

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE (AAP) POLICY

Policy Statement

CHA's commitment to Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) guidelines informs this policy. The phrase 'accountability to affected people' (AAP) is widely used in the humanitarian community to refer to the commitments and mechanisms that humanitarian agencies have put in place to ensure that communities are meaningfully and continuously involved in decisions that directly impact their lives.

Accountability refers to the responsible use of power (resources, decision making) by humanitarian actors, combined with effective and quality programming that recognizes a community of concern's dignity, capacity, and ability to be independent. As a regional humanitarian organization, implementing initiatives throughout Africa, Centre for Humanitarian Analytics is committed to 'putting people first' and drawing on the rich range of experiences, capacities, and aspirations of all their target beneficiaries including women, men, girls, boys and all other special interests' groups. In addition, it is committed to being accountable to the people it serves by listening and responding to their needs, perspectives, and priorities.

These includes:

- Participation and inclusion
- Communication and transparency
- Feedback and response
- Organizational learning and adaptation

Why AAP?

The following key components of accountability to affected people are intrinsically linked and build on each other and other community-based participatory approaches. They are applicable in all CHA operations and provide a framework for the practical integration of accountability into protection and assistance programming.

Participation and inclusion.

Women, men, boys and girls of diverse backgrounds are able to engage meaningfully and are consulted on protection, assistance, and solutions.

- CHA to establish arrangements that permit meaningful participation at all stages of the operation's management cycle (assessment, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation). The arrangements should be accessible to all groups in a community. In particular, ensure that potentially marginalized groups are included, such as minorities, people with disabilities, and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- CHA to ensure that all persons of concern have equal and non-discriminatory access to protection, assistance and solutions. Act in a manner that enables forcibly displaced and stateless women, men, girls and boys to be resilient and achieve self-reliance.
- CHA to identify the capacities and priorities of all persons of concern and develop protection, assistance and solutions programmes that accord with them.

Communication and transparency.

All staff implementing projects to ensure women, men, boys and girls of diverse backgrounds in all operations have access to timely, accurate, and relevant information on (i) their rights and entitlements, and (ii) the programmes of CHA and its partners.

- CHA to facilitate communication and dialogue between CHA, its partners, and persons of concern at key stages throughout the operation's management cycle.
- CHA to share information and communicate in languages, formats, and media that are culturally appropriate for, and accessible to, all groups in a community.

Feedback and response.

Formal and informal feedback from persons of concern is systematically received and responded to, and corrective action taken when appropriate.

- CHA to establish and maintain effective feedback systems (including comments, suggestions, and complaints), using a variety of communication channels that are accessible to all persons of concern and that are appropriate for both sensitive and non-sensitive feedback.
- CHA to allocate human and financial resources to ensure that feedback from persons of concern is systematically collected, acknowledged, assessed, referred, and responded to in a timely, confidential, and effective manner.
- CHA to collaborate with partners in feedback referral and response processes (wherever appropriate).

Organizational learning and adaptation.

Interventions, planning, priority setting, course corrections, and evaluation are informed on an ongoing basis by the views of persons of concern.

- CHA to learn from continuous engagement with communities of concern and adapt interventions and programmes in response to new knowledge gained through community participation and feedback, both in the short and long-term.
- CHA to measure and improve accountability to all persons of concern through assessments of organizational performance on accountability.
- Implementing staff to include persons of concern as partners throughout the operation's management cycle, inter alia by reporting the results of assessments and follow up actions to them.

CHA's Good practices when communicating with communities

CHA will at all times Listen and talk to communities as a fundamental part of a humanitarian response and is vital to ensure the organisation remain accountable to persons of concern. These Practices includes:

- Staff understanding context by running an information and communications needs assessment.
- Coordination of communication initiatives is critical, both in organizations and at interagency level.
 - Ensuring CHA staff provides factual, objective and actionable information that enables people to make informed decisions.
 - Adopting a variety of communications channels to promote inclusivity and accessibility.
 - Don't assume that communication is 'one-way'
 - Manage expectations, counter misinformation and address rumours
 - CHA not duplicating efforts. To ensure staff communication initiatives are sustainable, CHA will build on staff capacities and work with services that are already active.
 - Identifying the resources, you need, to ensure you have the capacity to implement, receive and react.
 - Testing and refining communications activities.
 - Considerations for practical implementation Keep up to date with technology but do so with your eyes open. To ensure you 'do no (digital) harm', CHA will address the following:

Ownership of technology. Is the channel owner associated with an interest, or with one side in a conflict.

Neutrality. Is the content that is normally shared through this channel biased against one group of people?

Data protection. How secure is the information that is shared through this channel?

Digital divide. Does this channel marginalize certain groups without access?

Appropriate. Is this channel preferred and trusted by communities?

No community is homogenous – be inclusive

CHA will adopt different measures while Communicating with Communities as per the below interest groups:

Physical impairments

- Where carers or advocacy groups for physically impaired people are active, CHA will work through them and use their communications channels.
- CHA will include disability information (for example, about wheelchair access) in all it's communications.
- Some people with a disability have carers: CHA include carers in discussions too.
- When printing messages, CHA will use a large font and prepare audio versions.

Cognitive and learning difficulties

- CHA will consider reaching out to social networks, family and carers.
- CHA will provide information verbally. It will be clear, simple and all staff should adopt short sentences.
- Implementing staff will not provide too much information because this may cause confusion and stress.
- All CHA staff should use pictures or colours to help communicate (primary on a white background).
- All implementing staff should ensure messages are consistent.

Communicating with children

- CHA implementing will start by connecting with what they are doing.
- All staff should introduce themselves by mentioning their names and who they are.
- Create an environment that is not distracting.
- Implementing staff should ask their name(s) and age(s).
- All staff should take their time while engaging children.
- All implementing staff should also watch, wait and listen while engaging children.
- Build trust through engaging them with various fun activities.
- All implementing staff should uphold confidentiality when dealing with the minors.
- Staff should avoid use of jargon but instead simplify information for children's uptake.
- All implementing staff should always have a non-judgmental attitude for children.

How to use pictures

- CHA will use one central image to avoid confusion about how to read the images on the page.
- CHA's implementing staff will avoid use of symbols that require prior understanding.
- Staff should avoid using comparison images to demonstrate differences in sizes, processes or numbers.

Making CHA's information easy to read:

- All staff should use words that communities use all the time.
- Use active verbs.
- Use full stops.
- Try not to use other punctuation.
- Use bullet points for examples and instructions.
- Do not split words over 2 lines.
- Staff to ensure it is easier to read straight across the page.
- All words should be in white (reversed-out text) on a coloured background can be harder to read.
- Use bold to highlight important words.