IASC | Inter-Agency Standing Committee

COUNTRY-LEVEL AAP ACTION PLAN: GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATE

This Guidance is intended to enable AAP practitioners, working groups or a designated focal point to develop a Country-level AAP Action Plan. Use the blank template with the following guidance notes, below each Outcome, and the relevant Action points. The notes include a non-exhaustive list of bullet points; not all of them may be useful or relevant in your context or for your AAP Action Plan. Some are specific tasks related to achieving the designated Outcome, others are general considerations to guide your planning processes to design and develop collective AAP approaches.

There are links to recommended resources under each Action and you can find other tools that may be useful online:

- The Accountability & Inclusion Portal where you can find resources and download tools on AAP, PSEA and inclusion; relevant policies, tools and case studies can be found on the Portal.
- Relevant service providers for each action can be located in the Service Directory.
- The **Results Tracker** facilitates the monitoring of these actions through related indicators (available soon).

Outcome 1: Coordinated needs assessment and analysis reflects all affected community groups' information needs and communication preferences.

Action 1.1: Collate evidence collected from community feedback, perceptions and participation in inter-sectoral needs assessments.

- Use multi-sector needs assessments and feedback mechanisms, to gather and incorporate feedback on communication preferences to help design collective or response-wide CFM.
- Establish a collective or response-wide CFM that identify, gather and analyse data from multiple channels (organisations' or agencies' CFMs, data from perceptions surveys, FGDs etc.), and is safe, accessible, inclusive and has clear referral pathways.
- Use collective needs assessment activities, including mapping the coverage of joint needs assessments and triangulating standardised and disaggregated data (gender, age, disability status[1]) from different sources.
- Validate the outcome of the assessment and analysis (Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)) and explain it to the individuals and groups (and/or their representatives) involved, to demonstrate that their voices were heard.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Include evidence from individuals and groups such as organisations of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples' organisations and local authorities.

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[1] In accordance with the Washington Group Questions.

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- Ensure the process is inclusive and represents the information and communication preferences of at-risk individuals and groups. This will require the disaggregation of data by gender, age, persons with disabilities and other diversities).
- Coordinate evidence collection to ensure complementarity and linkages across the following areas of focus: PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities.
- Gather and collate evidence related to sensitive and specific issues such as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), by answering:
  - How do people prefer to complain about sensitive issues?
  - What are people's information needs on PSEA?
  - What are the perceptions of the behaviour of aid workers?
- Work with development and preparedness actors and established platforms and networks, including on public health emergencies, to incorporate or adapt existing research tools and strengthen contextual knowledge. This will enrich the evidence and analysis and align longer term goals. Consider for example, how is evidence gathered and used in Risk Communication and Community Engagement approaches?

Key resources:
- [Tools and guidance for advancing coordinated needs assessment and analysis through the Grand Bargain](#)
- Menu of AAP Related Questions for Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MSNAs)
- [CDAC Assessing Information and Communication Needs Guide](#)
- IASC Best Practice Guide Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanism
- [The Good Enough Guide](#)
- [IASC Disability Guidelines, Chapter 7, page 44](#)
- [IASC Youth Guidelines section on Needs Assessments and Analysis](#)

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the [Accountability & Inclusion Portal](#) by searching for 'needs assessments'
- Relevant service providers can be found in the [Service Directory](#)
- Related indicators: Insert link to results tracker

Action 1.2: Aggregate and consolidate the collated evidence of coordinated community feedback and participation in response-wide analysis, including in the Humanitarian Needs Overview.

- Develop a collective approach to triangulate and analyse data gathered from agency and inter-agency processes and mechanisms; this should include information needs and communication preferences, perceptions and feedback.
- Aggregate and consolidate the collated evidence related to sensitive and specific issues such as PSEA, to inform the needs analysis.

- Verify the findings against the results of the multi-sector needs assessment (or vice versa). For example, how do individual or collective or response-wide CFMs, perception surveys and assessments continually feed into a collective approach for understanding needs of the most at-risk people? How is this reflected in the Humanitarian Needs Overview?
- Ensure the analysis is transparent about who was and was not reached during this coordinated approach and how that represents a genuine analysis of the needs of the most at-risk individuals and groups.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Develop a collective approach to triangulate and analyse data gathered from agency and inter-agency processes and mechanisms; this should include information needs and communication preferences, perceptions and feedback.
- Coordinate a consolidated analysis across the following areas of focus: PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities, to ensure complementarity and linkages.

Key resources:

- AAP Guidance for Humanitarian Needs Overviews
- IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, Chapter 7, page 44
- Gender Accountability Framework using the Field Level section page 9

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the Accountability & Inclusion Portal by searching for 'needs assessments and analysis'
- Relevant service providers can be found in the Service Directory
- Related indicators: Insert link to results tracker

Outcome 2: Humanitarian response planning includes affected peoples' voices.

Action 2.1: Integrate the evidence consolidated in Outcome 1 into sectoral and inter-sectoral planning, including in the HRP.

- Specify information formats and media that promote accessibility. For example, consider the information needs of people who use minority languages, have low literacy rates or have physical, hearing, visual or intellectual impairments. Be aware that some people have difficulty accessing information via technology or in public spaces due to poverty, isolation, gender norms, stigma and discrimination.
- Access and use thematic expertise held by existing community engagement and accountability working groups or staff from organisations with dedicated community engagement programming.
- Engage appropriate partners early in the process through:
  - the Humanitarian Country Team to ensure overall leadership; and

o   the Inter-Cluster / Sector Coordination Group, to ensure there is a clear plan for integrating collective information into operations and refering upwards to the HCT.

Remember these guiding principles:

● Reflect the needs and priorities of people who experience humanitarian consequences differently due to age, gender, disability and other diversities.
● Coordinate planning to ensure complementarity and linkages across the following areas of focus: PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities.
● Ensure all of the above supports the establishment, adaptation and continued operation of a collective complaints and feedback mechanism.

Key resources:

● AAP Guidance for Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)
● PSEA Guidance for HRPs
● PSEA Country-Level Framework
● IASC Guidance Note on COVID-19 and PSEA
● Guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in HRPs
● CDAC Network How-To Guide on Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action p.20
● IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, Chapter 7, page 44
● PSEAH Index

● Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the Accountability & Inclusion Portal
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Action 2.2: Establish or adapt mechanisms for community feedback and information sharing to trigger adaptive programming.

● Establish or adapt a collective mechanism for coordinating and sharing information with communities, and collating and responding to their feedback.
● Agree on how different working groups, such as community engagement and accountability, RCCE or a PSEA network, will coordinate and communicate so that their efforts complement each other without duplicating.

Remember this guiding principle:

● Ensure that the mechanisms reflect anti-discrimination, PSEA and AAP principles. Ensure that the mechanisms are safe, inclusive and accessible to all community members, regardless of gender, age, disabilities and other diversities.

Key resources:

- [CDAC Network - Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action: How to Guide for leaders and responders](#)
- [ODI - Collective approaches to communication and community engagement](#)
- [Inter-Agency Community Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms (CBCM) Best Practices](#)
- [IASC PSEA Programs and Activities by country](#)
- IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[, Chapter 7, page 44](#)
- [IASC Gender With Age Marker (GAM) Gender Equality Measures Summary](#)

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the [Accountability & Inclusion Portal](#)
- Relevant service providers can be found in the [Service Directory](#)
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Outcome 3: Funding and resources are in place to ensure a coordinated approach to information provision, community feedback systems and participation.

Action 3: Ensure appropriate financial and human resourcing is available to support coordinated information provision, community feedback systems and participation, with a particular focus on inter-agency coordination and information management capacity.

- Allocate funding to collective systems that deliver on Outcomes 1 and 2, including a collective response-wide CFM that is safe, accessible, inclusive and has clear referral pathways.
- Advocate and resource both coordination and information management capacity according to the scale and scope of the response; these are critical elements of a successful collective accountability approach.
- Identify and/or recruit additional expertise depending on various contexts (such as language and translation support; social science expertise) or re-allocating existing capacity.
- Identify common gaps that require resourcing, including language support, support to accessible communication, and to safe and accessible feedback mechanisms, as part of the overall HRP Monitoring Framework; resource common services for community engagement and accountability to fill the gaps.
- Source funds from various humanitarian financing options, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Country Based Pooled Funds, targeted support from donors and agency cost-sharing.
- Ensure funding and resources are allocated to activities by clusters and organisations to support information provision, community feedback systems and participation so that they can successfully contribute and feed into collective approaches.
- Identify existing local networks that are established and trusted in communities, with communication and community engagement capacity; ensure opportunities to support with resources and funding.
- Ensure resources are allocated for establishment, adaptation and continuation of complaints and feedback mechanisms.

- Ensure funding is available for addressing accessibility requirements, including for those who use minority languages, have low literacy or have physical, hearing, visual or intellectual impairments, as well as people who may have difficulty accessing technology or public spaces due to poverty, isolation, gender norms, or stigma and discrimination.

Remember this guiding principle:

- Ensure coordination between existing focal points and working groups that are leading on AAP, PSEA, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities to build complimentarity and linkages and minimise duplication in resource allocation.

Key resources:

- Humanitarian financing
- CDAC-How-To-Guide-Pages.pdf, p.14
- CDAC policy on collective platforms; annex 3: CDAC Network | The Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network
- ODI common approaches in-country - research on cost unicef_cce_policy_brief_web.pdf (odi.org)
- IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action , Chapter 7, page 44
- CDAC Guidance: Information management functions of an inter-agency AAP/CCE working group
- CDAC standardised Terms of Reference for AAP/CCE positions; Ensuring CCE/AAP expertise into the future (cdacnetwork.org)
- Revised versions (including PSEA Network terms of reference) In-Country PSEA Coordinator, Generic Terms of Reference | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)
- CDAC Network Collective Communication and Community Engagement in humanitarian action: How to Guide for leaders and responders

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the Accountability & Inclusion Portal
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Outcome 4: Response implementation is coordinated and driven by informed community participation and feedback systems and is monitored and adjusted as needed.

Action 4.1: Ensure aggregated evidence included in the planning phase informs and adapts response implementation.

- Establish a standing agenda item in every HCT meeting to share and discuss key trends and analysis of consolidated feedback as described in Outcome 1; note that feedback trends about the response can be shared at this level while responding and referring to sensitive complaints needs to happen on an individual basis and should be responded to immediately, in line with IASC procedures.

- Ensure rapid response and adaptation according to preferences for reporting specific and sensitive issues such as PSEA as outlined in Outcome 1.
- Document any decisions taken to address feedback; to ensure t*hat* affected people are consistently informed of relevant changes in programs and services, including where there is no change.
- Integrate the trends and analysis into other operational and strategic decision-making forums. This could include the HCT, sectors, NGO forums, local actors and networks, and government led groups where appropriate.
- Use the HRP mid term review as an additional opportunity to adjust the response activities based on updated consolidated feedback and track the decisions taken by the HCT.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Ensure that any trends and analysis is dealt with according to data sharing agreements and protocols.
- Consider PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities to ensure complementarity and linkages in decision making.

Key resources:

- IASC Best Practice Guide Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCMs)
- Global Standard Operating Procedures for Inter-Agency PSEA CBCMs
- IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, Chapter 7, page 44
- IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action, page 20
- IASC Gender With Age Marker (GAM) Gender Equality Measures Summary

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the Accountability & Inclusion Portal
- Relevant service providers can be found in the Service Directory
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Action 4.2: Ensure that decisions on actions taken, or not taken, are communicated with communities, to 'close the feedback loop', as part of a continuous engagement and dialogue.

- Ensure relevant clusters/sectors are engaged and participate in communicating decisions regarding the issues that are raised through CFMs and what actions were taken or not taken.
- Ensure that community-facing information-sharing is coordinated at the inter-sectoral level to effectively reach and be understood by communities.
- Ensure information provided to communities is consistent, through ongoing coordination and engagement with implementing partners, including local actors and other stakeholders in the humanitarian response.
- Close the feedback loop in a targeted localised or generalized way or through mass media campaigns depending on the nature of the information and purpose. Working with media development agencies and local media, engaging local communities with humanitarian communications and feedback may

provide some assistance. Identify, and engage with the channels that are used and trusted by communities, including local networks and leadership.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Ensure that the information provided addresses accessibility requirements, including for those who use minority languages, have low literacy or have physical, hearing, visual or intellectual impairments, as well as people who may have difficulty accessing technology or public spaces due to poverty, isolation, gender norms, or stigma and discrimination.
- Consider PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities to ensure complementarity and linkages in decision making.

Key resources:

- [Closing the loop: Effective feedback in humanitarian contexts, ALNAP](#)
- [Communication is Aid: online course](#)
- IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[, Chapter 7, page 44](#)

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the [Accountability & Inclusion Portal](#)
- Relevant service providers can be found in the [Service Directory](#)
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Outcome 5: Evaluation and review of collective AAP actions and outcomes is coordinated, participatory and transparent to inform learning.

Action 5.1: Evaluate and review collective performance at the country level against the outcomes of the AAP framework to be accountable and inform future planning and learning.

- Use the IASC Results Tracker to measure progress and performance against this Framework.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Ensure any review considers the effectiveness and quality of the AAP actions and outcomes outlined in this Framework
- Review system-wide performance, considering existing processes and resources such as the Annual Operational Review and the Annual Humanitarian Coordinator Performance Appraisals. HCT to review documentation of decisions from Outcome 4, Country Level AAP Action Plan / Strategy or other document of an AAP/CE Platform or working group

- Review community feedback and perceptions about the system-wide performance, use existing resources and methods such as perceptions surveys and other community feedback data collected in Outcome 1. This should be complemented with other data collected on a continuous basis.

To note: The IASC Results Tracker is intended to facilitate much of the above. It is a consolidated tool aligned to the Core Humanitarian Standard commitments, intended to be the principal tool to monitor this framework; and can be found <u>here</u>. The Results Tracker tool encapsulates the holistic approach to AAP, PSEA and inclusion as outlined in this Framework.

Key resources:

- [Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)](#) and the [CHS Verification Scheme](#)
- [*Leadership in Humanitarian Action: Handbook for the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator;* chapter on AAP](#) p 61, p103

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the [Accountability & Inclusion Portal](#)
- Relevant service providers can be found in the [Service Directory](#)
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Action 5.2: Ensure evaluations and review are designed and implemented with the participation of communities.

- Conduct dedicated consultations, focus group discussions, community meetings with local groups and actors.
- Ensure the evaluations and reviews are designed and implemented in a way that is accessible for everyone, including those who use minority languages, have low literacy or have physical, hearing, visual or intellectual impairments, as well as people who may have difficulty accessing technology or public spaces due to poverty, isolation, gender norms, stigma and discrimination.
- Disaggregate and analyse findings by gender, age, disability status.

Remember these guiding principles:

- Include representation from a diverse range of affected people; recognising that any barriers to participation in the evaluation by affected people due to gender, age, disability status or other diversities, response-wide evaluations should also inform the development of the next Humanitarian Needs Overview and HRP.
- Consider PSEA, AAP, discrimination, gender, age, inclusion of persons with disabilities and other diversities to ensure complementarity and linkages in the planning, design and implementation of the evaluations and review.

Key resources:

- [IASC Gender With Age Marker (GAM) Gender Equality Measures Summary](#)

- Global Protection Cluster - Protection Mainstreaming Guidance and Tools
- Better Evaluation guide to participatory evaluation.
- ALNAP guide to real time evaluations of humanitarian action.
- Intrac's summary of participatory evaluation.

- Other relevant policies, guidance, tools and case studies can be found in the Accountability & Inclusion Portal by searching for 'evaluation'
- Relevant service providers can be found in the Service Directory
- Related indicators: Insert link to results tracker