

Tip sheet on CEA for CVA

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) can be an empowering mode of assistance as it can help to put decision making power in the hands of communities, so that they can recover from crisis with dignity. This is only possible when we ensure the participation and engagement of communities throughout the programme cycle. This tip sheet provides practical actions you can take before, during and after a Cash and Voucher Assistance programme 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.

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 who you can contact to introduce the Red Cross, our fundamental principles and the purpose of the CVA programme. Make sure to involve women, men, elderly, persons with disability, and other potentially vulnerable groups. If there is no pre-existing committee then consider creating one. Be clear about the role of the committee before, during and after the CVA programme.

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 vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, those with underlying health conditions and 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, persons with disabilities, laborer's, single-headed households etc. are able to attend?*
- *What would be a safe location for the distribution site? Are both men, women, elderly, persons with disabilities etc. able to safely travel to this location?*
- *How can we ensure that people living with disabilities, those with underlying health conditions and the elderly have access to 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](#)

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

❖ Use the ['hotline in a box'](#) to assess, set up and manage different channels of communication

- Consider referrals from trusted sources that can be verified to reduce exclusion error. Trusted sources could be government social services and local authorities, volunteers, religious or community leaders and civil society groups, for example.
 - Speak to vulnerable groups such as elderly, pregnant and lactating women, or people with disabilities about whether they would face barriers accessing cash assistance or barriers using digital technology for registration (such as self-registration). Discuss possible solutions to barriers identified.
 - If appropriate, consider sharing the cash recipient list with the community committee for verification. You may also want to post it publicly in a trusted and easily accessible location.
 - Ask about people’s preferences for asking questions or providing feedback to the Red Cross. Use these preferences to set up a complaint and feedback mechanism which should run throughout the CVA programme. Alternatively, if a complaint mechanism already exists within the NS or the wider humanitarian response, be sure to advertise it clearly to the community.
- ❖ **Use the [feedback starter kit](#) to set up and manage a feedback and complaints mechanism**
- 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 selection 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*

❖ **Go [here](#) for CEA training materials**

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

Common 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 and what can be redeemed with the voucher?*
- *What are the selection 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*

❖ **Go [here](#) for a sample question and answer sheet**

Implementation

- Before the cash is distributed allow time for volunteers to explain to the cash recipients how the distribution process works, why they were selected, how much cash they will receive and for how long, as well as how and when they can access the cash.
- Take extra time to explain the selection criteria to those who were not selected – they are the ones who might disrupt your programme or share misinformation or rumors about the Red Cross.
- 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 they 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 on*
- *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 your selection criteria is – use pictures to demonstrate this (e.g., a poster of a pregnant women, a picture of a fully destroyed house)*
- *How you are selecting people – 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 of the aid is targeted at a specific group*
- *Process to complain*

- 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 gets information. You can do this by asking the community leaders, checking with the local volunteers or through secondary data about the media landscape in the country (google 'media landscape guide. Good options include:

- *Asking the leaders and community representatives to spread the information – but you need to check that they are actually sharing the information accurately and reaching vulnerable and potentially marginalized groups within the community*
- *Send out SMS to people in the community if you have their telephone 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 widely*
- *Holding a community meeting – if the community is small enough*

❖ Go [here](#) for more information on choosing channels of communication

- If using a physical distribution site ensure there is a lot of signage, in pictures and using local language. Serve vulnerable groups first –pregnant women, elderly, anyone with disabilities.

- 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 if literacy is low 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 go to queue, where the entrance and exits are, and how to travel and be at a distribution site safely*
- *Signs of the geographical area you are covering in the response – this helps respond to people who turn up who are not from the area you are targeting*
- *Pictures and explanation of the selection criteria – pregnant women, elderly person, those without 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 their concerns have been 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. If possible, have an investigation process if people genuinely seem like they were missed in the registration. An option could be using local leaders (if they are trustworthy) to verify the claims people are making*
- *Provide extra community engagement training for the 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 and include a male and female volunteer*
- *Have a table and chairs for both the volunteers and the person making the complaint*
- *The information desk should be clearly signposted*
- *Have a method for recording the feedback you received – this can be on paper, on a spreadsheet on a laptop, on a mobile device using mobile data collection*
- *If possible, have a list of 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, consider adding:

- *2 volunteers for the information desk*
- *2-3 volunteers to help supervise those arriving for the distribution and ensure social distancing and other protection measures (such as handwashing and face cover wearing is undertaken). These volunteers at the entrance and exit to the distribution line should also be ready to provide information and answer questions related to any 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, ask some questions to check if there was good community engagement.
- Regularly review community feedback from multiple sources with key staff after each distribution and throughout the programme.
- 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.

Advice on setting up a feedback / complaints mechanism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>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</i> • <i>Establish a complaints log, where all complaints are recorded. Categorize the complaints according to urgency and severity, and have a column to record the response given</i> • <i>Go through the feedback / complaints daily so that problems can be detected and resolved as quickly as possible</i> • <i>Ensure that time sensitive questions / complaints are dealt with immediately (e.g., difficulties with ATMs, mobile phones, etc.)</i> • <i>Have clear guidelines on who will deal with serious complaints (sexual abuse, abuse of power, fraud, etc.) and how</i>

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
Select communication channels and tools	Tool 19: Communication channels matrix Tool 21: Behaviour change and RCCE resources
Develop messages for target audience	Tool 14: Q&A sheet for volunteers Tool 21: Behaviour change and RCCE resources
Develop feedback and complaint mechanism	Tool 15: Feedback kit Tool 21: Behaviour change and RCCE resources
Review and learn	Tool 11: CEA checklist for plans Tool 12: CEA case study template