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# **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**GUIDELINE, 2020-2025**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) helps people in emergency crisis, whoever and wherever they are in the country. We are part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent global voluntary network, responding to health emergencies, refugee influx, natural disasters and building communities resilience through disaster risk reduction and preparedness. TRCS enable vulnerable people in Tanzania to prepare for and withstand emergencies in their own communities through disaster risk reduction and preparedness measures,

TRCS is a part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the world's largest independent humanitarian network and are committed to and bound by its fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

By doing so, TRCS practices and endeavours to promote Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) in its programmes and operations. In lieu of this, the TRCS hotline works as a channel for gathering feedback and address complaints with regards its activities while promoting community accountability and ensure its resilience.

## **2. Aim of Guide**

This guide is written for TRCS National Society staff and volunteers involved in delivering programmes and operations. It is designed to provide the National Society with a common approach to build CEA systematically into our ways of working. The guide provides an overview of CEA, its support services and more. Remember, CEA is not a stand-alone programme or a one-off activity; it should be integrated into the work we already do to improve its quality and impact. It has not been devised as a set of mandatory rules or as an exhaustive manual for a “perfect running” of the service. On the contrary, it should be seen as a living document that can and will be changed.

## **3. Beneficiaries of Guide**

The direct beneficiaries of this guide are all members of the TRCS community. This includes staff and volunteers from the national level to the regional sub-branch levels. The beneficiaries will use this guide to direct and integrate respective elements of CEA into organizational plans and activities.

## **4. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)**

CEA is an approach to Red Cross and Red Crescent programming and operations. It is supported by set of activities that help to put the community at the centre of what we do, by integrating communications and participation throughout the programme cycle or operation. The set of activities in CEA include community participation and feedback, providing information as aid, behaviour and social change communication and evidence-based advocacy.

## **5. Why is CEA important?**

Community Engagement and Accountability is important because it leads to;

- Better and more effective programming
- Improves acceptance and trust
- Helps to save lives

- Empower people and builds community resilience
- Support positive behaviour and social change
- Recognizes the community as experts and partners
- Supports National societies to fulfil their auxiliary role
- Contributes to the principle of ‘do no harm’ in programming
- Helps to manage community expectations
- Listening to and acting on feedback and complaints

## 6. What are the components of CEA?

### Community participation and feedback



This involves setting up systems for responding and acting on feedback, questions and complaints. Hereby TRCS members are encouraged to share honest, timely and accessible information with communities on National Society activities.

### Providing information as aid

CEA acts at all times but particularly during disasters to provide information that is actionable and potentially life-saving to communities quickly, efficiently and at large-scale, using systems such as SMS, social media or radio broadcasts.



### Behaviour and social change communication



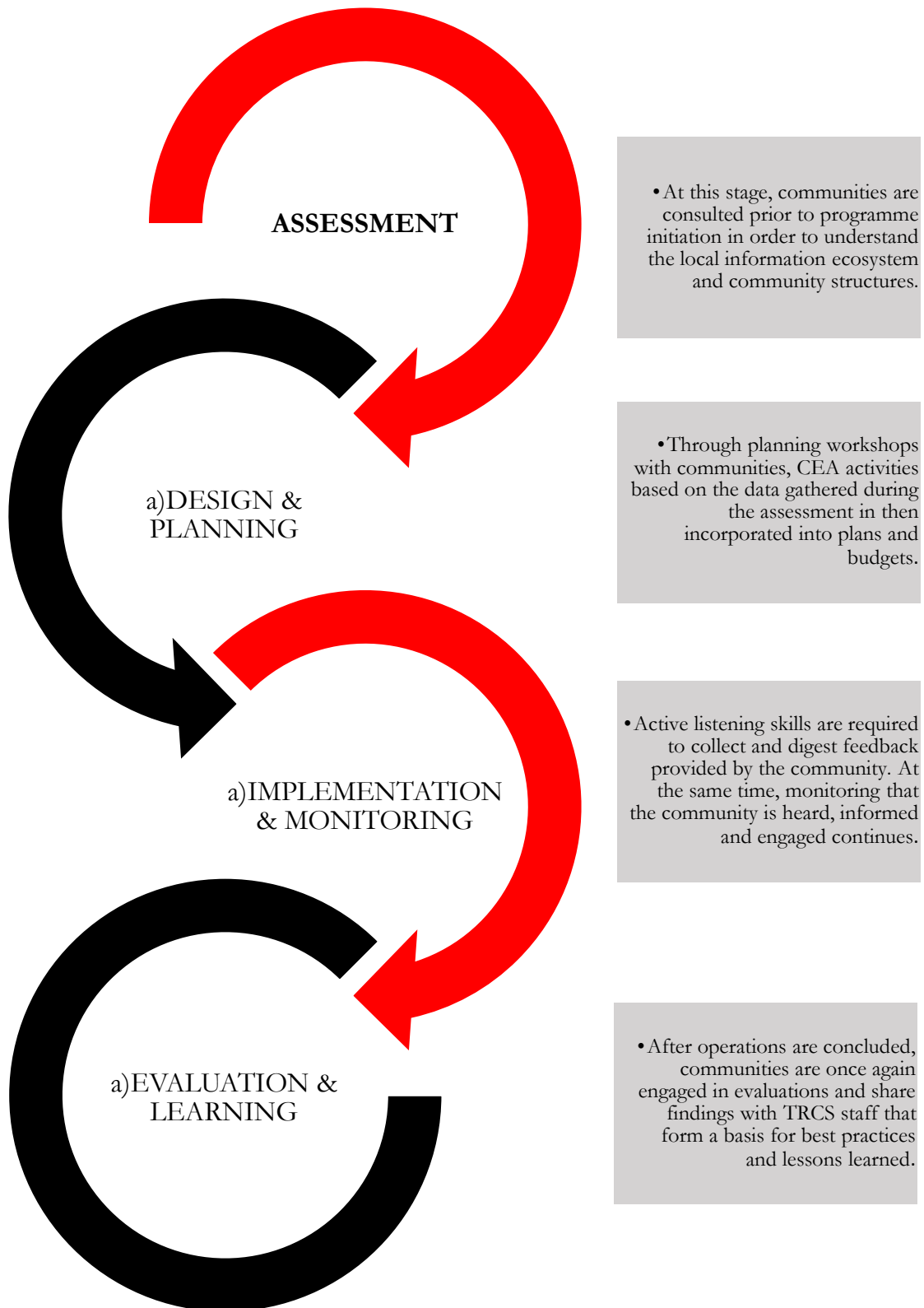
The perceptions and behaviours of different groups help gain an insight in the development of targeted messages and how to efficiently engage communities. This helps programmes adopt safer and healthier practices.

### Evidence-based advocacy

When there are available channels for communities to provide feedback, it allows members to be heard and provides the community with a forum to express the challenges that affect them and their solutions.



7. What are the minimum actions for CEA for programmes and operations?



## 8. CEA Support Services

TRCS uses the following mechanisms to ensure that community is engaged and to increase accountability. They are highlighted below:

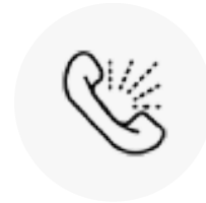
### Hotline

There are two hotline numbers.

**0-800-750-150** – the hotline number for regular to ask questions about TRCS services, & to provide feedback, address complaints and advice

**0-800-750-151** – the hotline number specifically for providing psychosocial support services.

The hotline will be under the CEA focal person which sits in the disaster management department



Hotline

### Help Desks



Help Desk /  
Field Volunteers

A help desk is a tool that organizes communication to help programmes and operations respond to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries more quickly and effectively. Help desks are often deployed during operation in order to gather immediate feedback.

### Committee Meetings

A group that comprises of community representatives and TRCS members who are involved in CEA activities per given programmes. They collaborate to provide their input on how best to conduct programmes or activities.



Committee  
Meetings

### Social Media

A communication channel for the promotion of CEA services such as the hotline numbers as well as to raise awareness of CEA activities and services.



Social Media

## 9. Institutionalizing CEA

To gain the best results of CEA, leadership buy-in from the top of the hierarchy must be attained. After which the following is completed:

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

## 10. Outcomes of CEA

CEA is an approach that helps to build resilient communities. That is, it nurtures strong accountability to communities, sustainable and community driven programs, improve acceptance and trust and finally creates a knowledgeable, skilled and connected communities.

