

Azerbaijan Red
Crescent Society

July-August 2023



ASSESSMENT REPORT

Community Engagement and
Accountability (CEA)



Acronnynms

AzRCS - Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society

IT - Information Technology

CEA - Community Engagement and Accountability

CBF - Capacity Building Fund

FGD - Focus Group Discussions

RC - Regional Center

TRCS - Turkish Red Crescent Society

MHPSS - Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

IDP - Internally Displaced People

Background

The AzRCS is currently unable to systematically manage data and feedback received through online and offline channels. It is therefore not possible to efficiently identify and address overall trends. The plan for introducing a central feedback mechanism has been discussed with the relevant departments throughout 2022. The lack of the necessary IT infrastructure and licenses is a substantial barrier to the systematic management and sharing of data and community feedback. The CBF funding will allow the AzRCS to strengthen its digital environment and ensure sufficient staff and volunteers are able to sustainably record, analyse and act on feedback.

Goals

Ultimately, the goals are for the AzRCS to be able to reach out and be accessible to communities in a structured and efficient manner. AzRCS is able to generate and provide solid and reliable data and design its programmes and humanitarian interventions on the grounds of evidence-based decisions. Digital systems are in place that allow to systematically manage community feedback data. This improved and more accountable system allows community members to understand, trust and use the feedback mechanism.

Commitments

In order to observe the [Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability \(CEA\)](#), development of the central feedback mechanism aims to integrate the 14 minimum actions for CEA throughout the program cycle. This required a preliminary phase of assessment and context analysis to ensure that community needs and preferences drive the design of the centralized feedback mechanism.

Method

The assessment, which included one-on-one surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the community members, was carried out in three pilot areas: Baku RC, Sumgait RC, and Ismayilli RC. Target groups included both people who have and have not received aid from AzRCS, aged 16+. Participants were chosen based on the method of simple random sampling from pilot areas. The questionnaire was created by taking into account the example of the TRCS CEA Assessment and finalized through consultation with MHPSS colleagues, to ensure that the wellbeing of the community members is not damaged. The questionnaire of the assessment was comprised of two languages: Azerbaijani and English, as target group included refugees as well. It covered more than 50 questions under five categories like General Information about AzRCS, Information needs of Community, Access to the Communication Channels, Community Structure and Social Cohesion, Participation and Feedback.

While implementing the assessment, we utilized the KOBO toolbox for mobile data collection. The KOBO toolbox was tested by the AzRCS staff in Baku prior to training with the 17 volunteers who would take surveys with targeted groups. Before conducting the assessment in the field,

during the training, the volunteers became acquainted with the questionnaire and the use of the Kobo through simulation exercises. The training also covered an introduction to the principles of CEA, how to design and manage a feedback mechanism, and the importance of institutionalization as well as effective communication, empathy and active listening skills, non-verbal communication, and building rapport and trust.

The assessment was planned to be carried out between 17 July to 31 July 2023. The duration of the CEA assessment took longer than planned due to a shortage of available trained volunteers, especially from Ismayilli RC, hence it was completed on 7 August with a week extension.

Individual Survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Sample size

A total of 285 individuals were invited to participate. 250 people gave their consent to take part in the one-on-one survey from the three pilot areas of Baku, Sumgait, and Ismayilli, respectively, with figures of 147, 91, and 11.

Totally four FGDs (women, men, and children) were conducted in pilot areas: Baku, Sumgait, and Ismayilli, respectively, with a total of 16, 25, and 21 participants. Two FGDs were conducted with local men and women separately in Baku, and a mixed FGD was conducted in Sumgait and Ismayilli. While choosing the participants for FGDs, attention was given to include the elderly, disabled, and single heads of households in accordance with the “do no harm” principle.

Assessment Team

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Limitations:

- As it was daytime and unavailability of men during day, male participants were less in compared to female participants in Sumgait and Ismayilli.
- Shortage of trained volunteers in the case of Ismayilli
- Due to the summer weather conditions it was not realistic to cover all the questions from the survey

Demographic data and trends

Analysis of the assessment is based on 250 survey responses, and FGDs with the status citizen, IDP and refugees. There were 163 female (65%) and 86 male (35%) respondents in the survey in total. The age distribution of respondents was 18% for 16-28-year-olds, 12% for 29-39, 18% for 40-49-year-olds, 39% for 50-69-year-olds and 12% were over the age of 70.

Gender-Age-Status

| Gender | 16-28 | 29-39 | 40-49 | 50-69 | 70 and over | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | 26 | 21 | 33 | 64 | 19 | 163 |
| Citizen | 19 | 19 | 25 | 51 | 17 | 131 |
| IDP | | | 6 | 11 | 2 | 19 |
| Other | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Refugee registered | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | 19 | 8 | 12 | 34 | 13 | 86 |
| Citizen | 18 | 6 | 10 | 28 | 11 | 73 |
| IDP | | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Refugee registered | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Citizen | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 30 | 45 | 98 | 32 | 250 |

15 respondents belonged to other nationality: Afghan, Arabic, Russian and Turkish.

Gender-Nationality

| Gender | Afgan | Arabic | Azerbaijani | Russian | Turkish | Total |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Female | 8 | 3 | 151 | | 1 | 163 |
| Male | 1 | | 84 | 1 | | 86 |
| Prefer not to say | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Total | 9 | 3 | 236 | 1 | 1 | 250 |

The level of education of the respondents: 7 % with no formal education, 2% primary education, and 36% have completed secondary education, while 28% have completed bachelor and 6% master, 20% have received vocational/technical training. Hence, the highest number of respondents have completed secondary education.



Information needs

- 32% of respondents say they are familiar with the Azerbaijani Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) and its services. While 30% of these respondents learned about AzRC and its services through AzRCS staff and volunteers, 28% learned through friends and neighbors, and 18% learned about AzRCS and its services through social media. According to the answers to the open question of what you know about AzRCS, we can say that people know AzRCS as an organization helping people in need by distributing aid (food is stressed more). 33% of these respondents get information from AzRCS, and 93% of them find this information useful and easy to understand, but 4% of these respondents think that although information is easy to understand, it is not useful. 42% say they know nothing at all regarding AzRCS and its services. These comparable statistics suggest that it needs to improve the dissemination of information about AzRCS and its activities. In this regard, 23% of the respondents had a moderate level of knowledge about AzRCS. According to age respondents' levels of awareness about AzRCS and its services differ. For example, among age groups the respondents over 70 years old are more familiar with AzRCS and its services. There is a similar pattern between male and female respondents in terms of awareness about AzRCS.
- While 78% of respondents want to get information regarding AzRCS and its services in Azerbaijani, 17% want to get it in Russian, and 4% want it in English.
- When it comes to how to get information about services in AzRCS, 40% want to get it through TV and 38% want to get it through a mobile phone. The next preferences are face-to-face at home and face-to-face at AzRCS, with figures of 32% and 23%, respectively. In general terms, social networks like Facebook and Instagram are less demanding; with 16%, they are followed by WhatsApp with a figure of 15%. It is also possible to see similar patterns across genders. However, patterns change according to age groups. For instance, the age group of 16–28 prefers Facebook and Instagram (53%), while WhatsApp comes in at 47%. 64% of the age group 29–39 want to get information about services in AzRCS through mobile phone. Respondents over 70-years-old want to get it face-to-face at home (63%). Hence, it is obvious to say that most of the means are important, and it is better to focus on different means to reach out to people than one or two.
- TV is also the most trustworthy source of information, with a figure of 55%. It is followed by family, friends and neighbors, government, and social media, with figures of 43%, 37%, 32%, and 25%, respectively. There is no strikingly different pattern across genders or various age groups.
- 77% of respondents say that they have no difficulty getting information, while 9% say they have trouble reading, 4% are dependent on other family members to get information, and 3% say that information is inaccessible because of health issues like being visually impaired, disabled, and so on.



Communication channels

- 91% of respondents have mobile phones, while 6% of respondents do not own a phone but their family has one. Across the genders, 97% of female respondents have their own phone, while 88% of male respondents have one. 3.49% of female respondents have family members with a phone, compared to 6.75% of male respondents.
- 79% of respondents have access to the internet, while 21% have no access to the internet. Across the pilot areas, it is possible to observe different patterns. For instance, the same figure for Baku is 87% (yes) and 13% (no), while for Sumgait it is 61% (yes) and 39% (no).
- 97% of the respondents who are familiar with AzRCS and its services have visited the social media pages of AzRCS. Among those who visit the social media sites of the AzRCS, Facebook is the most popular (82% of respondents), followed by Instagram (52%).
- Radio is not popular among the respondents. Only 9% of respondents listen to the radio.



Community structure and social cohesion

- There is not a strong collective decision-making process. 46% of the respondents say that they don't know how decisions are made. 18% of the respondents inform no decisions are made. While 9% of respondents say decisions are made by community leaders, 18% of respondents inform us that decisions are made at community meetings. However, according to the survey results, we cannot say that there are regular community meetings. For instance, 35% of respondents say that they do know if they have community meetings; 35% of respondents say they do not have community meetings. 21% of respondents say they have community meetings, and among those who are aware of community meetings, they participate at the meetings very often (35%), and 63% visit community meetings sometimes.
- There is no obvious strong intention to be involved in the process of decision-making. So, 33% of respondents say that being involved in decision-making is not important to them, and 26% of respondents say that they do not know how important being involved in decision-making is to them. While 27% say it is important for them, only 11% say it is very important.
- People interact with the local community mostly at work (35%), in shops and health centers (22%), and at AzRCS local branches (16%). They rate the relationship between the host community and refugees in their location as good (73%) and fair (13%).
- 21% of respondents say information is shared in their community through a mobile phone, 28% say that no information is shared in their community, 17% say information is shared by a community leader, and 15% say people share information through social media in their community.



Participation and feedback

- 40% of respondents know how to communicate with AzRCS for their questions and feedback about its services through their mobile phones; 39% of respondents know this by visiting AzRCS; 19% of respondents know how to communicate with AzRCS through Facebook; others do this through Instagram, e-mail, Whatsapp, or SMS (1–9%). However, 19% of respondents do not know how to communicate with AzRCS for their questions and feedback about services at all.
- Generally, 39% of respondents say that AzRCS is very open to suggestions, 9% think it is somewhat open to suggestions, and 1% of respondents say that AzRCS does not accept suggestions, while 48% of respondents have never made any suggestions to AzRCS.
- 28% of the respondents who applied to AzRCS with questions, complaints, or feedback have not received any response. 41% of respondents say they have received a response to their questions, complaints, or feedback. 12% say they have faced both kinds of cases.
- 44% of respondents would like to get a response to their feedback by telephone. 29% of respondents prefer face-to-face meetings with representatives of the organization. 18% say they also prefer the telephone, but it should be anonymous. When it comes to the time interval for replying to feedback, 73% of respondents think their feedback should be responded to in 1-3 days, while 18% of respondents think it can be responded to in 1-2 weeks.
- Respondents prefer feedback boxes to be placed in AzRCS local branches (35%) more than in headquarters (5%). Supermarkets as a place for feedback boxes are the second preference among respondents (34%).
- In relation to **sensitive feedback**, respondents prefer to use similar channels. 38% of respondents prefer face-to-face communication privately at AzRCS, 28% by telephone, 19% privately at home, and 12% by telephone, but it should be anonymous. 13% of respondents do not feel comfortable asking questions or raising complaints at all.
- While raising sensitive questions, 42% of respondents prefer the hotline; 27% say that any project worker in AzRCS is alright with them; however, 15% say they prefer female project staff in AzRCS. 9% of respondents also prefer volunteers in that case.
- 42% of respondents prefer not to make anonymous complaints. However, 19% of the respondents prefer to make complaints anonymously for all issues, and 33% would like to make anonymous complaints only for sensitive issues.



Focus Group Discussions

- There are 44 females and 15 males out of 62 participants who are Azerbaijani and 3 out of them are children. The participants have citizen status or IDP, with figures of 50 and 11, respectively. While 37 participants are currently working, 21 participants do not work actively for different reasons, like old age, disability, caring for a disabled family member, and so on.
- Most people get to know about AzRCS while volunteers distribute aid in their streets; some of them have been directed to AzRCS by different organizations like municipalities or workers at hospitals. Some of them have been directly contacted by workers of regional centers, thanks to people who informed regional centers about the ones in need. For instance, two participants from Baku RC said workers from regional centers contacted them directly.
- There are some barriers to the flow of information. Firstly, we can mention people who have trouble writing or reading with Latin alphabets, especially people over 50. We need to focus on oral communication channels to reach out to these people, too. Secondly, there are some rumors that show a lack of belief in the transparency of activities implemented by AzRCS in the community to a certain degree. For this, participants also suggested that AzRCS activities be broadcast on TV and face-to-face meetings be held very often. For example, participants from Baku RC suggested meetings be held every two months. Sumgait RC has regular meetings with people, at least every two months.
- Most people want WhatsApp groups to be created in order to inform members of the community. They think that in this way, they can participate in the process of making decisions more easily. Sumgait RC has already had similar experience; communities have WhatsApp groups to discuss issues. Besides WhatsApp groups, Ismayilli RC also suggested alternatively mass SMS and face-to-face meetings, especially in villages where there is a lack of technology or where the main population is elderly, and they cannot use their phones properly.
- Generally, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are used by respondents. Some follow the pages of the AzRCS to get information regarding aid. But official pages are not in high demand.
- The participants would also like to reach out to AzRCS by calling. However, they prefer face-to-face meetings over anonymous calls, especially in the case of sensitive feedback. They would like to have feedback boxes in the vicinity of local branches of AzRCS. Participants from Sumgait RC have mentioned they already know about these kinds of feedback boxes organized by state bodies.
- The participants from regional centers have different thoughts about the time interval to reply back to feedback. Participants from Ismayilli RC and Baku RC think two weeks are enough to reply back with feedback; however, the participants from Ismayilli RC also added that sensitive feedback should be responded to in five days. The participants from Sumgait RC suggested all kinds of feedback should be responded to within 48 hours.

The questions that used in the assessment:

Link through Kobo Toolbox - <https://eenew.ifrc.org/x/SqGpTkkG>

If you have any questions, please contact:

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