Tip sheet on CEA for CVA

Disclaimer
This version of the tip sheet has been reviewed and updated by Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) staff in Europe and Geneva to enhance resources, tools, and contextual relevance. Originally, it was developed as part of the Cash in Emergencies Toolkit.

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) helps put decision making power in the hands of communities, supporting people to recover from crisis with dignity. This is only possible when communities themselves participate and are included in planning and decision making throughout the programme cycle. This tip sheet provides practical actions you can take before, during and after Cash and Voucher Assistance activities to help integrate Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) principles, as well as Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) considerations. The document also includes links to specific guidance and tools.

Further guidance on CEA can be found in the RCRC Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (2nd edition). The guidance is designed for National Societies who want to strengthen the way they engage with communities and is relevant for all sectors using CVA. The accompanying revised CEA Toolkit includes templates, checklists and detailed guidance, and an introductory E-Learning on CEA in CVA is freely available to all on the IFRC Learning Platform.

Preparedness and design

- During the feasibility study or rapid market assessment, speak to community representatives about their needs, intentions, and preferences for receiving cash or in-kind assistance. If cash is the preferred option, ask how they would like to receive the cash (e.g., mobile money transfer, prepaid card or physical cash).

- Ask whether there are existing community committees you can contact to introduce the Red Cross, our fundamental principles and the purpose of the CVA programme. Make sure to involve women, men, older people, people with disabilities, and people from other groups who may be marginalised or particularly vulnerable. If there is no pre-existing committee then consider creating one. Make sure the role of the committee throughout the phases of the response - including before, during and after CVA activities - is clearly defined.

Questions to consider during initial meetings with community representatives
• *What language do people most commonly speak in the community?* • *What is the best method to inform people in the community of what is happening? For example, which communication channels do they use?* • *Are there any tensions in the community we should be aware of when designing this programme? Is there a chance we could put anyone at risk?* • *How would people in this community prefer to receive cash? Would there be any barriers for anybody, such as older people, those with underlying health conditions, or people with disabilities, to receive cash or access markets?* • *If a physical distribution is necessary, when should a cash distribution happen so that men, women, people with disabilities, laborer's, single-headed households etc. are able to attend?* • *What would be a safe location for the distribution site? Are men, women, older people, people with disabilities etc. able to safely travel to this location?* • *How can we ensure that people living with disabilities, those with underlying health conditions, older people, and others who may face challenges are able to access the distribution?* • *How can we ensure that children do not become separated at the distribution site?*

❖ **Use Tool 12 from the CEA Toolkit for a template ToR for a community committee**

- Use participatory approaches and techniques to agree selection criteria with the community and to identify who should receive support, including do no harm considerations. Managing selection processes with care, respect, and transparency is critical to ensuring we meet the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, and independence by reaching those most in need of support. For detailed information on participatory approaches to selection criteria and targeting please see "TOOL 18: Participatory approaches to selection criteria and targeting" from CEA in CVA kit or from here.

- Targeting specific groups can cause tensions. Discuss the proposed eligibility criteria with the community committee and ask if they agree, what challenges this might cause, and how they could be addressed.

- Once the eligibility criteria are agreed with the community committee, disseminate this information to the wider community through trusted channels of communication. This might be through a community meeting, over the radio, door-to-door, social media, via phone call or SMS.

- Established a feedback mechanism/channel to be to enable community members to share information, express concerns and needs or suggest changes of importance to them. If a hotline is decided among the channels use the 'hotline in a box' to assess, set up and manage it.

Advice on setting up a community feedback mechanism
• *Ensure to allocate sufficient human resources to this task. If you have set up a hotline, ensure that it is clear when the hotline can be called, and have someone ready to respond to the calls* • *Establish a log, where all feedback and complaints are recorded. Categorize each entry according to urgency and severity, and have a column to record the response given* • *Go through the feedback / complaints daily so that problems can be detected and resolved as quickly as possible* • *Ensure that time sensitive questions / complaints are dealt with immediately (e.g., difficulties with ATMs, mobile phones, etc.)* • *Have clear processes established ahead of time on who will deal with serious complaints (sexual abuse, abuse of power, fraud, etc.) and how*

- **Use the IFRC Feedback Kit to set up and manage a feedback mechanism.**

- Ensure there is a robust process in place if people genuinely appear to have been wrongly excluded. An option could be to work with local leaders or existing committees to verify any claims of wrongful exclusion.

- Consider referrals from trusted sources that can be verified to reduce exclusion errors. Trusted sources could be government social services and local authorities, volunteers, religious or community leaders and civil society groups, for example.

- Discuss with older people, people who are pregnant or lactating, people with disabilities, and others who may be marginalized or particularly vulnerable about possible barriers they may face in accessing cash assistance, and particularly any challenges around the use of digital technology for registration (such as self-registration). Work together with them to identify possible solutions.

- If appropriate, consider sharing cash recipient lists with community committees for verification. You may also want to post lists publicly in trusted and easily accessible locations.

- Ask about people's preferred channels for asking questions or providing feedback to the Red Cross Red Crescent. Use these preferences to set up a complaint and feedback mechanism which should continue for the duration of all CVA activities. If a complaint or feedback mechanism already exists within the NS or the wider humanitarian response, consider using this if it is accessible to and trusted by communities. Consider actively bolstering the capacity of any existing feedback mechanism to enable it to effectively support CVA activities and ensure contact details and feedback and complaint processes are well known to people in areas where you are working.

- Train or brief volunteers on basic community engagement and Protection, Gender and Inclusion.

CEA and PGI topics to include in training of volunteers:

• *Overview of the organization (especially if volunteers are new to the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement) purpose of the assessment, cash distribution processes and modality, and eligibility criteria rationale so that volunteers can confidently answer questions from community members* • *All staff and volunteers should have signed the Code of Conduct and have received a briefing on it, including prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and how to report misconduct* • *Good communication skills and how to speak to people clearly and with respect* • *How to answer questions honestly and clearly, including sensitive issues linked to sexual exploitation and abuse, violence or corruption*

➢ Provide a question-and-answer sheet to volunteers to use when in communities to help them share consistent information.

❖ **Go here for Q&A Sheet for Volunteers.**

Common community questions to include on a question-and-answer sheet for volunteers:
• *Who is the Red Cross Red Crescent?* • *How much cash will I receive?* • *When will I receive the cash and for how long will I receive cash payments?* • *How do I access the cash?* • *If a voucher, how do I use the voucher, where, and what can be redeemed with the voucher?* • *What are the eligibility criteria and why?* • *Why are you not helping everyone?* • *Do I have to pay for this help?* • *We need help now, so why are you asking all these questions?* • *When will you come back, and what will you do?* • *How can I become a volunteer?* • *How can I complain*

Implementation

➢ Before any financial assistance is distributed, ensure communities are well informed about how the process works, including the eligibility criteria and how these were set. Following the principle of "do no harm", engage with PGI and security colleagues, as well as Red Cross Red Crescent Management to decide how widely additional information should be shared including - , how much cash people will receive, when, and for how long, as well as how and when people can access the cash.

➢ Take extra time to explain the eligibility criteria to those who are not covered by the financial assistance – lack of engagement with those not covered is a common root cause of rumours, misinformation, and dissatisfaction.

➢ Use trusted and preferred channels of communication to share key information with the community before and during the distribution.

List of key information to share with communities:

- *How much cash is being distributed in each instalment and how many instalments will people receive?* - *How to access the cash (e.g., distribution dates and times, how to use mobile money, which bank to go to is using prepaid cards, how to use a prepaid card etc.) - film demonstrations and share on RCRC national society platforms or distribute leaflets with pictures demonstrating the process* - *If a voucher, how do I use the voucher and what can be redeemed with the voucher?* - *That aid is provided free of charge – to minimize the risk of corruption and sexual exploitation and abuse* - *What the eligibility criteria is – use pictures to demonstrate this (e.g., a poster of a pregnant women, a picture of a fully destroyed house)* - *How the eligibility criteria have been verified – to demonstrate this is done fairly and transparently and address any concerns people have about not being included* - *Why you are not able to help everyone – limited resources, need to prioritize the most vulnerable so the aid is targeted at a specific group* - *An internal referral pathway leading to the program team should enable within the feedback system if the people submit complaints or appeals about feeling wrongly excluded. Program staff can then assess, provide a transparent response, investigate, or adjust the program if needed, and share back updates with the community. This process can be followed by an action tracker. Template can be found **here** (Tool 32: Community feedback action tracker).*

- Involve the community committee in the registration process as they can help to verify households.
- During registration, disaggregated data should be collected (sex, age, disability).
- Communicate widely in the community that aid is free to minimize the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and corruption. A list of ways to do this is below

Methods of sharing information with communities:
Firstly, it is important to find out how the community accesses information - ask community leaders, check with local volunteers and seek out secondary data about the media landscape (google 'media landscape guide'.) Good options include: - *Ask leaders and community representatives to share information – but check they are sharing the information accurately and reaching vulnerable and potentially marginalized groups within the community* - *Use messaging apps (WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram etc) or SMS to reach people in the community (if you have their contact numbers). You can do this through a bulk SMS service (google 'bulk SMS service')* - *Announcements on the local radio* - *Through sound trucks – loudspeakers on a vehicle that play recorded messages and travel around the community* - *Through social media if the community has wide access and it is considered a trusted source* - *Putting up posters in key locations in the community (notice boards, schools, health centers, markets, bus stations – anywhere people often pass during their day)* - *Through community volunteers – but they need to be trained, and you need to check they are spreading the information accurately and widely* - *Holding town hall style community meetings*

- **Go here for more information on choosing channels of communication**

If using a physical distribution site, ensure there is plenty of signage using the local language and pictures. Serve people who could struggle with the physical demands of queuing first – people who are pregnant or lactating, older people, people with disabilities, for example. There should be an information desk with a clear process for how to deal with different questions, complaints and feedback.

Signage at the distribution site:

• *Use local languages and pictures and include* • *A list and pictures of exactly how much cash people will receive, how regularly and through which mechanism (e.g., mobile money, debit cards, bank transfer etc.)* • *If vouchers are to be used, how they will work (in terms of where they can be redeemed, item restrictions, how to maximize using all of their value etc.)* • *If distributions are to be used, different areas of the distribution – for example where the information desk is, where people should queue, where the entrance and exits are, directions to/from transport, and any additional safety information.* • *Maps showing the geographical area you are covering – this may help in explaining to people from outside the area why they are not included.* • *Pictures and explanation of the eligibility criteria – people who are pregnant or lactating, older people, those without other income etc.* • *Posters that explain all aid is free to minimize the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and corruption* • *Posters highlighting any telephone helplines that exist for people to raise concerns, including reporting sexual exploitation and abuse, corruption or where to get help in relation sexual and gender-based violence*

Advice on having an information desk:
• An information desk is very important at a distribution as it gives people a place they can go to ask questions that is separate from the main distribution, meaning your distribution is less likely to be disrupted and the community feel reassured their concerns are being listened to. Some advice for an information desk includes; *Develop a clear process for how to respond to different questions and complaints – decide in advance how you will respond to likely questions like 'I meet the criteria and you didn't assess me' and be clear about what you can respond to and what you cannot. Ensure there is a robust process in place if people genuinely appear to have been wrongly excluded. An option could be to work with local leaders or existing committees to verify any claims of wrongful exclusion.* • *Provide extra community engagement training for volunteers who will manage the information desk* • *Prepare a question-and-answer sheet to help information desk volunteers respond to the different questions they will likely receive* • *The information desk should be separate from the distribution and give people privacy to make a complaint or give feedback. Include male and female volunteers.* • *Have a table and chairs for both the volunteers and people making acomplaint/giving feedback* • *The information desk should be clearly signposted* • *Formally record the feedback you receive – this can be on paper, on a spreadsheet on a laptop, on a mobile device using mobile data collection Have a list or referral pathway to other agencies you can refer people to for specific services (SGBV, hospital, water, food distributions, PSS etc).*

- **Go here for more guidance and tools on feedback systems**

Community engagement volunteer roles for physical cash distributions:
In addition to the volunteers you need for distribution, also include: • *2 volunteers for the information desk* • *2-3 volunteers to help direct those arriving for the distribution and ensure safety.Volunteers at the entrance and exit to the distribution line should also be ready to provide information and answer questions about the distribution.*

- Have an updated list and contact details of agencies for SGBV, child protection, legal and psychosocial support services to refer survivors of SGBV or children who reveal an incident of violence to you.

Monitoring & evaluation

- During exit surveys / PDM surveys, include questions to check the quality of community engagement, for example if people felt they had access to enough information, and if feedback/complaints processes were convenient and effective, if they understand how the operation decided who should receive support and who should not.

- Regularly review community feedback from multiple sources with key staff after each distribution and throughout CVA activities.
- Jointly agree on recommendations and actions to take forward ahead of the next distribution. Hold a debrief with volunteers and community leaders to collect their feedback on what can be improved for the next distribution.

The following table highlights key CEA tools for the activities mentioned above (insert links in the column below):

Sub-step	**CEA tool/s**
Develop a CEA plan	Tool 5: CEA work plan Tool 6: CEA budgeting tool Tool 7: CEA M&E tool Tool 4: Template CEA strategy Tool 11: CEA checklist for plans
Build staff capacity	Tool 14: Briefing on CEA for new staff and volunteers Tool 10: Code of Conduct briefing Tool 25: CEA in emergencies briefing
Participate Community in planning	Tool 18: Participatory approaches to selection criteria Tool 16: FGD guide Tool 17: Community meetings tool
Select communication channels and tools	Tool 19: Communication channels matrix
Develop and disseminate messages for target audience	Tool 14: Q&A sheet for volunteers Tool 19: Communications methods matrix
Develop feedback and complaint mechanism	Tool 15: Feedback kit
Review and learn	Tool 11: CEA checklist for plans Tool 12: CEA case study template Tool 7: CEA M&E tool