

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

Using AAP indicators in Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MSNAs): A training module for assessment teams and enumerators

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REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



Understand AAP basics

After completing this training module, you will be able to define Accountability to Affected Populations and identify steps that can be taken to operationalize it by including AAP indicators in multi-sector needs assessments.



Put crisis-affected people at the centre

You will be able to explain what accountability means in practice, across the three components of accountability (taking account, giving account and holding account). You will relate AAP to real-life activities across the humanitarian programme cycle.



Understand the importance of AAP

You will recognize the major standard-setting initiatives for accountable humanitarian action. You will understand the importance of AAP, specifically the rationale behind including indicators on AAP in MSNAs.



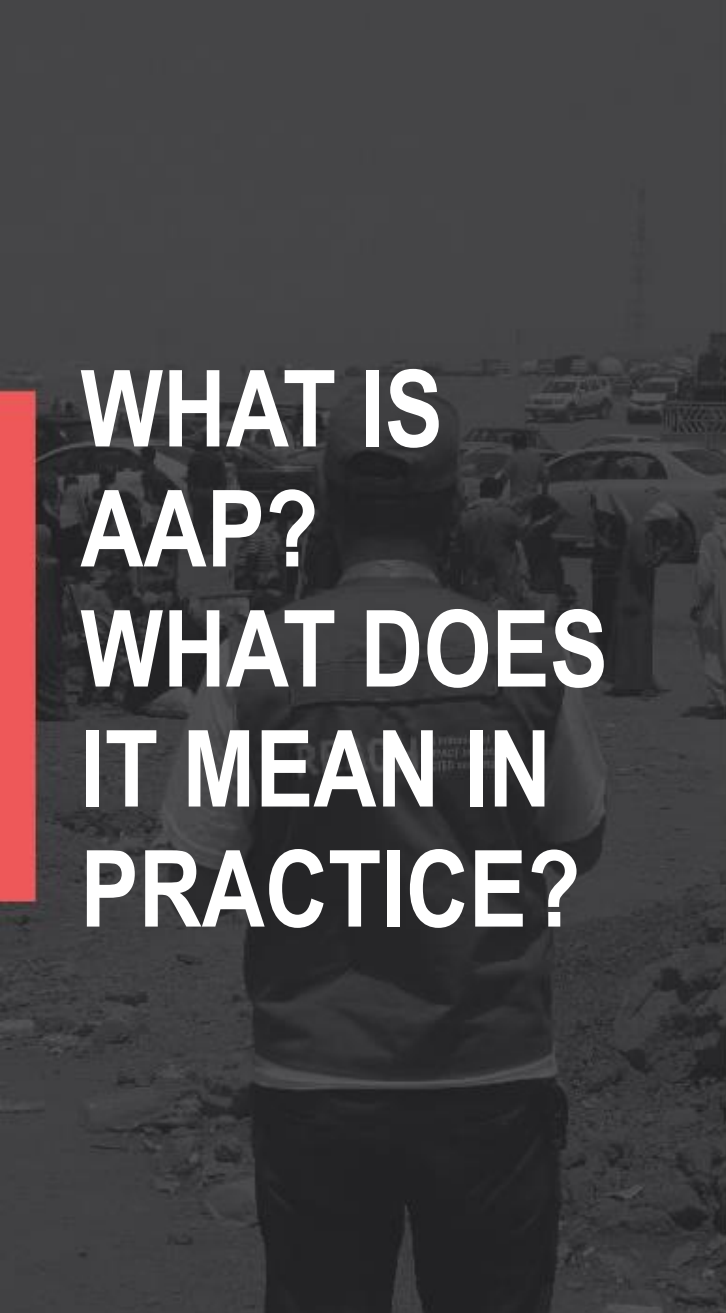
Collect, analyse and use AAP data

You will be familiar with the REACH/ AAP Task Force menu of indicators, including their prioritization and selection (by situation and phase of response), as well as data collection hints and tips from an AAP perspective. You will also discuss techniques and examples for integrating AAP into the assessment cycle beyond data collection.



01

AAP
BASICS



WHAT IS AAP? WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Accountability to Affected Populations is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist.



AAP is about power, and how power is used in practice. Unequal power relations are at the heart of the matter.



A focus on AAP represents a fundamental shift in attitudes and mindset. In the past, humanitarians often saw themselves as primarily accountable to donors, whose money they were using to run programmes. Of course, accountability to donors is still important, but AAP is about putting affected people at the centre of a response.



The women, men, boys and girls affected by a humanitarian response have a right to information in order to make decisions; they have a right to participate in designing and shaping programmes that affect their lives, individually and collectively; and they have a right to tell us whether or not we – the humanitarian community (international and national staff, contractors and volunteers) – are doing a good job.

THREE COMPONENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

?

THREE
QUESTIONS

?

TAKING
ACCOUNT

GIVING
ACCOUNT

BEING
HELD TO
ACCOUNT

1. As aid workers, what do we have to take account of?
2. As aid workers, how and on what issues do we give account to affected people?
3. As aid workers, what are we held accountable for?

THREE COMPONENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

1. As aid workers, what do we need to take into account?

What do we need to consider during the planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance? All the factors that can affect the success or failure of the humanitarian intervention e.g. issues the various groups of affected people identify and how they prioritize their needs; local contextual issues and power struggles; community dynamics; information and communication needs and preferences etc. **An MSNA is a major, coordinated effort to “take account,” by identifying and understanding affected peoples’ needs and priorities.**

2. As aid workers, how and on what issues do we give account to affected people?

What needs to be discussed with affected people? What information should they receive about the humanitarian response, and in which languages and formats? Information will include: what their rights and options are; how the national government and humanitarian community is supporting them; what criteria are used for making decisions re. targeting of aid; times/ dates/ location of aid distribution and how to demonstrate eligibility e.g. ID card; complaints and feedback mechanisms and modalities; how to know which organization a humanitarian is working for etc. **An MSNA informs the design and implementation of the “how” (the mechanisms for accountability), as well as the “what” (the identification of information gaps among the target population to support targeted communications).**

3. As aid workers, what are we held accountable for?

All the things that humanitarians are responsible for e.g. planning and delivering an effective, timely and relevant humanitarian response; the way we communicate about and engage affected people in decisions about the support they receive; for preventing exploitation and abuse, including child labour, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse; For establishing effective complaints and feedback mechanisms and providing robust, timely and appropriate responses; Preventing, reporting and acting on any cases of fraud or corruption etc. **An MSNA supports efforts to hold aid workers accountable, by informing the HNO/ HRP, and by including appropriate protection and AAP indicators.**

02

IMPORTANCE OF AAP

GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Global standards for accountability to affected populations in humanitarian action



Sphere's humanitarian charter and minimum standards (first edition published in 2000) aims to establish an operational framework for accountability in humanitarian emergencies. Sphere's partner standards include child protection, livestock, economic recovery, market analysis, education, age and disabilities.

Core Humanitarian STANDARD

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), launched in 2014, describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action. Humanitarian organizations may use it as a voluntary code with which to align their own internal procedures. It can also be used as a basis for verification of performance.



The IASC principals agreed to five commitments on AAP as part of their framework for engagement with communities. The commitments aim to create a "system-wide" culture of accountability.

WHY IS AAP SO IMPORTANT?

ETHICAL REASONS

Rights-based approach and “do no harm”

Accountability to affected populations is an integral component of a rights-based approach to humanitarianism.

It supports multiple rights, including:

- the right to dignity;
- the right to protection;
- the right to be heard and participate in decision-making.

PRACTICAL REASONS

Supports quality and effectiveness

AAP is also practical, and it supports high quality and effective programming. It ensures that the humanitarian response meets what affected people themselves identify as their needs, not what other people identify as their needs. Voices from affected communities invariably bring far greater contextual knowledge, linguistic and cultural competencies than external observers, and are well-positioned to inform timely, relevant and effective humanitarian programming.

AAP can also build trust between aid workers and beneficiaries, and improve acceptance of the humanitarian community, eventually contributing to increased security. In the longer term, mainstreaming AAP contributes to resilience, ownership and confidence, as affected populations are leading stakeholders in their own recovery rather than passive and voiceless beneficiaries.



03

AAP IN
ACTION

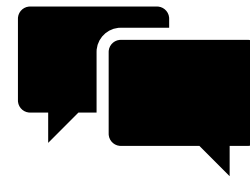
CASE STUDY: AAP IN ACTION



Created by Gan Khoon Lay
from Noun Project



Created by Luis Prado
from Noun Project



CASE STUDY: AAP IN ACTION





DISCUSSION

CASE STUDY to illustrate why it is important to take account of, give account to and be held accountable by those humanitarians seek to assist

1. As Maryam's mother in the story, how do you feel?
2. What could have been done differently to improve accountability to the affected people in this situation?

CASE STUDY: AAP

stereotyped
invisible
disregarded
disempowered
embarrassed
lonely
scared
marginalized
confused
disappointed
Angry
disregarded



04

AAP IN
MSNAS

Systematic and consolidated AAP data informs the Humanitarian Programme Cycle



Household Surveys,
Focus Group
Discussions and Key
Informant Interviews

Inter-Cluster
Coordination



AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

- In 2017, REACH, together with the Global AAP Task Force, developed a menu of AAP indicators to include in Multi-Sector Needs Assessments.
- The full list includes 24 indicators. MSNAs can be lengthy and time-consuming: it's important to be realistic about how many AAP indicators we can include. Every cluster is under pressure to ensure that its own indicators are included.
- Following piloting and lessons learned from the initial roll-out, the full list has been condensed into 12 that have proven feasible and appropriate for MSNAs, aligned with CHS commitments.
- Assessment teams are expected to choose indicators that are most relevant and appropriate to the local context and phase of the response.



AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

1) Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs

% of HHs who reported to have received aid in the past x period

[Of those who received aid in the past x period] % of HHs who were satisfied with the aid they received

[Of those who received aid in the past x period and were not satisfied with aid received] Most commonly reported reasons for why HHs were not satisfied with the aid they received

Most commonly reported modalities of assistance that HHs would prefer to receive in the future

Top three most commonly reported priority needs (using pairwise ranking), by % of HHs per type of priority need reported

AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

2) Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time

% of HHs who reported barriers to accessing aid in the past x period, by type of barrier reported

[Of those who received aid in the past x period and were not satisfied with aid received] % of HHs who reported timeliness of aid delivery as a reason for being dissatisfied with the aid received

AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

3) Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of collective humanitarian action

% of HHs satisfied with the way aid workers have behaved* in the past x period in their location

[Of those who were dissatisfied with aid workers' behavior] Most commonly reported reasons for dissatisfaction with the behavior of aid workers

AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

4) Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them

% of HHs by type of information they would like to receive from aid providers

% of HHs by preferred information source i.e. who/ where they would like to receive this information from

% of HHs by preferred means of receiving information

% of HHs by primary language spoken in the household

% of HHs by preferred language for written vs. verbal communication

AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

5) Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints

% of HHs by preferred means of providing feedback to aid providers about the quality, quantity and appropriateness of aid

AAP INDICATORS IN MSNAs

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitment // Indicator

7) Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as the collective response leadership learns from experience and reflection

% of HHs who reported to have been consulted in the past x period about what aid they would like to receive prior to receiving it

[Of those who were consulted prior to receiving aid] % of HHs who reported to have received what they asked for

GATHERING AAP DATA: HINTS AND TIPS

Prioritization, sampling and methodology will vary by context, but your overarching objective is to ensure that all questions are asked in a way that enables people to share their views **openly and safely**.

It is important to consider all factors that may prevent people from speaking openly. For example, in some cultures, women will not speak in front of men. In others, children will not speak in front of their elders; in others, no one may speak in the presence of an authority-figure (village chief or similar).

- Listening and responding to people affected by a crisis can seem difficult and time-consuming, especially in the urgency of a humanitarian response.
- Systematically building AAP indicators into MSNAs can make this listening and responding process easier: consultations are focused, and by using the same indicators over multiple consultations, the information provided can be comparable.
- Contexts vary hugely. It is the Country Team's responsibility to select sampling methods and methodologies that best meet their needs (security, access and other practicalities). MSNAs are designed to be predominantly conducted through household surveys, but may include FGDs and KIs.
- Every question on the MSNA should be reviewed with an accountability lens, to ensure that it is sensitive to age, gender and all relevant elements of diversity.

HINTS AND TIPS (cont.)



Primary data should only be collected when the required information is not already available and cannot be collected via other means. Assessment teams should adhere to the principle of “data minimization”, by only collecting the minimal amount of viable data to meet the objectives of the assessment. Put simply, don’t waste peoples’ time: it creates survey fatigue.



Information and communications needs: When gathering data on AAP indicators in the context of MSNAs (and for two-way communication with affected people more broadly), it is important to understand the communication channels that work, that are trusted and used by different affected groups e.g. radio, posters, WhatsApp, SMS services etc. Which languages are used for broadcasting? Do all or some people prefer face-to-face communication? Ideally, draw on the findings of a Rapid Information and Communications Needs Assessment if one has been completed for the target population. Before beginning data collection, test the questions with a few different people from the affected community. Are they easily understood? Does any ambiguity or confusion arise from phrasing or translation?



AAP data gathered in the context of MSNAs, along with all other MSNA data, should be stored, shared and processed in ways compatible with your agency’s data protection policy, which is based on international standards of data protection and data security.

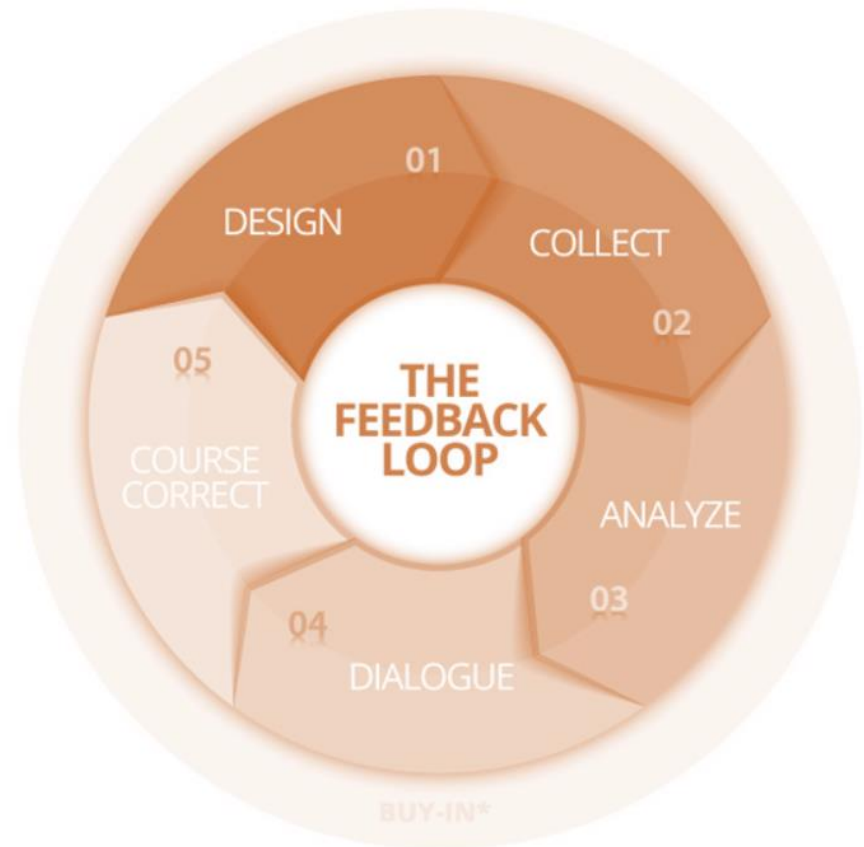
ANALYZING AND USING AAP DATA

It's important to remember that collecting the data is only one part of the process

- When we leave affected communities out of subsequent stages of the assessment cycle, then the information can travel upwards to the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team to guide strategic planning processes, but we fail to create a genuine feedback loop.
- Failure to include affected communities in each phase of the feedback and assessment cycle – from survey design and data collection, through to analysis, dialogue and course correction – is a frequent and serious mistake, one that effectively does very little to correct information and power imbalances in humanitarian action.
- This is enshrined in the CHS: people affected by crisis can expect to participate throughout the feedback loop, and they can expect **“delivery of improved assistance as the collective response leadership learns from experience and reflection” (Commitment 7)**
- Affected communities have experience and insights that can inform interpretations of the data.
- Neglecting to report back to communities on findings, and how and why their feedback way (or was not) used, can undermine accountability efforts. A narrow and extractive approach to data collection can eventually result in survey fatigue, mistrust and disenchantment.
- Several agencies have developed interesting and innovative ways of engaging affected people post-data collection, throughout the assessment cycle. See “Resources”.

Ground Truth Solutions: Constituent Voice Methodology™

- Ground Truth have developed a methodology you can follow to systematically build AAP into the assessment cycle beyond data collection. There is a cycle for each round of listening and feedback, and they should be repeated regularly throughout the humanitarian response (depending on how fast the situation is evolving). You can find extensive guidance on putting the methodology into practice at <https://groundtruthsolutions.org/>.
- You can also use the Constituent Voice methodology to complement the Core Humanitarian Standard's Verification Framework: the CHS checks that policies and processes for AAP are in place, while the Constituent Voice Methodology puts them into practice.
- AAP data gathered in MSNAs can provide a picture of how affected people rate humanitarian responders in a given context against their CHS commitments.



based on the Constituent Voice Methodology™

RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

This training module has shown that putting people affected by crisis at the centre of what we do is right, it makes sense and it's doable. It's also a process, requiring constant effort and critical reflection from all humanitarian workers.

- Menu of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Related Questions for Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MSNAs), REACH and the AAP Task Force, 2017. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/menu-accountability-affected-populations-aap-related-questions-multi-sector-needs>
- Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards. <https://spherestandards.org/handbook-2018/>
- Core Humanitarian Standards and resources: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>
- IASC Commitments on AAP: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-61>
- Grand Bargain Principles for Coordinated Needs Assessments Ethos: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/ws5_-_collaborative_needs_assessment_ethos.pdf
- Ground Truth Solutions Constituent Voice Methodology™. Available here: <https://groundtruthsolutions.org/>



RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING (cont.)

This training module has shown that putting people affected by crisis at the centre of what we do is right, it makes sense and it's doable. It's also a process, requiring constant effort and critical reflection from all humanitarian workers.

- Constituent Voice Technical Note, Keystone Accountability, 2015. <http://keystoneaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/Technical-Note-1.pdf>
- Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action, ICRC, 2017. <https://shop.icrc.org/e-books/handbook-on-data-protection-in-humanitarian-action.html>
- Data Responsibility Guidelines, OCHA, 2019. <https://centre.humdata.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/OCHA-DR-Guidelines-working-draft-032019.pdf>
- Accountability to Affected Populations: Community Perceptions of Humanitarian Assistance in South Sudan, REACH, 2020. https://www.impact-repository.org/document/repository/0a7205a8/SSD_REACH_Report_AAP_Final.pdf
- Somali Citizen Perspectives on Humanitarian Priorities in 2018, Africa's Voices Foundation and REACH, 2018. <https://www.africasvoices.org/case-studies/reach-somali-citizen-perspectives-on-humanitarian-priorities-in-2018-jmcna/>



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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