# TOOL 14: Q&A SHEET FOR VOLUNTEERS

#### Purpose of this tool

This question and answer (Q&A) sheet supports volunteers and staff to respond to questions commonly asked by community members during assessments, implementation and when programmes are coming to an end. This helps to prevent confusion and frustration in communities by ensuring people receive accurate, consistent information about the programme or response.

Please add or remove questions from the list below as relevant for your programme or response. Where possible suggested answers are provided, but this document should be updated with information specific to each programme or response. Developing this with the whole team, including community volunteers, helps to create ownership of the tool, ensures the most commonly asked questions are included and that answers are written in the best way for the local context. This should be a living document, updated regularly with new questions as they arise.

#### Commonly asked questions & answers

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| **Who is the Red Cross Red Crescent and/or National Society?** | The *<insert name of National Society>* is a member of the world’s largest humanitarian network called the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Together, 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.  Any support provided by the Red Cross Red Crescent is FREE. You should never be asked for money or sexual favours in exchange for assistance. If you are, please report it to us immediately through our feedback system *<insert details of feedback system>*, by calling +41 800 437 272, or speaking to a member of our team whom you trust.  *Add information about the National Society and its mandate, the types of services and support it provides in the country, nearest office or branch and the number of volunteers. Explain how people can expect to be treated by staff and volunteers.* |
| **Is the Red Cross Red Crescent a religious organisation?** | The *<insert name of National Society>* is not a religious organisation. We help people based on need alone, regardless of their race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions. Our aim is to help those are most in need. The Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems date back to the 1800s. Though neither emblem has any religious association.  *Add information about the National Society and the different communities it works in, and diversity of volunteer base.* |
| **Are you part of the Government?** | No. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are not part of the Government, but we do act as an auxiliary or support the public authorities in times of crisis. This means we work in partnership with public authorities. This can include providing ambulance services, blood donation, first aid training or helping to respond when there are disasters. However, National Societies are independent from the Government, and act impartially and neutrally, based solely on the basis of need.  *Add information about the National Society’s specific mandate in the country and its role with the Government.* |
| **What are you doing in our community?** | *Add information about what the National Society, IFRC or ICRC is doing in the community including:*   * *The programme or response aims and type of activities that are being implemented* * *How long the programme or response will run for and when it started* * *How people can access support, for example health clinics, distribution processes, shelter support etc* * *Who the programme or response will help and why* * *Who will be working on the programme or response e.g., staff team, volunteers etc?* * *Explain how people can participate in the programme or response, such as community meetings, committees, or feedback mechanisms.* |
| **Why are you asking all these questions?**  *(During assessments)* | We are asking these questions to understand what the main needs are in this community. Once we’ve collected information on the needs in this community we will assess if there is anything we can do to support. If we don’t take the time to ask these questions, we may end up providing support that is not useful or needed.  The information you share with us will be kept confidential. Nobody needs to answer questions if they don’t want to. Answering questions does not guarantee support.  *Add information about the assessment including:*   * *The purpose of the assessment e.g., what information you are trying to find out and for what purpose* * *How many days the assessment will last* * *Who will be asked questions, by whom, and through which methods e.g., focus group discussions, key informant interviews, household surveys etc.?* * *How you will use people’s information* * *When you will come back and share the findings of the assessment* * *How people can ask questions, for example, share details of the feedback mechanism or branch contact details* * *Manage expectations by being honest about limitations. For example, if a programme is not guaranteed or limited to one sector, or there could be a long delay between the assessment and a programme starting, it is important to communicate this clearly to the community. DO NOT MAKE PROMISES ABOUT COMING BACK IF THIS IS NOT CERTAIN TO HAPPEN.* |
| **When will you come back and what will you provide?** | *It is very important to answer this question honestly, otherwise there is a risk of raising false expectations in the community, which can damage the National Society’s reputation and relationship with the community. Do not tell people you will return to provide support, or what type of support they will receive, unless this is already decided and guaranteed.*  *Add information here on:*   * *The purpose of the assessment e.g., what information you are trying to find out and for what purpose. For example, is this an assessment for an already guaranteed programme? Or is it an assessment to decide if this particular community should receive support or not?* * *You can include information here on the type of support the programme or response will provide – but only if this is already decided and definite i.e., installing boreholes, providing health services, building shelters etc* * *When you expect to provide feedback to the community on the outcomes of the assessment* * *How that feedback will be provided i.e., through the community leaders, a community meeting, community volunteers etc* * *How people can ask questions, for example, share details of the feedback mechanism or branch contact details.* |
| **Why am I not receiving support?** | Unfortunately, we do not have enough resources to support everyone in the community and so we are focusing on those who are most vulnerable or most in need of support.  *Add information here on:*   * *The selection criteria for receiving support* * *Why these groups have been selected to receive support* * *How the selection criteria was decided and if anyone in the community was involved in agreeing the criteria* * *How people were targeted to receive support, and who was involved in identifying the recipients* * *How recipient lists were checked and verified by the National Society to ensure fairness* * *How people can formally request for their case to be reviewed if they feel they have been unfairly missed from the list. For example, details of the feedback mechanism. This also requires the programme or response to have an investigation process in place* * *It can help to include details of any activities that will support the community as a whole. For example, hygiene or health promotion, borehole installation or health clinics.*   *See* [*CEA Tool 18: Participatory approaches to selection criteria*](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) *for more guidance on this issue.* |
| **Why are you not providing X?**  *Where X is some type of aid item or support that the National Society is not providing e.g., food, education, shelter etc* | Unfortunately, we cannot meet all the needs in the community. We only have funding and resources to provide *<insert details of what the programme or response will support>*. We hope this is still useful and needed here? We recognize that there are other types of support that is needed by the people who live here and we’re sorry we cannot meet all the needs. However, please contact *<insert name and contact details of another organization who is providing the support requested>* or raise this through our feedback mechanism *<insert details of the feedback mechanism>*.  *Add information here on:*   * *How the programme or response was designed. For example, did the community feed into designing the programme? If so, explain how this process worked and who took part. If the programme or response was informed by donor funding requirements, explain this to the community. Sharing the constraints and limitations the National Society faces can help to build understanding and encourage a more collaborative approach* * *It is important to have information on other organizations operating in the community, so that you can refer people when they request support the National Society cannot provide.* |
| **I’m not happy, how can I complain?** | We are sorry to hear you are not happy with us. Everyone has a right to raise concerns, complaints, or suggestions on how we can improve. Please do this through our feedback mechanism.  *Add information here on the National Society’s feedback mechanism including:*   * *The types of issue the feedback mechanism can respond to, and what it cannot* * *The channels people can use to raise questions, concerns, or suggestions* * *What happens with their feedback and when they can expect a response from the National Society* * *How a response will be provided i.e., will they be contacted directly?* * *How their information will be protected and kept confidential* * *Details of other organizations providing services that people can be referred to if their feedback falls outside the remit of the National Society*   *It is important not to make up and answer or promise to resolve someone’s complaint unless you are sure you can do this.*  *See* [*CEA Tool 15: Feedback kit*](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) *for more guidance.* |
| **How can I get a job or volunteer with the Red Cross Red Crescent?** | *Add information here on:*   * *Where the National Society advertises vacancies and how recruitment processes work – emphasising fairness and transparency* * *Volunteering roles and opportunities available within the National Society* * *How people can sign up as a volunteer i.e., the contact details for the local branch or head office* |
| **Do we have to pay for Red Cross Red Crescent support?** | No, Red Cross Red Crescent services and support is FREE. You should never be asked for money or sexual favours in exchange for assistance. If you are, please report it to us immediately through our feedback system *<insert details of feedback system>*, by calling +41 800 437 272, or speaking to a member of our team whom you trust. |
| **How much longer will you be working in our community?** | *Add information here on:*   * *When the programme started and how long it was intended to last for* * *How much longer the programme will run for, be honest about end dates and be careful not to build expectations that the programme will be extended unless this is definite* * *If an end date is near, include details of how the programme will be handed over to the community and who has participated in these decisions within the community* * *Details of the feedback mechanism if people have more questions or concerns, they would like to raise.*   *See* [*CEA Tool 20: Exit strategy guidance*](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) *for more advice.* |
| **Why are you leaving?** | *Add information here on:*   * *When the programme started and how long it was intended to last for, and if it has been extended* * *Why the programme is ending i.e., intended end date, lack of funds, the needs have been met?* * *What has been achieved during the programme i.e., has the programme achieved what it intended to do?* * *How the programme will be handed over to the community, phases of handover, end dates, and who from the community is involved in the process* * *How people will be kept informed during the handover* * *Details of the feedback mechanism if people have more questions or concerns, they would like to raise.*   *See* [*CEA Tool 20: Exit strategy guidance*](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/) *for more advice.* |