



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING

## Introduction

This case study outlines the learnings and experiences in engaging communities by the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) after Typhoon Mangkhut.

It highlights how Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) can be integrated in Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) to enhance community acceptance.

## Issue

On September 15, 2018, Typhoon Mangkhut, locally known as Typhoon Ompong, made landfall in the Northern part of the Philippines affecting nearly 3.8 million people.

## Response

PRC conducted rapid assessments after the landfall to 83 towns across 12 provinces affected by the typhoon followed by a detailed assessment to the hardest hit provinces; Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Abra, Apayao, and Cagayan.

PRC, through the support of the Spanish Red Cross, provided conditional cash grants to affected communities in the Province of Ilocos Sur.

Initial orientation and information meetings were held with local communities to provide information on the mandate and services of the National Society, and partners, Red Cross Fundamental Principles, formation of BaReCom, beneficiary selection and validation process, and contact information of the local PRC Chapter.

## Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) at a glance: Philippines Red Cross (PRC)

Formed in 1947, the Philippine Red Cross is the foremost humanitarian organization in the country, committed to provide quality life-saving services that protect the life and dignity especially of indigent Filipinos in vulnerable situations. At present, the Philippine Red Cross provides six major services namely Blood Services, Disaster Management Services, Safety Services, Health Services, Red Cross Youth, and Welfare Services.

Trusted and preferred channels of communication in the Philippines include radio, newspaper, hotline, SMS, social media, help desks, and printed materials. PRC utilizes these multiple channels to ensure that the affected people had access to information through their preferred and trusted communication channels. Some of these include community focus groups, notice boards, social media, and Barangay Recovery Committees (BaReCom).

Cover photo was taken by Romulo Godinez during the cash distribution activity at Ilocos Sur on March 9, 2019.



as supported by:





PRC Ilocos Sur Chapter staff and volunteer posted tarpaulins encouraging and explaining to the community how they can provide feedback to the Red Cross.

## 1. Sharing relevant information through appropriate communication channels

The PRC conducted a CEA assessment to know the communication preferences and information needs of the community. Assessment results suggested that Ilokano is the ideal mode of communication by the villagers. Thus, all information that were shared through correspondence, posters, community assemblies, and house-to-house visits were all in the said local dialect.

Aside from introducing the organization and giving orientation about the program, the operations team also ensured that selection criteria were understood and agreed with the partner communities. More so, some Red Cross staff and volunteers done a series of information dissemination explaining the cash distribution process. The Red Cross also organized orientations on financial literacy and budgeting skills. These efforts were key to ensure acceptance from the community and led to a more organized payout activity.

## 2. Training volunteers on how to share and collect information from communities

Volunteers are the forefront of Red Cross activities, as such, equipping them with the skills to engage with communities is essential. The PRC CEA focal, facilitated an orientation to the local chapter volunteers. Some of the discussions done were CEA fundamentals, Communicating with Communities, and Establishing Feedback Mechanisms. This initiative gave the volunteers more confidence to speak with the communities about the project, including answering difficult questions about selection criteria.

It is also good to note, that the training session with the volunteers was accomplished a week immediately after the initial orientation about the program was held.

## 3. Giving Opportunity for feedback

In reference to the results of the CEA assessment, the PRC set-up three feedback channels in the community: face-to-face, feedback boxes, and feedback lines. The PRC also encouraged and guided the community on how to provide feedback with the aforementioned channels, as well as, the importance of their participation in this initiative. Each feedback gathered in the different communication platform is then consolidated and reviewed by the CEA focal.

Ninety-two percent of the feedback received were message of gratitude for the organization. Six percent were inquiries about the organization and the operation and two percent were requests for varied services.

## 4. Working with local authorities

Local authorities are the entry-point of the Red Cross in each community. Ensuring that local leaders fully understand and agree with the selection criteria and the activities to be implemented in their area, as well as, they are consulted and engaged in the selection of people to be provided grants were both significant to build trust and acceptance.

Initial list of selected people to receive grants were then validated by the Red Cross through a community assembly. After the community consultations, Red Cross staff and volunteers will then perform a house-to-house visit to verify if the person is eligible to receive cash assistance.

## 5. Forming community committees

Community participation can contribute greatly to the effectiveness and efficiency of a program. In reference with such, the Red Cross gave the community an opportunity to be involved with the implementation of the program through forming community committees.

Called as Barangay Recovery Committee (BaReCom), were mobilized to assist in the implementation and monitoring of the program. BaReCom—which constitutes a cross section of community members—also supports the team in disseminating information about the program and receives community feedback.

## Impact

People were at the center of the operations. Red Cross provided an enabling environment for the community to be engaged with the program implementation. As a result, two-way communication was strengthened between communities and the Red Cross ensuring community ownership.

## Lessons Learned

CEA approaches were fully integrated and core part of CTP implementation. This helped to build community acceptance for the project, as well as, contributing to the quality and long-term impact of the project. Some of the key lessons learned were;

**1. Use appropriate communication channels:** The team carefully planned what communication channels to use based on the preference of the locale, as well as, what and when information would be shared with the community. This focus on information sharing helped to ensure community understanding and acceptance for CTP. It also contributed to the smooth running of the cash distribution itself.

**2. Strengthen CEA capacity of staff and volunteers:** The Red Cross also recognized the need for the staff and volunteers be adept on engaging with the community. This is crucial to ensure accurate information is shared in a timely manner.

**3. Recognize the value of local knowledge:** Communities are experts about their situations. Through engaging local authorities and forming BaReCom, the communities were empowered to make informed decision. One recommendation is to increase the CEA capacity of the BaReCom. Concerns raised by the community to them were not recorded in the PRC Feedback database.

**For more information, please contact:**

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