDIENCES?

Think about your programme and the different groups of people who will have an **effect on** or be **affected by** your activities. Who are all the different groups you may need to reach in order to achieve your aims? Who is likely to help you and who will try and block you? A programme may have to go beyond just the primary target audience to be successful. The table below sets out an example of the different target audiences at different levels of society for a maternal health programme.



For guidance on mapping out different audiences and stakeholders, use **Tool 3** in [Annex 1](#).

Target group	Description	Who
Primary audience	Those whose behaviour you want to change	Pregnant women.
Secondary audience	Those who have an influence over the behaviour of your primary audience	Husbands, mothers, grandmothers.
Tertiary audience	Local institutions with a role in organizing the community	Religious leaders, women's committees, community leaders or village chiefs, local media.
Meso level	Those who provide services (public and NGOs)	Local health services, local government, other NGOs, media, telecommunications providers.
Macro level	Those who make policy and allocate resources	Ministry of Health, national government, legal system, telecommunications regulator.



CEA IN ACTION: Disaster law and the community - "Not about us, without us"

Community involvement is increasingly being seen as critical to the success of disaster risk reduction and management laws and policies, with many countries adopting a 'whole of society' approach to developing and implementing disaster risk management legislation. It is communities who feel the effects of disasters the most, and therefore have a critical role to play in not only providing inputs into national law and policy but also understanding their rights, responsibilities and the relevant processes that these documents entail for them.

CEA can support disaster law programmes to achieve their aims by helping to:

- engage communities in the development of disaster risk reduction and management laws and policies
- ensure people know about their rights
- advocate for those rights to be fulfilled by the relevant authorities.

The Philippines' Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, for example, commits to the involvement and participation of the local community in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks. It further stresses the importance of community-based disaster risk reduction and management (CBDRM) to reducing vulnerability and enhancing community capacity and resilience.

The Act is currently being revised by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), and the Philippines Red Cross is one of few community-based organizations with a seat on this Council, with a unique and privileged role to play as a bridge between the community level and national level law and policy-making processes.



Step 3: Plan CEA activities and approaches

The CEA activities and approaches you choose depend on **what** you want to achieve and **who** you need to reach. Different communication channels will work better for different objectives, while different audiences will access and trust different communication channels. The key is to select a range of activities and channels that can work together to achieve the CEA objectives and support the wider programme aims.

Choosing the right channel for your **objective**:

- **Participation and feedback** requires open channels of communication that support discussion and participation, such as community meetings, telephone lines or noticeboards with suggestion boxes.
- **Information as aid** requires a channel that can reach a great number of people quickly, such as SMS, TV, social media or radio – but remember, everyone in the community needs to be able to access these services to receive the message!
- **Behaviour and social change** requires a channel that allows for participatory communication and more in-depth engagement and continuous dialogue about the issue. Examples include radio chat shows, community theatre and mobile cinemas.
- **Evidence-based advocacy** channels will depend on whether the National Society is supporting the community to speak out or advocating on their behalf. Good communication channel options include community meetings or conferences and workshops with stakeholders.



Credit: Marko Kokic / ICRC



CEA IN ACTION: Communicating in conflict

In Afghanistan it can be difficult for programme teams to access communities physically because of security issues. The ICRC overcomes this challenge by providing a telephone number on information sheets included with every assistance kit distributed. This means even if staff can't be there in person they can still respond to questions and feedback from the community.

Choosing the right channel for your **audience**.

- ✓ **Locally available:** For example, only use television if people have access to TV.
 - ✓ **Trusted:** Be careful of using state TV if people are suspicious of the government.
 - ✓ **Accessible:** Consider literacy and avoid printed materials if literacy rates are low.
 - ✓ **Use multiple channels:** People use different channels to access information, so no one channel will reach everyone in the community. In addition, people are more likely to understand and take action if they hear it from more than one source.
 - ✓ **Who is excluded?** Women, children, disabled or minority language groups might not have access to or use mainstream channels. For example, it might only be appropriate for men to attend community meetings, so you will need to find other ways to engage with women and children.
 - ✓ **Flexible:** Needs will change throughout the programme, so be ready to adapt communication approaches to meet new challenges and respond to feedback from the community.
 - ✓ **Reputation:** Be aware of the potential reputation implications of the channel you select and the impact on neutrality. For example, using a religious radio station might alienate members of the community not of that religion.
- Finally, keep in mind that other organizations will also be engaging with communities, so it's a good idea to cross-check their plans to avoid duplication.



For more information on communication channels, use **Tool 8** in [Annex 1](#).



Credit: Christoph von Toggenburg

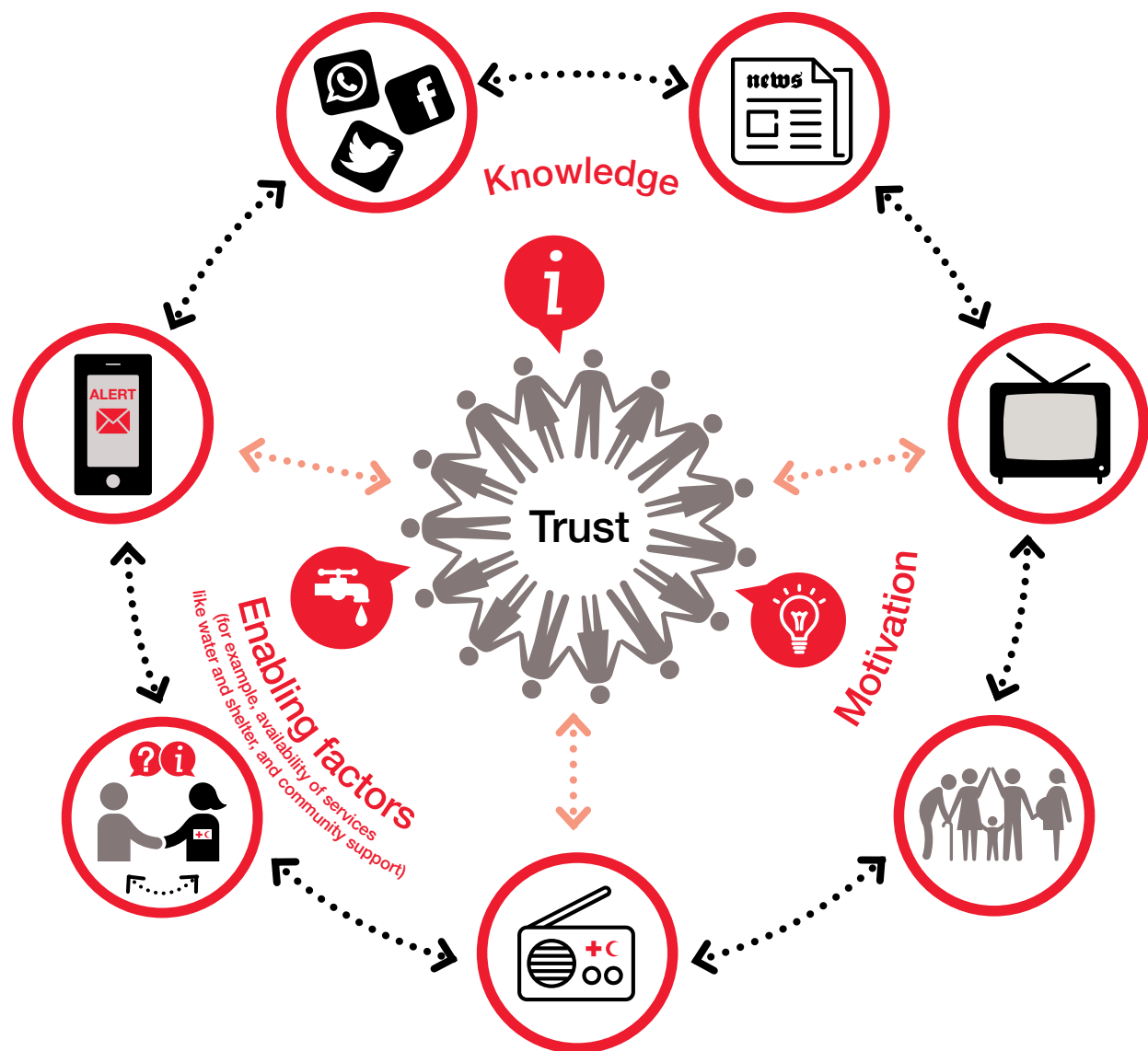


CEA IN ACTION: Thinking outside the box!

When the ICRC first began working with indigenous communities in Colombia on the dangers of unexploded ordnance they found it difficult to engage with them. Information shared about the ICRC and weapon contamination was either misunderstood or simply ignored. However, when the ICRC team took the time to talk to the community about their daily lives and beliefs they realized the most important information is passed by means of storytelling. The ICRC translated information into the form of stories, including common symbols from the indigenous stories and culture. This was a huge success and not only did the team gain the communities' full attention and acceptance but they also clearly understood the ICRC's aims, principles and why appropriate behavior of community members living with weapons contamination was a life-saving activity.

Multiple communication channels approach

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is a dynamic and planned process that employs a variety of communication approaches to improve people's knowledge, motivate action, promote participation and create an enabling environment for change.





Step 4: Develop key messages and frequently asked questions

Developing key messages involves more than just writing messages for a poster or leaflet. It also refers to the development of the overall picture you want to share with the community and should be linked to the programme's objectives. Messages may provide information about the programme itself, such as selection criteria, or information in support of the programme's aims, such as addressing rumours about cholera.

Information shared with communities has the most impact when it is timely, relevant, accurate and tailored to the audience. It is important to share information with staff and volunteers before it is communicated publicly so that everyone shares consistent messages. In addition, you should test your information with some community members and volunteers to ensure it is well understood, or, at a minimum, test it with local volunteers.



Credit: Albert Madrazo / ICRC



CEA IN ACTION: Testing messages in South Sudan





South Sudan Red Cross and the ICRC still test all messages before they are used on posters and the radio. The ICRC communication staff, supported by volunteers, developed a pre-test guide and organized one-hour sessions with a few selected communities and Red Cross national staff, to ensure a diversity of test audiences and make sure messages are understood easily and interpreted as intended. This quick process allows small changes to be made to messages, which can lead to big improvements in community understanding and impact. For example, by testing the messages, the ICRC and South Sudan Red Cross realized they needed to change how they explained time for it to be understood well. Instead of saying how many minutes a task would take, messages would use the concept of household tasks, such as boiling water, cleaning the house or grinding sorghum, to explain how long they should cook super-cereal.

Preparing a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document will help you to plan how to answer potential questions from the community. This can then be shared with all staff and volunteers and updated regularly to address issues and concerns as they arise.



For guidance on developing messages, use **Tool 10** in [Annex 1](#). There is a wide range of resources with template messages and additional resources listed in [Annex 2](#), including the CEA library and the Public Awareness and Public Education guide.

Overview of different types of messages

Programme need	Message characteristics	Example
Participation and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear ✓ Use simple language the community will understand ✓ Ask for feedback and information ✓ Communicate about a programme or service 	<p>The shelter programme starts on 10 April. A community meeting will take place on 5 April to provide more information, hear your views and answer your questions. If you cannot attend the meeting but would like to speak to us, you can call our hotline on 1111. We want to know what you think, so please get in touch or come to the meeting.</p>
Information as aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Life-saving information ✓ Address risks and vulnerabilities ✓ Share information the community needs and wants ✓ Short and simple ✓ Actionable advice 	<p>The following is a list of hospitals and clinics that are open and able to treat pregnant women.</p>
Behaviour and social change communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More complex ✓ Address underlying reasons why people engage in unsafe practices ✓ Address barriers to safer practices ✓ Explain benefits of changing behaviour ✓ Go beyond just information provision (still important to include this, though) 	<p>Ebola treatment centres may seem frightening but they are the best way to survive Ebola and stop the spread of the disease to your family and friends. For the best chance of survival, go to an Ebola treatment centre at the first signs of illness.</p>
Evidence-based advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Present an issue and explain why it matters ✓ Include possible solutions ✓ Very carefully tailored to the target audience – a message for a government department will be very different from one for a partner NGO 	<p>Village (NAME) has no access to clean water. This is causing outbreaks of diarrhoea, which is leading to adults missing work and children missing school. This could have a long-term impact on the development of the village and the wider regional economy. We think it might be possible to connect the village to the main water supply and would like to discuss this with you.</p>



What is behaviour and social change and how can CEA support it?

Behaviour change communication is the use of participatory communication techniques and tools to inform, influence and involve individuals, households and opinion leaders in adopting new attitudes, practices and behaviours. Behavioural change communication focuses on the individual as a unit of change.

Social change communication focuses on the community or the group as the unit of change. It is a process of addressing and changing practices or beliefs linked to harmful cultural practices, societal norms or inequalities amongst groups.

This highlights that behaviour and social change communication is much broader than just messages. Providing information alone is rarely enough to change entrenched behaviours and beliefs. It is about identifying cultural and social barriers to safer practices; influencing social norms; understanding the incentives for change; and providing material resources or enabling communities to source these themselves.

Within the Movement, programmes and approaches like CBHFA, Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST), community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) and mine risk education all aim to work with communities in a participatory way to promote healthy and safe practices and encourage positive changes.

CEA can support behaviour and social change programmes to gain an insight into people's perceptions and behaviours, develop engaging and targeted messages, and provide innovative and participatory communication approaches that address unhealthy and unsafe practices.

However, CEA activities should always be designed with the relevant technical staff (e.g., health) and should complement traditional social mobilization activities by using common key messages, run at corresponding times and be delivered by the same community mobilization staff. It is also important CEA activities are flexible enough to respond to community feedback and changing circumstances.



CEA IN ACTION: Cholera prevention in Sierra Leone

“I have had cholera twice now and I thought you caught it through the air, so I didn’t know how to stop that. Now I know I need to wash my hands and only drink safe water. Now I will not catch cholera a third time!”

(Annie Kamara, who lives in Kissy town, Sierra Leone)

By the time the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation confirmed the cholera outbreak in three districts in March 2012, the disease had claimed 34 lives and affected 2,137 persons. The subsequent spread of cholera to neighbouring districts was attributed to the high mobility of people from one community to another for commercial and personal activities. Poor sanitary conditions, which led to contamination of water sources, was a key factor as well.

As part of the cholera response, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, with support from the IFRC, launched

a mobile cinema, which toured the country showing an animated film about cholera prevention alongside hygiene promotion activities. The cinema also engaged communities in debate about the issues in their communities by asking for their feedback on four key questions:

1. What causes cholera?
2. How do you make water safe to drink?
3. What are the issues in your community that increase the risk of cholera?
4. Where do you go to the toilet if there are no latrines?

A hand washing demonstration and a song giving the recipe for home-made oral rehydration solution were also included. After the screening of the film, participants were asked what they had learnt, to see whether people could suggest solutions to the issues in their community. Finally, the film was shown for a second time and the community was given the chance to ask questions.

Monitoring and impact

The cinema team monitored the impact of the film in two key ways:

- A volunteer filled in a review sheet at each cinema event, which recorded the communities' questions and responses to the film.
- Volunteers undertook formal monitoring each week in one community. They asked six open questions to 30 randomly selected people before and a different 30 people after the event. Respondents were requested to answer the questions unprompted.

A mid-term review of the mobile cinema initiative was carried out as well and this showed that more than 13,000 people had attended across five districts. Most importantly, it had also reached its objectives of improving knowledge of safe hygiene practices and the spread of cholera. The mid-term review revealed the following:

- a 20% increase in the number of people who could correctly name two or more causes of cholera after the cinema event
- a 22% increase in the number of people who could list two methods of preventing cholera

- a 21% increase in the number of people who could name two or more times when they should wash their hands
- all 36 communities said the bush, river, plastic bag or in the open was a safe place to go to the toilet if there is no latrine – this dropped to just two communities after the cinema event
- 70% of people could list filtering and boiling as a way of making water safe to drink post cinema
- the most common cholera threats raised by communities were lack of latrines, no clean water and a dirty environment – but almost all communities gave proactive solutions to these problems post cinema
- 77% of people gave a correct recipe for the oral rehydration solution after the cinema.

In addition to the mobile cinema, Sierra Leone Red Cross launched a weekly radio chat show, SMS system and radio listener clubs.



Step 5: Plan for community feedback

Community feedback is invaluable to the programme and helps you to judge what is working well, what might need to be adapted and to identify any problems before they escalate. Managing feedback and complaints in a respectful manner also builds trust with the community. However, when you ask the community for feedback it sets up an expectation that you will act on what they tell you and use it to improve the programme. It is helpful, therefore, to plan from the outset how you will collect feedback, analyse it and act on it – and who will be responsible for managing the system. This will need specific resources, including people and budget and support from senior management.

Setting up feedback and complaints systems

Feedback and complaints systems come in many different formats. They can be formal or informal, apply to only a specific programme or operation, or cover the whole National Society, use a face-to-face format or technology (or both). Having a feedback system in place can reduce the pressure on volunteers and make it easier for them to respond to and refer difficult questions or complaints they receive while in the community doing their work. Feedback should be shared and discussed with the whole team, e.g., through the preparation of a report, which can be discussed at team meetings and shared with management. It should also feed into formal monitoring reports.



For information on setting up a feedback and complaints system and on how to log data, use **Tool 16** in [Annex 1](#) and refer to the 10 steps on page 49.



10 steps to setting up a feedback and complaints system

1. **Get management and staff buy-in and support.** A feedback and complaints system will affect everyone and require resources, so it is important that the whole team, including management, are on board and will support the system.
 2. **Define the purpose of the system and who is likely to use it.** Before a system is set up it is important to be clear about what you expect to gain from it.
 3. **Consult with the community.** Discuss with a representative cross-section of the community their key concerns about raising issues with the National Society. Even if you collected this information during the assessment, it is important to also discuss a feedback system with the community in advance so they are aware of what is happening and to check whether or not the situation has changed since the assessment.
 4. **Decide how complaints will be received** and what the potential barriers could be that would prevent people from being able to complain. Which channels are appropriate for the community and how will they work? For example, if you decide to use a phone line, do people have access to phones, should the line be free to call, at what time will it be open, and who will answer the calls? It is a good idea to prepare answers to the most likely common questions in advance so these can be answered quickly and consistently.
 5. **Plan in advance how serious or sensitive complaints will be handled,** e.g., relating to abuse or corruption. Be careful to protect confidentiality and ensure that community members are not put at risk by making a serious complaint.
 6. **Develop a system for logging, analysing and sharing** feedback and complaints, e.g., a database or paper system. Consult with your IT department as they may be able to advise on what platform you could use. How will feedback and complaints be shared with and used by programme staff and management? Should it be via a weekly report or at staff meetings? Decide the time-frame to respond to complaints.
 7. **Decide how to provide updates** to the community on changes made as a result of their feedback. This will build trust and respect with the community and ensure they continue to use the feedback and complaints system. Also, be clear about what the National Society will do with complaints it cannot answer and who they could be referred to, and be aware of trends that might indicate an advocacy need.
 8. **Go back to the community and discuss the proposed feedback system** in advance of setting it up to check they will be comfortable using what is being proposed.
 9. **Train your staff on the feedback system,** including confidentiality. It is important that staff are trained to receive and respond to complaints respectfully and appropriately, including handling sensitive issues such as corruption or abuse. Staff should also be clear about how the system works and their role in it. Make sure there are men as well as women on the team.
 10. **Advertise the system clearly to the community.** Make sure they understand what type of feedback and complaints the National Society can respond to (and what it cannot), how to use the system, how long it will take the National Society to respond and what kind of outcomes they can expect. Also, make it clear to the community that there will be no negative consequences if they complain, such as a loss of services.
- Finally, remember to regularly review and adjust your feedback and complaints system based on how it is working and lessons learnt.

The feedback loop

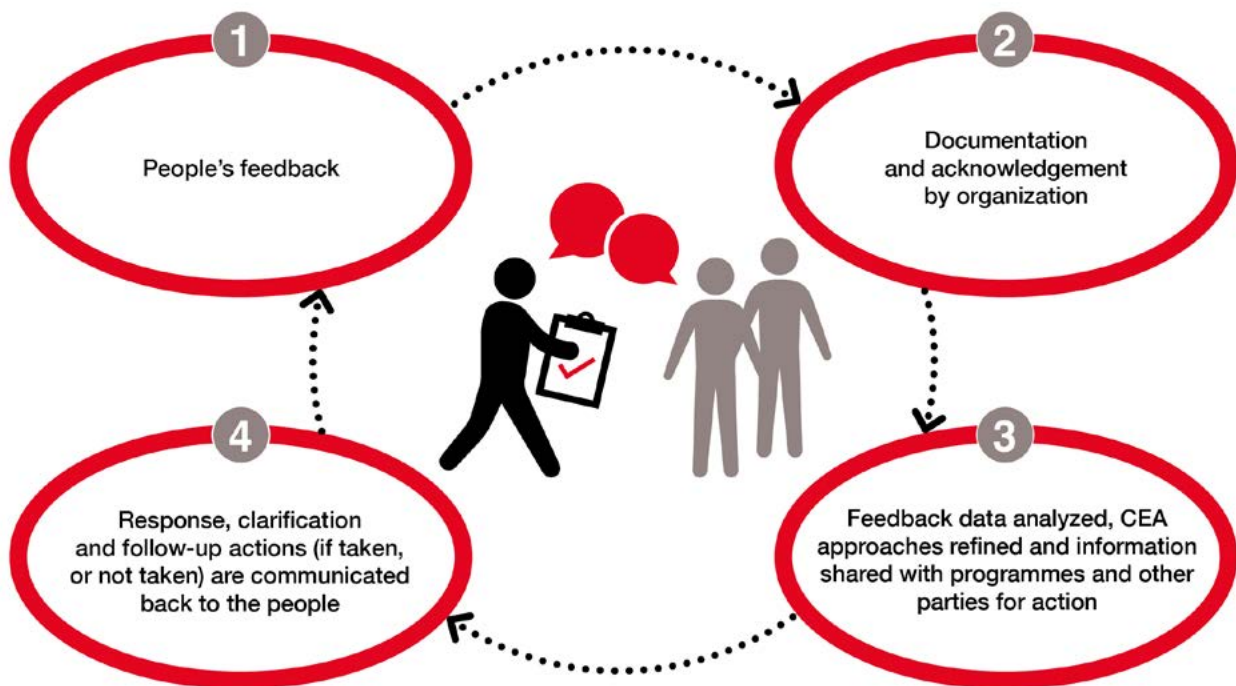
Feedback and complaints systems need to receive, analyse, act on and respond to feedback. This process is seen as a continuous loop – if one stage is missing, then the feedback system is not fully functioning (see diagram below).

If you receive lots of requests that are outside the programme's capacity, these should be referred to the relevant organizations that can respond to these needs, such as government ministries, other NGOs or partners, or local authorities. You could also consider supporting the community to advocate for action on these issues.



For information on analysing and summarizing feedback and complaints for management review, use **Tool 16** in [Annex 1](#).

Closing the feedback loop



source: adapted from CDA 'closing the loop'



CEA IN ACTION: Setting up a feedback system in Myanmar

“We would prefer to give feedback in person as some of us can’t read and write.”

Participant in a focus group discussion

The concept of complaints and feedback in Myanmar is not something immediately understood or obvious when consulting communities. People are usually reluctant to raise concerns or make complaints and have little awareness of their right to do so. This reflects a culture where it can be seen as inappropriate to complain when people are trying to help.

When the Myanmar Red Cross Society, with support from the IFRC, ran a community consultation about preferences for providing feedback, it showed that both women and men felt there was no need to provide feedback or complaints because everything ran smoothly. While this was positive, at the same time the community mobilizers received many questions from the community. It was therefore clear that the broader definition of feedback needed to be clarified, both with community members and volunteers, to encourage feedback that encompasses questions, and not just complaints. The language used to translate “complaint” and “feedback” is also important. The Burmese word for “suggestion” is a more positive way to translate these terms, which can both be perceived as negative.

The Myanmar Red Cross carried out a series of community focus group discussions and interviews with staff and volunteers, which found:

- There was a low awareness of their right to complain and provide feedback.
- Feedback was often considered negative rather than constructive.
- Although there were some differing preferences for feedback channels, the overwhelming preference was for verbal feedback via committee leaders or volunteers.
- Men voiced a preference to be able to provide written feedback (more men than women are literate), although verbal was still the overriding preference. None of the women consulted wanted to provide written feedback.
- It is strongly preferred that written communications materials about the feedback system are in the local dialect as more people can read and write local dialect than Burmese (approximately 80 per cent vs. 50 per cent).
- Suggestion boxes exist but are not widely used because many people are illiterate and/or are not sure how to use them.

Creating the system

Based on the community consultation and an analysis of existing community communication mechanisms, a variety of channels is now being used to gather and respond to complaints and feedback. These include face to face, with community mobilizers required to systematically gather feedback every time they are in a village and to document this in their monthly reports. Monthly community meetings and 'mothers' clubs' now also include sessions asking for feedback. Mothers' clubs are particularly important as the meetings primarily consist of women caregivers and therefore provide a safe space for women to share their views and opinions.

Finally, suggestion boxes were already in place for every village and so these continued to be used, but a renewed emphasis has been placed on reminding the community to use them, as well as providing written guidance on the accompanying noticeboard.

It is hoped that the proposed system will address the challenges posed - by utilizing the strong network of community mobilizers who are the only regular access to the villages; training and empowering volunteers to advocate for the right to give feedback and to raise complaints; providing multiple channels for feedback; and through the use of local languages for communications activities.



Step 6: Timeline and budget

The cost of specific activities will need to be considered in order to prepare a realistic budget and timeline. This timeline should include how often each activity will be carried out and the length of time the activities will take to prepare and deliver.



For a template of budgets and activity plans, use **Tool 7** in [Annex 1](#).



CEA tools to help you during the design and planning phase (see [Annex 1](#))

- Guidance to develop a CEA plan of action, including templates of CEA plans, indicators and budgets (**Tool 7**).
- Communication channel matrix (**Tool 8**).
- Checklist of information to share with the community (**Tool 9**).
- Message development Tool and library (**Tool 10**).
- Tips on holding community meetings and using information and feedback (**Tool 11**).
- Template of terms of reference for working with communities (**Tool 12**).
- Template of programme information leaflets and posters (**Tool 13**).
- Exit strategy guidance (**Tool 16**).

Additional resources to be used in the design and planning phase can be found in [Annex 2](#).



Programme Phase 3: Implementation and monitoring

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Integrating CEA into the implementation and monitoring phase will:

CEA Approach	CEA Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the programme to be delivered in a participatory and transparent way, including collecting and acting on community feedback and providing regular updates on programme progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure CEA activities support the programme to achieve its outcomes and contribute to community resilience.

During implementation, it is important to review all programme activities continually - including CEA activities - based on monitoring and community feedback, making changes and improvements as necessary and informing communities how their feedback has been used. Good-quality programmes that have a positive impact are ones which remain flexible enough to adapt to changes in need and context. CEA activities can also support communities to work together and address issues that previously they may not have discussed or been aware of.

Step 1: Do you need a baseline?





Before implementing any programme, you should carry out a baseline so you can measure the impact of the intervention as time passes, and make changes to areas which are not working as well as planned. It may be possible to use assessment data as a baseline or access this from secondary sources, but, if not, a baseline does not need to be complicated and can be kept short and simple. Include questions to measure CEA in the overall programme's baseline, rather than carrying out a separate baseline just for CEA activities.

All baseline questions should closely be linked to objectives – the baseline is there to show whether or not the programme has achieved its aims. The baseline will also inform the questions asked during regular monitoring.



For guidance on developing baseline questions for CEA, use **Tool 2** in [Annex 1](#).

Overview of the aim of baseline questions for CEA

Programme need	Information to be gathered through a baseline
<p>Participation and feedback</p> 	<p>People's perceptions and knowledge of the National Society, or specific services and programmes, and whether they know how to provide feedback. What, if any, mechanisms currently exist for community participation in programmes and who can participate from within the community and whether or not any groups are excluded.</p>
<p>For information as aid</p> 	<p>Current knowledge about risks, safe practices or help and services available, depending on the nature of the emergency. For example, where to get safe water, how to prevent disease outbreaks, where to access refugee services or shelter, or services provided by Movement partners, such as how many people are aware of the restoring family links service.</p>
<p>For behaviour and social change communication</p> 	<p>People's knowledge, attitudes and practices before your intervention. If you carried out a KAPB survey, or others have, then you will already have this information and should not need a separate baseline.</p>
<p>For evidence-based advocacy</p> 	<p>While it will very much depend on the issue being addressed, it may include measuring current government plans to address an issue so the National Society can see any changes that occur as a result of its efforts.</p>



CEA IN ACTION: Using film to capture baseline data in Bangladesh

In December 2015, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and the IFRC decided to film the baseline study being carried out for a new complaints and response mechanism for community-based disaster risk reduction and water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. The mechanism aimed to provide community members with a safe and accessible way to share suggestions, concerns or complaints on issues related to the programmes, and improve engagement with and accountability to communities.

The baseline study consulted with men, women and children to better understand some of the issues related to feedback and complaints from a community perspective, including barriers that could prevent people from speaking out, and preferred channels to use when giving feedback and complaints. When the programme ends in December 2016, an end-line study will be undertaken to identify how the mechanism has been used, how people feel about it, and what impact it has had on the programmes.

The findings from this baseline are captured through the two film clips below, which provide an insight to the many issues and considerations of establishing community feedback systems that are effective and accessible to different groups in a community.

You can find the clips in the following YouTube links:

Long version - youtu.be/bcfqcBOAMo8

Short version - youtu.be/bJlmoFco3g

The films highlight the importance of integrating feedback mechanisms into humanitarian programmes, rather than treating them as separate entities.



Step 2: Carry out training

Prior to implementation, staff and volunteers may require training to support the delivery of high-quality CEA approaches and activities within the programme. As a minimum, everyone involved in the programme should receive a basic training on community engagement and accountability.

You may need to carry out additional training with staff and volunteers, and the community if possible. Training the community can empower people to engage with the National Society and become partners in the delivery of the programme or operations. Remember, all teams being trained should reflect the gender and diversity in the community. Other forms of training may include:



Use the training pack developed to support this manual to provide CEA introductory training to staff and volunteers.



For communication skills training see **Tool 14** in Annex 1.



For guidance on setting up a feedback and complaints mechanism see **Tool 15** in Annex 1.



See the CEA library for more information on training packs already available; refer to links in Annex 2.



See the resources such as CBHFA Manual in Annex 2.



See the CEA library in Annex 2, which has training courses on mobile cinema and radio shows.

Programme need	Examples of training activities
Participation and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-day communication skills and complaints handling course for front-line volunteers. Complaints and feedback system training. Training for the community to outline what the National Society is, what they can expect from staff and volunteers in accordance with the code of conduct, and how they can participate and make complaints or provide feedback.
Information as aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on specific communication tools, such as producing a radio show, using SMS systems or social media.
Behaviour and social change communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural change theories, such as theory of change. Specific communication techniques, such as mobile cinemas or radio shows.
Evidence-based advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on stakeholder engagement, including the community you are working with.



CEA IN ACTION: Training teams in Rwanda and Burundi

When Rwanda and Burundi Red Cross Societies decided to implement mobile cinemas and regular radio chat shows, one of the first priorities was to train teams of volunteers to run these activities. The National Societies, with support from the IFRC, developed four-day training courses for each activity. The radio course covered how to plan a Red Cross radio show, presenting and interview skills, managing audience calls and recording and editing vox pops. The mobile cinema course covered planning a cinema show, different team roles, presentation and demonstration skills, and managing the equipment. Both courses included a live radio or mobile cinema show to give volunteers the chance to practise and obtain feedback.

Staff and volunteers taking part in the trainings in both National Societies provided positive feedback, with 100 per cent of Burundian participants at one of the mobile cinema courses agreeing they had learnt new skills and gained new knowledge. More importantly, staff and volunteers returned to their branches and were able to start implementing cinema and radio shows in support of the National Societies' programmes.

You can access both sets of training course materials in the 'Activities and Tools' folder in the CEA library at:

[CEA library on Fednet](#)



Step 3: Deliver activities

This is the fun part, where you can put into action all your plans and preparations. There is a range of tools and resources in this guide that will help you when implementing CEA activities, and it is a good idea to review these before you start to develop something new.



See the set of **Tools** that support this manual in [Annex 1](#). Also, check the CEA library for a wide range of template resources, such as plans for radio shows on health and disaster risk reduction, posters and leaflets used by different National Societies, and training materials for radio listening clubs or mobile cinemas.



CEA IN ACTION: Responding to Ebola

“We believe this sickness that was killing us was God’s punishment to Liberia because we are not going by his words.”

Regular caller to the radio programme

The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa was the largest and most complex since the Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976. There were more cases and deaths in this outbreak than all others combined. It spread across West African countries, from Guinea to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Mali.

From the outset of the epidemic, communications and strong community engagement were vital to an effective response, due to the myths and distrust spreading among communities.

Interventions focused on working with communities in both affected and non-affected areas, to ensure they understood how to protect themselves from Ebola and how to prevent the virus from spreading. Red Cross teams went door to door and worked with community elders and religious leaders to educate families about how the virus is spread, what the symptoms are, and the importance of seeking early treatment. Messages focused on correcting myths and providing life-saving information. For example: “The disease is not airborne, or spread in water, or passed on by witchcraft. It comes from direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person.” From the community, in turn, structured feedback provided a wealth of information and data.

Using multiple communications channels

Besides door-to-door visits to deliver key messages and listen to the community, National Societies, with support from the IFRC, also used a range of communication channels - from a television soap opera and interactive radio programmes to SMS systems and a hotline service.

In Sierra Leone, approximately 2 million SMS messages were sent out per month, and played an important role in delivering information aimed at raising awareness on Ebola prevention and protection. In Liberia, the Red Cross launched a mobile radio show operated out of a car. The show visited remote communities to provide people with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss Ebola with experienced Red Cross social mobilization staff and volunteers. Radio chat shows were also used to involve the public in the fight against Ebola and regain trust with communities that had been resistant to Red Cross outreach efforts. At the same time, Red Cross distributed solar-powered radios to people in remote villages so they could listen to and participate in the broadcasts.

In addition, national celebrities and a well-known film producer lent their support to a Red Cross soap opera in Sierra Leone. Entitled “Advice”, it aired on a weekly Red Cross TV show, with the script also adapted for radio. Using locations and popular figures that ordinary people can relate to, the soap operas proved to be an effective way to raise awareness about Ebola.

Managing expectations

Managing community expectations as activities are being carried out is an important part of CEA. Staff and volunteers will be asked many times for help that is outside the scope of the programme or the National Society's remit. It is OK to say no to requests, but it is important to explain why help cannot be provided and also investigate whether this is an advocacy need that the National Society could help with. Detailed guidance on setting up formal feedback and complaints systems is in the previous section on planning (under step 5). However, even if you don't plan to set up a formal feedback and complaints system, staff and volunteers will still receive questions and complaints as they carry out activities in communities. Therefore, it is important they are able to explain clearly what the National Society can and cannot do, always remain polite and calm when explaining why we are unable to help with an issue and, as much as possible, offer an alternative solution. In the most serious cases, failure to respond appropriately may cause anger and security issues, preventing the National Society from accessing communities to carry out activities.



CEA IN ACTION: Noticeboards tackle community tensions in Haiti

Following the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, a Spanish and Haitian Red Cross recovery programme initially struggled with unrealistic demands from the community. However, after noticeboards and suggestions boxes were provided within communities, with clear information on the programme's aims and activities, people's expectations aligned much more closely to what the programme could actually deliver. This reduced tension and improved the relationship between the Red Cross and the local community.



For more information on responding to community questions, holding community meetings, communication skills and managing complaints, use **Tools 6, 11, 14 and 15** in [Annex 1](#).



Step 4: Adjust activities based on monitoring, feedback and learning

“A programme that does not listen and does not change, does not work!”

M N'guessan Emmanuel
KOUADIO, Secretary
General, Red Cross Society
of Côte d'Ivoire.

This is the most important stage of implementation. Regularly adjusting programme activities based on community feedback and learning is key to delivering high-quality, high-impact programmes and operations. This includes adapting CEA activities, such as behaviour and social change messages, radio campaigns, feedback channels used or advocacy techniques based on community and monitoring data. This is also a critical part of being accountable to communities in the way that we work and is the responsibility of all programme staff and management. Feedback can come from a range of sources, including informally through volunteer interactions, formal programme monitoring systems and through feedback and complaints systems discussed in the previous section on planning. All forms of formal and informal monitoring and feedback should be analysed together and used to identify common or recurring community needs, problems or opinions that may need addressed as part of the programme.

CEA and programme monitoring

Integrating CEA into monitoring has three aspects:

1. The impact of CEA activities such as mobile cinemas, radio programmes or community noticeboards are monitored as part of the overall programme's formal monitoring systems.
2. Levels of community participation, feedback and transparency in the way the programme is being delivered are also monitored to ensure accountability to community standards are being met.
3. Information collected informally through daily activities is recognized as a valuable source of data that can be used to inform and improve programme delivery.



For monitoring questions on all aspects of CEA, use **Tool 2** (part C) in [Annex 1](#).

Formal monitoring questions should come from the baseline so you can track progress against objectives. It is good practice to involve the community in the monitoring process if possible; e.g., by asking them to help collect feedback and monitoring data (if appropriate) and by discussing the findings of monitoring with them and asking whether or not they agree with your analysis.




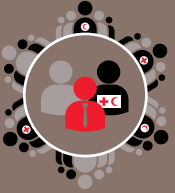
Informal monitoring and feedback includes feedback gathered through community meetings, discussions with community members or other stakeholders, information heard on radio chat show programmes or comments posted on social media.



CEA IN ACTION: Tackling Zika rumours in Panama

A key CEA activity within the Zika response was monitoring rumours and misinformation in communities about the virus and how it spreads. For example, Panama Red Cross teams found that many pregnant women were too frightened to attend important antenatal appointments because of fears that the Zika virus could be fatal, like HIV or AIDS. These fears came from the fact Zika, like HIV, could be transmitted through sex. Once the Red Cross knew about this myth, they were able to tackle it by providing communities with the right information through door-to-door visits, TV, radio and posters; this meant that pregnant women would feel safe to attend their vital pre-birth check-ups.

The table below provides examples of the different kinds of monitoring information collected through each of the three aspects (acknowledging there are overlaps between them):

Programme need	(1) Impact of CEA activities	(2) Programme accountability	(3) Informal information
Participation and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do people know about the service offered? Do people know how to provide feedback? Are feedback systems meeting response times? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were people consulted at the start of the programme? Do people feel they can participate in programme decisions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What issues are being raised with volunteers each day (and by who)? Are issues raised in community meetings documented and acted upon?
Information as aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did people receive and understand early-warning SMS communications? Do people have the information they need to stay safe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are people well informed about the programme and how to access services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using social media or SMS to send out information as aid, monitor the online response to this information.
Behaviour and social change communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of mobile cinema/ radio show etc. on community knowledge on health or disaster risk being addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do people understand and act on the key messages being shared? Are there rumours and misinformation spreading? Are there socio-cultural beliefs that need to be addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logging questions asked during radio shows or community sensitization sessions to look for trends.
Evidence-based advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact from an advocacy activity such as a workshop with public authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the programme addressing the most important issues to the community? Does the community have a space to raise their concerns with key decision-makers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What issues are being raised with volunteers in the community each day (and by whom)?



The difference between feedback, complaints and rumours

- **Feedback** = Information, questions or even compliments shared by the community with the organization. It can signal issues the community don't understand or issues about the programme. All feedback should be discussed with programme staff and the community should receive a response to their comments and questions.
- **Complaints** = An expression of dissatisfaction or discontent with something, and/or someone's misconduct, that requires a response.
- **Rumours** = A story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth, which is spreading in the community and needs to be addressed. This could be about the programme itself (e.g., related to selection criteria) or about a disease or risk the National Society is trying to tackle (cholera is spread through the air). Rumours can spread rapidly and have serious consequences for programme delivery and people's behaviour, so it is important to capture these and address them quickly.

Analysing and using monitoring, feedback and learning

CEA should be integrated into the programme monitoring report by:

- recording the impact of CEA activities alongside other programme activities, as they are supposed to support the achievement of overall programme aims
- including a separate section documenting issues raised by the community, both informally and formally, through the feedback and complaints system
- including a review of overall levels of programme accountability in relation to community participation and transparency, also documenting action taken or changes made as a result of community feedback received.

By capturing all formal and informal monitoring and feedback in one place, the monitoring report should support the team to identify trends or recurring issues or needs in the community that need to be addressed through changes in the programme or by advocating to other organizations. Recurring questions on a certain issue are also a sign that either the community haven't properly understood the information being shared, are unable to act on it, or that the programme is no longer addressing the issues of most importance to them.

In addition, it is important that feedback received through one channel is used to communicate information being shared through all channels. For example, if the radio programme receives many questions on a given topic, it is important that volunteers on the ground are informed and focus their engagement on addressing those questions. This is demonstrated by the infographic on page 66.

Acting on monitoring and feedback data is the responsibility of the whole programme team and National Society management.



For information on analysing and summarizing feedback and complaints for management review, use **Tool 15** in [Annex 1](#).



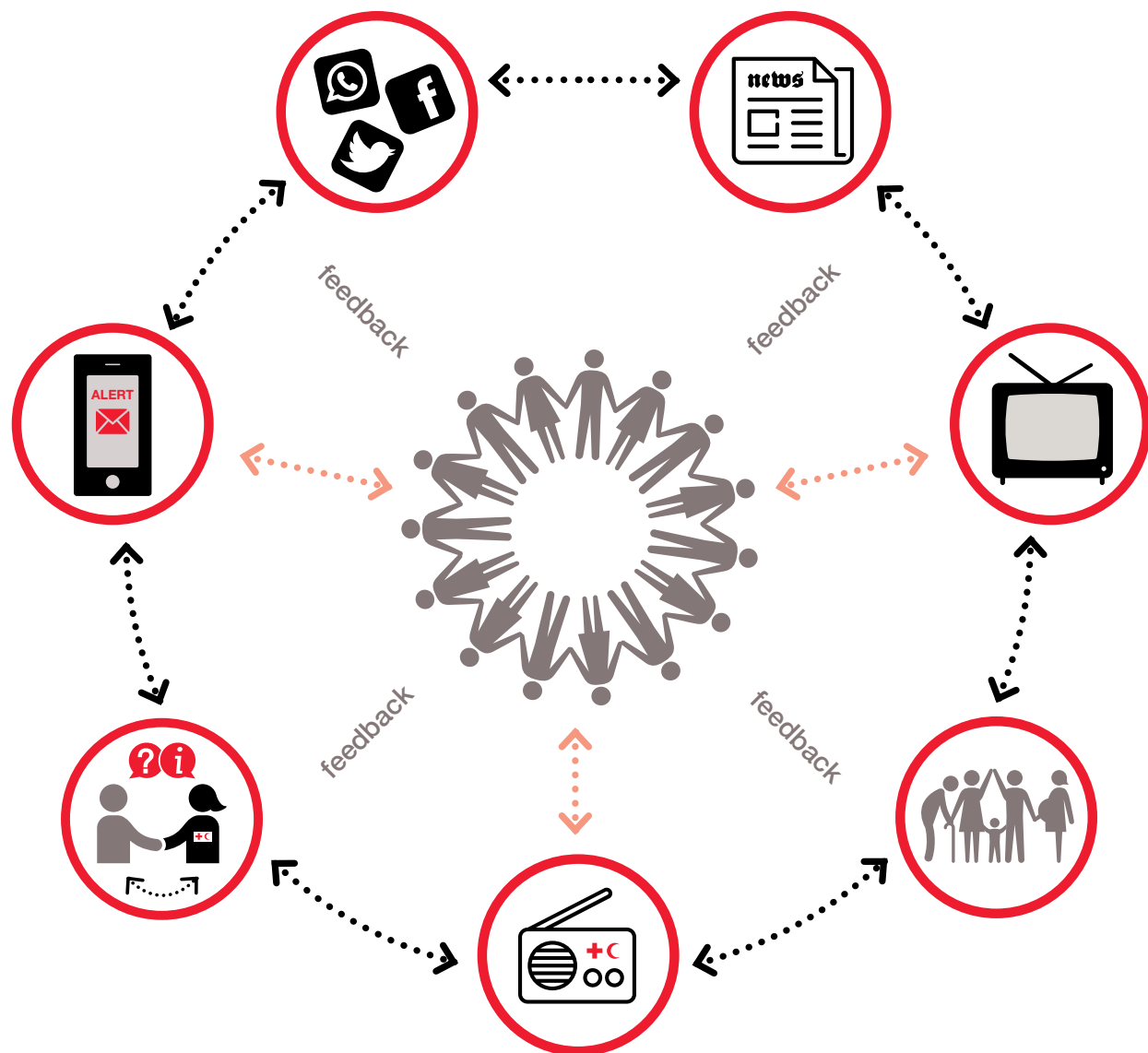
CEA IN ACTION: The importance of updating messages based on feedback

An important part of the early response to the Ebola virus in West Africa was information as aid. Red Cross National Societies, along with many other agencies, scrambled to communicate vital information to at-risk and affected communities who knew nothing about the causes, transmission and spread of this new disease.

While this information was initially listened to and absorbed by community members keen to find out how to protect themselves, repetition of the same messages over and over again soon led many to stop listening; this meant that important new information was missed when it was introduced. This example highlights the importance of continual dialogue with communities so that information as aid and behaviour and social change communication activities can continually be updated to reflect the current situation. This also enables our staff and volunteers to be ready to tackle new needs and issues as they emerge.

Informal feedback and learning

Feedback gathered through different communication channels will influence our communication approaches, messages and programmatic actions



Ensure that feedback informs your Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approaches regularly.

It is key that feedback received through one communication channel informs the approach of other communication channels. For example, if the radio programme receives a lot of questions on a given topic, it is important that volunteers are informed and focus their engagement on addressing those questions. Also, your messages and information should adapt to match the concerns of the community.



Step 5: Develop an exit strategy

Ideally, exit strategies should be planned from day one if there is a clear timeline on when the programme will end. However, in reality often it is not clear at the beginning of a programme how long it will run for. It is important to discuss the end of a programme or operation openly and honestly with communities - and well in advance of the programme or operation ending. If communities help plan the exit or handover, there is a much greater chance the outcomes of the programme or operation will be sustained after it has finished. Being honest about the end of a programme also shows respect and protects the good relationship the National Society has built up with the community. While people may not be happy to hear that an activity or service is stopping, they would much prefer to know in advance so they can plan for the change.

A good exit strategy will:

- ✓ Include a consultation period where all segments of the community have the opportunity to contribute to decisions about what will happen after the programme ends.
- ✓ Make sure staff and volunteers are also consulted and informed about plans, including branch staff and volunteers who spend time in the communities.
- ✓ Give advance warning of changes to provide people with enough time to prepare or adjust. The longer an activity or service has been provided, the longer notice you should give.
- ✓ Ensure a system is in place to receive and answer questions and complaints.
- ✓ Share important information clearly, honestly and in a way the community can understand - e.g., when services will stop, what will happen next, what is the role of the community, and how to get in touch with the National Society.
- ✓ Tackle rumours quickly by addressing them and providing the correct information.



For guidance on exit plans, use Tool 16 in [Annex 1](#).



CEA IN ACTION: Stopping water trucking in Haiti

CEA played an important role helping communities to understand the scaling down of free water trucking in Haiti by the IFRC during 2011. Posters were produced to explain why water trucking was ending and what the new arrangements would be for water provision. These were put on display throughout communities affected by the changes. SMS and the Red Cross sound truck were also sent to communities at key points during the transition process to alert people to how they could access safe water. A feedback and complaints line was activated as well, to deal with any queries people might have, with the number for the phone line advertised through all the channels above. Despite initial concerns about large numbers of complaints, only 36 people called the line, many of whom just wanted clarification on the new processes and some who just wanted to say thanks for the free water service.



CEA tools to help you during the implementation and monitoring phase (see [Annex 1](#))

- Template of CEA questions for baselines (**Tool 2b**).
- Q&A for volunteers on roles and responsibilities (**Tool 6**).
- Tips on holding community meetings and how to use feedback (**Tool 11**).
- Training for staff and volunteers on communication skills (**Tool 14**).
- Tool for setting up and managing feedback and complaint mechanisms (**Tool 15**).
- Template of programme information poster and leaflet (**Tool 13**).
- Template of CEA questions for monitoring (**Tool 2 (part C)**).
- Exit strategy guidance (**Tool 16**).

Additional resources to be used in the implementation and monitoring phase can be found in [Annex 2](#).



Programme Phase 4: Evaluation and learning

An evaluation is central to gathering an overall view of the impact, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme or operation. Evaluations provide useful learning for what can be done better in the next programme or operation, so it's important these are shared with colleagues to ensure everyone can benefit.

As with monitoring, integrating CEA into the evaluation process has three key aspects. Firstly, the evaluation should attempt to answer the following two questions:

- **Did CEA activities work?**
CEA activities, such as mobile cinemas, feedback systems or radio shows, are evaluated alongside other programme activities to assess how they contributed to the programme's aims and the impact they had on the community. This should help capture the added value of including CEA in the programme.
- **Was the programme delivered in a way that was accountable to communities?**
Programme accountability to communities is included as part of the evaluation to assess whether people felt informed and able to participate. This helps demonstrate that the National Society is delivering on commitments to accountability to communities and will also capture the added value of working in this way.

And secondly:

- **The evaluation itself should be carried out in a participatory and transparent manner** to make sure community views are captured and the results of evaluations are shared with the participating communities. This will improve the quality of the evaluation and ensure a good relationship is maintained with the community, making it easier to work together again on the next programme.



Step 1: Decide what to evaluate

The evaluation is an opportunity to discuss with communities what they thought of the programme or operation and whether or not it met their needs, was relevant and effective, and delivered in a way they felt satisfied with. This helps to measure the quality of a programme or operation. IFRC recommends eight key evaluation criteria in relation to what should be included.

An evaluation is also a chance to capture learning to help us all improve future programmes, so it is important the evaluation captures aspects of the programme that didn't work well, too. No programme is perfect, so it is important to be honest about any problems or issues in order to document lessons learned.





The table below provides an outline of the kinds of information you may want to collect during an evaluation. There are obviously overlaps between evaluating programme accountability and specific CEA activities, but this table outlines some of the differences:



See the IFRC Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) manual for more information in [Annex 2](#)



For a template of evaluation questions to assess CEA, use [Tool 2 \(part D\)](#) in [Annex 1](#).

Programme need	(1) Impact of CEA activities	(2) Programme accountability overall
<p>Participation and feedback</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did people feel comfortable using the feedback system implemented? If not, why not? Was anyone excluded? • Was feedback listened to, addressed and responded to? • How did the feedback system benefit the programme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the community members all equally satisfied with the help they received? • Were they satisfied with the way the programme was delivered? • Did all groups receive regular information about the programme? • Did people feel included in decision-making and were they given equal opportunities to participate (men, women, children, minority and vulnerable groups)?
<p>Information as aid</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did people receive and understand the information that was shared? • Did they act on it? • How did providing information as aid benefit the programme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we use the best channels for the community? • What information did we not share that people needed? • Were any groups in the community not reached or excluded?
<p>Behaviour and social change communication</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact of CEA behaviour and social change activities (e.g., mobile cinema, radio etc.) on people's behaviour? • How did they benefit the programme's aims? • Were CEA activities well-coordinated with other programme's activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the community appreciate behaviour and social change activities? • Did they address the right risks and barriers? • Were the community consulted on behaviour and social change activities and aims in advance? • Were they involved in delivering activities?
<p>Evidence-based advocacy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did evidence-based advocacy activities benefit the programme's aims? • What was the outcome for the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the community participate in advocacy activities? • Could there have been ways to involve them more? • How do the community view the activities? Did they address the right issues?



Step 2: How to involve the community in the evaluation

Ideally, communities should be involved at each stage of the evaluation process by being given the opportunity to participate in design, data collection, data validation and analysis, and dissemination of the results. If this isn't possible, at the very least they should be consulted on the impact of the programme and the results of evaluations should be verified and shared with them.

Here are some suggestions for how you could involve communities in the evaluation process:

- ✓ Ask the community for their suggestions on the best way to evaluate the programme's impact, e.g., through a community meeting or focus group discussion.
- ✓ Have an evaluation advisory group that includes community leaders or representatives.
- ✓ Ensure the evaluation methodology includes collecting community feedback as one of the most important sources of information in the evaluation. Also, think about what members of the community were most affected by the programme.
- ✓ Make sure you engage with different segments of the community, including men, women, boys and girls and vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities or the elderly.
- ✓ Use community satisfaction surveys, but also allow opportunities for people to provide open feedback beyond survey questions.
- ✓ Evaluations must be conducted in an ethical and legal manner, with particular regard for the welfare of community members involved in and affected by the evaluation.
- ✓ Ensure that community leaders or representatives are part of the evaluation team (only if appropriate to the context and without impact to the results).
- ✓ Consider partnering with local research and/or academic institutions to support external independent evaluations.

More guidance on involving communities in the evaluation process can be found in the resources listed in [Annex 2](#), including DFID's Guide to Beneficiary Feedback in Evaluations.



See **Tool 2 (part D)** in [Annex 1](#) for a sample of community satisfaction survey questions. The CEA library listed in [Annex 2](#) has examples of satisfaction surveys used by National Societies around the world.

Verifying and sharing findings



For options on how to share evaluations with communities, use **Tool 17** in [Annex 1](#).

Sharing the evaluation findings with the community to validate the findings is an important part of the evaluation process. If the community have taken the time to answer questions, it is good practice to also ensure they are given the results. This can be undertaken in a number of ways, from a simple community meeting, posters on noticeboards or workshops.



Step 3: Share evaluations findings with colleagues and learn from them



For guidance on running workshops on lessons learned, use **Tool 18** in [Annex 1](#).

Working in a way that is accountable to communities also means acting on and learning from the findings of evaluations. This involves sharing learning with colleagues within the National Society so future programmes do not repeat the same mistakes - potentially with the same community!

It is also good practice to share evaluations with members of the wider Movement so everyone can benefit. Share evaluations at: www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/evaluations/.



CEA tools to help you during the evaluation and learning phase (see [Annex 1](#))

- Template evaluation questions that assess CEA (**Tool 2D**).
- Options for sharing evaluations with communities (**Tool 17**).
- Guidance on running workshops on lessons learned (**Tool 18**).

Additional resources to be used in the evaluation and learning phase can be found in [Annex 2](#).



CEA IN ACTION: Responding to the Nepal earthquake

“It would be better if the announcement was done through the radio or television because then everyone would be informed about the aid and there would be none who would miss the information provided”

Participant at a focus group discussion

Communities in Nepal are still struggling to cope with the effects of powerful seismic quakes that hit the country in April and May 2015, causing catastrophic damage to the capital, Kathmandu, and the surrounding valleys. The onset of winter brought a new facet to the humanitarian challenge as a sizeable population were living in transitional shelters and needed support to survive the harsh winter months (October to March).

The Nepal Red Cross Society, with support from Movement partners, launched a cash distribution initiative to address the additional challenges brought with the winter season. The distribution aimed to meet the needs of 53,073 families in 16 targeted districts. Timely communication to communities was highly recommended as part of this initiative due to learning from previous evaluations of relief and cash distributions. These findings had indicated that only 25 per cent of respondents had received information about the distributions before they actually happened.

Informing communities

The Nepal Red Cross and IFRC’s CEA team shared vital information with communities about the distribution sites and timings and eligibility criteria through the radio, schools, community meetings and visiting households.

A hotline number was manned 24/7 by a Red Cross volunteer before and after the distribution from the National Society headquarters in Kathmandu. During the distribution, the CEA team established help desks at distribution sites to listen to and record feedback, as well as providing answers to enquiries. In some areas, the volunteers also used mini dramas on TV to share messages.

Findings from the post-distribution evaluation show significant improvement in community engagement. Reports indicate 99 per cent of the respondents received information about the cash distribution in advance while 92 per cent of respondents felt they had received enough information.

In addition, reports show that many relied on their local social networks for receiving information about the distribution: 48 per cent of the people said they heard of the cash distribution through word of mouth from others in the community, 34 per cent from community leaders, 28 per cent through meetings called by the Red Cross, 24 per cent from their neighbours and 22 per cent through a visit from their neighbour. Word of mouth is a common way for notifying communities and the CEA team used it as a tool to ensure maximum reach for information about the cash distributions.

Findings from focus group discussions indicate that people would like to receive information through the radio, TV and newspapers. This learning is being considered for future interventions, which will seek to use broader media channels.



Community engagement and accountability in rapid-onset emergencies

This section provides a quick overview of how to integrate CEA into a rapid-onset emergency operation. It is important to note, however, that all the information in this guide can also be applied to an emergency operation, so we strongly recommend you read through the full guide for more detailed advice as early as possible in the response. You can use the minimum actions to integrate CEA on page 18 to guide you as well. You may already have CEA resources in place through long-term programmes or disaster risk management legislation that can be activated to support the emergency response.

CEA is critical in an emergency response because:

- It can save lives by sharing timely, actionable and useful information when people may need it the most.
- It supports the role the community always play as first responders.
- It can help to involve the affected population in planning the response; this means that the operation will be more likely to meet their needs and so have a greater impact.
- It builds trust with affected communities, which supports the delivery of aid and provides the right foundation for sustainable recovery programmes.



Who's in charge?

While integrating CEA into programmes and operations is everyone's responsibility, in the immediate aftermath of a rapid-onset emergency making a specific named person responsible can ensure it actually happens.

The CEA focal point works with and supports the emergency response manager to integrate CEA across the operational response area and throughout the disaster cycle.

If needed and appropriate, a CEA specialist can be deployed from another country, region or Geneva to provide support to the designated CEA focal point person within the National Society. For smaller-scale emergencies, it may not be possible to have a dedicated position or an emergency deployment in which case the responsibility to ensure CEA is integrated should sit with someone within the operations team.

The CEA focal point person should ensure that, at a minimum, operations staff:

- Ensure questions on information needs and access to communication channels are part of needs assessments. This includes understanding the extent of the damage to the local media and telecommunications infrastructure and what impact that is having on people's ability to access information and communicate.

- Provide information as aid to communities, including about the National Society and the Movement, and our plans, as well as inform people about assistance available and entitlements. In addition, local authorities and other stakeholders need to be kept informed.
- Conduct ongoing consultations with affected communities throughout the different phases of the response and the programme cycle.
- Establish effective feedback and complaint mechanisms that enable the National Society to tackle rumours and misinformation, allow community members to raise concerns, suggestions, complaints and criticisms (and also 'thank you' messages), as well as allow the National Society to report to the community on progress and development of the response.
- Respond, adapt, and develop in response to feedback received, and explain to all stakeholders the changes made and/or why change was not possible.



Step 1: CEA in emergency assessments

The assessment phase is critical as it will determine the rest of the emergency response, including what help is given to who, where, why and how. If these decisions are based on faulty or inaccurate assumptions, it will affect the impact and trust of the response operation and lead to a loss of valuable time while mistakes are corrected.

In addition, you may have to start providing information as aid while the assessment phase is still taking place, to help the population address immediate risks they are facing – e.g., which hospitals are open or how to make water safe to drink.

Gender and diversity commitments are also equally important in an emergency. The questions on page 29 can guide you as you plan the assessment and ensure you capture the specific needs and priorities of different groups.

Integrating CEA into the emergency assessment phase has two purposes:

- 1. Identify the population's main information needs and the best communication channels to reach them.** For epidemics, it is also important to understand the main risks and barriers to safer practices. This information will help you plan the most effective CEA activities as part of the emergency response operation.
- 2. Support the assessment to be carried out in an accountable way;** this means that community members are given adequate opportunity to express their needs, are treated respectfully and provided with clear and transparent information on the assessment process and what happens next. This ensures the operation meets the needs and builds trust with affected communities.

Here are some ways you can save time during the assessment phase:

- ✓ **Monitor the local media, civil society organizations and key influencers online, including relevant local government departments.** Local TV, radio and social media can provide a quick overview of the situation, particularly in areas where you may not have immediate physical access.
- ✓ **Check for existing information first (secondary data review).** Either assessment data already collected by other agencies after the disaster or conflict started, or data from recent assessments. This could save time and questions in your emergency assessment. However, remember that a disaster or conflict changes the context, so you can't rely fully on pre-emergency assessment data as it may no longer reflect the real situation.
- ✓ **Integrate, integrate, integrate.** Work with other sectors and 'negotiate' a few CEA questions into your organisation's overall assessment. Don't carry out a separate assessment for CEA. Check what other teams, such as health, hygiene or shelter, may be planning and what information they are going to collect. Check there are questions on information needs and access to communication channels and/or 'negotiate' with them for the inclusion of some. Offer support to ensure the assessment process is participatory and inclusive.



For a list of CEA questions, use Tool 2 (part A) in Annex 1. Which questions you choose will depend on the type of emergency, but the ones highlighted in yellow indicate those considered the most critical.

- ✓ **Review the legal framework.** Before and after a disaster strikes, check national disaster risk management legislation and other relevant sectoral laws and policies to see what the government's responsibilities are with regards to the right to know. This can help you advocate for their support and involvement in disseminating life-saving information, e.g., by encouraging mobile operators to issue SMS communications to the population. The opportunities and complexities of this, including changes due to the declaration of a 'state of emergency', are very different when it comes to an armed conflict.
- ✓ **Work with others.** Can you carry out a joint assessment with other agencies to save time and resources and reduce 'assessment fatigue' within the affected population? As mentioned earlier, the opportunities and limitations to collaborate are different during an armed conflict as it can compromise your independency in the eyes of one or several of the parties to the conflict.
- ✓ **Informal assessments are also useful.** Informal focus groups, key informant interviews and even simple observation, can provide a considerable amount of important information that might be missed in a formal survey and allow for more open discussion with affected communities about their needs. These methods can also replace a formal survey if this isn't possible or if the opportunity to add CEA questions has been missed.



For an overview of information to collect and the different methods used for collecting it, use **Tool 1** in [Annex 1](#)

Resources for humanitarian information and analysis

ACAPS (www.acaps.org) provides a weekly overview of current humanitarian priorities and recent events and produces ad-hoc crisis briefs to inform operational, strategic and policy decision-makers in the immediate aftermath of a natural or man-made disaster.

ReliefWeb (reliefweb.int/) is the leading humanitarian information source on global crises and disasters. It is a specialized digital service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

When it comes to epidemics, Demographic Health Studies provide information on disease prevalence and beliefs (www.dhsprogram.com).

The CDAC Network Media and Telecommunication Landscape Guides provide a very good overview of more than 20 countries, although these guides are now several years old (www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/media-landscape-guides/).



CEA IN ACTION: Working with other agencies

Following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, a wide range of agencies worked together to carry out a joint rapid assessment of communities' information needs and trusted communication channels. This was able to take place quickly because agencies already had in place preparedness agreements and template surveys through a local Community of Practice for community engagement set up in 2015. This helped all agencies obtain the information they needed to enable them to plan appropriate CEA activities and avoided communities being asked the same set of questions many times by each individual agency.



Step 2: Information as aid

CEA activities should be integrated into the overall emergency plan of action and budget and not designed as a stand-alone programme. In the immediate aftermath of a rapid-onset emergency, providing timely, accurate, life-saving information to the affected population through locally available channels should be one of your top priorities. The right information at the right time has the potential to save lives, prevent further crises and protect homes and livelihoods. That information may be the only thing people may receive from you, particularly for those who may be in areas where there are open hostilities. Examples include:

- information people need to protect themselves from a threat, such as aerial bombings, mine risk information, storm warnings or how to prevent disease in an epidemic
- guidance on how to mitigate the after-effects of a crisis, such as advising people not to drink flood water
- information on how to access help and services, such as family reunification, which hospitals are open, or when and where distributions are taking place
- information on their rights and who is responsible and who to contact for shelter, protection or health issues. This information should come from disaster risk management legislation in place at the national level.



For guidance on integrating CEA into an emergency plan of action, use **Tool 19** in [Annex 1](#).



CEA IN ACTION: Information as a weapon of war

Conflict situations present particular challenges different to those of natural disasters, such as insecurity and limited physical access to communities, disrupted energy and telecommunications infrastructure, communities' limited access and skills to use communication technologies and, very importantly, data protection.

Rumours, misinformation and propaganda have always been a feature of conflict situations. In the digital world, this happens faster, both at a local and global scale, and can be much more streamlined, making it more difficult for people to perceive propaganda for what it is.

At all times, but particularly in the context of armed conflicts, it is critical to understand the local information environment, how the local media and the mobile network operators are owned, and who is using which channel.

Understanding the local information environment includes understanding what people want to know about, what communication channels they currently use and trust, how they use them and how information is distributed. It also requires understanding how the local media and telecommunications infrastructure are coping and how the ownership and control may have changed.

The National Society, government, UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF or WHO, or local and international NGOs may already have messaging and material addressing the most common information needs as part of disaster preparedness or disaster law programmes. It is worth checking whether these exist before developing any new messaging and, more critically, before starting the dissemination. Conflicting, contradictory information or too much information about the same topic from many sources can cause confusion and increase frustration within communities.

This does not replace the need to share information with communities about who the National Society is and the services being provided, including details of how people can provide feedback or ask questions.

Guidance for effective emergency messages

Information shared after an emergency should:

- **Be simple:** do not use too much text or too many images.
- **Communicate the threat:** be clear about the danger or risk if people don't follow the advice, e.g., "drinking flood water can make you sick".
- **Provide a call to action:** suggest practical actions, e.g., "wash your hands" or "get immunized". However, be careful that the information doesn't encourage people to take actions that are not practical or are against the culture or religion.
- **Be accessible:** in the language people speak, shared through channels they use and be conscious of literacy.
- **Reach as many people as possible.**
- **Never cause harm or create panic.** It is important to understand the risks and vulnerabilities people may face, especially in sensitive situations such as armed conflict. This is vital to ensure messages developed do not cause more harm, e.g., by advising people to do something that could be dangerous and make them unsafe.
- **Try to coordinate with others, if and when possible.**



For a template of emergency messages, use [Tool 10](#); and for information on communication channels, use [Tool 8](#), both in [Annex 1](#).



Example of leaflet produced by Nepal Red Cross soon after the earthquake to prevent and manage hypothermia cases.



CEA IN ACTION: You can't turn social media off in an emergency!

Both the Ecuador and Nepal Red Cross Societies found social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter became vital communication channels after devastating earthquakes affected their countries.

In Ecuador, the Red Cross used Facebook and Twitter to connect people with their first aid app, provide answers to key issues and advertise services for restoring family links. The social media sites even proved an important source of online donations to the emergency appeal.

In Nepal, the Red Cross found their Facebook site was overwhelmed with requests for help in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. The National Society utilized support from their partner, British Red Cross, together with digital volunteers in America, to filter and respond to the thousands of messages being posted on their page. Updates on the page were quickly updated from behavioural change messages to information as aid, including emergency hygiene information and the importance of avoiding being near damaged buildings.

The site was also used to provide people with answers to the most common questions being asked and to give updates on response activities and how to access support services, like restoring family links. Information was posted in Nepali and English and photos were used to capture people's attention.

A small amount was also invested to pay Facebook to advertise the Nepal Red Cross' posts in the relevant areas, which led to a massive increase in the number of people viewing posts, from 7,000 to 733,000. While it was still difficult to respond to individual requests for assistance, these actions helped reach thousands of people with vital information and contributed to communities feeling that their questions were being heard and their needs and opinions taken into account.

Both of the examples above highlight how important social media can become in the immediate aftermath of an emergency – and the possible challenge of responding to the huge increase in posts. Therefore, in advance of an emergency, National Societies should consider how it might affect their social media channels and how they would respond.



Step 3: Participation and feedback

While it might seem time-consuming to involve affected communities in the assessment and planning of the response, it is critical to ensure activities meet the needs and are relevant and therefore accepted by the community. Below are examples of some quick, simple approaches that can be incorporated into the response to improve participation and feedback:

- Involve a range of community members – women, men, children, adolescents and people from minority groups – in assessing, planning and delivering the response activities. This includes sharing clear and easy-to-understand information about the Movement, its principled humanitarian action and the activities the National Society will carry out.
- Allow opportunities for open discussion with the affected communities. This includes communicating the selection criteria for those who will receive assistance clearly and honestly.
- Cross-check response plans with some of the affected communities before implementation. This can be done informally through a community meeting or discussions with community leaders or committees, although be aware that not all leaders and committees represent the community fairly.
- Decide with the community a locally relevant formal feedback and complaints system(s) – be aware of gender, age and diversity – and set it up as early as possible, including an effective information management system. Be aware of data protection, privacy and consent issues and build into the operation management processes by having this as a standing item in team meetings.
- Train all front-line volunteers on basic communication skills and complaints handling, even if a formal feedback and complaints system is not being set up immediately.
- Regularly monitor the impact of CEA and overall operation activities as well as the changing situation, and use this information to adapt the response plans and keep the conversation with the community going – remember to close the feedback loop.



See **Tool 9** for a checklist of information that should be shared with communities as well as the gender and diversity commitments in **Annex 2**, for more advice.



Use **Tools 5 and 11** for guidance on running a focus group and holding community meetings and **Tool 13** for a template of programme information posters and leaflets – all in **Annex 1**.



Use **Tools 5 and 11** in **Annex 1** for guidance on running a focus group and holding community meetings.



Tool 15 in **Annex 1** provides a range of materials to help you choose, design and establish a feedback mechanism in times of emergency.



Tool 14 in **Annex 1** provides a one-day rapid-onset emergency training pack for volunteers on communication skills and complaint handling.



Tool 2 (part C) in **Annex 1** provides a template of monitoring questions



CEA IN ACTION: Canadian Red Cross feedback mechanism helps after forest fires

In May 2016, the Canadian Red Cross piloted a feedback mechanism as part of its emergency operation to respond to wild fires in Alberta. The name used for the feedback mechanism was Comments & Concerns.

The mechanism was set up within the disaster management operation centre, with staff and volunteers trained on how to collect feedback and complaints through various channels and feed them back to the operations team so that issues could be addressed and prioritized. The mechanism was used to also flag urgent needs to the operations team. The mechanism proved invaluable in helping to identify vulnerable people who had been missed in the emergency cash transfer scheme, which aimed to provide people evacuated from their homes with funds for accommodation, food and relief items.

The cash transfers were issued to people's bank accounts, so the mechanism helped find and assist those who hadn't received the necessary codes via email, or the elderly, homeless and disabled individuals who would struggle to access cash from the bank. Communities also clearly appreciated the feedback mechanism as the operations team logged 46 thank-you messages on the first day alone.



Step 4: Working with other agencies

In any emergency, communities first and foremost are trying to figure out what's happening around them and will seek and receive information from a vast range of sources including the social media, local and international media and NGOs, the government, and the UN. If this information is contradictory it can cause confusion, be dangerous and increase the communities' sense of isolation. Therefore, when carrying out CEA activities in an emergency, be aware of the information everyone else is sharing and try to have a collaborative approach to working with others, if and when possible. As mentioned earlier in this guide, natural disasters and armed conflicts present different opportunities and limitations. Below are some tips on how to adopt this approach:

- **Find out whether there is an existing CEA working group and, if so, participate.** In major emergencies, there is often a working group for community engagement that is normally convened by UNOCHA or UNHCR. This is where agencies discuss, share and collaborate on CEA activities and approaches. Of particular importance in the early days of the emergency is the need to discuss and collaborate around information and communication needs assessments, messaging and assessments of the impact on local media and telecommunications infrastructure. Potential partnerships with local groups – including research, technology and academic groups – should be investigated also. This will help ensure coordination and coherence and avoid duplication.
- **Coordinate with other departments on clusters/thematic meetings.** Different colleagues within the National Society will normally attend different cluster/thematic meetings, e.g., on protection, shelter or health. It is important to be aware of the outcomes of these meetings, as these will influence the choice of CEA activities deployed and inform collaborative approaches, when possible.



CEA tools to help you during a rapid onset emergency (see [Annex 1](#))

- CEA assessment checklist and methods overview (**Tool 1**).
- CEA questions to include in assessments and monitoring (**Tool 2**).
- Guidance on adding CEA to the emergency plan of action (**Tool 19**).
- Matrix of different communication channels (**Tool 8**).
- Message development Tool and library (**Tool 10**).
- Guidance on running a focus group discussion (**Tool 5**).
- Tips on holding community meetings and how to use feedback (**Tool 11**).
- Checklist of information that should be shared with communities (**Tool 9**).
- Template of programme information posters and leaflets (**Tool 13**).
- Training for staff and volunteers on communication skills and complaints handling (**Tool 14**).

Additional resources to be used in a rapid-onset emergency can be found in [Annex 2](#).



CEA IN ACTION: Using the right people to answer complaints

When the Lebanese Red Cross set up a feedback and complaints mechanism to answer questions from Syrian refugees about a cash transfer programme, they decided to use Emergency Medical Service (EMS) volunteers to answer calls. Supported by the British Red Cross, the National Society trained existing EMS volunteers in complaints handling and procedures, believing their experience on the ambulance service had set them up with the right people skills to handle questions and complaints calmly and respectfully.

The use of volunteers who were separate from the actual programme also provided a sense of independence in how complaints were handled. The hotline was launched in January 2014 at the same time as the actual programme and was advertised at distribution points. Common issues raised through the hotline included the fact that some people who had missed their cash transfer or were having trouble using the ATM cards that had been issued. Feedback collected through the hotline became a key source of information in deciding and how and where the cash transfer programme needed to be improved.

A review of the hotline highlighted the importance of having senior management on board, having the right procedures and training in place prior to launching the hotline and the need for a clear referral process for calls received about other programmes or external services.



Institutionalizing **CEA**

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Integrating CEA across all programmes and activities of a National Society throughout the full programme cycle requires organizational and operational commitment and adequate prioritization and resourcing. In many cases, staff and volunteers are already engaging with communities and encouraging participation as part of their day-to-day jobs.

Engaging with and being accountable to local communities is at the heart of the Movement and part of our operational model. Yet this is not enough to enable us today, in such a fast-changing environment, to always predictably and systematically integrate CEA approaches within operations or to better monitor, adapt and improve the quality of our approach based on people's needs, complaints, suggestions and concerns.

The process of institutionalizing CEA as an organizational priority has already come a long way within the Movement. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief and The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance are two notable examples of organizational commitments that embrace CEA approaches. National Society mission statements and core values often reflect a commitment to CEA as well, when they reference accountability, participation and engagement.

With a changing environment in many emergencies and protracted crises around the world, the Movement has made progress in this area, but, like many humanitarian organizations, it faces challenges in ensuring that future practices are timely and predictably rolled out across all contexts throughout the programme cycle. Improvements on CEA still lack a systematic approach (including to monitoring and documentation) that threaten learning opportunities and evidence of the Movement performance and progress on this critical area of humanitarian assistance.

For National Societies to fully institutionalize CEA, this approach must be viewed as an institutional priority. This means planning how the National Society will integrate CEA at an operational level – including how the organization will approach CEA, who will be responsible and how it will be budgeted for.

Strategic integration

While some National Societies may choose to have a stand-alone CEA strategy, incorporation into other core documents and processes will help to emphasize the importance of CEA as an integrated process. Some examples of how to institutionalize CEA in strategic approaches include integrating it within:

- a National Society organizational strategy – ideally under operations or under programme quality
- PMER or communication frameworks or policies
- partnership documents: as a commitment that partners make to the National Society
- the National Society's mission statement
- written into staff job descriptions and be part of performance evaluation
- staff briefings and trainings, including dedicated CEA trainings
- all staff and volunteers are briefed on and sign the code of conduct.

Programme and planning integration

In addition to the high-level strategy documents of a National Society, a core part of operational integration is making sure that CEA is a key part of operational processes and documents. Some examples of documents to integrate CEA into:

- annual planning processes
- programme funding proposals and plans
- PMER frameworks and processes (e.g., programme cycle management tools)
- disaster management standard operating procedures (SOPs), including roster specialists
- emergency appeal plans of action.

A 'Good Enough' communication kit

A 'Good Enough' communication kit contains the basic materials a National Society programme, operation or branch needs to communicate clearly with communities on who they are, what they do and how they can be contacted. This kit can help to ensure that all staff – from drivers to heads of departments – can act as confident ambassadors for the Movement, both during working hours and at home. This kit should contain:

- ✓ Durable National Society banners with the office phone line for display at distribution points.
- ✓ A brief guidance note on how to present the National Society to different audiences.
- ✓ A brief guidance note on how to assess information needs and access communication channels. See **Tools 1 and 2** in [Annex 1](#).
- ✓ Key messages, FAQs and facts and figures in relation to the National Society and its programmes and operations. All these items need to be updated regularly. See **Tool 6** in [Annex 1](#).
- ✓ Leaflets and posters explaining National Society programmes, selection criteria and contact details. See **Tool 13** in [Annex 1](#).



Tools to help you institutionalize CEA (see [Annex 1](#))

- Guidance to develop a CEA plan of action, including a template of CEA plans, indicators and budgets (**Tool 7**).
- Guidance on adding CEA to the emergency plan of action (**Tool 19**).
- Myanmar Red Cross Society Strategy 2020, with CEA integrated (**Tool 20**).
- CEA responsibilities to include in job descriptions (**Tool 21**).
- Briefing on code of conduct for staff and volunteers (**Tool 22**).
- Training on CEA for staff and volunteers (**Tool 23**, which is the training package to accompany this guide).
- CEA brochures and posters (**Tool 24**).



CEA IN ACTION: Institutionalizing CEA into Myanmar Red Cross

The Myanmar Red Cross Society Strategy 2016–2020 integrates CEA as both a cross-cutting issue and a strategic objective, with a specific outcome that: “All programmes include a community engagement component based on a set of minimum standards for accountability.”

In order to make this outcome a reality, MRCS first developed a set of CEA minimum standards, with support from the IFRC. A workshop in March 2016 brought together MRCS participants from all departments, branches and the PMER working group. A key focus was how CEA could be strengthened in MRCS’ 330 branches, with much consultation on how the standards could be translated into practical actions for branches not involved in delivering programmes tied to the traditional programme cycle.

Integration across the National Society

Key to MRCS’ approach to CEA is that it is not seen as a separate sector or programme but as a set of interventions to be integrated into existing programmes or operations. To date, CEA has been integrated into the following areas:

- 1. At an organizational level:** CEA standards are reflected in the Organizational Strategy 2016–2020, the MRCS Communications Policy, the MRCS Partnership Framework and the PMER Framework

Next steps



Roll-out of CEA Minimum Standards has already begun, with sessions integrated into existing training courses, and a special training curriculum is currently in development. Integration into other tools and processes will continue, with a focus on inclusion in the PMER framework, into emergency response simulations and the CEA branch pilots.



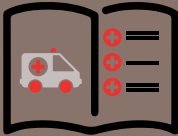

- 2. Community-based programming:** CEA minimum standards are integrated within the resilience programming guidance and tools. This has included integrating CEA actions into resilience assessment, planning and monitoring guidelines. CEA has been included in the community-based programme reporting templates as well.
- 3. Emergencies:** To make the CEA standards as practical as possible for emergencies, CEA actions have been mainstreamed into disaster management standard operating procedures (SOPs). CEA is also being included in the revision of other tools, including the Emergency Communication SOP, the branch damage and needs assessment reporting tools, village emergency assessment template, disaster management contingency plan and Emergency Response Team (ERT) and National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) training curriculums.
- 4. Branches:** A checklist of key activities needed to meet the CEA minimum standards was developed with branches and will be piloted by a selection of branches in 2017. The Branch Development Model and reporting templates have also been revised to include CEA.

Annex 1: CEA tools matrix



All tools listed below are available in the USB annexed to this guide, in the [IFRC CEA FedNet library](#) and in the public IFRC CEA page, www.ifrc.org/CEA.

Section	No.	Tool	Purpose of the tool
ASSESSMENT 	1	CEA assessment checklist and methods overview	To provide an overview of different types of information you might need, questions to ask and the most appropriate channels for collecting it. This can also be used as a guidance Tool for a rapid situational analysis if there is not enough time for a full assessment.
	2	CEA questions for assessment, baselines, monitoring and evaluation	CEA questions to include in overall programme assessments, baselines, monitoring and evaluation, including an example of a knowledge, attitudes and practices survey for the Zika virus.
	3	Steps to analyse CEA information	Step-by-step guidance on how to analyse data that the team has gathered and how this informs programme direction.
	4	National Society capacity assessment form	Understand what your National Society's capacities are and the level of CEA experience. Will help ensure activities selected are not too ambitious and match the available capacity and resources.
	5	Guidance on running a focus group discussion	Tips on holding a successful focus group.
	6	Q&A for volunteers and staff	This Q&A helps volunteers and staff to be prepared and able to answer questions from communities as they carry out assessments or implement activities.
DESIGN AND PLANNING 	7	Guidance to develop a CEA plan of action	Step-by-step guidance to develop a CEA plan of action. Also, template logframes, activity plans, indicators and budget, as well as an example of a risk communication and engagement strategy for epidemics.
	8	Matrix of different communication channels	Helps programme managers select which communication channel is most appropriate for their needs. Includes an overview of the advantages and disadvantages and different ways each channel can be utilized in support of different CEA activities.
	9	Checklist of information that should be shared with communities	Checklist to make sure all the relevant programme information has been shared with communities.
	10	Message development Tool and message library	Guidance on developing messages and links to banks of existing messages.
	11	Tips on holding community meetings and how to use information and feedback	Getting the most out of community meetings and how feedback can be documented and utilized.
	12	Template of terms of reference for communities	To provide a template that can be adapted when developing terms of reference documentation with a community for a programme or operation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING 	13	Template of programme information leaflets and posters	Templates that can be adapted to suit needs.
	14	Training for staff and volunteers on communication skills and complaints management	Full training pack, including slides and exercises, for a one-day basic training on improving communication skills. Aimed at front-line volunteers.
	15	Setting up and managing feedback and complaints mechanisms	Step-by-step guidance to planning, choosing, setting up and managing a feedback and complaints system, including template forms and databases.
	16	Exit strategy guidance	To provide advice on how to plan and deliver a phased exit strategy that is accountable to communities.
EVALUATION 	17	Options for sharing evaluations with communities	Some ideas for sharing programme evaluations with communities.
	18	Lessons learned workshop guide	Advice on bringing together project staff and volunteers to share insights gained during a programme that can be practically applied to future programmes.
EMERGENCIES 	19	Guidance on adding CEA to the emergency plan of action	Step-by-step guidance on how CEA can be integrated section by section into the standard emergency plan of action template.
INSTITUTIONALIZE 	20	Example of CEA incorporated into a National Society Framework	Myanmar Red Cross Society Strategy 2020, with CEA integrated.
	21	CEA responsibilities to include in job descriptions	Ideas for lines to include in job descriptions setting out an individuals' responsibilities in relation to CEA.
	22	Briefing on code of conduct for staff and volunteers	To help new staff and volunteers understand the Code of Conduct and what it means for them before signing it.
	23	CEA training pack	A full set of presentations, facilitator notes and resources to deliver CEA training and briefings from 15 minutes to four days.
	24	CEA brochure	Promotional brochure to explain what CEA is and how it fits within the Red Cross Red Crescent.

Annex 2: Useful resources

The CEA guidance comes from and is linked to other manuals, methodologies and toolkits where you can access more detailed information on specific aspects of the phases and steps above.

Resource	What is it for?	Where can i find it?
AtB toolkit from Africa region	Carrying out accountable assessment	FedNet library Accountability folder
Cash in Emergencies toolkit	Tools for participatory planning for cash programmes	www.rcmcash.org
CEA library on FedNet	Lots of sample CEA plans and strategies and tools	CEA FedNet Library
Community-based health and first aid in action manual (CBHFA)	Guidance on health promotion approaches	www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/health/cbhfa/toolkit/
IFRC Better Programming Initiative guides, including the Conflict-Sensitive Context Analysis	Guidance and advice on understanding the community and context to avoid unintended negative consequences through our actions	BPI/Do no harm FedNet page
IFRC Disaster Law projects global map	A map of all ongoing and completed disaster law projects around the world	www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zwH0csuD3bJQ.kkj_Ovg2fuyg
IFRC Emergency needs assessments	The IFRC has produced standard guidelines for assessing emergency situations, so that basic data can be collected and processed in a way that different members of the Movement can compare it.	www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/disaster-response-system/emergency-needs-assessment/
IFRC Framework for Community Resilience	Guidelines on how National Societies can work with communities to build resilience, capacity and address underlying vulnerabilities	www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201501/1284000-Framework%20for%20Community%20Resilience-EN-LR.pdf
IFRC Health Behaviour Change Framework	More on behavioural change including communication activities	CEA FedNet Library - Health Behaviour Change Framework
IFRC Minimum Standards Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming. Training package: Seven Moves – Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming	Carrying out assessments in line with gender and diversity and child protection	www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/principles-and-values/gender1/ Also, check training material on the FedNet Gender Community of Practice
IFRC Monitoring and Evaluation Guide and Project/programme planning guidance manual	A range of different methods for carrying out assessments and analysing data	www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/performance-and-accountability/monitoring-and-evaluation/

IFRC Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) tools.	More guidance on participatory assessments	www.ifrc.org/vca
IFRC working with communities	Information on participatory approaches	www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95747/B.b.01.%20Working%20with%20communities-Tool%20box_IFRC.pdf
Introduction to IDRL	E-learning for staff and volunteers to provide an overview of some of the most common legal problems in international disaster relief operations	Available on IFRC's Learning Platform
Messaging Campaigns: A Companion to Changing Behaviour	This set of publications offers guidance for campaign development based upon the learning from a variety of recent campaigns.	preparecenter.org/resources/messaging-campaigns-companion-changing-behaviour
PHAST manual	Participatory approach to hygiene and sanitation behavioural change	www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/Health/water-and-sanitation/WatSan-Software_Tools.pdf
Public Awareness and Public Education for DRR: Key messages	This publication is offered as a Tool for practitioners internationally to use in a consensus-building validation process. National Societies, national disaster management organizations, governmental and non-governmental organisations and international organizations are invited to be part of a global validation project working to develop a comprehensive multi-regional set of key messages as a contribution for the culmination of the 2005–2015 Hyogo Framework for Action. Published in 2013.	preparecenter.org/resources/public-awareness-and-public-education-drr-key-messages FedNet PAPE page with multiple languages versions
Safer Access Framework	Securing acceptance during assessments	www.icrc.org/en/safer-access-publications-and-resources
Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change (YABC)	IFRCs flagship initiative on the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace. Created in 2008, this programme seeks to empower individuals to take up an ethical leadership role in their community.	www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/principles-and-values/youth-as-agents-of-behavioural-change-yabc/

Resources from other partners:

Resource	What is it for?	Where can i find it?
Assessment guides	If you want to learn more about assessment, consult: ACAPS (2014) Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide, The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB) and Practical Action Publishing.	reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/h-humanitarian-needs-assessment-the-good-enough-guide.pdf
Assessing Information and Communication Needs, A Quick and Easy Guide for Those Working in Humanitarian Response	This guide provides guidance on steps humanitarian responders can take to assess and determine how to enhance communication with and among communities at different stages of an emergency.	www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20140721173332-ihw5g
CDAC Network Common Needs Assessment Tools	A suite of common tools for conducting communication needs assessments following a disaster. These are based on questionnaires used by Internews in its information needs assessments.	www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-and-resources/i/20140721171402-wj4au
Core Humanitarian Standards	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.	www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard
DFID review of Beneficiary Feedback in Evaluations	This provides an overview of existing practice and guidance on including communities in evaluations.	r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/Evaluation/Beneficiary_Feedback_in_Evaluation.pdf
Facts for Life	This handbook, Facts for Life, provides vital messages and information for mothers, fathers, other family members and caregivers and communities to use in changing behaviours and practices that can save and protect the lives of children and help them grow and develop to their full potential.	www.factsforlifeglobal.org/index.html

Annex 3: Movement commitments to CEA

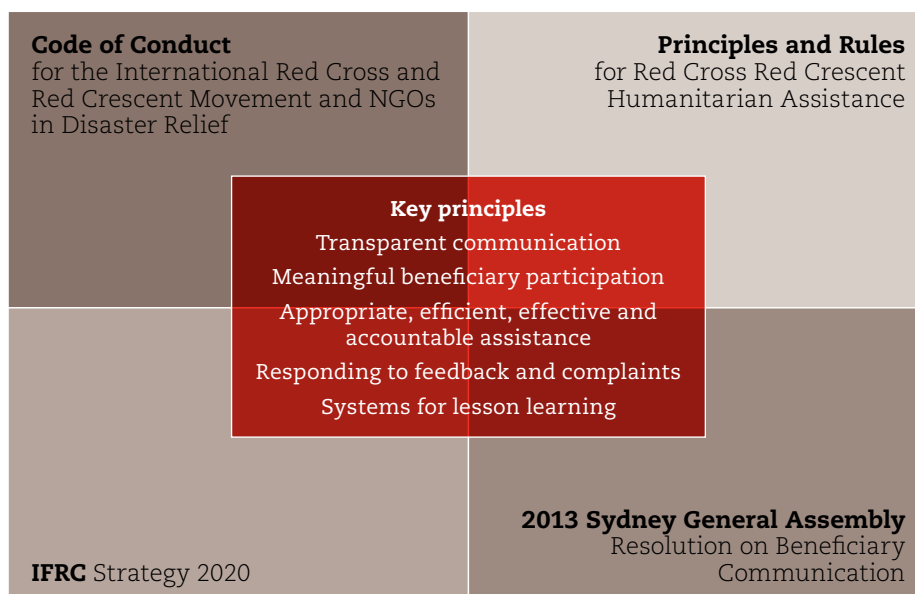
IFRC General Assembly Resolution, Sydney, Australia, 2013: DD/6.4/1

The General Assembly,

- **recommends** that National Societies integrate beneficiary communications at all levels of disaster management and disaster risk reduction, health prevention and social inclusion work, including early-warning, needs and impact assessments
- **recognizes** that rapid growth in access to communications technology presents new opportunities to inform, listen to, be accountable to and empower the communities we serve
- **welcomes** the innovative leadership that many National Societies are showing in capturing community voices in support of better services and advocacy for vulnerable communities
- **encourages** National Societies to explore, pilot, form partnerships and share experiences on integrating beneficiary communications in disaster management and disaster risk reduction, health services, social inclusion and National Society decision making processes
- **urges** National Societies to integrate community engagement in programme design and management, and to use beneficiary communication to strengthen evidence based advocacy in their auxiliary role in providing prevention and life-saving information.

The resolution is the culmination of previous commitments. In particular, the resolution builds on the Movement's long-established commitment to accountability, including the IFRC's accountability commitments. The Movement's commitment to accountability is reflected in a number of documents, including the [Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief \(1995\)](#), the [Code for Good Partnership of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement \(2009\)](#) and the [Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance \(2013\)](#). For more information, please visit:

www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/performance-and-accountability/.



Below are a number of commitments that sustain the resolution.

Where	Commitment
Strategy 2020	<p>Encompasses our commitment to prevent and alleviate suffering and contribute to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world by the Red Cross and Red Crescent through the provision of beneficiary-centred aid delivery services in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Affected populations are involved in setting priorities and creating plans for recovery programmes b. The affected population ‘owns’ the relief and recovery response c. The Red Cross and Red Crescent will hold itself accountable to the affected people we serve.
World Disasters Report 2005	<p>“People need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter.” Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources and that information bestows power to beneficiaries because it lets them make the best choice for their recovery based on what the aid organization can and cannot provide.</p>
Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response – the Sphere standards	<p>Humanitarian charter, number 12 “our commitment” that we undertake to make our responses more effective, appropriate and accountable through sound assessment and monitoring of the evolving local context; through transparency of information and decision-making; through more effective coordination and collaboration with other relevant actors at all levels, as detailed in the Core Standards and minimum standards.</p>
Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015 priorities for:	<p>Action A – General considerations, sub-section ‘f’: Both communities and local authorities should be empowered to manage and reduce disaster risk by having access to the necessary information, resources and authority to implement actions for disaster risk reduction;</p> <p>Action B – Priorities for Action, sub-section 3: Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities;</p> <p>Action B – Priorities for Action sub-section 3, key activities: (i) Information management and exchange: (a), (d), (e)</p>
IFRC Early Warning, Early Action, guiding principle 2	<p>Communication for action is key and there is a need to transform scientific information, which is often complex and in the form of maps or percentages, into simple and accessible messages that would allow people at risk to make sensible decisions on how to respond to an impending threat.</p>
IFRC Plan and Budget 2016–2020	<p>Highlights engagement and accountability as a key outcome of the eight strategies for implementation.</p>

Strengthening communication with, accountability to and participation of people in need were core components of the recently agreed Grand Bargain.² At the World Humanitarian Summit, ICRC and IFRC committed to “...improving the quality and quantity of timely, accurate, life-saving and actionable information for communities; promoting greater dialogue and two-way communication approaches with local communities; and supporting an environment of greater trust and accountability.” Please see some key reference documents here:

['Joint International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Paper on the Grand Bargain'](#) and advocacy report ['Istanbul and Beyond'](#).

² The “[Grand Bargain - A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need](#)” is the name for a package of reforms to humanitarian funding launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016. Articulated around eight principles, number six being “A participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives, the Grand Bargain proposes that the major donors and largest humanitarian organisations commit to make their spending more flexible, efficient, transparent and effective.”

ICRC's institutional commitment to community engagement and accountability

Engaging with and being accountable to affected people constitutes the essence of the operational model of the ICRC. Working closely with people is crucial for understanding their self-identified needs, priorities and specific vulnerabilities, while building on their existing capacities and coping mechanisms.

Since our foundation, we have applied community engagement and accountability approaches – underpinned by the “do no harm” principle – in various ways to enhance our operational effectiveness and the impact of our activities across our four programmes: Assistance, Protection, Prevention and Cooperation.

Throughout the years, we have dedicated considerable human and financial resources to the development of policies, tools, approaches and provision of technical support to delegations to ensure that engagement with and accountability to affected people is adequately addressed.

This has notably translated into the creation of a Community-Based Protection Advisor position in 2011 and of a Community Engagement Advisor position, based within the Communications unit, in 2015.³ In 2013 the Economic Security Unit appointed a focal point for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and the Policy unit followed suit in 2016. All of these advisory positions work very closely among themselves and within ICRC programmes, supporting teams and delegations around the world. They also aim to contribute to the development of knowledge, new thinking and approaches.

While improving the institutional approach and performance on how we engage with and are accountable to affected people is an ethical responsibility, the need to adapt and improve our approaches has also been dictated by a changing humanitarian landscape.

In recent times, we have committed to being more systematic and to better documenting

our community engagement and accountability approaches throughout the management cycle, through our Institutional Strategy (2015-18)⁴ and joint pledges with the IFRC in the context of the Grand Bargain. In line with these commitments, an AAP Technical Working Group bringing together advisors and representatives from all four programmes, was created in 2016 and tasked with developing the first AAP Institutional framework for the ICRC.

The Institutional Framework that is being developed through an internal consultation process, broadens the application of the AAP Executive Brief developed by the Economic Security Unit in 2014. It also brings together key existing tools within the ICRC, including Community-Based Protection and Economic Security tools, the Guiding Principle on Community Engagement and other humanitarian standards and commitments. These include, but are not limited to, the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability. The framework will be rolled out from 2017.

Our commitment to AAP is also visible in our involvement since 2011 in the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network⁵ that brings together more than 30 organizations including humanitarian, media development and technology organizations.

For the ICRC, engaging with and being accountable to affected people is an approach that seeks to preserve the dignity of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. It focuses on giving people a voice in determining their own needs and designing their own solutions. In other words, it aims at ensuring that affected people have the power to effectively contribute to shaping the response.

³ In 2015 the ICRC published a new External Communication Doctrine (Doctrine 7). Among its eight guiding principles, it specifically articulates community engagement and the integral role of communication as a cross-cutting support activity of ICRC's four programs and positioning work. www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-external-communication-doctrine

⁴ The Institutional Strategy states that the ICRC will “Engage in a more structured and systematic way with beneficiaries, with a view to better involving them in the assessment of their needs and in the determination of adequate responses” (Strategic Objective 2.7). www.icrc.org/en/publication/4203-icrc-strategy-2015-2018-adopted-icrc-assembly-18-june-2014

⁵ Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network www.cdacnetwork.org

Acknowledgements

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The idea for a Movement Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) was first born out of Red Cross and Red Crescent experience following the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Since then the Guide to CEA has been adapted and updated to reflect new learning and feedback from colleagues across the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This current pilot version of the Guide to CEA was tested and reviewed by a large number of programmes, operations and CEA specialists from both ICRC and IFRC, many of whom attended a CEA workshop in Geneva in June 2016. Very special thanks also go to all the National Society staff and volunteers who contributed to the content and review of this Guide.

Author: Sharon Reader. **Main contributors:** Nancy Claxton, Ombretta Baggio, Jacobo Quintanilla, Amanda George, Rebecca Webb and Louise Taylor.

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 world-wide.



ICRC

ICRC – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

For more information, please contact us:

Jacobo Quintanilla

ICRC Community Engagement Advisor

jquintanilla@icrc.org

[@jqg](#) [#CommIsAid](#)

Tel: +41 (0)22 730 3226



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IFRC – The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our 190 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in every community reaching 160.7 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes, as well as 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Ombretta Baggio

IFRC Community Engagement Coordinator

ombretta.baggio@ifrc.org

[@ombaggio](#) [#CommIsAid](#)

Tel: +41 (0)22 730 4495