



## ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN TANZANIA

FEBRUARY 2019

Tanzania Red Cross Society is committed to deliberately put communities at the center of her work through various community engagement and accountability approaches across various sectors. This has been done through listening to communities through feedback mechanisms, enhancing community participation and behavior change through gender dialogue sessions and community scorecard as well as community sensitization through mobile cinema, radio among other approaches.

### Listening to community concerns in the Refugee Relief Operation (RRO)

Through its Restoring Family Links (RFL programme), TRCS uses different face to face avenues to collect and act on community feedback in Mtendeli and Nduta refugee camps. Due to presence of many humanitarian actors, the mechanisms used act as joint feedback mechanisms, with agencies addressing the community concerns on their respective agencies.

***Community Meetings:*** These community meetings are conducted by Zonal leaders in the different camps to collect different community concerns. The zonal leaders in turn share these concerns with the different agencies and also allows participation of the agencies in subsequent meetings to address concerns raised. For example, on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019, zonal leaders conducted community meetings in both camps. Some of the feedback collected in Mtendeli was on the community need for mosquito nets and fumigation due to high malaria morbidity rates. Other concerns were on the detention of refugees by police. In Nduta camp, following a request by religious leaders in December 2018, TRCS RFL volunteers used the community meeting avenue to disseminate information on RFL services available to the community.

In addition, quarterly community mass meetings are conducted, providing an avenue for communities to ask questions or raise concerns directly to agencies. These are addressed on the spot or in subsequent meetings if needed.



Figure 1: TRCS volunteer sensitizing community members in Nduta camp on the RFL services during a community meeting – Photo:

TRCS/2019

**Zonal leaders’ meetings:** These are monthly meetings between leaders from every zone and agencies. In these meetings, agencies receive suggestions, complaints and respond to concerns on the various programs. The platform is also used by agencies to share any relevant information.

**Zonal/village meetings:** These are conducted at zonal/village level in every camp. In this meeting the RFL Field Assistants do represent the program to collect and respond to concerns that they can address at that point from the community members. For issues they are not able to immediately address, this is passed to the Tracing Officer for him/her to participate in the subsequent meeting for response/clarification.

**Help desks:** This service is available in all the three camps. Although initially planned to have each implementing agency in the refugee camps send one national staff to sit at the help desk to collect concerns from the community directly, this was not possible for TRCS due to limited human resource. The help desks are managed by the camp management and UNHCR who consolidate all the concerns from help desk and share with TRCS for action. TRCS in turn follows up with the complainants for additional information if needed as well as feedback.

In addition, TRCS RFL staff organize separate dissemination sessions weekly in different zones, sharing information on their services, RFL criteria, RCRC Movement principles and values.

## Investing in community preparedness

To strengthen community preparedness, TRCS is implementing a disaster preparedness project in three regions namely; Dar es Salaam (Kigogo and ), (Morogoro- Magole and Tindiga villages) and

(Mwanza – Shushani and ) targeting 6 flood prone communities i.e. 2 in each region. To create awareness on disaster preparedness, the NS conducts community sensitization on disaster preparedness through mobile cinema shows, use of megaphones as well as distribution of flyers and posters. TRCS recruited and trained 180 Branch Disaster Response Team-community based volunteers. The disaster preparedness training also includes CEA component.

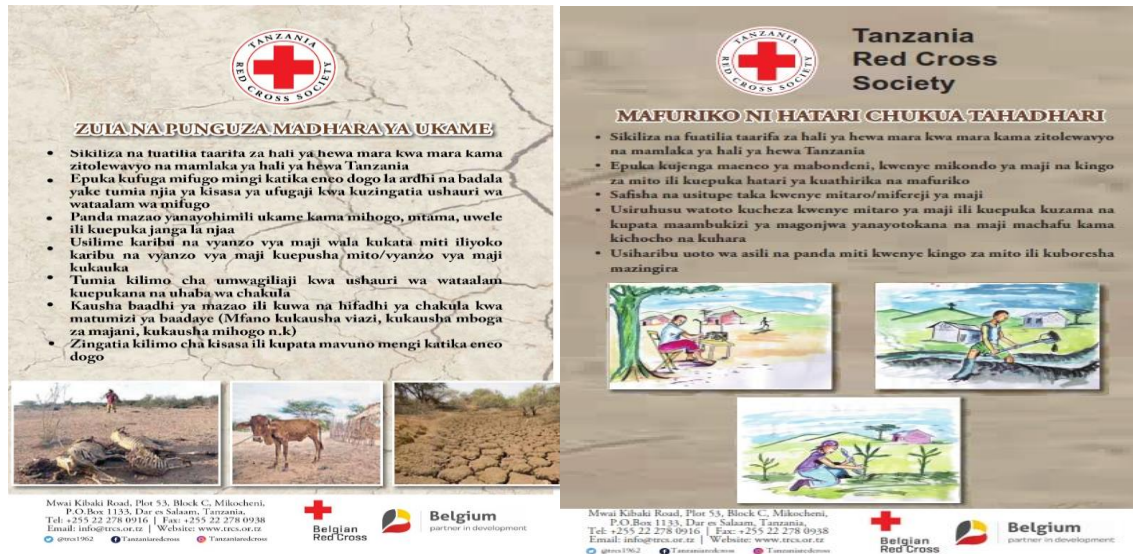


Figure 2: Community flyers in Swahili sensitizing communities on how to minimize effects of drought and floods respectively

To ensure cash preparedness, TRCS sensitizes the community on the process of receiving cash. This is currently being piloted in three targeted disaster flood risk regions namely; Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Mwanza targeting 1,000 households for cash transfer assistance in flood emergency. Below figure (figure 3) illustrates a poster shared with community members, sensitizing them on the cash transfer process.





## Involving communities in assessments

Through the Cash Transfer Programme, TRCS carried out a Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) in Tindiga community in Kilosa district-Morogoro region. 15 volunteers were trained on VCA concept and tools for data collection, analysis, prioritization and transformation plan process with community members. The community members were involved in this exercise through focus group discussion with representatives from the local government, community elders, men, women and youth. TRCS analyzed the data and reconvened with the community members for verification, prioritization of disaster risks and its transformation plan process.



**Left:** RC volunteers with women group -Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

**Right:** Local leaders clarifying issues during VCA exercise- Transect walk and direct observation



**Left:** RC volunteers verifying details of community hazard map drawn by volunteers with support of community representatives and community-based volunteers.

**Right:** TRCS Disaster Preparedness Manager during hazard risk prioritization using Pair-wise ranking tool in the VCA exercise with community members

## Social and Behaviour Change Communication

TRCS in collaboration with Jhpiego, is implementing the Reproductive, Maternal, Malaria, Newborn, Child and Adolescence Health (RM2NCAH) project in 9 districts with the aim of improving health status of communities through ensuring availability, accessibility to quality services.

To sensitize communities, TRCS uses different approaches:

***Community volunteers:*** are engaged in tracking pregnant women, new born and children to share health information through family education, recording their information in a database and making follow up on their health status. They also remind them of clinic appointments and sensitize them on nutrition and safe motherhood. Other family members are oriented on support the mother in safe birth plan, and safe motherhood.



TRCS Volunteer disseminating RMNCH information to family members in Kyerwa district

***Gender dialogue sessions:*** Organized by volunteers, TRCS brings together groups of 30 people with equal gender representation. Through 10 sessions, these groups discuss behaviors that hinders safe reproductive and maternal health in relation to gender roles. They discuss different issues including using role plays, the community behaviors and gender roles that affect accessibility, and decision making at family level related to reproductive, maternal, malaria, new born, child and adolescence health care. Through a consensus best practices are identified and all agree to put in practice.



*A gender dialogue session*

***Community Score Card:*** TRCS ensures community participation in assessing community health services through the community score card. The exercise ensures participation of policy makers, community leaders, opinion leaders, service providers and diverse community groups. Each participant assesses their role in the community health service provision and rank their performance. The scores are then discussed jointly, agreeing on a final score and steps for improvement identified. An action plan is then developed for all to implement including the community and this is reviewed on a quarterly basis. Through participation of communities, leaders, health facility workers and opinion leaders work together and commit to ensure the RMNCH services are improved.



*TRCS Program Officer guiding participants on the CSC process*

***Live Radio programs:*** TRCS organizes monthly radio shows, bringing on air health practitioners to educate communities on RMNCH. Communities are given an opportunity to participate through call-in question and answer sessions, providing immediate feedback to communities.