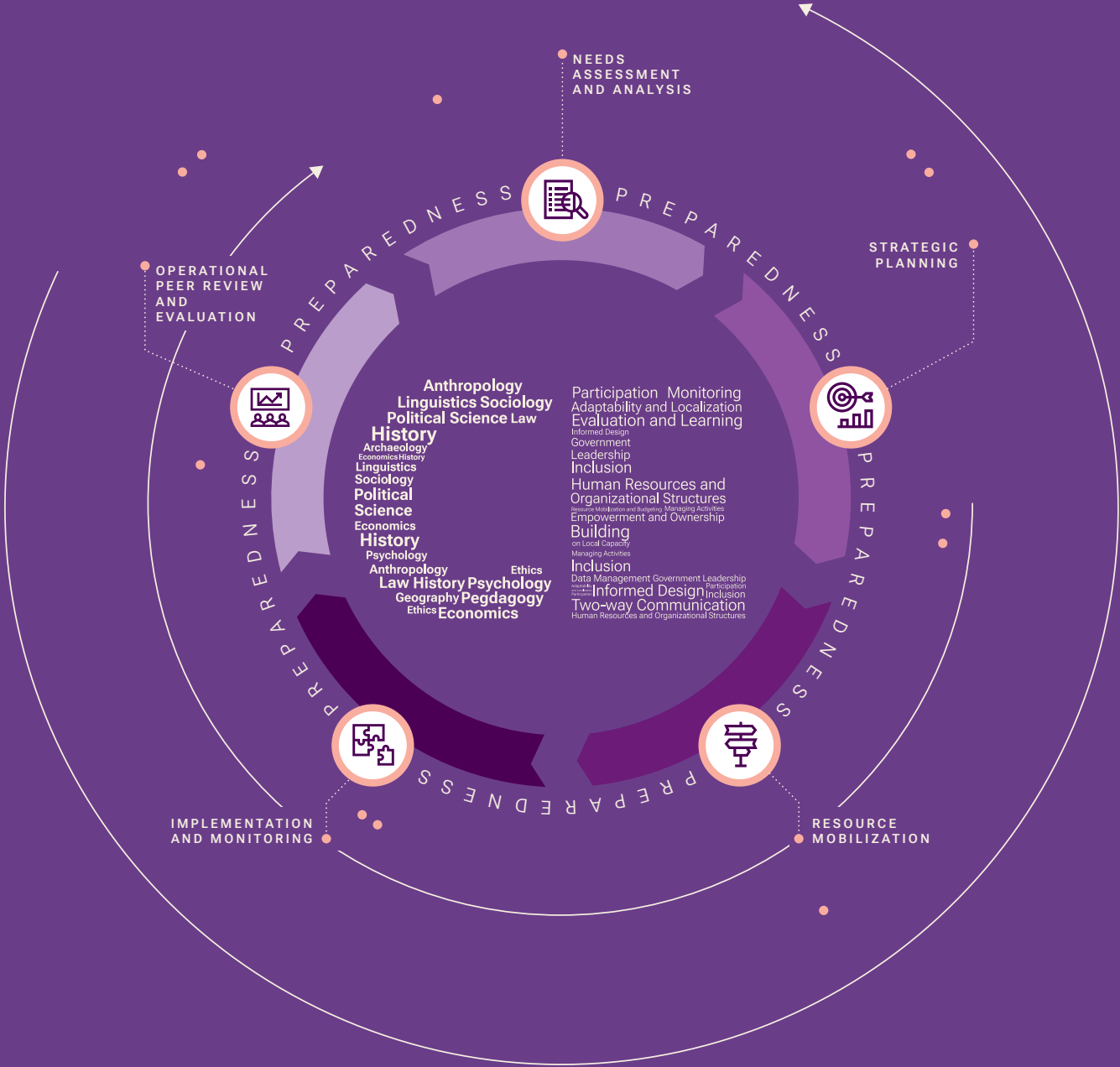# SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION
COMMON MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

OPERATIONAL PEER REVIEW AND EVALUATION

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

PREPAREDNESS

Anthropology
Linguistics Sociology
Political Science Law
History
Archaeology
Economics History
Linguistics
Sociology
Political
Science
Economics
History
Psychology
Anthropology Ethics
Law History Psychology
Geography Pegdagogy
Ethics Economics

Participation Monitoring
Adaptability and Localization
Evaluation and Learning
Informed Design
Government
Leadership
Inclusion
Human Resources and
Organizational Structures
Resource Mobilization and Budgeting Managing Activities
Empowerment and Ownership
Building
on Local Capacity
Managing Activities
Inclusion
Data Management Government Leadership
Informed Design Inclusion
Two-way Communication
Human Resources and Organizational Structures

Better Data
Better Decisions
Better Outcomes

iMMAP

SS CE
Connecting Community Engagement with
Social Science in Humanitarian Contexts

Social Sciences for Community
Engagement in Humanitarian Action
**Common Monitoring and
Evaluating Framework for
Community Engagement**

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Foreword
Looking Ahead: Bridging theory and practice

Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action Project (SS4CE in HA) is an initiative launched at the end of 2020, funded by the Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, USAID. The main objectives focus on co-creation of global goods, designed as a collaborative approach that connects with global humanitarian and public health system-wide existing mechanisms that harness active participation of humanitarian organizations, academic institutions and donors. The processes undertaken for the development of global goods are also further framed in the 'decolonization of aid agenda' and provide clear recommendations for the implementation of actions that drive people-centred and community-led humanitarian and development programs. As envisioned, the project has made substantive progress towards systematically aligning social science informed community engagement actions to humanitarian architecture, tailored to different elements and enablers of the humanitarian program cycle (HPC).

Leveraging on the initial, exclusive public health emergency (PHE) focus at the time, due to the COVID-19 response, the SS4CE project developed a multi-pronged, governance structure that could facilitate the linkages and inform all humanitarian crises (e.g., natural hazards, conflicts and PHEs). This governance structure provided technical oversight to the development of SS4CE global goods, as well as positioning the processes and outputs of the project with key humanitarian stakeholders including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), Clusters and committees, for the uptake and mainstreaming within the ongoing and relevant humanitarian program processes.

The **Community Engagement Common M&E Framework** is an output of the Technical Working Group-3 (TWG-3). The framework was prepared by TWG3 with the support of a team of consultants at iMMAP, an international organization that turns data into information and creates knowledge for decision makers operating in development contexts, situations of violence, post-disaster and conflict recovery. Since June 2022, evidence has been collated to inform the development of the framework including Mapping CE Data Systems, Practices and Resources across 28 HRP Countries, case studies with humanitarian organizations and consultation with the decision makers.

The Common M&E Framework reflects the need for further shared learning and improved CE programmes in emergency responses in specific and humanitarian programming in generally across all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle beginning with preparedness. It has been acknowledged that the absence of a Common M&E Framework for CE work in emergency settings has led to variations in the objectives, outcomes, and indicators that organizations use to assess the effectiveness of their work. Using a Common M&E Framework, organizations are encouraged to share their results, including any challenges and lessons learned, in order to help others in the field and to build a body of evidence for CE programmes. The goal is to encourage all organizations implementing CE activities in emergency settings to measure similar constructs, which can advance the collective understanding of the field. As use of the framework grows, programming will increasingly build a shared language and understanding about the most appropriate practices to ensure CE. Any CE-related programme ought to aim for improvements in the engagement of communities affected by humanitarian crises.

Key deliverables for the project are:
- Landscape report
- Ethics and Data Sharing Mapping Review
- Codes of Conduct Mapping Review
- Mapping of Capacity Development for the application of SS4CE in HA in Conflicts and Hazards
- **Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Community Engagement**
- Compendium of Case Studies on the Use of community engagement to Inform Decision Making

- Desk Review of Community Engagement Iindicators Across Humanitarian Response Plans (2022) and Documentation on Community Engagement
- Vision Paper on Community Engagement for Accountability to Affected Populations and Social and Behavior Change.
- Common Principles and Code of Conduct for the Application of SS4CE in HA

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Community engagement, informed by social sciences, addresses participation issues and the immediate needs of the affected communities but also strengthens community systems where marginalised groups become equal partners in finding solutions, having wider knowledge and understanding of social science disciplines' conceptual frameworks (e.g., historical, political, sociological, economical) and providing pathways to deal with systemic fallacies and challenges (i.e., social justice, gender equity, decolonization and localization).

We hope that this M&E framework will contribute to evolving and identifying actions to reform community engagement processes, especially leveraging the spectrum of social sciences in challenging humanitarian contexts. This will be of utmost importance to respond effectively in current and future crises.

UNICEF, Vincent Petit

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1   https://immap.org/

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List of Abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
CE	Community Engagement
DRRM	Disaster Reduction and Risk Management
HA	Humanitarian Action
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHE	Public Health in Emergencies
RAP	Rapid Appraisal Procedure
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
SBC	Social and Behavioral Change
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SS4CE in HA	Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction
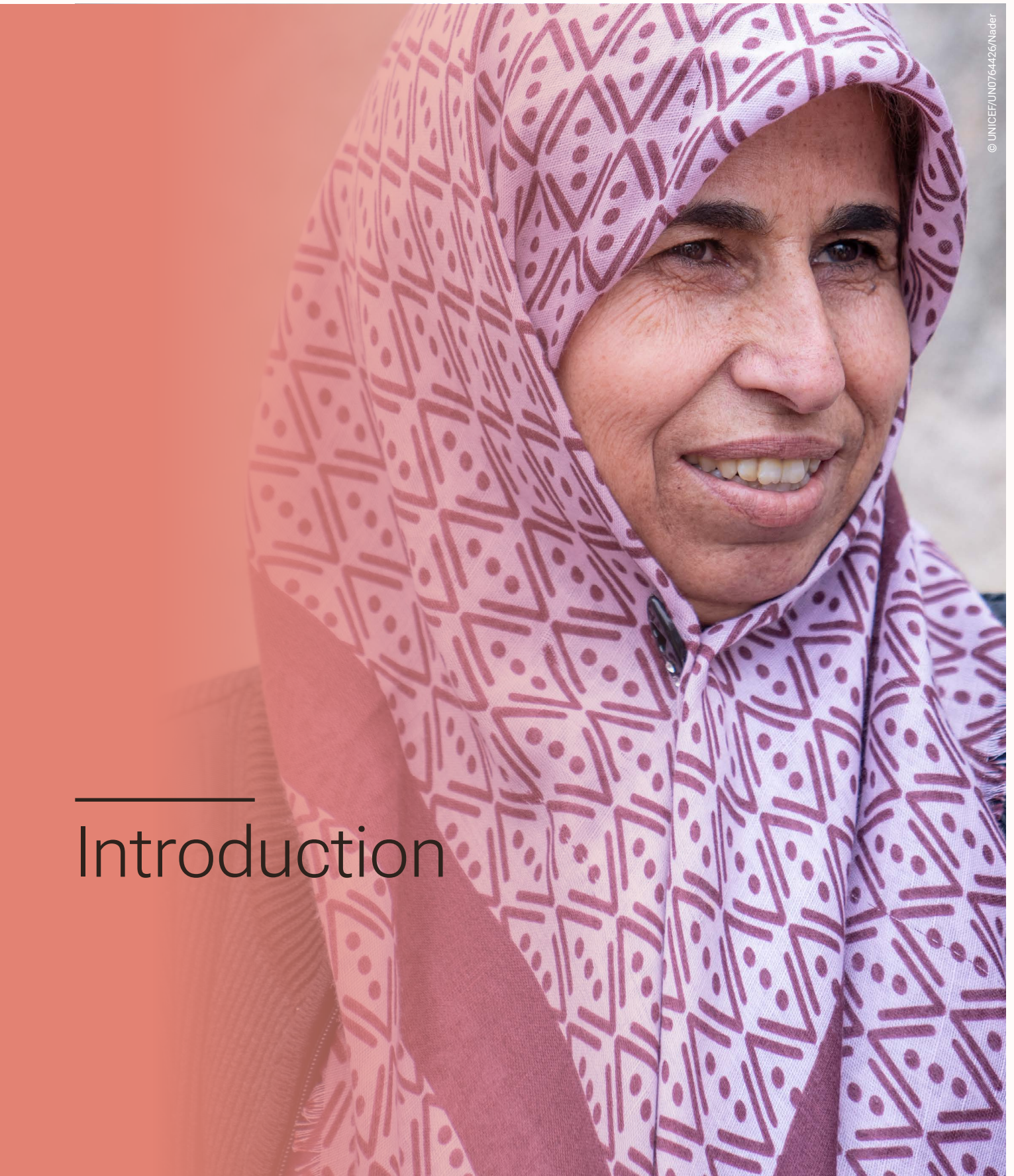
This document provides guidance in the assessment, research, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Community Engagement (CE) to inform the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). It assumes familiarity with Community Engagement Minimum Standards (CEMS) guidelines.

A. **Background**

As part of the governance structure of SS4CE in HA, TWG-3 primarily addressed the development of a consensus to strengthen CE data within existing data systems including processes, uptake of evidence and capacities for Humanitarian Response Planning (HRP) countries. Among its deliverables, TWG-3 with the support of iMMAP developed this CE Common M&E Framework. Since June 2022, evidence has been collated to inform the development of the framework including Mapping CE Data Systems, Practices and Resources across 28 HRP Countries, case studies with humanitarian organizations and consultation with the decision makers. The overall goal of the project is to develop global goods to strengthen global and regional demand and capacity for social science specific to community engagement integration into humanitarian programming.

B. **Objectives**

General

In general, this framework aims to promote response-wide synergies for CE between the various coordination efforts and support existing collective platforms and related cluster coordination functions. Ultimately, this shall enhance the effective engagement of affected communities throughout the response cycle, for more relevant, impactful, and sustainable interventions.

Specific

Specifically, it seeks to provide guidance on the assessment, research, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CE data integration into the HPC, particularly for HRP countries. It should be noted that CE, and corresponding M&E frameworks, should be gender sensitive, context specific, risk informed, localized, responsive and bidirectional.

In addition, it shall inform CE data integration initiatives by highlighting global achievements and ongoing efforts of humanitarian organizations in improving information management on CE to inform HRP and Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

C. **Methodology**

This framework was developed using a rigorous mixed-method approach. It included (i) a desk review of CE indicators in HRPs and other documentation, (ii) consultations with TWG-3 members and global cluster professionals, (iii) a survey with senior professionals involved in CE data integration across HRP countries, and (iv) an in-depth review of commonly used indicators and measurement tools, and a peer review for preliminary validation.

The survey provided a quantitative and qualitative analysis of issues such as the types of relevant CE data, reasons to start collecting it, platforms used to work with it and steps for better data integration. In addition, 99 documents, including 27 HRPs for 2022, were reviewed in relation to CE.

The final framework is deemed relevant for the majority, but not necessarily all of CE activities, interventions, projects and programmes that are likely to be implemented in a humanitarian response, as described in the CE Minimum Standards.

D. **Terminology**

The review of CE indicators and relevant documents displays a diversity in the use of M&E terms, as well as concepts related to CE. A CE Common M&E Framework may foment a shared language that facilitates comparison, collaboration, and measurable progress towards CE. For the purpose of this indicator review, the following M&E terms are used:

Goal

A general, high-level and long-term vision that guides the direction of the project or organization. The goal is usually reflected in the title of the project and is divided into several specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives. The overall goal, such as ending child labor or providing housing facilities, cannot be achieved by the project alone, but it sets the direction for the project to pursue.[2]

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2   https://proposalsforngos.com/project-goal/

Indicators

Unit of measurement that specifies what is to be measured; indicators are intended to answer whether the desired impact, outcomes or outputs have been achieved. Indicators may be quantitative (e.g., percentages or numbers of people) or qualitative (e.g., perceptions, quality, type, knowledge, capacity).

Outcomes

The intended long-term impact or change that occurs because of a specific project's interventions.

Outcome indicator

Aligned with the outcome statements and aim to reflect the changes for individuals or groups of people that have occurred due to a particular programme or intervention.

Output indicator

Aligned with the activity plan and aims to reflect on whether the planned activity was carried out as intended.

What is community engagement?

A foundational action for working with traditional, community, civil society, government, and opinion groups and leaders; and expanding collective or group roles in addressing the issues that affect their lives. CE empowers social groups and social networks, builds upon local strengths and capacities and improves local participation, ownership, adaptation and communication. Through CE principles and strategies all stakeholders gain access to processes for assessing, analyzing, planning, leading, implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions, programmes and policies that will promote survival, development, protection and participation.[3]

Other organizations and initiatives, including the Sphere Project, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), ICRC and some global clusters have developed varying definitions and approaches of CE. For example, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) offers another often used definition of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) as "a way of working that recognizes and values community members as equal partners. It makes sure their opinions are heard and used to design and guide our work."[4]

CE is a critical component of international development practice and humanitarian assistance. CE approaches support communities across contexts in taking their own action in addressing their most pressing issues. CE is intrinsic to approaches based on human rights, which is a UN guiding principle. Communities should be listened to and have a meaningful role in processes and issues that affect them.[5] Crucially, CE should not be limited to one-off consultations, top-down communication or ad hoc complaint mechanisms. Instead, CE should be a comprehensive and genuine engagement of diverse stakeholders, through the humanitarian programming, from design to evaluation. Special attention should be placed on including disadvantaged, discriminated against and marginalized segments of the population, and avoid inadvertently reinforcing patterns of inequality and exclusion. Ultimately, CE should build on local capacity, nurture the inclusive empowerment of community members and enable greater resilience in the face of future crises or disasters.

3 https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/8401/file/19218_MinimumQuality-Report_v07_RC_002.pdf.pdf
4 https://www.ifrc.org/our-work/inclusion-protection-and-engagement/community-engagement-and- accountability
5 https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/8401/file/19218_MinimumQuality-Report_v07_RC_002.pdf.pdf

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Community engagement minimum standards

PART A.
Core Community Engagement Standards

These core standards describe the fundamental standards that should guide CE practice. They should be mainstreamed across all aspects of practice. They are cross-cutting, and should be applied to all aspects of standards included in Parts B, C and D.

1.	Participation
2.	Empowerment and Ownership
3.	Inclusion
4.	Two-way Communication
5.	Adaptability and Localization
6.	Building on Local Capacity

PART B.
Standards Supporting Implementation

These standards are aligned to elements of the project cycle. They define the scope of practice for engaging communities. They explicitly target informed design, planning and preparation, management of activities, monitoring and evaluation.

7.	Informed Design
8.	Planning and Preparation
9.	Managing Activities
10.	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

PART C.
Standards Supporting Coordination and Integration

These standards focus on supporting collective, harmonized and mutually supportive CE practice at national and local levels. Coordination addresses how partners harmonize their activities with other partners, government, response clusters/pillars, and communities. It supports policy and strategy alignment, common protocols and resolves geographic and functional duplication. Integration involves the inclusion of CE in all aspects of development programming, governance and humanitarian response structures, systems, policies and plans. Governments have a primary role in leading the coordination and integration of CE in 'peacetime' and emergency contexts.

11.	Government Leadership
12.	Partner Coordination
13.	Integration

PART D.
Standards Supporting Resource Mobilization

Standards supporting resource mobilization focus on key management and administrative considerations that determine quality CE. The resourcing of CE is human capital intensive and can require complex operational imperatives, involving significant budgetary consideration, such as human resources, training, pronounced time investments, logistics and safety/security protocols.

14.	Human Resources and Organizational Structures
15.	Data Management
16.	Resource Mobilization and Budgeting

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Desk review of indicators across HRPs and documentation on community engagement

Occupied Palestinian territory

HRP countries   HRP countries without CE indicators   HRP countries without published HRP report
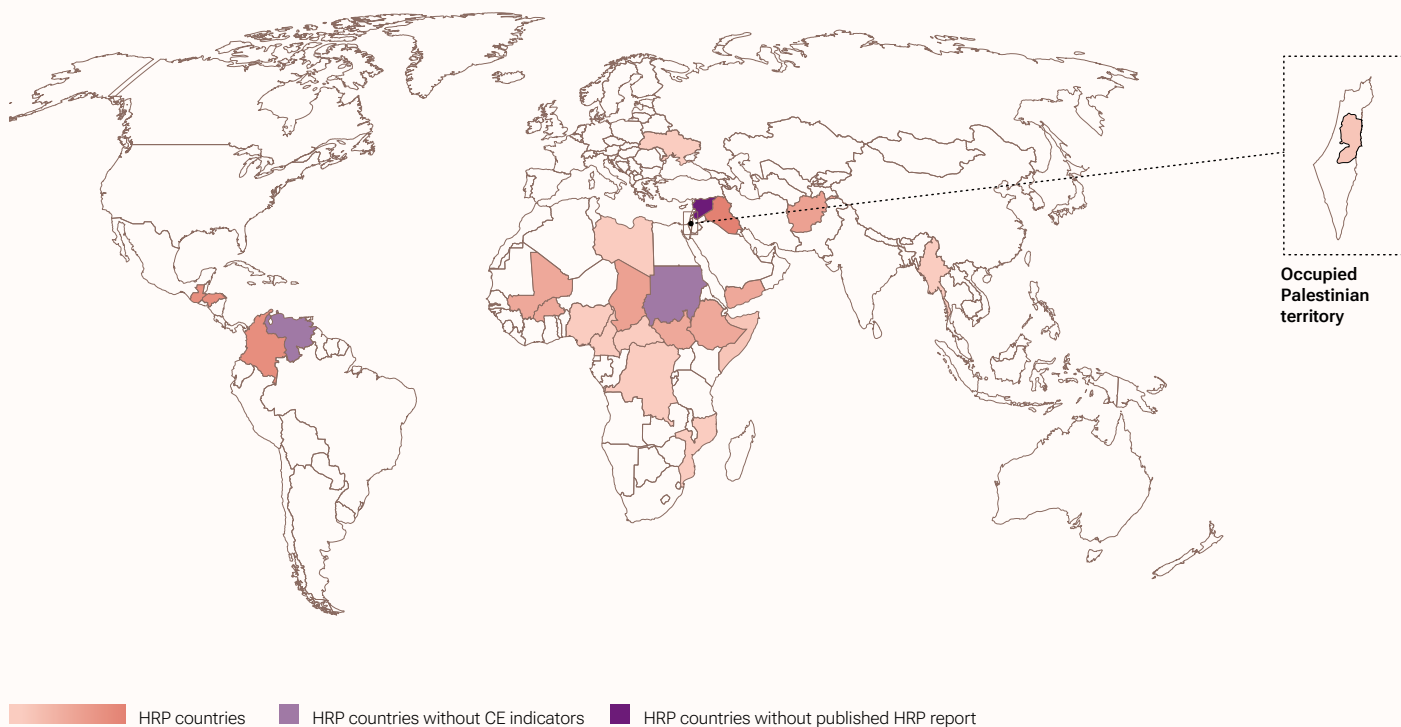
28 HRPs from 2022 were reviewed in detail and CE indicators based on CEMS core standards were mapped. CE indicators that are commonly used were identified and their overall frequency calculated, as well as across clusters or HRPs. The frequency with which these indicators are used in other documentation was also reviewed.

HRP Countries

1. Afganistan	**11.** Guatemala	**21.** Occupied Palestinian territory
2. Burkina Faso	**12.** Haiti	**22.** Somalia
3. Burundi	**13.** Honduras	**23.** South Sudan
4. Cameroon	**14.** Iraq	**24.** Sudan
5. Central African Republic	**15.** Libiya	**25.** Syria (HRP not publicly available)
6. Chad	**16.** Mali	**26.** Ukraine
7. Colombia	**17.** Mozambique	**27.** Venezuela
8. Democratic Republic of Congo	**18.** Myanmar	**28.** Yemen
9. El Salvador	**19.** Niger	
10. Ethiopia	**20.** Nigeria	

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In addition, 102 documents related to CE were reviewed, through a comprehensive process of searching and collecting information from various secondary sources, such as humanitarian repositories, web pages of humanitarian organizations, etc. The information collected was then categorized using a metadata file with a corresponding glossary of variables. The metadata file has three components: the traditional classifying information such as title, abstract, organization, place of publication and date of publication; the concepts of CE, including Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Communications, Community Engagement, and Accountability to Affected Populations (CCEA), Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), etc., and their definition within the documents; and the mention of indicators related to CE. This desk review fed into an interactive database for further consultation.

Finally, this desk review built on the mapping assessment of CE systems in HRP countries, including the Secondary Data Review (SDR) of 7 HRP countries that was conducted between September and October 2022.

To summarize key findings, the review of CE indicators and relevant documents highlights a diversity in the definition and concepts related to CE as well as the use of M&E terms. Definitions of CE can vary based on the focus, scope and approach of the organization involved, with some emphasizing the active involvement of community members in decision making and problem solving, and others emphasizing the responsibilities centered on organizations to engage with the communities they serve.

The review of CE indicators in HRPs shows that they are related to various sectors, but are presented in different ways, resulting in a lack of consistency. This heterogeneity inhibits the recognition of patterns that may inform the Common M&E Framework, while highlighting the need for certain standardization to extract shared lessons and promote global progress on CE. Protection has the highest number of CE indicators in HRPs, followed by emergency shelter/camp coordination and management, education in emergencies, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food security, and early recovery. The lowest number of CE indicators are in health and nutrition.

The secondary data review of HNOs and HRPs shows that there are opportunities for CE data to inform the annual humanitarian

planning process, but gaps remain in its use, as the data collected from direct consultations with affected people is generally absent, and HNOs and HRPs tend to rely on self-referential reports from international organizations.

The review of CE documentation informed by 102 documents highlights three main areas: (i) standards and best practices, (ii) community involvement and empowerment, and (iii) partnerships and collaborations. Standards and best practices focus on quality standards, accountability, risk communication, and monitoring and evaluation. Community involvement and empowerment emphasizes survivor/community led crisis response, mental health and psychosocial support, and social and behavior change. Partnerships and collaborations focus on health via coalitions, peacebuilding and humanitarian response plans for different countries. The Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) published the highest number of CE documents. Overall, the review highlights the need for a standard terminology and a more consistent approach to CE indicators and documentation to improve monitoring and evaluation of CE initiatives.

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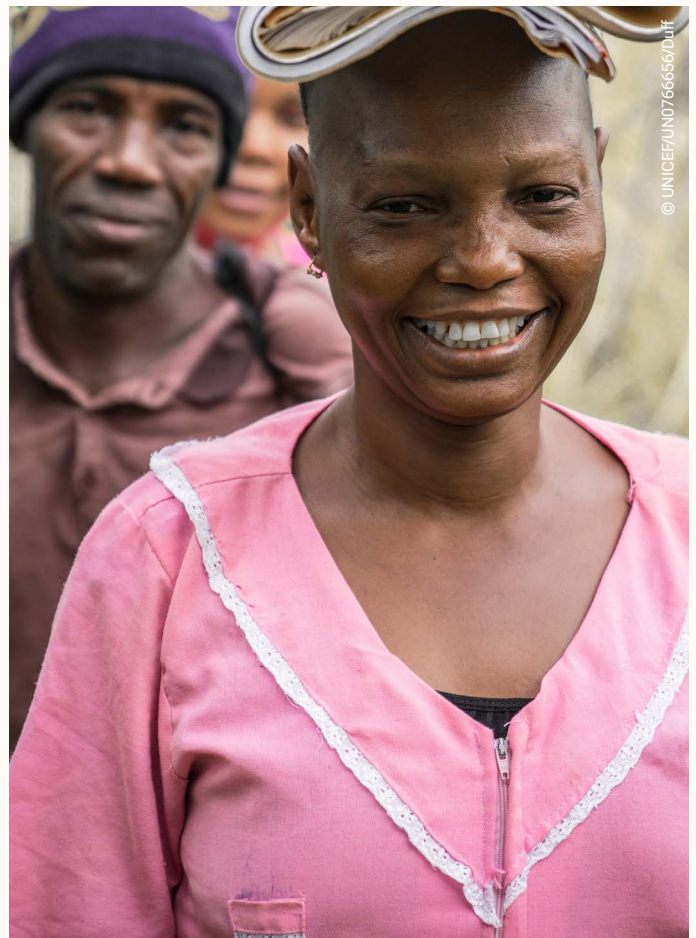
The CE common M&E framework goal and outcomes

This CE Common M&E Framework serves several purposes. It may help to standardize the way in which data is collected, analyzed and reported on CE, in humanitarian action, across different programmes and organizations. This could enable a better comparison of results across different contexts and help to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Additionally, it may enable more effective communication and coordination among different humanitarian actors. By using a shared set of indicators and data collection methods, organizations can more easily share information and collaborate on CE initiatives. CE indicators are ways of measuring the effectiveness of CE. Consistent and rigorous measurement of CE enables us to demonstrate the value of CE to key stakeholders.[6] This can lead to greater efficiency and impact in addressing the needs of affected communities.

Furthermore, a common M&E framework may help to ensure that CE is effectively integrated into the overall humanitarian response. By clearly defining the indicators and outcomes that should be tracked in relation to CE, organizations can more effectively design and implement programmes that are responsive to the needs and priorities of affected communities. It may also enable organizations to more effectively demonstrate their impact to donors and other stakeholders. By using a shared set of indicators and data collection methods, organizations can more easily and transparently communicate the results of their CE activities.

However, it's also important to note that a CE common M&E framework may have limitations in its implementation and it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. This CE Common M&E framework is not intended to replace existing or preferred M&E structures or approaches. Rather, it is organized in a simple way that will allow individuals and organizations to use the goal and outcomes to complement their own M&E frameworks and project-specific designs. The framework may also be viewed as a supplementary approach towards achieving more global goals (e.g., Grand Bargain and others). Therefore, it's important to be flexible, adaptable and considerate of the context, culture and the specific needs of the affected community.

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A description of framework outcomes and indicators

The Common M&E Framework is based on the six core standards, as presented in the CEMS:

- **Standard 1: Participation —** Communities and stakeholders are actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmes.
- **Standard 2: Empowerment and Ownership —** Communities and stakeholders are empowered to take ownership of programmes and that they have the necessary resources to do so.
- **Standard 3: Inclusion —** Programmes are inclusive and that marginalized and vulnerable groups are not left behind.
- **Standard 4: Two-way Communication —** There is open and effective communication between all stakeholders involved in the programme.
- **Standard 5: Adaptability and Localization —** Programmes are adapted to the local context and that they take into account local knowledge, customs, and cultures.
- **Standard 6: Building on local capacity —** Building the capacity of communities and local organizations to be self-sufficient, independent, and sustainable in the long-term.

Each standard has specific inputs, outputs and outcomes that are designed to achieve the overall goal of the framework. Inputs should be understood as the resources and activities that are required to achieve the outputs and outcomes, where the outputs are the immediate results, and the outcomes are the long-term results of the programme. Each of these levels are accompanied by indicators to measure achievement.

The framework suggests usage of a Likert scale for **self-assessment** to measure the extent to which the goal, outcomes, outputs, and inputs are being met. Respondents would then be asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree." This data can be used to identify areas where the framework is being effectively implemented as well as areas that need improvement. This is useful for self-assessment because it allows for a quantitative measurement of the perceptions of stakeholders and can be used to identify areas of improvement.

0	Yet to use this quality criteria for the community engagement/IEC/SBCC programmes.
1	Achievements are minor and there are few signs of Planning, or forward action, to improve the situation.
2	Achievements have been made but are incomplete while Improvements are planned, the commitment and capacities are limited
3	There are some institutional commitments and capacities to achieving the goal, but progress is not comprehensive or substantial
4	There has been substantial achievement, but with few deficiencies in commitment, financial resources and/ or operational capacities
5	There has been considerable achievement, with commitment and capacity to sustain efforts at all levels

Overall, the Common M&E Framework is designed to promote the participation, empowerment, inclusion and ownership of communities in programme design, implementation and evaluation. It also focuses on adaptability, localization and building on local capacity to ensure that programmes are sustainable in the long-term, and that communities can continue to benefit from them even after external support is withdrawn.

Common M&E framework for CE

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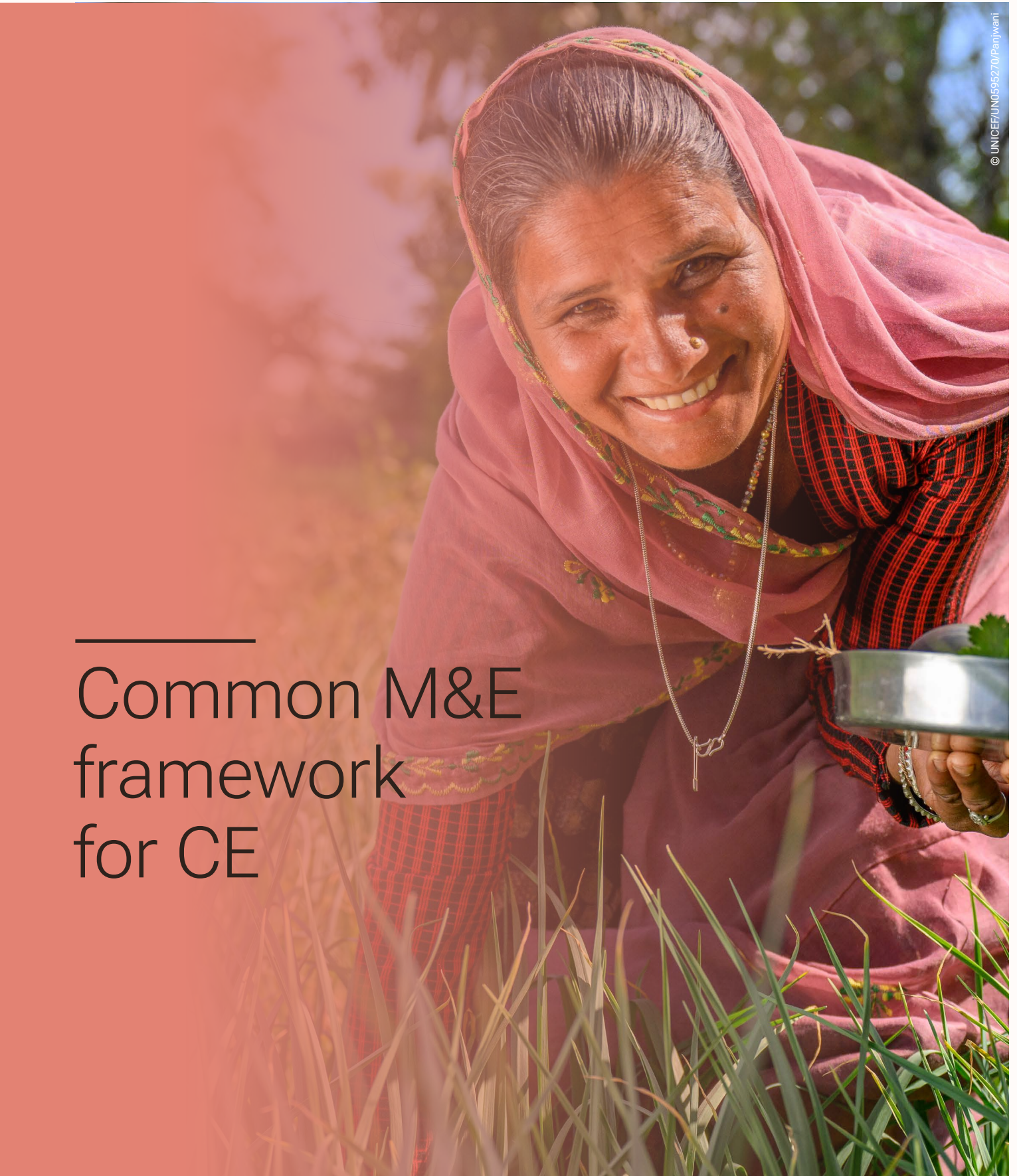
Goal

People centered and community led humanitarian action reaching the most disadvantaged children, adolescents and communities.

Potential targets

% of community members who feel that humanitarian action puts people affected by crises at the center
% of community members who feel that feel that humanitarian action is led by communities

Standard 1: Participation

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	All aspects of analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of governance, development and humanitarian initiatives are based on community views and needs	% of affected people who feel that humanitarian decision making is based on meaningful community participation and their views are given weight in all aspects of policy, planning, research and practice
Output	Meaningful participation is recognized as a right to inform decision making and enhance collective self-determination	# of affected people (including marginalized and disadvantaged community members) who participate in the assessment of community needs and contribute to identify goals and barriers for community participation
Input	Clear objectives for levels of participation of men, women, boys and girls based on necessary minimums for achieving outcomes and impacts	Humanitarian actor has participation objectives disaggregated by gender, age, and other key criteria
Input	Transparency mechanism about proposed levels of participation	Humanitarian actor has a transparency mechanism about proposed levels of participation
Output	Processes and policies are in place for collaboration, shared learning and interactive participation throughout the engagement process	Humanitarian actor has processes and policies for collaboration, shared learning and interactive participation
Input	Processes to ensure community involvement in key programme design and management	Humanitarian actor has processes to ensure community involvement in key programme design and management
Input	Identified community priorities, resources, needs and solutions	Humanitarian actor has identified community priorities, resources, needs and solutions
Input	Linkages between community structures, governments and development/humanitarian actors	# of discussions between community structures and governments and development/humanitarian actors # of community members who participate in discussions with governments and development/humanitarian actors

Level	Content	Indicators
Input	Linkages between community structures, governments and development/humanitarian actors	# of discussions between community structures and governments and development/humanitarian actors # of community members who participate in discussions with governments and development/humanitarian actors
Input	Agency mechanisms that feed into and support collective and participatory approaches	Humanitarian actor has mechanisms that feed into and support collective and participatory approaches
Output	Established and recognized participatory methods and approaches are employed to ensure the participation of communities	Humanitarian actor has participatory methods and approaches to ensure the participation of communities % of community members who are aware of participatory methods and approaches
Input	Participatory approaches such as Participatory Learning Action (PLA); Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA); Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA); Participatory Research and Assessment (PRA); Participatory Action Research (PAR); Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA); Health Impact Assessment (HIA); Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA).	

Standard 2: Empowerment and Ownership

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	Communities feel empowered by community engagement processes, and have ownership, decision making and leadership in programming	% of community members who feel that community engagement processes empower them Top priorities identified through community participation are addressed (for them)
Output	Programmes work with existing community structures and strategies to facilitate community decision making and ownership	Humanitarian actor works with existing community structures and strategies to facilitate community decision making and ownership (by them)
Input	Community involvement in the planning and implementation of activities	# of affected people who participate in the analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities
Input	Initiatives of local groups and organizations, and community assets, strengths, capacities and resources identified	Humanitarian actor identifies community initiatives, assets, strengths, capacities and resources
Input	Community action plans, within self- help and resilience strategies	Humanitarian actor identifies or facilitates self-help and resilience strategies, including community action plans
Output	Advocacy takes place to ensure that communities are leaders in decision- making, and in the actions that affect the community	# of advocacy activities or products that aim to ensure that communities are leaders in decision-making, and in the actions that affect the community

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the application framework sciences
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Level	Content	Indicators
Input	Trusted community leaders, influencers and key stakeholders, including representatives outside formal structures identified and involved in decision making	Humanitarian actor identifies and engages trusted community leaders, influencers and key stakeholders, including representatives outside formal structures
Input	Leadership from among those most disadvantaged, marginalized and discriminated against	# of community members among the most disadvantaged, marginalized and discriminated against groups participate in leadership of the humanitarian intervention
Output	Community resource capacities (labour, time, financial and material) and limitations are recognized and negotiated in decisions about resource contributions	Humanitarian actor recognizes and negotiates community resource capacities and limitations in decisions about resource contributions
Input	Agreement with communities to identify and contribute appropriate resources and skills, and set roles and responsibilities for the resourcing of planned activities	Humanitarian actor develops agreement with communities to identify and contribute appropriate resources and skills, and set roles and responsibilities for the resourcing of planned activities
Input	Planning, resources, and inputs to ensure that activities continue beyond the life of the initiatives (if long-term sustainability is an expectation)	Community representatives are informed of planning, resources, and inputs to ensure that activities continue beyond the life of the initiatives (if long-term sustainability is an expectation)

Standard 3: Inclusion

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	All aspects of community engagement support and ensure a role and a voice for community members and groups that are under-represented, disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized	% of community members who feel that a full range of stakeholders contribute to, and benefited from, all aspects of community engagement
Output	Disadvantaged, discriminated against, deprived and marginalized social groups in communities are identified	Humanitarian actor identifies disadvantaged/marginalized/ excluded groups (gender, disability, ethnicity, SES status, urban/rural, etc.)
Input	Processes to identify underrepresented, disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized groups in communities	Humanitarian actor has processes to identify underrepresented, disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized groups in communities
Input	Risk analysis to identify potential risks to local subgroups by participation and communication practices	Humanitarian actor conducts risk analysis and mitigation process
Input	Risk mitigation measures required to achieve inclusion in community engagement actions	
Input	Strategies to overcome or remove attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to participation for disadvantaged and marginalized groups	Humanitarian actor has strategy to overcome or remove attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to participation for disadvantaged and marginalized groups

Level	Content	Indicators
Input	Advocacy within communities for the inclusion of marginalized groups (such as adolescents, etc.)	# of advocacy activities or products that aim to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups within community activities
Output	Disadvantaged and marginalized social groups are included in activities and decision making and have access to services	# of community members from disadvantaged/marginalized/ excluded groups involved in intervention
Input	Priorities, needs and barriers to access, identified by marginalized and disadvantaged community members	# of disadvantaged/marginalized/ excluded community members who participate in the assessment of community needs, and contribute to identify goals and barriers for community participation
Input	Diverse representation of local populations ensured	Humanitarian actor maps and addresses barriers to access for marginalized community members (including access issues, unequal burdens of participation, participation in activities, leadership roles, participatory planning, implementation and evaluation processes)
Input	Process to equitably distribute benefits across all segments of the population, according to programme purpose and intent	Humanitarian actor has process to equitably distribute benefits across all segments of the population
Input	Feedback pathways from vulnerable and underrepresented groups that can be included in, but are distinct from, broader feedback mechanisms	Humanitarian actor has distinct feedback pathways for vulnerable and underrepresented groups

Standard 4: Two-way communication

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	Communities and all relevant stakeholders, including government and implementing organizations, communicate and access clear, appropriate and accurate information through regular and predictable two- way communication pathways	% of community members who feel that they have access to clear, appropriate and accurate information to participate in interventions, through two-way communication pathways on a regular and predictable basis % of community members who feel that they have the opportunity to give clear, appropriate and accurate information through two- way communication pathways on a regular and predictable basis
Output	Systematic two-way communication mechanisms are established between communities and all relevant stakeholders, including government and implementing organizations	Humanitarian actor develops or uses existing two-way communication lines for routine feedback, based on consent for communication and effective communication strategies to meet community and stakeholder needs

Level	Content	Indicators
Input	Clear and functional lines of two-way communication for routine feedback	
Input	Communications using existing structures when available, or new, multi-approach mechanisms of communication when existing structures are unavailable or redundancies to reach marginalized and vulnerable populations	
Input	Community members who can work as focal points for information dissemination	# of community members who work as focal points for information dissemination
Input	Consent for communication between communities and stakeholders, including government and implementing organizations	
Input	Systematic and transparent feedback mechanisms to facilitate comprehensive information flow, such as people registering dissent and raising issues	
Input	Feedback strategies to share monitoring, evaluation and learning findings with communities, and to provide communities with access to data	
Input	Effective communication strategies to meet the needs of communities and all related stakeholders	
Output	Programme design and implementation evidence that communities are listened to, heard and believed	% of community members who feel that they are listened to, heard and believed within programme design and implementation
Input	Clear information for communities about programme intentions, methods and objectives	Humanitarian actor delivers clear information for communities about programme intentions, methods and objectives
Input	Integration of community feedback as an indicator of programme success	Humanitarian actor integrates community feedback as an indicator of programme success
Input	Community priorities to inform and guide all programme activities	

Standard 5: Adaptability and Localization

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	Community engagement approaches and models are based on local contexts, while being flexible and responsive to local populations' needs, conditions, and concerns (i.e., understand community and local platforms and assets existing at the community level and that need to be engaged with)	% of community members who feel that humanitarian interventions are based on their local contexts % of community members who feel that humanitarian interventions are flexible and responsive to local populations' needs, conditions and concerns
Output	Locally contextualized community engagement approaches and models	Humanitarian actor developed locally contextualized community engagement approaches and models
Input	Community understanding of local conditions, needs and capacities	Humanitarian actor assessed and validated local conditions, needs and capacities
Input	National and regional political, cultural or historical circumstances that may impact community agreement, and acceptance of, and responsiveness to, community engagement initiatives	Humanitarian actor accepted and responded to community engagement initiatives, within their national and regional political, cultural or historical context
Input	Community engagement tools adapted to local languages, contexts and are locally relevant	% of community engagement tools that are adapted to local languages, contexts and are locally relevant
Input	Qualitative and mixed method approaches to develop a holistic understanding of the local context	Humanitarian actor develops qualitative or mixed method approaches for a holistic understanding of the local context
Output	Design and implementation prioritize adaptability and flexibility	Humanitarian actor has adaptable and flexible programme design and implementation
Input	Budgetary planning with anticipation of local adaptation and localization	Humanitarian actor conducts budgetary planning, with anticipation of local adaptation and localization
Input	Assessment of whether community engagement approaches are responsive to ideas, needs and priorities expressed by community members over time	Humanitarian actor conducts recurring or ongoing assessment of whether community engagement approaches are responsive to ideas, needs and priorities expressed by community members
Input	Monitoring and assessment of demands imposed upon communities to adjust	Humanitarian actor conducts recurring or ongoing monitoring and assessment of demands imposed upon communities to adjust
Output	Communities are communicated with in linguistically and culturally appropriate formats (communications should be reflective of a wide range of community knowledge and information demands)	
Input	Local information ecosystem and community communication pathways	HHumanitarian actor assesses local information ecosystem and community communication pathways

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Level	Content	Indicators
Input	Identified barriers to communication or difficulties accessing communication among marginalized, discriminated against, vulnerable or disadvantaged groups	Humanitarian actor identified barriers to communication or difficulties accessing communication among marginalized, discriminated against, vulnerable or disadvantaged groups
Input	Communications in the correct format and language and through appropriate channels	% of communications in the correct format and language and through appropriate channels
Input	Strategies that build on changing community demands for information	Humanitarian actor develops strategies that build on changing community demands for information

Standard 6: Building on local capacity

Level	Content	Indicators
Outcome	Communities are strengthened for self-sufficiency, independence and sustainable development, building on the existing skills and resources of communities and the local groups and organizations that serve them	% of community members who feel that they are strengthened for self-sufficiency, independence and sustainable development through the humanitarian intervention
Output	Community engagement approaches serve to foster strong communities capable of self-sufficiency, independence and sustainable development	Humanitarian actor has community engagement approaches that aim to foster strong communities capable of self-sufficiency, independence and sustainable development % of community members who feel that the existing skills and resources of communities and local groups were identified and leveraged in humanitarian interventions
Input	Strengths-based approach to programme design and implementation, based on recognition of community skills, strengths and resources	Programme design and implementation is conducted with a strengths-based approach, based on recognition of community skills, strengths and resources
Input	Plan to strengthen the skills, resources and assets identified by and within communities, and support the development of new and complementary skills and capacities	Humanitarian actor has a plan to strengthen the skills, resources and assets identified by and within communities, and support the development of new and complementary skills and capacities
Input	Assessment of activities the community can undertake itself and activities for which the support of service providers will be required	Humanitarian actor conducts assessment of activities the community can undertake itself and activities for which the support of service providers will be required
Input	Capacity development activities that build on skills and tools that are locally relevant and incorporate local knowledge and expertise	Humanitarian actor conducts capacity development activities that build on skills and tools that are locally relevant and incorporate local knowledge and expertise
Input	Equitable partnerships with local actors to build on their long-term relationships and trust with communities	Humanitarian actor develops equitable partnerships with local actors to build on their long- term relationships and trust with communities

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Level	Content	Indicators
Output	Training and capacity building is realistically tailored to the needs of each community, and to community members' skills and expertise	Humanitarian actor has training and capacity building that is tailored to the needs of each community, and to community members' skills and expertise % of community members who feel that the skills and resources of communities were strengthened by humanitarian interventions
Input	Realistic timeframes for community engagement activities to accommodate the need to build or expand required capacity	Humanitarian actor develops realistic timeframes for community engagement activities to accommodate the need to build or expand required capacity
Input	Training and capacity development based on realistic assessments of existing strengths and resource gaps	
Input	Local capacity building to interpret and use information and data	Humanitarian actor assesses, leverages and builds local capacity to interpret and use information and data
Input	Capacity building to strengthen community resilience and ability to withstand threats or shocks, adaptable to new livelihood options, in ways that preserve integrity and that do not deepen vulnerability	

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Measuring indicators using means of verification

To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of CE within humanitarian interventions, organizations should collect data and evidence to assess the extent to which a project has achieved its desired outcomes. Means of verification (MoV) are the methods and tools used to gather data and information to assess and measure indicators. They may be used to ensure that the data collected accurately reflects the status of the indicators being measured, and to provide credible evidence for M&E results. Examples of MoV include:

- Direct observation
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Focus group discussions
- Data analysis of administrative records or databases
- Remote sensing technology, such as satellite imagery
- Participant observation and shadowing
- Documentation review and analysis
- Physical measurement and inspection

The choice of MoV will depend on the specific indicators being measured, the resources available, the data collection context and the target audience. They should be tailored to provide reliable, valid, and relevant information about the project outcomes. Practical and cost-effective sources should be considered, and specific methods should be specified when choosing MoV. If there is no available information for the indicator, a specific activity to collect the information, or a change to the indicator, may be necessary.[7] The use of appropriate MoV is essential in ensuring accurate results and informed decisions about the effectiveness of the intervention.[8]

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7   https://www.logframer.eu/content/indicators-and-their-sources-verification

8   https://tools4dev.org/blog/means-of-verification-what-it-is-and-how-to-use-it/

Practical tips for using the common M&E framework

Each CE initiative is unique, as it depends on the local context, needs, experience and resources of the implementing organization, as well as considerations such as timing and budget. However, it is recommended that they include some outcome and output indicators from the Common M&E Framework. This will help ensure that the programme is aligned with response-wide goals and objectives of CE, embed consistent and accurate methods to assess impacts, and enable that its results can be compared and evaluated against similar programmes.

The following 5-step process can be initiated to include indicators from this Common M&E Framework:

1. Assess the community's needs and expectations for engagement.
2. Consider the programme's outcomes and outputs in relation to the community's engagement goals.
3. During the design phase, review the relevant framework and align the proposed intervention with the community engagement objectives.
4. Select relevant indicators from the framework and include any unique output indicators for the programme design.
5. Identify appropriate means of verification, to measure the impact and outcomes of community engagement, applying methods that have been used by other organizations, or those that are cost-effective and practical for the specific programme.

Ethical considerations in M&E

The process will apply the guidelines for the use of data of the Ethical Guidance for Evaluations of the UNEG:[9] Only collecting data that is needed and creates value. The protection and privacy of personal data in any form, processed in any manner, with particular caution when processing data of vulnerable or marginalized individuals or groups. Data governance to clarify data roles, responsibilities, standards and protocols, and to ensure accountability for data assets, insights and actions. Transparent management of data and analytical products by ensuring that evaluation outputs are comprehensible and traceable. Secure and safe data collection, storage and use, with careful management of data leakage or breaches of confidentiality. Data usage that is responsible and impartial and respects, protects and promotes human rights and as appropriate international standards. This includes eliminating bias and not discriminating based on gender, race, religion or any other factor. Other aspects of data management, as applicable, with reference to the Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles adopted by the United Nations High-Level Committee on Data Management.

Overall, data collection, use and dissemination for M&E should be done in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of the participants, stakeholders and the environment. This involves obtaining informed consent, protecting sensitive information and personal data, using methods that minimize harm and exploitation, being transparent in communication and reporting, ensuring equity and fairness, avoiding conflicts of interest, respecting cultural and social norms and considering the impact of M&E activities on the environment.

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Sharing results and lessons learned

Every CE programme, project or activity will require its own unique M&E framework that is appropriate and relevant to its design. However, to build evidence for CE globally and to demonstrate its importance in emergency settings, it will be necessary for diverse CE interventions to measure some common impact and outcome indicators. The Common M&E Framework reflects the need for further shared learning and improved CE programmes in emergency responses in specific and humanitarian programming in generally across all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle beginning with preparedness.

It has been acknowledged that the absence of a Common M&E Framework for CE work in emergency settings has led to variations in the objectives, outcomes, and indicators that organizations use to assess the effectiveness of their work. This has made it difficult to demonstrate the impact of CE programmes in such settings. Using a Common M&E Framework, organizations are encouraged to share their results, including any challenges and lessons learned, in order to help others in the field and to build a body of evidence for CE programmes. Documentation of results can take various forms, such as reports, fact sheets or peer-reviewed articles, and findings can be shared through various channels such as online platforms, meetings or conferences. The goal is to encourage all organizations implementing CE activities in emergency settings to measure similar constructs, which can advance the collective understanding of the field.

As use of the framework grows, programming will increasingly build a shared language and understanding about the most appropriate practices to ensure CE. Any CE-related programme ought to aim for improvements in the engagement of communities affected by humanitarian crises.

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Common Monitoring and evaluation framework
for Community Engagement