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NATIONAL SOCIETY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY AMBASSADORS NETWORK

FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Strategy 2030 calls for an urgent shift of leadership and decision-making to the local level – placing local communities at the centre of change so our actions are effective, inclusive, and sustainable. Achieving this requires the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies to adopt a more systematic, consistent, and high-quality approach to community engagement and accountability by institutionalizing it within strategy, policy, process and practices so it becomes an integral part of all programmes and operations.

Despite longstanding commitments to strengthen accountability to communities¹, coupled with technical support and practical resources², many National Societies have still faced a variety of challenges institutionalizing community engagement and accountability within their ways of working. These include limited understanding and prioritisation, inadequate and inconsistent resourcing, and a lack of dedicated, skilled staff to drive institutionalization efforts forward.

The Community Engagement and Accountability Ambassadors Network aims to address these gaps and challenges by leveraging and coordinating Movement-wide support to provide National Societies with sustained, multi-year, technical and financial support to institutionalize community engagement and accountability. This support is provided through a structured programme approach, with key milestones to meet and indicators to measure progress, supported by a Steering Group comprising IFRC, partner National Societies and National Societies. In exchange, with the support of a mentor(s), National Society Ambassadors document and share their experiences and lessons learned and advocate to their peer National Societies on the importance of stronger accountability to communities. This framework helps to guide the process through which the Ambassadors Network will provide structured and coordinated support and mentoring to National Societies to institutionalize community engagement and accountability.

¹ For example, the <u>Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance and the International</u> <u>Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief</u>. More recently, leadership adopted the <u>Movement-wide Commitments on Community Engagement and Accountability</u> at the <u>2019 Council of Delegates</u>.

² For example, the recently revised <u>CEA Guide, toolkit, feedback kit</u>, and <u>training packages</u>



2. RATIONALE FOR THE AMBASSADORS NETWORK

- The quality of community engagement and accountability is higher when it is institutionalized: Evidence³ shows the quality and consistency of community engagement and accountability is improved when it is integrated at the strategic and technical level, for example in organizational strategy, plans, policies, and other sectors' approaches and tools. This helps community engagement to be more continuous and less project based. It also encourages accountability to be seen as cross-cutting and a shared responsibility.
- 2. **Institutionalization needs a coordinated, structured approach:** Combining resources and adopting a collective, methodical approach to institutionalization internally and with Movement partners will increase impact and lead to greater success.
- 3. **Inconsistent resources have been a major barrier to success:** Recognising organisational change takes several years of sustained efforts, the Community Engagement and Accountability Ambassadors Network would ensure National Societies receive seed funding and technical support and mentoring over a minimum period of 18 months.
- 4. **Building an evidence base on what works:** To support peer learning between National Societies and refine, improve and accelerate institutionalization processes
- 5. **Building leadership buy-in**: The Ambassadors Network requires leadership support, which is critical to ensure efforts to strengthen accountability are prioritized, funded, staffed and integrated in plans, policies and processes.
- 6. **Creating a network of advocates**: The Ambassadors approach will build a network of advocates amongst National Society leadership who can help influence their peers and share lessons learned on the process and value of strengthening organisational approaches to community engagement and accountability from a leadership perspective.
- 7. **National Society, not donor, driven**: Often National Societies who are committed and working to strengthen accountability approaches do not get the support they need because they are not a priority donor-country.
- 8. **Structured milestones**: National Societies agree to meet certain commitments on an annual basis, which provides structure to the process and helps build a level of commitment to the network organisation wide.
- 9. **Valuable learning for others**: Evidence and lessons learned on institutionalization and organisational change would be valuable for other sectors within the Movement.

³ For example, see <u>https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/all-the-evidence-we-need/</u> and <u>https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/closing-the-gap-a-strategy-to-strengthen-cea-in-africa-2020-2023/</u>



3. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE AMBASSADORS NETWORK

- 1. Provide targeted support to a dedicated group of National Societies to improve the quality, consistency, sustainability and scale of community engagement and accountability by institutionalizing it within organizational ways of working and strengthening staff, volunteer and leadership understanding and capacity.
- 2. Gather and share evidence on the impact of and most effective approaches to institutionalize community engagement and accountability to help accelerate efforts Movement-wide.
- 3. Build a network of advocates amongst National Society leadership who influence their peers and share lessons learned on the importance of community engagement and accountability to quality, trust, and sustainability.
- 4. Encourage a more coordinated and collaborative approach among Movement members who are supporting community engagement and accountability efforts within National Societies.

4. KEY COMMITMENTS FOR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

National Societies joining the Ambassadors Network will be supported to improve the quality, consistency and scale of community engagement and accountability by embedding the <u>Movement-wide Minimum Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability (CR/19/R1)</u> within their organizational ways of working. By the end of the 18 months, it is expected National Societies will achieve the community engagement and accountability standard outlined within the new IFRC Certification on Trust and Accountability⁴. This includes the following five requirements:

- 1. The National Society has integrated community engagement and accountability in its strategy, policy and procedures and ensured its staff and volunteers have the required knowledge, skills, and competencies to put this into practice.
- 2. The National Society is transparent with and trusted by the people and communities it serves.
- 3. The National Society understands the diversity of needs, vulnerabilities, risks and capacities of the people and communities they seek to serve through impartial assessments and regular context analysis.
- 4. The National Society facilitates the participation of local people and communities, including National Society volunteers, in decisions that affect them.

⁴ Previously part of OCAC, the occupational capacity assessment and certification.



5. The National Society systematically listens to, responds to, and acts on feedback from the people and communities it serves.

National Societies have the flexibility to develop their own plans to meet the above requirements, based on their specific context, needs, and capacities. However, the above requirements should be the end result all National Societies joining the Ambassadors Network are working towards. It is also essential that all Movement partners supporting community engagement and accountability within the country agree to work together on one overall coordinated country plan – as opposed to separate plans and activities for each partner.

In addition, National Societies will be expected to monitor, document and report their progress and lessons learned and be ready to share their experiences with peer National Societies and the wider Movement, including advocating to others on the importance of institutionalizing community engagement and accountability.

NATIONAL SOCIETY	 Identify a focal point to lead the Ambassadors process. This person will likely be the National Society's Community Engagement and Accountability manager or staff lead
	 Establish a National Society-led community engagement and accountability working group to coordinate and ensure National Society wide and partner involvement. This group should include programmes, operations, leadership and support services, IFRC, partner National Societies, and where possible, ICRC
	 Develop and implement a National Society One Country Community Engagement and accountability plan and budget, to strengthen the quality, consistency, sustainability and scale of community engagement and accountability by institutionalizing it within the National Society's ways of working and integrating it within programmes and operations – including reviewing and revising this as needed
	 Monitor, document and report on progress and lessons learned throughout the process – including the impact of stronger community engagement and the best approaches to accelerate institutionalization Attend monthly calls with their mentor, and bi-annual check-in calls with the Ambassadors Network Steering Group
	 Identify funding and partnership opportunities to further scale up and sustain community engagement and accountability approaches

5. AMBASSADORS NETWORK ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



	 Share experiences and lessons learned within the National Society and with peer National Societies and the wider Movement in approximately 3 meetings/webinars per year (to be determined by the NS group) National Society leadership advocate to their peers in different fora (ex: International Conference) on the value of strengthening organisational approaches to community engagement and accountability- from a leadership perspective
	 In the medium term, support and promote the Ambassadors Network to peers and partners as evidence of the impact of the network is gathered In the long-term, mentor new National Societies joining the Network
AMBASSADOR	 Member of the Ambassadors Network Steering Group⁵
MENTOR	• Support the National Society to develop their One Country Community Engagement and accountability Plan together with IFRC, Partner National Societies, and where possible, ICRC – and ensure the Terms of Reference is agreed and signed with the National Society
	 Attend monthly calls with the National Society and provide in-person visits to provide CEA training, technical support and mentoring as needed and agreed between the National Society and the mentor Document and share lessons learned about the Ambassadors Network process, including identifying opportunities for improvements
	 Support the National Society to review and revise their community engagement and accountability plan as and when needed, including addressing long term sustainability
	Support the National Society to reflect and prepare progress reports
	 Support the National Society to identify funding and partnership opportunities to further scale up and sustain community engagement and accountability approaches
	• Support the final evaluation at the end of the process
STEERING GROUP	Global coordination of the Community Engagement and Accountability Ambassadors Network – including strengthening partner coordination
	Secure multi-year funding for new trainee Ambassadors
	Manage the application and selection process for new Ambassadors
	 Allocate a mentor to new Ambassador National Societies – including resolving any issues between the National Society and their mentor

⁵ Currently known as the Community Engagement and Accountability Task Force for the Ambassadors Network.



- Facilitate kick-off and check-in calls with National Societies and mentors
- Review and approve the release of funding to National Societies based on their community engagement and accountability plans and reports
- Gather, synthesize and share evidence on the value of institutionalizing community engagement and accountability and the best approaches to adopt to help accelerate efforts Movement-wide
- Identify opportunities for National Societies to share lessons learned and advocate on the importance of community engagement and accountability to peers and Movement partners
- Identify funding and partnership opportunities for National Societies to scale up and sustain community engagement and accountability approaches
- Coordinate and fund the final evaluation at the end of the process
- Use evidence to advocate to Movement leaders on the importance of community engagement to quality, trust, and sustainability.

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6. THE AMBASSADOR NETWORK PROCESS

Application & selection

- Application launched to join the Ambassadors Network
- New 'trainee ambassadors' selected by the Ambassadors Network Steering Group

Planning Month 1

- Kick-off meeting between the NS, their mentor, and the Ambassadors Network Steering Group to agree key commitments and milestones
- NS and mentor prepare a detailed 'one-country' CEA action plan and budget – with all partners
- Terms of Reference signed
- 1st tranche of

Implementing Months 2-6

- Baseline survey
- NS implements activities within their action plan
- Monthly check-ins with mentor including inperson visits as
- needed Documenting and
- sharing lessons learned
- funding released

- Reporting Month 9
- NS submits a report on the first 8 months of the process
- Check-in call with NS, mentor and steering Group
- NS action plan revised if needed based on challenges and lessons learned
- Second tranche of funding released based on progress against agreed milestones

Implementing **Months 10-17**

- NS continues implementing activities with mentor support
- Monthly check-ins with mentor including inperson visits as needed
- Documenting and sharing lessons learned
- Applying for additional funding to sustain and scale CEA approaches

Evaluation Month 18

- Evaluation to assess NS achievements and lessons learned and identify potential
- improvements to the Ambassadors process
- Final call with the NS. mentor and Steering Group
- Sharing lessons learned

Graduation

- NS joins the network as a full ambassador
- NS scales up advocacy to peers on CEA
- NS continues efforts to strengthen CEA (CEA plan or strategy)
- NS mentors new trainee ambassadors



7. MONITORING & REPORTING

National Societies are required to:

- 1. Conduct a baseline within the first 2 months of the process, using the global community engagement and accountability core indicators below. A template baseline format and guidance will be provided
- 2. Report on progress against their community engagement and accountability plan, milestones and budget at 8 months. A template reporting format will be provided gathering both qualitative and quantitative findings, including progress, successes, challenges and outstanding needs and gaps. If possible, the NS should also conduct a follow-up community survey to track progress against the baseline
- 3. Endline survey and evaluation in month 18 to report against their plan and baseline and gather lessons learned on the Ambassadors Network process and overall impact.

The following indicators⁶, taken from the IFRC's indicator bank and the community engagement and accountability core indicator set, are applicable for the Ambassadors Network:

Process indicators

- 1. A community engagement and accountability policy, strategy or plan is in place for the National Society
- 2. Community engagement and accountability is integrated in the National Society's strategy or plan with clear goals, designated CEA budget lines, and key performance indicators
- 3. Number of staff, volunteers and leadership trained on community engagement and accountability within the organisation/programme/operation
- 4. A functioning feedback mechanism in place for the whole National Society⁷
- 5. Number of methods used to enable communities to participate in planning and managing programmes and operations (e.g., community committee meetings, planning workshops, focus group discussions, town hall meetings etc)

⁶ For more details on how to measure these indicators and definitions see:

https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/IFRCSharing/EZHO_S8jT4pBtcB9sx9ouIoBZXu9rqOAbjitrZO74MKXtA?e=BePUnh

⁷ Functioning means; having at least two feedback channels; clear processes to record, analyse, share and track feedback; at least 70% of actionable community feedback is responded to; changes are made based on feedback received; and safe and confidential processes to refer, manage and provide an initial response to sensitive feedback within 24-48 hours are in place. In place for the whole National Society means currently operating and able to be used by the public, and covering at least 70% of the areas where the National Society is active, including supporting programmes and operations.



6. Number of methods established to communicate with communities about what is happening in the National Society and its programmes and operations, including selection criteria if these are being used.

Outcome indicators – through surveying community members

- 1. Percentage of people surveyed who trust the National Society to put the people it supports and their needs first, above anything else
- 2. Percentage of people surveyed who say they trust the information and services provided by the National Society (option to add about climate, early warning, health, hygiene, disaster risk reduction etc if a specific sector is focused on in the National Society plan)
- 3. Percentage of people surveyed who feel the National Society's support/services meets their most important needs/provide useful support
- 4. Percentage of people surveyed who feel their opinion is considered in decisions about services, programmes and operations
- 5. Percentage of people surveyed who report they know how to provide feedback about the National Society
- 6. Percentage of surveyed people who feel the National Society has communicated well about plans and activities **OR** Percentage of people surveyed who report receiving useful, actionable information from the National Society (option to add about climate, early actions, health, hygiene, disaster risk reduction etc)⁸
- 7. Percentage of people surveyed who feel treated with respect by the organisation's/programme's/operation's staff and volunteers.

8. FUNDING

The Ambassadors Network Steering Group is responsible for sourcing 18 months of sustained funding for National Society trainee ambassadors. This funding is released in two tranches, based on the plan and budget prepared at the start of the process. The first tranche is released within the first month of the process and should be sufficient to cover activities up to month nine. The second tranche is released in month nine based on the National Society mid-term report against its plan, milestones and budgets. The timeframe of funding tranches can be revised as needed and depending on National Society needs and progress.

The Steering Group and the National Society community engagement and accountability working group should develop a sustainability plan and identify opportunities for ongoing funding, including

⁸ The National Society can choose to use both or either of these communication indicators depending on their context.



supporting applications to the IFRC Capacity Building Fund, connecting with partners willing to support institutionalization, and integrating community engagement in programme and operational budgets.



ANNEX 1: DETAILED ACTIONS FOR EACH STAGE OF THE AMBASSADOR NETWORK PROCESS

The table below is intended to provide a guide to National Societies and mentors on activities that should take place at each stage in the Ambassadors Network. While most of these activities should apply in most contexts, there will be deviations depending on individual National Society needs and challenges. National Societies and their mentors can discuss and agree where the activities below will need to be adapted to suit the context.

PHASE 1 - APPLICATION PROCESS	
ACTION	STEPS / GUIDANCE
Application and selection	• Funding is secured to support ideally 5 National Societies (1 per region) for 18 months
(approximately 4- 6 weeks)	• A call for applications for join the community engagement and accountability Ambassador Network is launched in each region – ideally by the Regional Director to Secretary Generals, with support from the Regional CEA coordinators
	Criteria for National Society selection:
	 Completed a CEA self-assessment and identified key areas which need to be strengthen/scaled up⁹. If a self-assessment has not been completed, this should be a priority in the planning phase NS has an assigned CEA focal point or staff position
	 NS focal point for this programme should speak sufficient English to participate in meetings, to exchange with other regions – or receive support from the IFRC Country, Cluster or Regional office to participate in meetings in English (Translation will be provided for larger events, and where possible) NS leadership is committed to and prioritises strengthening community engagement and accountability
	 The NS' programmes and sectors (i.e., health, disaster response, climate, migration etc) are committed to strengthening community engagement and accountability

⁹ The self-assessment should be recent enough to still reflect the National Society's needs and gaps, for example within the last 2-3 years.



	 To apply, NS need to complete the application form and submit the following documents:
	 Letter from NS leadership explaining briefly why the NS wants to strengthen community engagement and accountability and how it plans to achieve this
	 A draft CEA action plan setting out key CEA priorities the NS would like to achieve through being part of the Ambassadors Network. If the NS does not have a plan in place already, this can be a simple one-page outline of the key outcomes. If possible, it should include outcomes, activities, resources required, people involved and timeline. It should also include how CEA will be integrated into relevant thematic areas such as Climate, Migration or Protection Gender & Inclusion. Applicants can use tool 3.d from the CEA toolkit if they need a template for this: https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/Tool-3dAction-plan-worksheet-1.docx
	 A draft budget for the action plan outlining how they will use the funding provided through the Ambassadors Network. This should not include travel to attend Ambassadors Network events. Applicants can use tool 6 from the CEA toolkit if they need a template for this: https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/Tool-6CEA-budgeting-tool.xlsx The Ambassadors Network Steering Group are responsible for selecting ambassadors using the above selection criteria
	 As part of the selection process, members of the Ambassadors Network Steering Group will be identified as a mentor for new ambassadors joining the network. This named mentor can be from the IFRC, a partner NS, or an NS, who has successfully graduated as a full ambassador. The National Society will have a role in selecting who their mentor will be.
PHASE 2 - P	PLANNING
ACTION	STEPS / GUIDANCE
Kick-off call	• The Steering Group sets up a kick-off call between the selected NS, their mentor and the Ambassadors Network Steering Group to brief



(within 2 weeks of being selected)	the National Society on the process, reporting requirements, and agree key areas of focus and milestones
	• The mentor and National Society focal point should have a one-to- one call to discuss expectations of the mentor / mentee relationship
Planning (within the first month)	• The National Society gathers together all partners who are supporting them on community engagement and accountability, including IFRC at the country, cluster and region, Partner National Societies, and where possible, ICRC, to develop a one-country community engagement and accountability plan for how they will meet the key institutionalization commitments. The plan should include outcomes, outputs, activities, timelines, roles and responsibilities, monitoring plan and budget. National Societies can use the template workplan or strategy from the <u>CEA Toolkit</u>
	 If the National Society has not already carried out a community engagement and accountability self-assessment, this should be conducted as part of planning using <u>Tool 3 in the CEA toolkit</u>
	• The plan and budget are reviewed by the Ambassador mentor and the Steering group, and following any clarifications or amendments, are approved
	 A Terms of Reference is prepared and signed by the National Society, Steering Group Chair, and mentor. Use the Ambassadors Network template Terms of Reference The first tranche of funding to cover the first 9 months of the process is released to the National Society
PHASE 3 – I	MPLEMENTATION & MONITORING
ACTION	STEPS / GUIDANCE
Baseline survey	 The National Society completes a baseline survey against the global community engagement and accountability core indicators, including a survey of community members. This can be a survey in selected areas (it does not have to be country-wide). A template is available for this baseline The results of the baseline survey are shared with the Ambassador mentor and the Steering group as well as the regional CEA coordinators and regional CEA networks
Implementation	• The National Society implements the outputs and activities within their community engagement and accountability plan. It is important



	this is a National Society-wide effort with input from sectors, branches and leadership and partners
	• The National Society and their mentor have monthly check-in calls to discuss progress, successes, challenges, lessons learned, and any additional support needed. The mentor should also be available for in-country visits to support the National Society with trainings, workshops, technical advice, field visits and mentoring as needed
	 At the 9-month point, the National Society and their mentor should review the community engagement and accountability plan and identify any adaptations needed for the remaining 9 months
	• The Steering Committee shares additional funding opportunities with National Societies and support them, with their mentor, to apply for these i.e., the IFRC Capacity Building Fund
Monitoring, reporting and	The National Society monitors progress against activities and milestones in their plan throughout the process
sharing learning	 The National Society captures any case studies, examples, lessons learned and evidence on the impact of community engagement and accountability and the process of institutionalization, including the Ambassadors Network, and how this could be improved The National Society is willing and available to share lessons learned with their peers through webinars, workshops, events and case studies including sharing these through the community of practice and the community engagement hub
	• The Steering Group identifies and creates opportunities for National Societies to share lessons learned with their peers and the Movement. For example, through webinars, workshops, case studies and peer-to-peer visits
	• The National Society produces a mid-term report in month 9 detailing activities implemented, progress against milestones, against the baseline if a mid-term survey is conducted and financial situation
	 The report is reviewed by the mentor and Steering Group, and following any clarifications, the second tranche of funding is released provided 60% of activities have been completed and 60% of the budget utilised Mentors share feedback with the Steering Group on successes, challenges, and suggestions for improvement, in relation to the
	Ambassadors Network process through a simple reporting form



	 The Steering Group coordinates a mid-point check-in call with the National Society and mentor to discuss progress, challenges, and plans for the rest of the process The Steering Group shares learning from the Ambassadors Network with Movement staff and leadership and reviews and adapts the
	Ambassadors process based on this learning
Evaluation	• An endline survey and evaluation are coordinated and funded by the Steering Group in partnership with the National Society and mentor. This should include an endline survey against the baseline question and narrative report. The evaluation should seek to understand impact of strengthening community engagement and accountability on the quality and effectiveness of National Society work and any lessons learned or improvements on the process of institutionalization and the Ambassadors Network
	• The Steering Group synthesizes learning from National Society Ambassadors and identifies opportunities to share this learning more widely within the Movement
PHASE 4 –	GRADUATION
ACTION	STEPS / GUIDANCE
Member of the Ambassadors Network	 At the end of the 18 month process the National Society will graduate as a full member of the Ambassador Network, provided improvements in community engagement and accountability practices are identified through the endline survey and evaluation Despite 'graduating' they should continue efforts to sustain and scale
	up community engagement and accountability as needed. For example, guided by a CEA Strategy they may have developed as part of the Ambassador process
	up community engagement and accountability as needed. For example, guided by a CEA Strategy they may have developed as part