



**WEBINAR SUMMARY**

Collective Accountability to Affected People: Moving Beyond Listening, together

08 March 2017

Most humanitarian organisations have their own Accountability to Affected People (AAP) systems focused on those who benefit from their activities. Yet, collective AAP approaches that cover the entire humanitarian response are relatively new. Collective approaches seek to bring together the views, feedback and complaints of affected people across the totality of a response. They generate analysis which is essential for strengthening the quality, targeting and timeliness of operations, and for guiding the strategic direction of Humanitarian Country Teams. Different mechanisms being tried include joint call centres and radio programmes, as well as integrating AAP across the programme cycle and within pooled funding mechanisms. This webinar draws on experience from the Humanitarian Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the example of the IDP centre in Iraq.

**Panellists**

**Mamadou Diallo**

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**Charlotte Lancaster**

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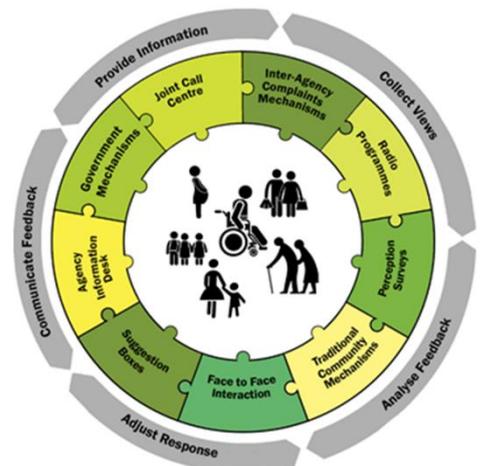
**Mamadou Diallo**

DSRSG, MONUSCO, and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, DRC

The humanitarian planning process in the DRC led the Humanitarian Country Team to realise that more should and can be done to close the gap between people affected by crisis and in need of assistance, and those who set the agenda of the humanitarian response. AAP requires humanitarian actors to involve people affected by crisis in key decisions and processes that impact them, and have effective communication and feedback channels that engage all sectors in a community, especially those most vulnerable or marginalised. In DRC, the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team recognised that a collective approach to AAP would be critical for guiding the prioritisation of sectors and locations according to needs of those most in need.

**What is Collective Accountability to Affected People?**

Most humanitarian organisations have their own AAP systems focused on those who directly benefit from their activities. Collective AAP approaches, on the other hand, have a broader focus on the views, feedback, and complaints of people across the totality of the response, including those who may not be receiving assistance or protection. For Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams, collective AAP approaches are critical for understanding the overall needs and preferences of affected people across the response by identifying where gaps exist and guiding the prioritisation of sectors and locations.



## **What concrete steps have the Humanitarian Coordination and the Humanitarian Country Team in the DRC taken to put in place a collective approach to AAP?**

Humanitarian actors in the DRC used the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) as a frame of reference. The CHS sets out nine commitments that organisations and individuals can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian response. As a core standard, the CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action that humanitarian organisations may use to align their own internal procedures for measuring performance. The Humanitarian Country Team took the following steps:

- 1. Agreed on priorities:** Based on an opinion poll and a set of strategic discussions at the Humanitarian Country Team and the Inter-Cluster level, the Humanitarian Country Team arrived at a common understanding on what the priorities were, how to address the problems identified, and what the framework for addressing these problems should be. The Humanitarian Country Team:
  - Focused on Commitment 2, 4, and 5 of the CHS Standards.
  - Conducted an analysis of the needs and preferences of affected people, particularly in relation to forced displacement, in concert with authorities and development actors.
  - Is conducting a 10-year evaluation of the humanitarian response to see how it has adapted over time to needs and what we can learn more broadly about assistance in protracted emergencies.
- 2. Established responsibilities:** The Humanitarian Country Team clarified the roles and responsibilities of clusters, cluster leads, and individual agencies.
  - The Humanitarian Country Team played an instrumental role in creating momentum and providing strategic guidance. It will also continue to oversee the implementation of activities.
  - National cluster coordinators, the Inter-Cluster, and OCHA have an essential role to play in norm-setting, monitoring, and driving the agenda.
  - The CHS Alliance provided vital support in disseminating information about collective AAP. They were instrumental in providing training to local NGOs (free 1-hour online training) and also helped in translating and disseminating manuals on core CHS standards in local languages and through the appropriate channels to both international and national humanitarian actors in the DRC.
- 3. Dedicated resources:**
  - A CHS Advisor worked with communities to understand their experience and perceptions.
  - Different initiatives have been harmonised under a set of “norms and standards” for AAP.
  - UNICEF, WFP, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, UNDP, and other agencies and NGOs bring their knowledge of community feedback under a single organisational logic.

## **How can a collective approach to AAP by the HCT make a difference in the DRC?**

**Creating change at programmatic level through sub-national coordination mechanisms:** An external CHS advisor provided by OCHA surveyed assisted communities on their experience of humanitarian aid on the basis of the nine commitments, and brought his findings to provincial Inter-Cluster groups to discuss how to adjust the response.

**Harmonising initiatives and approaches:** In the DRC, many actors have developed sets of norms and standards related to AAP and other cross-cutting aspects of the response over time. The CHS provides an integrative framework in which all these initiatives can find a single organisational logic.

**Monitor the quality and accountability of the response at strategic level:** The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative conducts quarterly peacebuilding surveys among communities affected by the crisis. We are looking with them at including questions allowing to assess how these communities rate the quality and accountability of the humanitarian response, using the CHS’s nine commitments.



**Charlotte Lancaster**

Project Manager, Internal Displaced Persons Information Centre, Iraq

The project was born out of an inter-agency collaboration that started with a needs assessment that looked into the communication and information management needs of IDP populations in Iraq. A group managed to gather traction and pull resources, financial and in-kind, to bring to life this call-centre. Following the findings of the needs assessment, the HCT endorsed the recommendation to put in place a two-way communication channel in October 2014, this was referenced in the OPR of 2015, as the first step towards achieving accountability to affected people in Iraq.

## What concrete steps have been taken by senior leadership to set up and maintain the call centre in Iraq?

### 1. **Collaboration and establishment:**

- **Inter-agency commitment and agreement**
  - Inter-agency needs assessment
  - Pooling of resources (in-kind and financial)
  - Agreement/buy-in by all, with help of ICCG
  - Project Board – key partners including HC
- **HCT endorsement /Operational Peer Review**
  - First step towards comprehensive collective AAP

### 2. **Ongoing support:**

- Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)
  - Consistent support & promotion; part of project board
- Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)
  - HRP prioritisation of AAP; attention at HCT meetings
- Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)
  - Regular data analysis presentations
- NGOs
  - Engagement – bilateral and through NCCI
- Prioritisation of support within agencies
  - High level interest and promotion

### *Learning and Challenges*

- *Preparedness and mapping*
- *Consolidation of donor reporting and financial requirements*
- *Harmonisation of data collection processes to aid assessments*
- *Ensuring buy-in and awareness raising at early stages*

## What are the key learnings and next steps for 2017?

### **Supporting established accountability mechanisms**

- One toll free number – exposure/availability for all in need
  - Connects callers with partner information and anonymous feedback mechanism
- Operational-level information packages shared with partners
  - Documents issues & service gaps
  - Real-time referral of vulnerable cases
- Regular evidence-based reporting and analysis helps ensure cross-sectoral needs are prioritised & leadership can make informed decisions

### **Strengthening follow-up**

- Review quality of service provided to affected populations
- Analyse caller perceptions of accessibility and relevance of services to which call centre refers callers
- Strengthen documenting positive influence of call centre on humanitarian programme cycle

### **Integrating and standardising approaches to needs assessments**

- Triangulating different levels of assessment