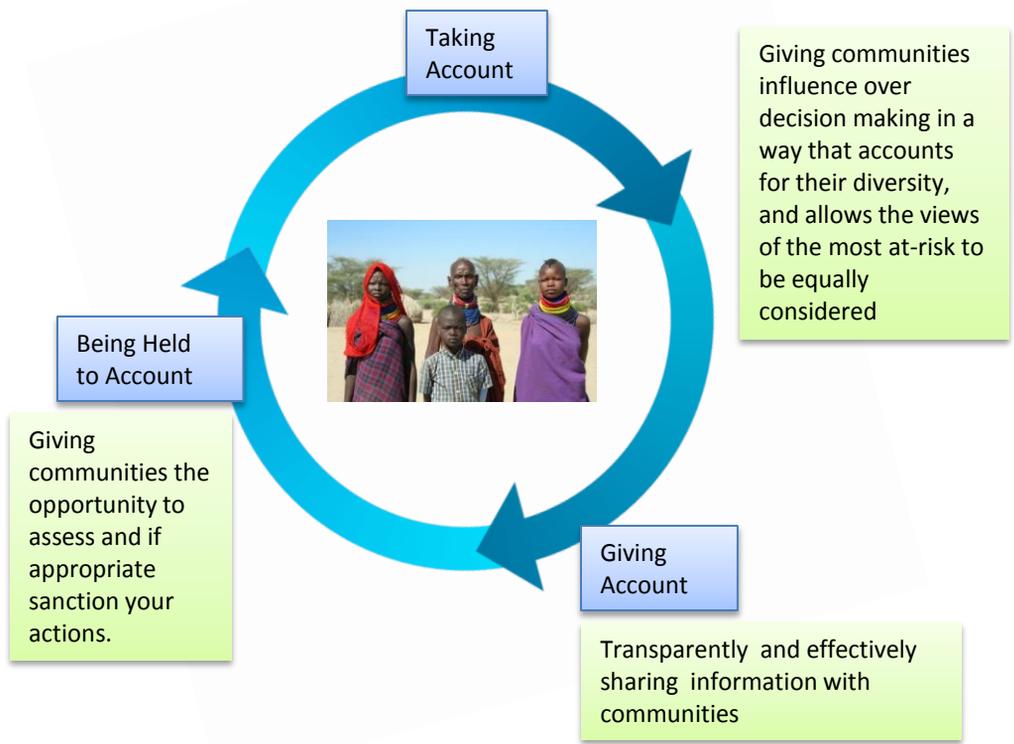


### What is Accountability to Affected Populations ?

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

### How to operationalise Accountability to Affected Populations?



**Taking account** means giving communities meaningful influence over decision making in a way that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and accounts for the diversity of communities. Listening is not enough: individual organisations and humanitarian actors need to incorporate the feedback into their strategies as well as in the collective response to the crisis. While many organisations are now putting in place individual feedback mechanisms, innovative approaches to joint feedback mechanisms can reinforce transparency, mutual accountability and have a positive impact.

**Giving account** is about the sharing of information in an effective and transparent way across communities. This can include for instance information about agencies and their roles and responsibilities, about entitlements and targeting criteria, as well as the reasons why these would change, about how to provide feedback or how to raise complaints. Information needs to be shared in a way that communities can actually understand it, can be empowered by it and become active participants in the response. The Humanitarian Country Team needs to agree on a strategy to share information to streamline communication and ensure coherence of messaging

**Being held to account** means ensuring communities have the opportunity to assess and, where feasible, alter or sanction humanitarian actors' actions. Communities are rarely in a position where they have the agency or power to select the organisations which will support them, nor the type of support they will get, at least initially. Their view on the appropriateness and quality of the service or response should be consistently sought. Being accountable involves consulting communities on what they think about the quality of the response – at the individual agency and collective level by humanitarian actors. Communities being assisted should be involved in the monitoring of programs and their points of view on the success and impact of a humanitarian intervention should be central to any evaluation.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by anyone associated with the provision of aid constitutes the most serious breach of accountability, and populations should be able to raise complaints and call for appropriate protection measures against such abuse, as well as be informed of the results of investigations on these complaints.

Taking account, giving account and being held to account is, therefore, necessary at the level of individual agencies but is also crucial at the collective level and for the Humanitarian Country Team and clusters. This obligation to be accountable applies not only in emergencies, but also through the transition and solutions phases of our engagement with communities in humanitarian situations

The IASC 5 Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations:

Accountability is one of the three pillars of the Transformative Agenda and the IASC principals have committed to creating a system-wide “culture of accountability” by upholding these 5 commitments :

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 marginalised and at risk are represented and have influence.

**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 organisation on an on-going basis and reporting on the results of the process.

Essential guidance relevant for Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country teams and clusters



The IASC AAP Operational framework is designed to assist agencies both individually and in groups to find practical entry points for improving accountability to affected populations.

For each objective, it highlights the relevant phase of the HPC, responsibilities, suggested indicators, means of verification, risks and additional tools.

The Minimum Operating Standard on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel (MOS-PSEA) highlights 8 objectives and related indicators to monitor and are complemented by the Guidelines to implement the MOS-PSEA, with links to additional resources for each area of work.

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out nine commitments that organisations involved in humanitarian response can use individually and collectively to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. It is complemented by Guidance notes and indicators to implement the commitments.

You can find all these documents on the IASC website/ AAP PSEA task team section



Additional support needed ?

The IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse offers a helpdesk service to share information and best practice, as well as case studies and additional guidance to suit specific needs : Don't hesitate to contact us : [helpdesk-aap-psea@unhcr.org](mailto:helpdesk-aap-psea@unhcr.org)

