

Central African Republic: AAP, CwC & PSEA Issues Paper

Accountability to affected populations, including communicating with communities and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse



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Headline Messages

- The IASC Principals called for an AAP Action plan for the L3 Response in the Central African Republic on 11 December, 2013
- AAP has been demonstrated as an effective tool in conflict settings, and overlap with CwC and Acceptance should be emphasised and capitalised on
- Protection issues as they related to each segment of the community by gender, age and disability are critical in this context and should be integral to any AAP and CwC interventions
- Release of a response wide code of conduct on PSEA is a priority
- The Inter-cluster Coordination Group in Bangui highlighted key needs related to AAP in December 2013, including the importance of systematically engaging in two-way communications and of ensuring community influence on programming and monitoring
- CAR represents an opportunity for a coordinated interagency approach to AAP and CwC that could streamline resources, given commitment from agencies with capacity and expertise
- Interventions need to be carefully designed so as not to increase security risks
- Exclusive reliance on traditional and religious leaders as the voice of the communities could be especially problematic in this setting
- Early consideration of projects on interactive radio broadcasts, crowd seeding, third party and remote monitoring, and/or disaggregated consultations could yield strong gains

Background¹

In the course of 2013, the situation in Central African Republic deteriorated significantly. After weeks of growing tension and violence, on 5 December fighting erupted in the capital city of Bangui, followed by sectarian violence, looting, and arbitrary killings, with violent incidents and clashes also reported in provincial towns. Close to 1,000 people were killed in the violence during December. On 5 December, the UN Security Council created the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), and on 9 December, 1,600 French troops arrived in Bangui to disarm the warring militias. On 11 December, the heads of the member agencies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) declared the humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic a Level 3 emergency and activated a system-wide response for three months. The Emergency Response Coordinator, Valerie Amos, released a USD\$10 million CERF for immediate life-saving assistance in the crisis in CAR.

The fighting and communal violence has taken on a sectarian dimension, adding additional layers to the original conflict between ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka groups. Tension remains high, and confrontations between militia and attacks against the civilian population still occur, particularly in the capital Bangui and in Bossangoa. As at late December, around 639,000 people were internally displaced and most have congregated in some 40 sites, mostly hospitals, religious centres, and schools. With 232,000 living as refugees in neighbouring countries, one out of five of Central Africa's 4.6 million has had to flee their homes. Two million people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, and some 1.1 million to be food insecure. Internally displaced people are the most affected, half of them suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity. Many protection abuses have been reported, including GBV, arbitrary executions and the recruitment of child soldiers, and security remains a serious concern. On-going conflict and high tension in the capital make the provision of services and assistance extremely challenging. The most urgent needs of the newly displaced in Bangui include security and basic access to food, water, WASH services, medical assistance, and shelter.

Accountability to affected populations (AAP) as a part of the Transformative Agenda

AAP is increasingly being demonstrated to offer an overarching framework linking many of the cross cutting issues and in particular, those related to the people humanitarian action aims to assist². It is concerned with respecting the rights, dignity and safety of all segments of an affected community, and identifying their unique needs by gender, age, disability and diversity. It employs a few key pillars to improve the quality of humanitarian service delivery for each identified group through each phase of the project cycle, including information and two-way communication, participation and representation, and complaints and feedback.

Allowing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of affected community members by anyone associated with the provision of aid to occur constitutes the humanitarian sector's most serious breach of accountability, and as such, the prevention of SEA is a distinct sub set under AAP, with a high profile and a strong set of specific commitments. Communicating with communities (CwC) (similarly to "communicating with disaster affected communities" (cdac)) draws on a vast body of communications and media expertise that is richly and closely associated with the IASC Principals' commitment on AAP related to transparency, two-way communication and information provision. While both CwC and AAP have their own additional areas of concern and specialisation, the two

¹ Background text adapted from OCHA's Humanitarian Bulletin, West and Central Africa, December 2013

² Coordination and Funding of Cross-Cutting Issues in Humanitarian Action; A strategic review commissioned by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Dr Piero Calvi-Pariseti

areas overlap significantly, and therefore strong efforts are being made to build complementarity rather than to add to a landscape of worthy issues competing for attention.

Building on outcomes and learning from an interagency AAP deployment to the Philippines one week after the devastating super typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, the IASC Principals ad-hoc meeting on 11 December, 2013 called for the development of an AAP Action plan for the L3 Response in the Central African Republic³. It was felt that the CAR L3 Response provided a good opportunity to implement enhanced accountability in line with the Transformative Agenda. In the formulation of this Action Plan, the Emergency Directors recommended that a series of actions be put in place in CAR to enhance accountability to affected people. They undertook to underscore with donors the need to support AAP and CwC-specific project proposals, include discussions with communities in operational peer reviews and evaluation of the response, and request the HC/HCT to report back on actions taken to implement this plan within two months. The Action Plan was endorsed by the IASC Principals before Christmas.

In December, the Inter-cluster Coordination Group in Bangui highlighted key needs related to AAP, outlining the importance in CAR of systematically engaging in two-way communications with affected communities, and of ensuring their meaningful influence on programme development and monitoring. The identified needs included:

- In the current context, trust building between humanitarian organizations and communities is crucial to ensure an adequate environment for the response and other future actions
- Information and sensitization campaigns to be strengthened with simple and clear messages
- Establish common mechanisms for receiving and processing feedback and complaints from affected communities
- Identification and involvement of community leaders / focal points in facilitation of humanitarian operations
- Definition and dissemination of clear criteria for beneficiaries when delivering humanitarian assistance
- Mainstreaming of AAP at inter cluster and cluster level (strategic and operational levels)
- Review the existence and adequacy of human resources practices and policies, including a code of conduct for staff, and disseminate relevant policies among affected communities for the purpose of being held accountable to the code of conduct
- DSS to support UN agencies' efforts to "Stay and Deliver" by deploying personnel to areas affected by security constraints

In a collaborative effort on the part of the Emergency Directors' group and the IASC Task Forces on AAP and PSEA, WFP rapidly deployed its AAP specialist, recently returned from the Philippines on secondment to OCHA in the first Interagency AAP coordination role, while OCHA set about identifying a suitable candidate to deploy as Interagency AAP Coordinator from mid-January. The WFP employee was tasked both with supporting WFP in enhancing the accountability of its response from the early stages, and with assisting OCHA and the incoming Interagency AAP Coordinator to establish the role and ensure continuity and cohesion of efforts. Agreement was also made for collaboration between the WFP AAP specialist and OCHA's CwC assessment team from early January.

Unfortunately with the deteriorating and unpredictable security situation, movement outside of the hotel from arrival on December 24 was restricted for a number of days. It was not possible to attend distributions or to in any way access affected women, men, girls or boys receiving assistance to

³ IASC Principals Action Point 6. Asked the EDG supported by the IASC Task Team on AAP to prepare an Action Plan for Accountability to Affected People, based on best practices during the response to Typhoon Haiyan, by 16 December.

speak with them about their particular needs and challenges, nor was it possible to attend cluster meetings or the offices of any agencies. As the hotel served as one of the few more secure locations in Bangui, it was possible to begin to build some networks amongst key peer and partner agencies, however these efforts were in their infancy when the decision was taken to re-profile the WFP team in country and the AAP specialist was amongst a group of staff relocated to Yaoundé, Cameroon, six days after arriving.

This first report has therefore been compiled through a combination of conversations with WFP colleagues and representatives of the Protection and CCCM clusters, second-hand data from affected communities gained from WFP's PI officer and video consultant, consultation with peers⁴ and a broad review of assessment reports and other relevant documentation. Ongoing contact is being established with other stakeholders, however in the current remote context, this continues as a work in progress. As it has not yet been possible to pay particular attention to WFP specific operations, the intent of this report is to raise AAP, CwC and PSEA issues more generally in addition to as relevant to WFP operations, with an aim to propose some ways forward for WFP and the humanitarian community as a whole, and to lay some foundations for the forthcoming work at the coordination level.

Protection as an overarching and prevalent theme

Reminiscent of Maslow's famous hierarchy of need, if people's lives are in danger, including both affected communities and the workers seeking to assist them, anything beyond attempting to meet the very basic issues of food, shelter and urgent health care remains a lower priority, and quite understandably so as workers are placing themselves at risk even to get lifesaving goods and services out. In such circumstances, protection is clearly a core issue of heightened concern, not only globally at the obvious level of the conflict, but also differentially for each segment of the community because lawlessness allows other protection issues to emerge and/or worsen, and the introduction of aid commodities into this situation presents new opportunities for violence and abuse of those more vulnerable. It is therefore important to emphasise that any AAP or CwC related interventions at this stage must be intimately associated with a protection analysis and strategy.

The displaced in CAR are not all cohesive and tight communities defending themselves against an external threat. The external threats are multiple with numerous separate combatant groups, and there are also numerous internal threats amongst displaced groups. One of the most alarming examples is that of the camp that continues to grow in size around the airport. Colleagues report gangs of youths roaming this camp armed with machetes and rudimentary clubs reinforced with nails. With the camp estimated to be housing around 100,000 people in extremely crowded and chaotic circumstances, even if policing capacity were in existence, one would expect limited impact. It should be said, however, that this site proves a more extreme example, and assessment reports from some other sites, such as those posted by ACTED and partners on the CAR Humanitarian Response website point out that, at least earlier in December 2013, some of the sites in Bangui were reasonably well covered by security and that in the course of their assessments, limited protection concerns emerged.

Protection issues for women and girls

An IMC report⁵ published in December 2013, highlighted the fact that "looting, acts of physical violence, arbitrary killings, rape, and abductions are carried out with impunity" and that women and girls are especially vulnerable. Their consultations with women in rural areas found that the threat of

⁴ Particular thanks to Emily Rogers of the British Red Cross for the crowd seeding link

⁵ "Central Africans Fight against Gender-Based Violence", ReliefWeb

GBV by armed actors was one of their primary concerns and that it severely restricts women's movements and their access to assistance. These women also pointed out that despite the circumstances affecting everyone, those who have been assaulted are also likely to be ostracised and discriminated against by their own communities, and in some cases, forced to marry their attackers. According to a GBV Subcluster report⁶, women, girls and boys are also used by political-military groups as combatants, sex slaves and labourers.

In addition to increased GBV as a by-product of the conflict, women and girls of CAR were already subject to high rates of physical and sexual violence perpetrated by their husbands or men from their own communities, in addition to female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage, a practice designed to avoid the stigma of extra-marital sex or assault. Without confirmed evidence or statistics, as it is generally the case during times of crisis, it can be assumed that rates of sexual and physical violence towards women and girls by men in their own communities will have therefore also increased, probably significantly.

Protection issues by age and disability

According to the Child Protection Subcluster⁷, between March and September 2013, 3,500 children were recruited into armed forces or groups, more than 66,000 children were separated or unaccompanied among internal displaced persons and refugees, there was a demonstrable increase in the number of forced marriages of girls between 12 and 14, and the registration of births had declined significantly. Currently, with the escalation of the conflict, it has been identified that children are increasingly subject to violence and abuse and it can only be assumed that the statistics above have increased. Child friendly spaces (CFS) are being established, however as at December, only 22 percent of IDP sites had access to child protection activities.

A HelpAge International and Handicap International report in 2012⁸ found that no projects in any sector at that time in the Central African Republic targeted older people or those with a disability. HelpAge International⁹ also points out the very specific challenges and vulnerabilities of the elderly that can be assumed in any crisis situation, such as pre-existing and increased healthcare needs, visual and physical impairments including restricted mobility, specific nutritional requirements that may not be met through general distributions, trauma, isolation and loss of livelihoods (that may not be recognised or prioritised in humanitarian interventions, as was noted recently in the Philippines).

With no specialist agencies working with the needs of the elderly or the disabled specifically in mind in the CAR response, advocacy for their particular needs may be quite low. Given reports on youth gang activities, violence and theft, one could also safely hypothesise that the elderly and people living with disabilities are well represented as victims.

Outside of the city it is believed that tens of thousands of people remain at large, displaced in the open, fleeing the parties to the conflict. People with charge of children, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and people living with disabilities are clearly most at risk in these circumstances.

Protection concerns related to the distribution of aid

By virtue of the existence of aid goods as valuable commodities, our contributions bring with them additional risks both for aid workers and for certain groups within the communities. According to reports, distributions by humanitarian agencies at times have to be stopped short due to security

⁶ ["Gender Based Violence in a forgotten conflict: recommendations for the Central African Republic"](#)

⁷ [CAR Dashboard](#)

⁸ [HelpAge and Handicap International Study](#)

⁹ [HelpAge International: Older People in Emergencies](#)

concerns, and local leaders may be tasked with completing them. Post distribution monitoring is also limited. Pressure on distributions and the potential for them to have to be abandoned by humanitarian staff bring with them concerns, including:

- Lack of monitoring or even presence means that we don't know for sure whether people received what they were entitled to and what happened to it afterwards
- Control in the hands of local leaders leaves the way open for corruption and favouritism, and reports are that in some places, the ability of leaders to maintain order and influence the communities they are with is being eroded
- It is not known the extent to which people have their distributed goods taken from them by theft or forcibly, although there is a widespread understanding that this is happening
- The pressure to distribute food rapidly will mean that additional concerns, such as for example, the problems encountered by families without a strong and able bodied person to carry the distribution back to where they are living may not be prioritised
- There may be fewer opportunities for aid workers to establish relationships of trust with the recipient communities and fewer opportunities for individuals to report incidents of concern to people they feel safe confiding in

The lack of supervision, checks and balances also means this is a ripe environment for sexual exploitation and abuse of aid recipients by anyone who even for a moment holds the power of control over needed goods.

Reflections on the IASC commitments on accountability to affected populations (CAAP)

1. Leadership and governance

Leadership commitment to supporting the growth of AAP initiatives and interventions from the early stages of a humanitarian response is clearly growing. Locally, leadership interventions will also be required to support the development of a cohesive, lean and effective approach amongst and between agencies, as there are neither the resources nor the time in the situation of CAR for individual agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive approach alone. There is also not already a strong history of AAP expertise and practice in this country, therefore very little if anything is already established. In some ways, this provides an ideal blank canvass for an interagency approach that could serve all actors and affected communities alike.

This leadership should come from the HC/HCT and the agencies that are committed to placing some AAP expertise within the country, in partnership with those concerned with related cross cutting issues, such as protection, gender, age and disability, and agencies that have more broad accountability expertise globally, such as some of the NGOs operating in country.

2. Transparency, two-way communication and information provision

The CAR response AAP Action Plan identifies that community radios in CAR have historically played a vital role across a country where communications and infrastructure are severely compromised. It also highlights that at times of crisis, essential information, delivered in time, can save lives, and points out that local media personnel will require support, assistance and partnership to continue their work. There has been in the recent past a project called, "Integrating Local Media and ICTs into Humanitarian Response in CAR"¹⁰, which was a collaboration between Internews¹¹, Ushahidi, the Association of Journalists for Human Rights in Bangui and UNOCHA–RCA. It comprised a network of

¹⁰ [Ushahidi blog, Humanitarian Innovations Internews project](#)

¹¹ [Internews](#)

trusted local media organizations who gathered real-time first-hand information from affected populations to create a two-way communication flow with humanitarian agencies to improve emergency response, community participation and community resilience. Lessons learned from this project will be important in shaping the design of anything in the future.

In the absence of a current assessment of communication and information provision, needs and preferences, specific and up to date information on this area is patchy so far. A colleague who accessed communities prior to heightened security measures did note, however, that people had indicated very high, and somewhat inaccurate expectations of what the UN could and aimed to achieve, leaving many perplexed as to why it wasn't simply putting an end to the conflict and keeping them safer. Heightened expectations regarding what the international community can achieve could lead to a breakdown of trust over time, adding potentially to security issues as well as to the confusion and misinformation of communities.

Even in the absence of a specific assessment, it could be fairly safe to guess that communities are receiving very little information over and above basic distribution times and schedules. Recent experience in the Philippines and Mali highlighted the anguish that affected communities can experience through lack of information as to what is happening around them, what is planned, how they can receive the assistance they need, what their rights are, and so on, and this is supported through global research conducted with affected populations, such as that conducted by the Listening Project¹².

Information provision in a situation such as CAR brings specific challenges, and not only because the literacy rates are very low. Recently a grenade was thrown at a distribution site, emphasizing that some information may place people at risk, and its provision needs to be carefully thought through. This does not mean, however, that security issues provide a reason not to provide reasonable information, and many precedents for good practice exist from humanitarian operations in places such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere, including WFP's own practice. Such examples are drawn from below in the discussion on suggested ways forward. Of note is the fairly broad access to mobile phones and the popularity of radio as an information source, although a formal review of coverage and gender based access to either has not yet been conducted.

3. Participation and representation

The humanitarian community often relies upon traditional, religious or political community leaders for rapid access to information and for participatory processes. While traditional social structures should always be respected and included, relying on them exclusively can tend to reinforce social inequalities and practices of exclusion, serving the elite and more powerful. Community leaders don't always know the experience and needs of each segment of a community and can't always speak on their behalf. When the aim of many humanitarian agencies is to ultimately prioritise the vulnerable and marginalised, it doesn't always make sense to rely upon those who may be marginalising them to assist in that. Affected communities in a diverse range of countries have pointed out that lack of understanding on the part of humanitarian actors regarding local dynamics and nuances of power can lead to errors on our part, and inadvertently feed exclusion and corruption.

This dilemma is compounded in CAR, where displaced communities are not all arriving at new sites intact, meaning that not all those in the habit of leadership are known and respected, and social order and cohesion is deteriorating in some areas. An additional problem is faced in relation to the

¹² A Time to Listen, CDA Inc

best role for religious leaders. While much of the conflict appears to be falling along religious lines, many commentators propose that the underlying motivators are not religious at all. The humanitarian community needs to be careful about risks associated with appearing to reinforce religious divisions.

It was suggested that the CCCM cluster in country may look at means by which consultative committees made up of special interest groups could be established, to allow for clarity in the voices of the community by age, gender and diverse needs. In the context of social disorder, the role of women in promoting social cohesion has also been raised as an important avenue to explore. Both of these ideas point to creative alternatives to the sole reliance on leaders as the contact points with communities.

4. Complaints and feedback

As noted above, the necessarily rapid nature of much community contact means that interaction with communities is fairly limited in places. Some agencies must have closer contact through the nature of their work, for example, when running child friendly spaces and providing health care, and this more in depth contact may be something that could be captured for the benefit of the wider sector. But in general, mobility, chaos, lack of social cohesion and limited safe spaces to engage with communities and seek their ongoing feedback and input increases the imperative to come up with creative ways to establish feedback and information channels and build trust.

A protection hotline has been established and it would be worth understanding further how this is being communicated and utilised and whether there is potential for expansion or multitasking. At present, no information has been found about existing approaches to complaints handling through any agency, although this is not at all to suggest that no one is doing it.

5. Design, monitoring and evaluation

Due to the short nature of the time spent in country and the timing of that between Christmas and New Year, input into programme design has been limited and contact has also not been made with any parties engaged in M&E.

Limited monitoring clearly reduces the ability to confidently assert how much aid has reached people, what has happened to it, and what impact it had. Monitoring is also an excellent means by which agencies can establish trusting relationships with aid recipients and is a conduit through which feedback and complaints can be gathered and understood.

AAP in Conflict Settings

According to FAO's paper on AAP in limited or no access zones¹³, the main considerations for implementing AAP in responses in areas where security is a significant issue include:

- AAP can be mainstreamed in common remote management practices, and technology-based solutions support AAP practices
- An investment in field staff or partner capacity on AAP systems and their monitoring is key.
- Careful analysis of the context, exploring existing spaces and structures, or creating new ones through which to engage with the population, are the first starting points to allow agencies to find the most appropriate and safest ways to mainstream AAP
- AAP systems should be tailored to the context and evaluated on the basis of risks for the organization, staff, partners, and the population (supporting the integration of protection)

¹³ [FAO's AAP resource documents](#)

- Investment in technology-based options for communication and monitoring (such as phones, satellites, SMS servers, phone lines, online platforms, etc.) should be planned and budgeted for at the design stage in low access zones
- Creative solutions can support agencies to embed AAP approached within their response

A positive perspective as to the high potential for AAP in conflict settings is supported by a British Red Cross AAP specialist, who notes that remote management can encourage stronger AAP because it requires working more closely with local actors to achieve objectives. Opportunities present for enhanced AAP through the negotiation and formalisation of roles and responsibilities, reviewing which leaders and other actors to work with and the extent to which they represent the various segments of each community including the most vulnerable, for example. A key is the link between AAP and an acceptance approach that allows a heightened opportunity to use AAP approaches, including CwC to achieve humanitarian goals.

Some Proposed Elements for an AAP Strategy in CAR

The commencement of an Interagency AAP Coordinator is still some weeks away. There continues to be a need for an AAP presence on the ground to, for example:

- Support and resource parties identified in the Action Plan on AAP to meet their accountabilities
- Engage with and support clusters on AAP
- Make an ongoing assessment of manageable and realistic means to address the commitments on AAP and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Identify and capture good practices
- Engage with relevant actors on the link between Acceptance and AAP strategies
- Lead on consulting with communities in a more in depth manner than is allowed for through rapid assessments, and disseminate that information widely to augment programming
- Identify information needs and communication gaps and work with CwC and PI to address those, ensuring that information fits within accountability standards and that it responds to the needs of women as well as men
- Gather, link and synthesise cross cutting issues information, such as related to gender, protection, access, age and disability, so it can be used more responsively and effectively
- Make links with and between agencies on AAP, CwC and PSEA to identify collaboration and resource sharing opportunities
- Identify feasible means by which feedback, questions and complaints from the community about services and assistance can be captured, responded to and learnt from
- Incorporate accountability perspectives into monitoring and evaluation processes and identify means by which community consultation and input into any other processes could be achieved

Priority activity: Development of a response wide PSEA Code of Conduct

In the Philippines typhoon response, the HC released a response wide code of conduct that the HCT was then responsible for disseminating throughout the responding community so that all humanitarian workers were aware of it. Under the authority of the HC in CAR, such a code should apply to all humanitarian and peacekeeping staff. Once released, agency heads should also take responsibility for ensuring that all staff understand the implications of the code, the expectations on their behaviour and their obligation to report. Following that, strategies for ensuring that communities are aware of the code and their options for reporting breaches should be identified.

Some AAP and CwC intervention options

A few integrated and targeted interventions that bring together communication, feedback, and participation could potentially achieve a high impact with a limited investment, as a starting point

for the establishment of a cohesive AAP strategy. These could equally be initiated by an individual agency, such as WFP, or run as a common service project.

1. Interactive radio programming

Modelled on an initiative by WFP in Goma, it is proposed that a series of regular weekly humanitarian radio slots be negotiated with a local radio station. A humanitarian official or spokesperson would speak each week about a topic related to operations and answer questions from the communities. The topic would be announced in advance and people would be invited to call and text in their questions during the week leading up to the session. In the context of the ongoing conflict and sensitivities, this allows for review of the questions, and formulation of appropriate responses that won't increase security risks on either side, prior to the broadcast. Such an exercise would also allow an ongoing assessment of what people know, don't know and need to know, which can then be addressed by agencies in other ways as well. This could be seen as a good will gesture to communities, and if successful, could be run featuring a range of UN agencies, NGOs and sectors. It may be perceived as neutral and responsive to community needs without being incendiary because the interaction wouldn't, at the initial stages at least, be live; the responses could be controlled and address any misinformation, such as the role of the UN.

Based on experience elsewhere, it is likely such an initiative would garner a wide range of feedback and potentially complaints. It would be important to gain broad agreement from the humanitarian community as a whole to respond to relevant community feedback, so that this responsiveness could be communicated back via the broadcast, and people could begin to trust that their feedback is being taken seriously. The feedback received during the week from the radio station could be very instructive and useful.

Resources needed:

- Some coordination time to collate inputs and draft responses, prepare and plan weekly broadcasts
- Promotion of the show to communities
- Cost of the broadcast time slot, or some other in kind support to the radio station in exchange
- Depending on the availability of radio sets, import of a bulk order of radios to be included in NFI distributions

2. Crowd seeding communication and participation

Based on a pilot project in the DRC¹⁴, crowd seeding is an approach that could be adapted in the CAR context to potentially exciting effect. The basic idea is that in each participating community unit (such as a village or sector of an IDP site), a certain number of representative interlocutors are identified with the participation and consent of the community (including a combination of existing community leaders, women and elected representatives). They are trained and provided with a cell phone and credit, and tasked with, on at least a weekly basis, providing information and feedback on predefined topics (in the case of the pilot, it was to do with conflict and security related information). Elements of this approach that make it appealing in an AAP framework include that:

- The interlocutors are known and can be representative across a number of groups
- The communities can participate and provide real time input: the process is transparent
- The elements and themes developed in the project can be tailored to the context, so that in the case of CAR, it could be designed around security and protection issues, accountability, programme feedback, etc

¹⁴ [Voix des Kivus](#): Reflections on a Crowdseeding Approach to Conflict Event Data Gathering, Peter van der Windt and Macartan Humphreys, Columbia University, February 2012.

- Communication can be two-way, and the interlocutors can be tasked with relaying feedback and information to the communities they represent
- In the pilot, the communities were given regular feedback on the project overall
- The system uses an inexpensive SMS platform that can work with either coded responses or narrative messages, allowing for a range of literacy levels
- The approach can have built in elements covering communication, participation, feedback, monitoring and evaluation, and can be sensitive to gender, age and protection

In the context of CAR, it would have to be carefully designed to make sure that the interlocutors were not at risk as a result of their roles, and some IDP sites may need to be avoided, at least in the short term, because of the insecurity. The outcomes of the Columbia study show promise for a context such as CAR, and the shortcomings they faced could very well be overcome by the project being run and managed not by university researchers, but by humanitarian agencies, thereby overcoming the main problem they had with convincing humanitarian agencies to use the information and follow through on the feedback.

Resources needed:

- Budget for set up and running costs (relatively low), including handsets and credit
- Project staff to recruit and train interlocutors and analyse and record data

3. Third party and remote monitoring

WFP has an excellent example of accountable post distribution third party monitoring in Northern Mali, and it is suggested that the lessons from there could be applied to M&E in CAR, either through the monitoring format or the method used. In Mali, an independent local agency that is not a cooperating partner is contracted to carry out post distribution monitoring. If such an agency is not available in CAR (and different approaches may be needed in rural and urban areas), alternative approaches, such as recruiting displaced people as monitors could be explored.

Alternatively, simple remote monitoring systems using a network of affected community members through telephone contact have been designed and tested in a number of settings, in particular Somalia, and could be adapted for use in CAR.

4. Disaggregated Community Consultations

As per the suggestion of the CCCM cluster lead that the camp management group could investigate the possibility of establishing regular consultation groups disaggregated around gender, age and other special needs, this initiative would be well served by support from AAP capacity, and the broader humanitarian community would benefit from the outputs. A similar approach designed in the Philippines has been shared and could be adapted as relevant for the context in CAR.