



Accountability to the Affected Populations in Early Recovery: Examples of Good Practice

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON AAP – MARCH 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

While there is a consensus on the importance of accountability to affected population in humanitarian response, country teams often raise the question “how do we actually do it”? This document is an attempt to illustrate more concretely what accountability to affected population means in terms of Early Recovery (ER) assistance and coordination.

The document gives a gist of some of the guiding principles and commitments the humanitarian community has made to improve accountability. It also provides a few examples of good practices on how Accountability to the Affected Populations (AAP) is exercised in Early Recovery response vis-à-vis the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). They are meant to assist Early Recovery practitioners, including Cluster Coordinators for Early Recovery (CCfER) and other staff. This is not a technical guide. Instead, in view of the abundance of existing theories and guides, this package is meant to inspire early recovery clusters in the field with a few stories and tips to a practical approach. It is a living document and more stories can be added if people are interested in sharing.

What is AAP?

There are many dimensions to accountability, but in summary, Accountability to Affected Populations is an active commitment for aid workers and organizations to use the power and resource entrusted to them ethically and responsibly, combined with effective and quality programming that recognizes the community’s dignity, capacity and rights to participate in decisions that affect them. Being accountable means taking account of the views of affected people in the design and implementation of aid activities and collecting and acting upon feedback from them, giving account by transparently and effectively sharing information with communities, and being held to account for the quality, fairness and effectiveness of their actions.

Individual aid organizations are ultimately responsible to manage resources, engage communities and be accountable to the population they assist. Moreover, the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) has committed itself to strengthening AAP and the Global Cluster for Early Recovery established a Technical Working Group (TWG) on AAP¹ in 2015 to follow through the commitments. Clusters are an important space for actors to discuss and promote a consistent and harmonized approach to accountability in operations. Cluster Coordinators should play an active role in ensuring that accountability is considered in operations, such as promoting consistent use of recognized technical and quality standards, the use of context and culturally appropriate mechanisms for collecting community feedback to inform and guide cluster decision-making, or identifying and addressing gaps in the response. Leadership at the cluster level to encourage and promote application of good practices around accountability helps ensure that clusters can more consistently and effectively meet affected people’s needs, priorities and concerns.

¹ GCER, *Guidance Note on Inter-Cluster Early Recovery* 2016, p.51

Early Recovery & AAP – it's a People-Centered Approach

AAP is fundamental to Early Recovery, which aims at generating self-sustaining, nationally owned, resilient processes for post crisis recovery.

Early Recovery addresses recovery needs that arise during the humanitarian phase of an emergency, using humanitarian mechanisms that align with development principles. Thereby the response assists affected populations in overcoming the impact of the crisis and returning rapidly to something approaching normality. In this process, people are not merely seen as beneficiaries or victims, but as actors, participants and change agents.

Extensive research shows that when given an opportunity to express their needs and thoughts, people in disasters and crisis situations want significant positive and lasting change – and three specific areas are very often highlighted²:

Economic Betterment: “People want and expect international assistance to improve their current and/or future economic prospects. How they judge aid’s impacts depends on whether or not it increases the likelihood of a secure livelihood. Roads that open markets, water that allows improved crops, schooling and training that lead to employment or productive skills, and even housing that can be used for commercial purposes are welcomed”.

Improved Political and Security Conditions: “Although improvements in economic well-being are most important, many people also talk about the influences of international assistance on their political and social conditions. They look for, and hope for, aid providers to have positive impacts on their governance structures and on their physical safety. When the assistance supports new ways of engaging with their government or improvements in their safety, they welcome it“. People want aid providers to support them in gaining a voice and express their concerns to the government.

A Sense of Solidarity, Collegueship and Support: “Many people say that they want a sense of connectedness to people in other parts of the world. They welcome the expressions of solidarity that international assistance brings. When aid providers discuss problems and solutions with them and suggest new ideas or new ways of doing things, they see these as expressions of caring and collegueship.” People affected by crisis would like to take part on an equal foot with responders.

The three areas refer directly to the overall objectives of early recovery as well as to the more defined focus areas of early recovery. The box below provides some examples of frequent remits of an ER Cluster during a humanitarian response – some of which will arise again in the four case studies presented in this document.

² Mary B. Anderson et al, *Time to Listen, Hearing People on the Receiving end of International Aid*, p. 15-19

Early Recovery Programme Types³:

<p>Recovery of Livelihoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-agricultural livelihoods • Economic recovery (SME, Microbusiness) • Cash and vouchers for off farms community infrastructure rehabilitation • Access to, and provision of, financial services • Differentiating economic recovery needs of specific (vulnerable) groups, including men and women, youth, and specific groups affected by the crisis. • Protection of environment and natural resources 	<p>Rehabilitation of basic infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management and sanitation • Utility systems (water electricity) • Economic services: Roads, bridges, markets, irrigation schemes • Social and cultural services: schools, clinics • Local government buildings and those related to the restoration of state authority (including police stations, prisons etc.) • Community buildings: prisons, markets • Mine awareness and clearance
<p>Strengthening Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of Law • Peace and Reconciliation • Community Stability • Social Cohesion • Local Governance & recovery • Civil Society 	<p>Capacity-Building - Investing in people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local level government official • National level government official • Police • Small and medium size enterprises • Civil Society • Women's groups • Youth groups

Placing people affected by crisis at the center of Early Recovery-measures is at the very core of a people centered approach (PCA). A PCA recognizes that a person's gender, age and other diversity characteristics have a significant impact on the way they experience emergencies and access assistance. Understanding these differences is absolutely necessary to ensure that humanitarian action responds to the diverse needs of the affected people, reaches and assists all segments of the population and, importantly, does not put some at risk. Gender and age play a crucial role in this regard. Thus, in line with the PCA and AAP approach and in addition to the good practice examples an Early Recovery Tip Sheet of IASC Gender & Age Marker (currently under development) is included in the Annex for further guidance and inspiration.

The Five IASC Commitments to AAP⁴

Accountability is one of the three pillars of the Transformative Agenda and the IASC principles, committed to creating a system-wide "culture of accountability" by endorsing five commitments:

1. Leadership/Governance: Demonstrate commitment by ensuring accountability is integrated into country strategies, programme design, monitoring and evaluations, recruitment, staff inductions, trainings and performance management, partnership agreements, and highlighted in reporting.

³ GCER, *Guidance Note on Inter-Cluster Early Recovery* 2016, p.31

⁴ Transformative Agenda Protocol, *IASC AAP Operational Framework*, 2011

2. Transparency: Provide accessible and timely information on organizational procedures, structures and processes that may impact communities in order to support informed decisions, and engage communities in a dialogue as part of information provision.
3. Feedback and complaints: Actively seek the views of communities to improve policy and practice in programming, ensuring that feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined, appropriate and robust enough to handle (communicate, receive, process, respond to and learn from) complaints about breaches in policy and stakeholder dissatisfaction.
4. Participation: Enable communities to play an active role in the decisions that will impact their lives through the establishment of clear guidelines and practices on participation and ensure that the most marginalized and at risk are represented and have influence.
5. Design, monitoring and evaluation: Design, monitor and evaluate the goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations, feeding learning back into the organization on an on-going basis and reporting on the results of the process.

Good practice of AAP in ER guided by the Core Humanitarian Standard

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) is the result of wide consultation with NGOs, the UN, Global Clusters and governments on how to define quality and accountability in humanitarian actions. It sets out nine inter-related commitments that organizations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can and should use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide.⁵ It also facilitates greater accountability to communities and people affected by crisis: Knowing what humanitarian organizations have committed themselves to will enable them to hold those organizations to account.

The Nine Commitments (see figure on the right) are a structured way to operationalize AAP and thereby strengthen Early Recovery response in having a people centered approach. The four case studies provided in the following chapter will also be referenced to the CHS.

The Global Cluster on Early Recovery AAP TWG would like to thank those colleagues who provided examples on how they have tried to strengthen accountability through their clusters and programmes and welcome others who want to share their experiences.



⁵ CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project, *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*, 2014

2. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE: STRENGTHENING AAP IN EARLY RECOVERY

CASE STUDY 1: The Malakand complex emergency and 2010 Pakistan Floods - IOM in Pakistan

Issues of Accountability

The 2007-2008 insurgency in Malakand, Pakistan, and the resulting military operation the following year, caused the displacement of 1.7 million people. Pakistan was again affected by major crisis in July 2010, as torrential monsoon rains caused flash-flooding that surged through more than 15 thousand villages, affecting over 18 million people and displacing one fifth of the population.

The response of the government and the international community focused on meeting humanitarian needs of affected populations and supporting their early and longer-term recovery. However, the crisis also highlighted that a lack of reliable and accurate information often undermined efforts by communities to respond effectively, cope and recover from crisis.

AAP actions and CHS links

Recognizing the pivotal role that information can play in facilitating a more effective and accountable response in the immediate aftermath of crisis and in early recovery, IOM Pakistan designed a communications programme for affected communities (**CHS 4** “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”).



Photo taken from IOM publication: *IOM Pakistan Flood Response: Six months on, 2011*.

The objective of the Humanitarian Communications Project (HCP) was to assist the Government of Pakistan and humanitarian actors to provide timely, accurate and needs-based information to people displaced by crisis⁶.

⁶ The project was supported by the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and subsequently by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the UK Department of International Development (DFID)

Designing and delivering a communications strategy (CHS 1 “Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant”, and CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):

In designing a strategy for the project, IOM undertook careful research to establish how communities traditionally received and provided information, what information they already had available to them and what information they needed the most to cope and begin a recovery. The project identified which sources of information communities trusted the most, and how vulnerable groups within communities’ accessed information.

It was found that communities turned to a wide array of formal and informal sources of information. Apart from television, radio and print media, communities often turned to friends and family, religious leaders, district government officials, police or even local shops. Mobile phones and social media were found to be important sources of information too for many communities, but there were also limitations to using such technology when trying to reach poorer and illiterate groups.

Working in partnership (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects”; CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”, and CHS 6 “Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary”):

The project co-chaired dedicated communication working groups jointly with government officials at national and provincial levels and included key humanitarian agencies and media partners as working group members.

The working groups assessed information needs and agreed on appropriate joint strategies for dissemination.

The project also worked closely with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) clusters that had been established to coordinate the overall humanitarian response effort. This way, the project could identify and respond to specific communication needs identified by each cluster. In Pakistan, the government co-chaired these clusters, allowing for joint prioritization and development of messages.

Watan Card (or The Citizen’s Damage Compensation Programme), was a government cash grant scheme to compensate flood survivors. A lack of information had led to beneficiaries showing up at wrong sites to pick up their cash or bringing inadequate documentation, often creating influxes of ineligible beneficiaries at designated card centers. These issues kept many eligible beneficiaries from accessing their cash grants on time.

In collaboration with the government, the IOM project helped distribute beneficiary lists to local government offices. Using radio, text messages and newspaper ads, the project helped direct communities to the locations of these lists.

Community Feedback mechanisms (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”, and CHS 5 “Complaints are welcomed and addressed”):

Providing avenues for communities to give feedback constituted a core feature of the project.

Feedback mechanisms helped ensure that affected people participated in the shaping of key messages and in determining the best mechanisms for their dissemination.

Feedback also helped identify gaps in the overall assistance to inform government and humanitarian actors and helped improve or better target their responses.

In order to collect the feedback, frontline communications teams were deployed in the field to consult directly with affected communities.

A **Humanitarian Call Centre (HCC)** was also established and operated to respond to specific queries (**CHS 2** “Humanitarian response is effective and timely”; **CHS 5** “Complaints are welcomed and addressed”).

The project distributed FAQ sheets to affected populations, initially focusing mainly on relief issues, such as food distribution points and the dangers of waterborne diseases.

Content was soon adjusted to provide information on aspects relevant to early recovery, such as how to construct safe shelters and information on livelihood options.

The FAQ sheets were location-specific with contact information of local officials and aid providers. The FAQ sheets were regularly updated to reflect the evolving information needs of affected communities as they transitioned from relief to recovery to longer-term reconstruction.

Impact

The Humanitarian Call Centre (HCC) ensured ‘two-way communication’ with affected populations. Cases where beneficiaries eligible for the Watan card scheme were excluded due to technical problems were frequent. Azam Sheikh was one such beneficiary, whose Watan card did not work: ‘My family was in dire need of money and I did not know who to contact. I looked up the Watan Card online and sent an email to the HCC.’ An officer soon replied and within four days a solution had been found. ‘I cannot describe my feeling when I got that call. They informed me that I needed to call the bank helpline. I did so, and my Watan card was reactivated.’

Over the course of three months, the number of ineligible people at card centers had dropped dramatically leading to a more efficient delivery of cash grants, and thereby a better and more accountable response to the early recovery needs of affected communities.

The HCC became an important tool in the early recovery phase to support recovery programmes with accurate information, such as the government’s national compensation schemes. The HCC received calls from all over the country and was equipped to respond in various languages: English, Urdu, Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi and Saraiki.

When necessary, callers were referred to appropriate organizations or government departments.

The HCC kept an accurate record on topics discussed during phone calls.

This helped create a comprehensive list of sectoral and geographic information gaps to help inform the development and targeting of new messages (CHS 2 “Humanitarian response is effective and timely”, and CHS 7 “Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve”).

AAP lessons learned

The Malakand complex emergency and 2010 Pakistan Floods highlighted the important role information can play for communities. It enabled them to effectively cope with crisis and transition to early recovery.

Through the enhanced information access provided by the Humanitarian Communications Project, affected populations knew their assistance entitlements and demanded accountability from state and other actors.

Affected communities could take decisions on where to seek refuge, how to access compensation schemes or replace lost documents.

Information could provide ‘early warning’ of possible conflict escalation and ‘preparedness’ for impending natural disaster. Information was thus effective in countering occurrences of miss-information and rumors.

The Humanitarian Communications Project spearheaded by IOM in Pakistan proved a useful tool and became a full, permanent component of the overall disaster risk management strategy of the Government of Pakistan.

Communities with high illiteracy rates needed easily comprehensible messages in a language that they could understand, thus an emphasis to regional languages was given.

Feedback mechanisms were important because they were useful in highlighting ongoing needs and underlining areas where needs were unmet or where programmes needed to be adjusted.

CASE STUDY 2: Debris-Removal after Political Violence in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 – Community Restoration Cluster in Osh

Issues of Accountability

In 2010, an internal political conflict between Uzbek and Kirgiz groups in Kyrgyzstan escalated to a violent crisis and displaced hundreds of thousands in Southern Kyrgyzstan and in particular around the old city of Osh.

In the course of the violence houses, shops and market places of Uzbeks were burned and many fled to Uzbekistan. Those who returned or remained had to live in makeshift shelters or with relatives and moreover many lost their livelihoods.

Part of the early recovery response was to assist the municipality and communities of Osh in cleaning up the debris, bricks, cement and burned wood from the destroyed market places, houses and streets to pave the way to rebuilding these areas. Due to the crisis many had lost their jobs and expressed that they wanted their livelihoods and their communities restored.

Employing the affected population in the debris removal in their own communities became a priority.

AAP actions and CHS links

Engaging local communities (CHS 1 “Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant”, CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects” and CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):



The Community Restoration Cluster (CRC), taking the lead in coordinating the debris removal, engaged with the local municipality of Osh to identify community members interested in working on debris removal in a cash for work programme.

Photo: UNDP, Osh, Kyrgyzstan 2010

The local municipality referred to leaders who could organize groups in different communities. Many community members were interested. The CRC encouraged that groups would be gender-mixed, aiming for a minimum of 40% women and that women, men, youth and older people were consulted to understand their specific interests and needs.

Receiving regular feedback (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”, and CHS 6 “Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary”):

In order to ensure safe working environments, minimum health and safety guidelines were established for the cluster, which included appropriate gear to remove the often dangerous debris.

The participants reported back to the agencies and organizations and received their daily wage. This was an opportunity to get regular feedback.



The cash for work programmes were popular and soon many partners were assisting these emergency employment schemes. But the CRC was confronted with a major challenge when other agencies reported on young children being observed as working on the debris removal teams during school hours. In some cases, children were cleaning up the debris, while their parents were sitting next to the sites.

The CRC called for meetings with all partners working on debris removal and invited the child protection coordinator as well as OCHA to discuss the problems.

Tackling the issue was challenging, given that not all sites could be monitored. Most agencies had left the task of monitoring the debris sites to the community leaders.

The response measures to child labor (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects”, CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”, and CHS 6 “Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary”):

The CRC partners met with the local municipality and explained that child labor was prohibited, referring to the Kyrgyz legislation prohibiting the employment of children, as well as international law and child rights.

The CRC raised awareness amongst communities, which engaged them in a dialogue: On the one hand, parents were given a chance to explain why children were working on the teams on not attending school, while also being made familiar with the law prohibiting child labor in Kyrgyzstan and the reasons for safety and standards on the sites.

The education cluster was also consulted, so that they could raise awareness amongst parents about the importance of school attendance.

The CRC also involved the municipality as the main interlocutor to explain the national and international laws and labor rights to the community groups.

Finally, CRC partners increased site visits and engaged in more dialogue with the women and men working on debris removal.

By working together, the different humanitarian actors did not only develop a mechanism to alert each other, but other clusters could also contribute with their expertise to tackling the problem.

Impact

These activities had positive effects. First of all, they increased the level of awareness among municipality and community members, especially parents and children around the negative effects of child labor and the laws prohibiting it. The measures also increased awareness among humanitarian agencies and staff for the fact that child labor was actually taking place – and fostered communication on how to avoid negative effects of the humanitarian response. Preventing and reporting on child labor became a joint effort of the cluster partners.

Consequently, the CRC increased monitoring and thus started visiting the sites and engaged in dialogues with the community members.

The dialogues on child labor provided opportunities for receiving additional feedback and complaints regarding the daily challenges of the debris removal groups: The days were long, labor was hard, not everyone had wheel-barrows and some of the debris was heavy, allowing mainly the physically stronger people to take up those jobs. In response the CRC encouraged setting up mixed teams with younger and older persons so that they could help each other.

In terms of actually reducing the level of children engaged in debris removal, comprehensive monitoring remained a challenge. However, site visits and awareness raising and joint commitments to monitor and report helped. Thus, the CRC jointly with partners facilitated that communities removed debris from their own houses in a safe way and thereby created jobs that were safe.

AAP lessons learned

The experience the CRC had with the debris removal programme led to a number of lessons learned which can be phrased as Early Recovery Minimum AAP commitments and related to the humanitarian programme cycle phases (**CHS 7** “Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve”):

Needs Assessment and Analysis: Do Separate consultations with women and men, including youth and older people, about their interest in engaging in cash for work activities to identify potential barriers that might hamper their equal access.

Planning & Design: Ensure that cash for work programmes offer tasks suitable for groups with specific needs, particularly older persons and people with disabilities. Ensure that daily labor-teams comprise, at minimum, 40% women.

Implementation: Ensure that weekly discussions are conducted with female and male workers of different ages to get their feedback on issues of hardship, safety at work or any other difficulty that they might face. Take timely corrective actions.

Monitoring & Evaluation: In collaboration with the education and child protection sectors, ensure that the national law on child labor is known and abided by families and that child rights violations are routinely monitored.

CASE STUDY 3: Resettlement in Ngway Pyaw Village (PaLaNa), Myitkyina, Kachin State, Myanmar - UNDP in Myanmar

Issues of Accountability

Since May 2014, the State Government of Kachin and the Union Government of Myanmar initiated the returns and relocation of IDPs from across Kachin State. One of these relocation concerned the IDPs in camps around Myitkyina and Waingmaw Townships. Most of these IDPs had been displaced for around three years and many of them had had several episodes of displacement affecting their lives.

In its capacity as co-lead for Durable Solutions, the Early Recovery Sector, along with the Protection Working Group, engaged in consultations with IDPs in targeted camps to assess the adherence to basic principles and standards of durable solutions prior to their relocation to Ngway Pyaw Village. IDPs came from seven IDP camps in Waingmaw and Myitkyina Townships in Kachin State.

AAP actions and CHS links

Consulting with resettled families (CHS 1 “Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant”, and CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):

During and after their relocation, the Early Recovery Sector, in collaboration with the Protection Working Group, coordinated short term support to durable solutions while engaging in consultations with resettled families (initially 113 households: 484 individuals), authorities and civil society organizations for longer-term recovery and reintegration.

Establish resettled families committees (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):



Photo: UNDP Myanmar

The first step was to support the resettled families to organize into committees. The representation of women and girls in these committees was critical. One of the most important committees was the Village Development and Social Cohesion Committee (VDSCC), which coordinated with humanitarian and development partners' short-term assistance and consultations for longer-term recovery and

reintegration. Three women were among the eight members forming the community.

The community proposed members to the committee, which was central in channeling resettled families concerns, feedback and complaints.

Increasing community participation (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):

Through the committee, the humanitarian and development partners consulted the community for longer-term recovery and reintegration programmes. Women and girls were consulted separately to identify their needs. Young girls were also consulted separately.



Photo: ACTED Myanmar: Resettled families working on the road construction

After the consultations, the community recommended the following activities:

- Access road to allow the community to access basic services and livelihoods in and outside the village. A 2.4 km concrete road was constructed by UNDP, which cut down the traveling time from and to the village to half. The road construction included a Cash for work scheme for a duration of ten months and it provided income to around 45 people among resettled.
- Livelihoods activities (livestock breeding, grocery, motorcycle repair, sewing, amber polishing and food processing).

Capacity development to start a business (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects”):

The village received vocational training on book keeping, the concept of community-based organizations, food processing, motorcycle repair, livestock breeding and husbandry and sewing. This was possible through the collaboration between UNDP, the Cooperative Department, Department of Social Welfare and the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Cash grants were disbursed through the committee to 113 households. 62 households chose livestock breeding, 21 chose grocery, 29 chose amber polishing.

Additionally, 17 people, including five women received cash grant and tools for food processing, motorcycle repair and sewing.

For the 29 families that were dealing with amber polishing, UNDP, the Small Scale Industry Department, the Cooperative Department and Gems and Jewelry Entrepreneurs Association agreed to establish the value chain and protect the interest of these families.

An additional group of 66 families (380 individuals) was relocated in the village mid-2015. UNDP provided all 66 households with livelihoods assistance in a form of conditional cash grant for small and medium enterprises. Overall, 864 people were covered by the programme.

Setup of complaints mechanisms (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”, and CHS 5 “Complaints are welcomed and addressed”):

The community had access to the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) of the State Ministry of Social Affairs where they knew they could channel their complaints.

Various humanitarian and development actors sensitized them on possibilities they had to convey issues, complaints and meet with any of the representatives of UN and partners. They also participated in the governance of the village through regular meeting with the Village Administrator and the Township administration.

The arrival of 380 newly resettled IDPs coincided with the end of the provision of food for the first group of 484 (who had received a few months earlier recovery assistance from UNDP). When the new group received food, the first group protested and wished to continue receiving food as well. They raised this issue separately with UNDP, the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Coordination between UNDP, OCHA, WFP, ACTED, RRD, the Department of Rural Development (DRD) and the State Ministry of Social Affairs helped clarify and communicate the issue and helped them understand why the second group alone was to receive food assistance at that time.

Impact

Building a new road benefited the communities and improved the social cohesion among resettled families coming from seven different camps and between IDPs and host communities (host/surrounding community members were included in motorcycle repair, sewing and food processing trainings). It strengthened the community cohesion by reducing socio-economic disparities and vulnerabilities and strengthening community networks and relations.

The vocational training enhanced economic growth through skill enhancement and income generation opportunities.

AAP lessons learned

The implementation of early recovery activities supported the self-reliance and strengthened the resilience among communities. The affected communities received support to start resuming their livelihoods.

The vocational training gave the community a chance to learn or improve a skill that might help them earn an income and helped them rebuild their lives.

Recovery and (re)integration assistance provided by humanitarian and development actors was coordinated and coherent with a roadmap that was agreed upon by the area-based Humanitarian Country Team. The project was coordinated by UNDP in its capacity as Global Cluster Lead for Early Recovery.

This helped the UN and partners to maintain coherent and coordinated interventions throughout the process of recovery and reintegration. WASH activities were linked with food assistance and Non-Food Items (NFIs).

All of them converged toward longer term recovery and reintegration through the provision of sustainable livelihoods and the promotion of social cohesion among resettled families and with local and surrounding communities.

Engaging IDPs on longer term recovery and reintegration prior to their return or relocation, providing them with all necessary information allowed them to be aware and meaningfully participate in deciding what kind of assistance is appropriate and would be sustainable for them.

Coordination with national authorities facilitated the political and social integration of IDPs, which also expedited the recovery process (**CHS 6** “Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary”).

Integrating gender dimensions in recovery and reintegration allowed women to play a key role in the Village Development and Social Cohesion Committee (VDSCC), and meaningfully participate in the process, including playing leadership roles, particularly in dialogue activities.

CASE STUDY 4: Nepal Earthquake 2015 – Engaging people as actors of change - UNDP in Nepal

Issues of Accountability

The large-scale earthquake with 7.8 magnitude that struck Nepal on April 25, 2015 created a great crisis in the country claiming more than 8,500 lives, injuring over 22,000 people, and destroying over 800,000 houses, leaving some three million people displaced just before the monsoon season. While the earthquake's effects have been most visible in Kathmandu valley, the major impact has been in outlying districts, qualifying this event as a rural disaster.

It mainly affected 33 districts among which 14 districts were very severely affected. In the hardest hit districts, more than 80% houses had been severely damaged and over 8.3 million people had been affected. In the most affected district, there was an urgent need to restore community infrastructure, housing/shelter and to deliver public services.

Less apparent, but equally devastating, were the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost jobs and livelihoods. They had limited access to public services, schools and hospitals, many of which have been destroyed.

Immediately after the quake, UNDP launched a number of Early Recovery programmes that provided assistance to the affected population, while addressing underlying vulnerabilities. UNDP's Early Recovery programme focused on several areas including safe debris management for reconstruction, emergency employment and livelihoods recovery, rehabilitation of community infrastructure, local governance and public service delivery restoration.

AAP actions and CHS links

Working closely with affected communities (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):

UNDP and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development jointly started the debris management and safe demolition project.



Photo UNDP Nepal: Completing a debris management task near Chautara

The first phase of UNDP debris work focused on providing immediate economic relief for over 4,500 people living in the remote hard hit villages in Sindhupalchowk district while removing 225,000 cubic meters of debris from private homes.

With a team of 80 young Nepali civil engineers recruited as UN Volunteers and trained and supervised by international demolition experts, the community members manually cleared the rubble of 3,500 houses, sorting and reusing as much as recyclable material as possible.

The UNDP teams were based in Sindhupalchowk district and worked daily with people affected by the earthquake for more than five months to remove debris, manage recyclable and reusable materials and prepare sites for reconstruction. Training and equipment were provided to the people from these communities to enable their work.

Feedback from these communities was provided by the UNDP team to the shelter cluster and early recovery cluster coordination meetings to inform them of village development committees where people were ready for shelter assistance and other forms of recovery activities.

Networking (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects”):

A focus on public buildings to restore local government capacity to deliver public services was a key part of the strategy. Many schools were made safe for temporary learning spaces.

By working with the school principal and teachers, the teams were guided on saving important areas for the school such as underground water tanks, toilets, retaining walls and ways to improve safe access to the schools. Many religious sites and cultural monuments were also protected within these communities.

By the end of 2015 the project expanded into Kavre and Nuwakot completing a total of 205 public buildings (130 school buildings, 10 health buildings, 16 temples, 11 community structures and 38 other government structures).

Capacity Building Training (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects” and CHS 8 “Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers”):

UNDP trained masons and engineers in earthquake safe construction techniques so that the demand for skills to build back better would be met during reconstruction.

500 national engineers were trained in post-disaster debris and waste management; 1,000 members of the national emergency response capacity (security forces, fire fighter brigades) were equally trained in safe urban demolition techniques.

Furthermore, the team trained 100 staff of key national institutions including the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Urban Planning and the National Planning Commission in post-disaster debris and waste management. More than 4,200 people benefited from cash for work in debris management.

Building on local capacity (CHS 3 “Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects”):

UNDP provided emergency employment for debris removal and engaged local people to mobilize work teams.

The teams encouraged and showed the earthquake affected populations how to take control of their environment and provided an unexpected psycho-social benefit of helping victims cope with the consequences of the disaster. Their actions galvanized the Village Development Committees and Ward Citizens Forums into action for the betterment of their community and encouraged Local Development Offices to restore service essential services.

Innovative Feedback Mechanism (CHS 4 “Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback”):

UNDP and the Microsoft Innovation Centre in Nepal developed a DEBRIS MANAGEMENT APP that was rolled out in early debris work. The App streamlined data gathering, assisted in demolition planning, recorded the beneficiaries details, kept track of the workforce and brought transparency and accountability to the work on emergency employment. The App allowed for a feedback survey from beneficiaries and participants in the project. The App continues to be employed in the demolition of public structures and serves as an important record of activity in Nepal.

The Project planned to work with a larger number of affected communities but due to resource constraints did not manage to scale up to the level anticipated because of a government decision to provide only financial relief to earthquake victims rather than physical support through demolitions. Subsequently expected donors were unable to go against government policy.

Clearing the rubble was the major challenge facing the families whose houses have collapsed. Sindhupalchowk, one of the districts hit hardest by the quake, has seen a migratory exodus of young, able-bodied youth for foreign employment, leaving behind rural communities composed mostly of women, children and elders.

This lack of human resource meant that many communities found it difficult to cope with the aftermath of the devastating quake. Without able-bodied people to assist in the clearing of debris and demolishing of unsafe structures, many people had continued to live in fear. This situation was keenly felt in rural schools where the school management committee had neither the funds nor the technical ability to mobilize citizens to remove debris and demolish unsafe structures.

A Buddhist monk sent a written letter to the debris management and safe demolition team requesting support to remove the debris from their quake-stricken monastery. Before the earthquake, the monastery was a spiritual center for over 1000 Buddhist families living in the Irkhu area of Sindhupalchowk district. It used to be a place of prayers and other religious gathering for the local people until it was severely damaged by the earthquake.

The team had been demolishing damaged houses and removing debris for over a month as part of UNDP's cash-for-work programme. Most of the houses in the area were a continuing threat to the survivors still living in their vicinity and required prompt demolition.

Within three days of receiving the letter, the UNDP team safely demolished the damaged monastery and removed the debris engaging 17 workers from the same community.

"I am very thankful to this team," said the lama as he stood beside fluttering Buddhist prayer flags. "We weren't sure how to do this. The structure was unsafe and required many people to clear it, when we have very few youth around."

Once word of this activity reached other villages, UNDP was asked to demolish 15 more monasteries, a true sign of trust and implied understanding of the respect and understanding that UNDP has for buildings of cultural and religious importance.

Impact

Working within the affected communities, the demolition team helped to alleviate people's fear, while also providing much-needed cash to the community. The team had assessed over 4,000 affected houses, demolished and safely removed debris from 3,500 houses, including over a dozen community buildings and provided emergency employment to over 4,200 locals, spreading the benefit to several thousand people in the quake affected areas.

The emergency employment team for debris removal gave some of the most vulnerable people a daily wage to meet their needs and provide for their families. Almost 4,300 (42% women) people were hired and trained under the Cash for Work programme.

The teams were also guided by people from the communities to areas needing protection through debris management such as schools, religious and cultural sites. This represented a fully inclusive approach to disaster management, involving the victims as decision makers on what actions were to be taken.

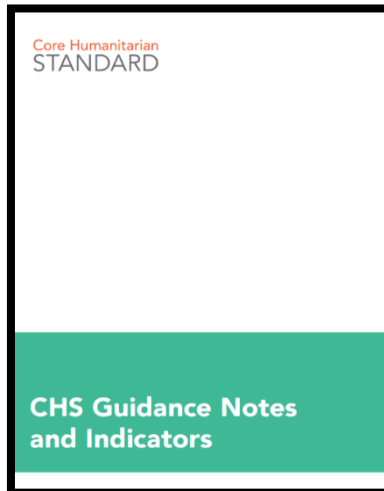
AAP lessons learned

The case study focuses on specific themes that provide lessons regarding: increasing community participation, involving community members to help remove the rubble, investing in national and local governance by strengthening the local capacity and supporting the local communities.

In terms of technical delivery, the use of digital technology in UNDP's early debris work allowed for a feedback survey from beneficiaries and participants in the project. The App continued to be employed in the demolition of public structures and served as an important record of activity in Nepal. Linked with PowerBI this data could be mapped, graphed and updated in real time to provide a comprehensive overview of project outputs.

3. ANNEXES

3.1 Core Humanitarian Standard Guidance Notes and Indicators



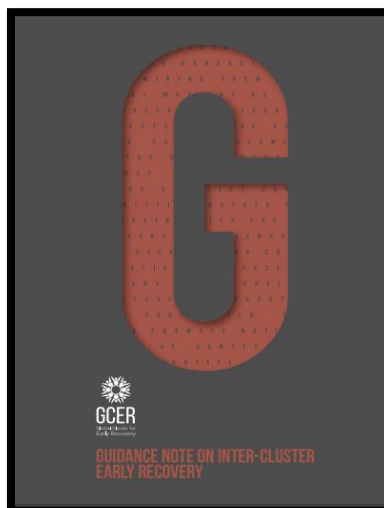
Can be accessed [here](#) :

3.2 IASC Commitments to the Accountability to the Affected Populations



Can be accessed [here](#):

3.3 Guidance Note on Inter- Cluster Early Recovery



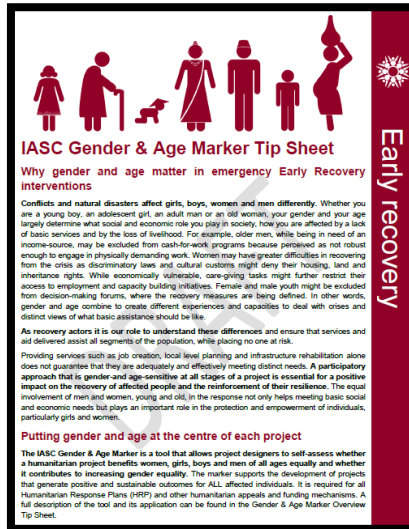
Can be accessed [here](#):

3.4 OCHA - Suggested Actions for Inter-cluster coordination groups to strengthen accountability



Can be accessed [here](#):

3.5 DRAFT IASC Gender & Age Marker Tip Sheet for Early Recovery



Will soon be accessible [here](#):