

Core Values of Sustainability and Exit Planning (extract from the American Red Cross Sustainability and Exit Planning Guide)

The American Red Cross (ARC) developed the following set of core 'sustainability and exit planning' values/principles to guide the process, because as in any strategic planning exercise, establishing a set of guiding principles can help to clarify the rationale for the process and emphasize why it is important. It can also provide a touchstone for staff to return to as necessary throughout the implementation period.

- **Do no harm:** Building on the Hippocratic Oath and Mary Anderson's development mantra to above all "Do no harm," this principle should underpin all interaction with beneficiaries, partners and the environment.
- **Focus on the 'beneficiary':** Like all program design, the underlying premise and motivation for exit and sustainability planning is the creation of quality programs, services and products for the end user, namely, the 'beneficiary'.
- **Promote equity:** Within the process of exit and sustainability, managers should try to ensure the process is carried out in an equitable manner— that is, various community and beneficiary groups are treated equitably, that some don't receive additional benefits for attention unless there are sound reasons (e.g. more vulnerable groups might receive services for a longer period, or communities that have not yet achieved objectives might be phased out later).
- **Foster self reliance:** This principle extends from the idea that the job of a development practitioner is to facilitate processes that empower the individual or community. The process of exit and sustainability planning should help reinforce this principle.
- **Manage expectations and honor commitments:** The sustainability plan and the exit process can also serve as checks to ensure that the organization is keeping the expectations of communities and beneficiaries in check, and that all organizational commitments are met prior to exit.
- **Transparency and clear communication with Host National Society (HNS), beneficiaries and other stakeholders:** Throughout the process, ensure communications (at all levels) are clear, and that staff actions are carried out in a transparent manner. Planning for exit and communicating the plan clearly to various stakeholders, helps to ensure transparency.
- **Leave no liability behind:** This refers to ensuring appropriate management of all contracts and services after ARC exits.
- **Close coordination and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities with all stakeholders:** Planning for exit and sustainability requires that all stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities, both during and after exit.
- **Evaluation, documentation of best practices, knowledge building and sharing with HNS, Federation, ISD and other stakeholders:** This serves as a reminder that these things need to be planned for and take time; they should not be overlooked in the rush to exit. Likewise, sustainability plans need to build on the existing evidence on how various outcomes can be sustained.
- **Empowering and enabling national and expatriate staff to move on as the program or office comes to a close:** The exit plan should take into account needs of staff. This could include individual professional development sessions, group sessions on resume writing and interviewing skills, or other activities that help staff move on to their next job.
- **Link to ongoing HNS programs and priorities:** Sustainability plans should take into account the needs, interests and capacities of the HNS.