**Ethiopian Red Cross Society**

**Community Engagement and Accountability**

**Guideline**

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**ADDIS ABABA**

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# **FORWARD**

Ethiopian Red Cross Society as a humanitarian organization working in Ethiopia and part of Red Cross and Red Crescent movement in the world intended to promote its inclusion, participation and enhancement of local community engagement in all its thematic areas and operational endeavors. So, ERCS can believe that working with local community is the only and best approach via the use of CEA tools and procedures to assure project sustainability and to the creation of ownership among the local community and target beneficiary. As of many commitment of ERCS to institutionalize CEA the Guideline formulation, contextualization and adaptation passes through different phases, first of all the ERCS CEA initial assessment was conducted, CEA briefing was given to ERCS Senior management and other relevant process was conducted and finally as a Mother working Guideline we refer IFRC and other partner national societies Guidelines and we try to adopt it in country wise. Last but not least the final endorsement of the Guideline still needs the full participation and significant comment of the different stack holders including IFRC and partner national society. Generally the development of this guideline is the reflection of ERCS Commitment to ensure the participation and engagement of local community by considering them as partner of the NS and to address the growing need of IFRC,ICRC and particularly Neither Lands Red Cross to assure CEA mainstreaming in all project and program operations of Ethiopian red cross Society.

# **ABBREVIATIONS**

**BDRT**: branch disaster response team

**CEA:** Community Engagement and Accountability

**CHS:** Core humanitarian services

**DPRD:** Disaster Preparedness and Response Department

**DRM:** Disaster Risk Management

**EPOA**: Emergency Plan of Action

**ERCS**: Ethiopian Red Cross Society

**FACT:** Field Assessment Coordination Team

**GoE**: Government of Ethiopia

**HQ:** Head Quarter

**ICRC:** International Committee of the Red Cross

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

**MEAL**: Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

**MOU:** Memorandum of Understanding

**NDRT**: National Disaster Response Team

**ES/NFI**: Emergency Shelter/Non-Food Item

**NGO**: Non-Governmental organization

**NS**: National Society

**PGI**: Protection, Gender and Inclusion

**PHAST**: Participatory hygiene and sanitation Transformation

**PMER** : Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting

**PNS**: Partner National Societies

**PSS**: Psycho Social Support

**Q&A**: Question and Answer

**RCCE**: Risk Communication and Community Engagement

**RDRT**: Regional Disaster Response Team

**RFL**: Restoring Family Links

**SAF**: Safer Access Framework

**SMS**: Short messaging service

**SOP**: Standard Operating Procedure

**TOR**: Terms of Reference

**VCA**: Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

**WASH:** Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

**KEY TERMS AND DEFINITION**

* **Community-** Community in the context of the CEA Guide and the definition refers to any group of people your programme or activity is aiming to support. Community can be geographical rural, urban, in camps (temporary or permanent) on the move (eg migrants) or Nomadic. It can defined by personal characteristics such as age, gender, disability, vulnerability level, mothers or pregnant women?
  + In today’s world your community may even be online!
* **Community Engagement-** Involving communities in decision-making and in the planning, design, governance and/or delivery of services.
* **Accountability-** accountability within CEA means sharing honest and timely information with communities about who we are and what we are doing – using channels and methods preferred and understood by the community. Communicating regularly with communities – asking and listening to what they think, need, want and believe. And CRITICALLY acting on that information
* **Learning** – this is linked to acting on feedback and is about learning from what the community tell us, from past programmes, avoiding repeating the same mistakes. Also learning from the community who are also a source of knowledge and expertise on their own situation, needs and potential solutions to issues. For example – learning from traditional practices
* **Feedback-** Information, questions or even compliments shared by the community with the organization.
* **Compliant-** An expression of dissatisfaction or discontent with something, and/or someone’s misconduct, that requires a response
* **Rumors-** A story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth, which is spreading in the community and needs to be addressed.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Established by the government decree on 8 July 1935, Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) is the oldest and chartered humanitarian organization working in almost all parts of the country using its 11 regional, 39 zonal, 131 district branches and 5,871 kebele Red Cross committee at grass route level and over 1,200 permanent and contact workers as well as 48,000 volunteers and 5.5 million fee paying members.

Ethiopian Red Cross as an auxiliary to the Ethiopian government on humanitarian matters has contributed a lot in saving the life and improving the livelihood of the disaster affected people together with its movement and non-movement partners across the country. On average ERCS and its movement and non- movement partners assisted between 750,000 and 1,000,000 people every year through emergency response (ES/NFI, WaSH, Emergency health and livelihood) and over 3.5 million people through provision of essential drug as well as development and disaster risk reduction support.

**Strategic Vision, mission and core values**

Following the completion of the 2015-2020 strategic plan, ERCS has revised its strategic plan by envisioning to become the leading national society in Africa between 2021 and 2025. ERCS is striving to prevent and alleviate human sufferings, contribute to the wellbeing of mankind and prevalence of peace by mobilizing the public at large and partners in Ethiopia and around the world. ERCS identified its five core values to be used as a guide towards realization of its vision, mission and staffs and volunteers to abide to these core values.

**Mission**

To prevent and alleviate human sufferings, contribute to the wellbeing of humankind and prevalence of peace by mobilizing the public and partners in Ethiopia and around the world.

**Vision**

To be the leading humanitarian organization in Africa in reaching the vulnerable by 2025.

**Core Values**

* Responsiveness: We provide timely response for the needy.
* Empathy: We develop emotional capacity to understand other’s from their point of reference
* Credibility: We work towards trust worthiness and reliability among all
* Excellence: We provide superior quality service
* Solidarity: We collaborate with movement and non-movement partners

Short summery of the document key topics

1. **WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA)?**

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) helps to put communities at the center of what we do by integrating communication and participation throughout the program cycle or operation. CEA is the process of and commitment to providing timely, relevant and actionable lifesaving and life-enhancing information to communities. CEA emphasizes listening to and acting on community needs, feedback and complaints. CEA helps us gain a better understanding of people’s perceptions and behaviors, so we can better address unhealthy practices. CEA also supports communities to speak out about the issues that affect them to influence decision and policy-makers. CEA is not a stand-alone project; it is an approach that needs to be integrated across all National Society programming, from health to WASH to disaster management. Community driven programmes are more effective, accountable and sustainable and improve the trust and acceptance of National Societies and their volunteers.

**Components of CEA**

* **Community participation and feedback**

CEA supports those involved in our programs 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 program 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 programs 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.

* **Behavior and social change communication**

CEA helps behavior and social change programs to gain an insight into the perceptions and behaviors 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.

1. **Why community engagement and accountability is important**

* **Leads to better and more effective programming**

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

* **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 rumors and prevent potential reputational and security risks, all of which enhances acceptance by communities.

* **Feedback and complaints are good**

Feedback and complaints provide us with valuable information we can use to improve our programs 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 behavior and social change communication initiatives.

* **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.

* **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.

* **Supports positive behavior and social change**

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

* **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.

* **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.

* **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.

* **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.

1. **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.

* **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

* **Behavior and social change communication**

Understand people’s behaviors 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.

1. **RATIONALE OF CEA GUIDELINE TO ERCS**

How was CEA practices within ERCS? What kind of practical things were done before pilot? How was it done?

Although not clearly mentioned as Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), the concept of community engagement/ participation is not new for Red Cross in general and ERCS in particularity. It has been practiced since long when emergency, recovery and vulnerability capacity assessments (VCA) conducted, (Community has been engaged in providing firsthand information when they are responding to questions what happen (disaster)?,the impacts of the disaster and the needs)The community engaged during emergency response beneficiary targeting and communicated as to what emergency items are going to be provided so far, when, where and who is providing the assistance in order to avoid duplication of efforts among government and humanitarian partners

ERCS experiences revealed that community has been the center of focus during vulnerability and capacity assessment conducted to produce development and disaster risk reduction projects/programs. It is not the whole community members that took part in providing information in both emergency operation and development program assessments. Rather representative of the community members from different social groups (women and men, youth, and elderlies, religious and clan leaders and local authorities) will be actively engaged in assessment phase while their participation slightly declined in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases.

Community members have also been engaged in providing early warning information through traditional knowledge (lilting fire at mountainous areas to inform potential flooding to the people residing in low-lying locations). The community has also contributed a lot in giving their feedback and compliance during monitoring, evaluation and post distribution assessments conducted by implementing department, PMER or external evaluators.

Most of the feedback and compliance is given during focus group discussion or key informants interview conducted with community representatives and VCA exercise while developing DRR/resilience/ development projects. Community has been engaged during Red Cross mass sensitization /HIV,WASH and emergency health awareness raising exercise so as to build trust on RC and make a behavioral change to exercise healthier practice. Mobile cinema has been applied by the community in South Gonder to show how they were vulnerable for various disasters and how they struggle to reverse their vulnerability.

Community complaint and response mechanism has already been captured by ERCS strategic plan. The draft DRM policy has incorporated CEA as important approach to be adopted/mainstreamed. However, ERCS did not systematically applied CEA with the objective of integrating communication and participation of the community throughout program cycle and operation and enhance the understanding the community views through most appropriate communication approaches. However it has been practiced with different assessment methods/tools and rely on volunteers and field staff’ face-to-face interactions with the communities ERCS work with.

ERCS in partnership with IFRC attempted to institutionalize CEA after providing CEA training for core staffs. Two coordinators (emergency and PMER) trained on CEA specialist ToT in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2017.A one day CEA training was provided as part of response option analysis training in 2018 for regional program managers and HQ staffs. The three days’ workshop on CEA facilitated in September 2018 for HQ and branch staffs. CEA is piloted within Canadian Red Cross supported emergency response project in Wolaita zone, Kindo Koysha woreda. After many staffs and volunteers trained on CEA, Austria, Danish and Finnish Red Cross supported projects have been practiced some components of CEA activities in their respective intervention areas.

ERCS through its quality assurance and PMER unit has developed beneficiaries /stakeholders’ compliance and feedback manual in December 2007 to be employed while conducting beneficiaries/stakeholders satisfaction survey during and after emergency operation or program/projects carried out. The manual clearly explained its objectives, principles to be guided, roles and responsibility of the national society in managing feedback and complaints. It also explained how feedback and compliance presented to the concerned unit/ responsible individual, the various communication channel, investigation of compliance, how to take corrective measures and responding to the compliances the national societies received.

Currently with the financial and technical support obtained from Netherlands Red Cross IARP project, one CEA coordinator has been employed at head quarter since 2019 to oversee CEA/ensure CEA actions are taking place and incorporate CEA in all the national society’s program and operations by supporting the production of a holistic guideline and adopt the various IFRC CEA tools to the country context and keep track of the progress of the planned activities under different projects.

* Ethiopian Red Cross Society CEA working Group established
* CEA focal person Assigned
* ERCS DRM policy Draft Document Integrate CEA as a cross cutting theme
* ERCS PMER Annual beneficiary satisfaction survey data collection tools integrate CEA component in Assessment Questions
* Staff and Volunteer trained CEA three day training and ToT.
* CEA briefing given to ERCS senior management and gate buy-in
* ERCS Head quarter and selected regional branches Capacity Assessment conducted.
* ERCS community Engagement and Accountability Brochure/leaflet produced
* ERCS currently implement CEA component in different Emergency and development projects.
* Newly revised organizational structure gave due attention for Community Engagement and Accountability.
* CEA component included in grant documents and project agreements produced
* We work with partner and we address that what are the donors need to assure to boost our project sustainability and continuity by addressing safeguarding policies of the Donors based on the agreement and it in turn increases our commitment and Accountability to the local people.

The following points were identified as strength and opportunities as far as CEA is concerned:

* Initiation and good start to institutionalize CEA in ERCS strategic plan, program and operational plan and some policy documents;
* Management buy in to institutionalize CEA
* ERCS has trained staffs and volunteers
* Growing interest of Movement partners in supporting NSs to integrate CEA in programs and operations
* Growing needs of the local community to participate at all stages in a program cycle
* Existing tools and materials

On the other hand, the following gaps were identified during the assessment conducted:

* Lack of systems, standards and tools to implement CEA;
* Absence of assigned CEA focal person in the NS;
* Conflict, tension and violence may limit the implementation of CEA exercise

In addition to the gaps identified in the assessment mentioned above, the following organizational and industry commitments necessitated the need for CEA and a tool to integrate CEA in to the NS Programs, projects and services, these are:

* Code of Conduct
* Principles and Rules for RCRC Humanitarian Action
* Sphere project
* Core Humanitarian Standards

We also need a topic “Scope of the Guideline”

**Our commitment to implement community Engagement and Accountability in Ethiopian Red Cross Society in future time.**

* We commit to work for adequate resource allocation (budget and staff) to improve the Community Engagement and Accountability framework.
* We foster an organizational culture that promotes transparency and accountability to communities.
* We ensure our partners uphold our values and standards for Community Engagement and Accountability understanding and we are committed to accountability.
* We ensure CEA to be integrated within Program/project cycles.
* We enhance and advocate protection to secure the benefit of most vulnerable community groups.

1. **INTEGRATING CEA IN TO THE PROGRAM CYCLE**

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

**Programme Phase 1 Assessment**

Needs assessments involve systematically gathering and analyzing information relating to the needs, conditions, and capacities of persons of concern – community diversity / women, men, girls, and boys of all ages, including those with specific needs /– in order to determine gaps between a current situation and agreed standards In order to identify the real need to the affected /at risk community, it must be conducted with the active involvement of persons of concern.

A needs assessment seeks to do some or all of the following:

* Identify the different diverse needs of disaster risks of targeted communities, and establish priorities.
* Identify existing capacities and resources of in the target communities, including coping mechanisms, as well as partners and government’s levels of intervention.
* Inform emergency or longer-term/multi-year program responses to close gaps between an affected population’s current status and the desired state.
* To Support operational and strategic decision-making, including targeting.
* Inform emergency as well as development program/project design.

During conducting assessment with target community engagement the following basic steps need to be followed.

Step 1: Understanding the context

An initial desk review of available information to understand the context is advisable to be conducted prior to any planning or data collection activity. This involves analyzing existing pre-crisis data and information collected by other actors (e.g. humanitarian organizations, national or local governments, civil society organizations) on the current situation.

In addition, Existing information in the public domain can help inform assessments and improve the assessment team to understand 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.

In the case of sudden-onset emergency or a sudden substantial change in an existing Crisis, information is needed urgently to inform emergency actions. In this case we may not have time to carry out a formal assessment, observing the community and interviewing community members and volunteers can help collect the information and /or we may limit our assessment on secondary data to inform emergency decisions and priorities.

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.
* Prepare staff and volunteers.
* Listen first, ask later.
* **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.
* **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.
* **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.

**Step 3: Decide what information needs to be collected**

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

* **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 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.)?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme need** | **Information needed** |
| **Improve community**  **participation and feedback** | 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. |
| **Provide information as aid** | 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. |
| **Behavior and social change communication** | 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. |
| **Plan evidence based advocacy activities** | Information on the issues affecting the community, the community power relations and who the other stakeholders are. |

* **Engaging with communities in situations of armed conflict**

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 Frameworkfor 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.

**Step 4:Analyze CEA assessment data**

Once assessment data has been collected, it needs to be analyzed 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 program plans. Assessment data, including information on CEA, should be analyzed together by the full programme team so everyone involved can see linkages between different sectors.

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme Need** | **Considerations** |
| **Participation and feedback** | * 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. |
| **Information as aid** | * 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? |
| **Behavior and social change communication** | * What are the key unhealthy or unsafe behaviours * Why do people engage in this type of behavior * 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? |
| **Evidence-based advocacy** | * 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? |

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.

## **Programme Phase 2: Design and planning**

**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.

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.

**Step 2:** Define CEA objectives and audience

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:

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

1. 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.

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 audience.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Channel of communication | Things need to be considered |
| Locally available: | For example, only use television if people have access to TV. |
| Trusted one | Be careful of using a channel if people are suspicious not to trust |
| Accessible channel understood | Consider literacy and avoid printed materials if literacy rates are low. |
| Use multiple channels: | people are more likely to understand and take action if they hear it from more than one source |
| Who is excluded? | 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 |
| Reputation: | Be aware of the potential reputation implications of the channel you select and the impact on neutrality. Such as religious medias. |

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.

Step 4: Develop key messages and frequently asked questions

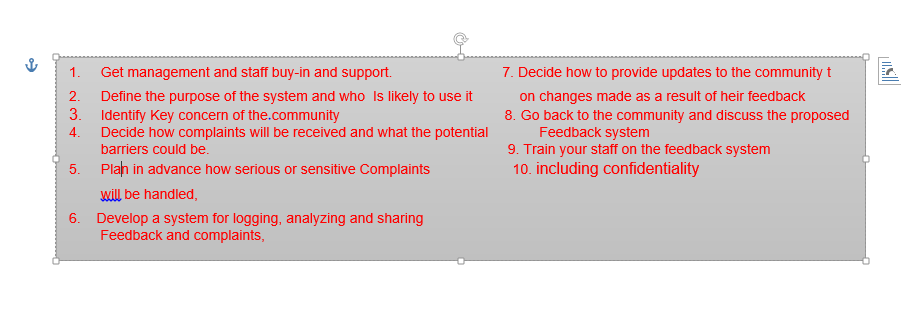
Developing key messages involves more than just writing messages for a poster or leaflet. It also refers to the development of the overall picture you want to share with the community and should be linked to the programme’s objectives. you should test your information with some community members and volunteers to ensure it is well understood, .

Step 5: Plan for community feedback

Community feedback is valuable 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.

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.

10 steps to setting up a feedback and complaints system



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.

## **Programme Phase 3: Implementation and monitoring**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CEA Approach | CEA Activities |
| • 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. | **• 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.

Step 1: Do you need a baseline?

All baseline questions should closely be linked to objectives – the baseline is there to show whether or not the programme has achieved its aims. It is essential to measure CEA in the overall programme’s baseline, rather than carrying out a separate baseline just for CEA activities.

Step 2: Carry out training

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.

Step 3: Deliver activities

At this point 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.

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 in which the national society to be engaged.

Step 4: Adjust activities based on monitoring and feedback

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 behavior and social change messages, radio campaigns, feedback channels used or advocacy techniques based on community and monitoring data.

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.

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.

Step 5: Develop an exit strategy

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 he 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. 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 rumors quickly by addressing them and providing the correct information. For guidance

## **Programme Phase 4-Evaluation and learning**

Evaluation is the process of assessing impact, efficiency and effectiveness of the program or operation. The evaluation 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 program.

An evaluation should attempt to assess how CEA activities i.e mobile cinemas, radio shows or feedback and complaint systems, are contributed to the program’s aims and the impact they had on the community. This should help capture the added value of including CEA in the program. In addition, it measures whether or not the program delivered in a way that was accountable to communities. Program 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.

Integrating CEA into the evaluation process has three key aspects.

Step 1: What to evaluate

The evaluation is an opportunity to discuss with communities what they thought of the program 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 program or operation.

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 program accountability and specific CEA activities, but this table outlines some of the differences:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Program**  **need** | **(1) Impact of CEA**  **activities** | **(2) Program accountability**  **Overall** |
| Participation and  feedback | * 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 program? | * Were the community members all equally satisfied with the help they received? * Were they satisfied with the way the program was delivered? * Did all groups receive regular information about the program? * Did people feel included in decision-making and were they given equal opportunities to participate (men, women, children, minority and vulnerable groups)? |
| Information as aid | * Did people receive and understand the information that was shared? * Did they act on it? * How did providing information as aid benefit the program? | * Did we use the best channels for the community? * What information did us not share that people needed? * Were any groups in the community not reached or excluded? |
| Behaviour and  social change  communication | * What was the impact of CEA behavior and social change activities (e.g., mobile cinema, radio etc.) on people’s behavior? * How did they benefit the program’s aims? * Were CEA activities well-coordinated with other program’s activities? | * Did the community appreciate behavior and social change activities? * Did they address the right risks and barriers? * Were they involved in delivering activities? |
| Evidence-based  advocacy | * How did evidence-based advocacy activities benefit the program’s aims? * What was the outcome for the community? | * 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

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 program’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 program.
* 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.

Step 3: Share evaluations findings within the national society, stakeholders and partners and learning from findings

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.

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, staffs and management within the National Society so future programs do not repeat the same mistakes. It is also good practice to share evaluations with stakeholders and members of the wider Red Cross Movement.

**CEA in Early Warning and Early Action**

**CEA in Emergencies and Risk Communication and Community Engagement**

This section provides a quick overview of how to integrate CEA into a rapidonset 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.

* **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’

## 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 preemergency assessment data as it may no longer reflect the real situation.

I**ntegrate, 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 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.

## 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 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

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.

## 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-tounderstand 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.

## 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.

1. **INSTITUTIONALIZING CEA**

For ERCS to fully institutionalize CEA, this approach must be viewed as an organizational 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**

Incorporating CEA into other core documents and processes will help ERCS to emphasize the importance of CEA as an integrated process. Some examples of

Institutionalize CEA in strategic approaches shall include integrating it within:

* ERCS strategic plan
* PMER or communication frameworks
* DRM Policy and strategy and other sector based policies and strategies
* Partnership documents:
* ERCS mission statement, core values
* 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.

**Program and planning integration**

In additional to the high-level strategy documents of a National Society, CEA actions shall be mainstreamed into:

* Disaster management standard operating procedures (SOPs)
* Annual planning processes
* Program/project funding proposals and plans
* PMER reporting tools
* Emergency appeal plans of action
* Needs assessment reporting tools
* National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) and BDRT training curriculums
* The Branch Development Model and reporting templates have also been revised to include CEA.
* Integrate into existing training courses, and develop a special training curriculum.

1. **Applicability and improvement of the Guideline**

ERCS CEA Guideline shall be amended as per the emerging situations within country, in RCRC movement and even within our national society. The amendment will be effective after having endorsed by the senior management of the nation society.

1. **REFERENCES**

**All of us to insert here**

1. **ANNEXES**
   1. Adopted Tools: IFRC 24 tools

All the available tools can be categorized into Four major sections for simplicity and to make use of all the tools when need be.

**Section one: Tools that can be merged and summarized**

Tool 1. CEA assessment checklist and methods overview

Tool 2. CEA questions-assessment-monitoring-evaluation

Tool 3. Steps to analyze CEA assessment information

Tool 5. Guidance on running a focus group-

Tool 6. Standard Q & A for volunteers and staffs

Tool 9. Checklist of information to share with communities

**Questions for Rapid assessments**

* Existing community structures and their mandate?
* Status of Literacy rate in the community?
* The overall situation of community meetings?
* Access to information, information needs and appropriate channels of the community?
* How is the decision making process in the community?
* What are minority groups, vulnerable groups, marginalized groups and target groups in the community?
* Tensions of political, ethnic and clan along social groups?
* What is the situation of social cohesion and participation in the area?
* What are the typical unsafe practices in the community?(based on our operation thematic area)
* Handling complaints and feedback mechanism of the community?
* Reputation of the NS in the community?

**Questions for monitoring**

* How the overall project implementation was communicated?
* What type of support have you received so far?
* Did you priority needs being met?
* Were feedback and complaint mechanisms in place?
* What kinds of behavoural change has brought as a result of the operation?
* What are the current most urgent issues of the community?
* Conditions of staff, volunteers who have been deployed for this specific operation?
* Any other issues?

**Questions after the assistance was being distributed**

* Had it addressed your most pressing needs?
* Had it addressed people who are most in need?
* Did the assistance provided in a fair way?
* How do you describe the adequacy and quality of the assistance?
* How the level of key stakeholders’ consultation in the community was looks like?
* How was the staff and volunteers supported the distribution?
* Area of improvement?

**Questions for evaluation**

* Have you satisfied in the project progress?
* Have you received regular information about the project implementation?
* Level of the community groups in decision making process?
* Did feedback and complaint handling mechanisms in place?
* Do you require information on other topics?
* Did mobile cinema show included in the operation?
* Any behavioral changes as a result of the NS operation?
* Did your activities addressed the main risks of the community?
* Status of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning/MEAL?

**Section two: tools that can be used as it was**

Tool 4. NS capacity assessment

Tool 7. Guidance to develop A CEA plan of action-

Tool 8. Communication channels-

Tool 10. Message development tool and library

Tool 11. Tips on holding community meetings and how to use information and feedback

Tool 16. Exit strategy Guidance-

Tool 17. Options for sharing evaluations with communities

Tool 18. Lessons learnt workshop guide

Tool 22. Briefing note on code of conduct-

Tool 23. Training on CEA for staff and volunteers

Tool 24. CEA brochures and posters

**Section Three: we can contextualize as per the mission objective and scope**

Tool 12. Template TOR-

Tool 13. Template leaflets and posters

Tool 14. Training- communication skills-materials

Tool 15. Feedback starter-kit

Tool 19. Sample EPOA-

Tool 21. CEA responsibilities for job descriptions

**Section Four: Tools that can be optional or dropped**

Tool 20. CEA in MRCS strategy-

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