

DISCUSSION PAPER

Delivering the Participation Revolution

Friday 29 June, 10h30 - 12h30 (CICG, Geneva, Room 2)

Objective of the session

To promote good practice and practical examples of effective participation by, and accountability towards, IDPs through the use of feedback and accountability mechanisms in relation to the provision of protection and assistance.

This will help identify best practices for UN HCR and partners to take forward and to promote to other humanitarian actors.

Methodology

NGOs and UN agencies attending will have the opportunity to discuss the ways forward and good practice proposed by three people who are currently internally displaced in Nigeria (Orpha Ibrahim Atumga), Mexico (Gildo Garza Herrera), and South Sudan (Cleto Kunda), along with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. Practical insights will be gathered from IDPs, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies.

Before coming to Geneva, all three IDPs have consulted not only their immediate communities, for example, in Borno State in Nigeria, in Wau, South Sudan, and in Mexico, but also IDPs in other host communities and/or IDP camps. They will report back to these communities on the session's discussions.

Desired outcomes

- An improved understanding of the role of accountability and feedback mechanisms in enabling effective local participation by, and accountability towards, affected populations in internal displacement contexts.
- An improved understanding of best practices and common challenges faced by IDPs and NGOs in establishing, accessing and sustaining meaningful feedback and accountability mechanisms as integral parts of a response.
- Identification of common advocacy messages to strengthen means of effective local participation, particularly in relation to feedback and accountability mechanisms.

For discussion

- What good practice exists regarding the participation of internally displaced persons in decisions that affect them, and accountability towards them?
 - How have internally displaced persons, national and international NGOs, and UN HCR and other UN agencies, identified and used relevant and appropriate accountability and feedback mechanisms?
- What key messages need to be promoted to humanitarian actors and decision-makers with regards to the effective participation by and accountability towards affected populations in internal displacement contexts?

Background

76% of people internally displaced are in just 10 States, many shaken by armed conflict, cyclical drought or both. The IDPs speaking today are just three of the over 40 million IDPs globally; from the “forgotten” emergency in DRC, where the numbers of displaced swelled by over 2 million in 2017 to over 4.5 million IDPs; South Sudan with 2 million IDPs; to Nigeria where 2 million displaced people are malnourished; and the millions displaced by conflict in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

Internally displaced persons are often the “least, the last and the lost”¹ in terms of support and attention to address their plight, and too often they report inadequate influence over decisions which affect them, and a lack of information provided to them during all phases of displacement. Mechanisms and processes for their consultation and meaningful participation are absent or unsatisfactory and decision-making processes often fail to take their views, needs and objectives fully into account. This affects the relevance of immediate humanitarian responses, means that recovery efforts are more likely to fail, and impedes longer-term durable solutions if humanitarian agencies and local and national governments fail to understand the needs and expectations of those internally displaced and leave them outside of planning processes.

However, the GP20 Plan of Action is galvanising renewed efforts starting from 2018, the 20th anniversary year of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It places those persons displaced internally, and host and receiving families and communities in the design, planning and implementation of actions and decisions that affect them.

GP20 provides an opportunity for national, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies to support the direct participation of representatives from affected communities in internal displacement contexts. The national level is the focus of GP20, so States and humanitarian actors will need to promote and share their good practice in humanitarian and development programming at all levels. Participation of IDPs in the development of national laws and processes, peacebuilding processes, and data collection and analysis, complements this.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) highlighted the central role of affected populations and the need to support local capacities and decision-making. This is critical for the WHS target of reducing internal displacement by at least 50% by 2030. 347 out of 851 commitments related to reducing and addressing displacement. Agenda 2030’s Sustainable Development Goals committed to “reaching the furthest behind first” while pledging to “leave no one behind”. Taken together both the Agenda for Humanity and a review of Agenda 2030 targets, so that IDPs are fully included in development plans, could deliver for IDPs².

The Grand Bargain, agreed at the WHS, calls for a “participation revolution” to ensure affected populations are at the centre of humanitarian decision-making and states “we need to provide accessible information, ensure that an effective process for participation and feedback is in place and that design and management decisions are responsive to the views of affected communities and people”. This supports the localisation agenda, also agreed at the WHS, which favours decisions being taken closest to action in communities by those most affected, the use of local capacities and expertise in local and national NGOs.

¹ *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, UN General Assembly, 24 July 2017 A/72/202.*

² *Agenda 2030: What Ambition for IDPs?* Christian Aid, 2018.

Standards and Practice.

Definitions of participation draw from international human rights and humanitarian law and the body of humanitarian practice, for example:

*Effective “participation” of people affected by humanitarian crises puts the needs and interests of those people at the core of humanitarian decision making, by actively engaging them throughout decision-making processes. This requires an ongoing dialogue about the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian responses with people, local actors and communities who are vulnerable or at risk, including those who often tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged, such as women, girls, and older persons.*³

Or as articulated by the UN Special Rapporteur in her 2017 report: *“meaningful and effective participation enables displaced communities to express their needs and expectations, but also to communicate their capacity, skills and potential for recovery”.*

The 1998 UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide clear guidance to underpin meaningful and effective participation of IDPs (see GP 4, 7(3), 18(3), 22, 23(3)).

States are the primary actors responsible for ensuring participation of IDPs. The Inter-Agency Framework for National Responsibility requires States to dedicate resources to address situations of internal displacement.

The IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations Commitments draws from a range of guidance and norms, including the Guiding Principles, and humanitarian practice:

- Leadership/governance that is committed to accountability:
- Transparency re processes, structures, mechanisms, timely and accessible information;
- Feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined, appropriate and robust;
- Participation with clear guidance, practices, supporting engagement in decision-making;
- Design, monitoring and evaluation of protection and assistance with affected populations.

In 2014 a range of humanitarian actors adopted the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability with nine commitments embodying a code of practice that puts communities affected by crises at the centre of decision-making through:

- Dialogue that includes the provision of information to affected communities about i) lifesaving information, including protection services, ii) humanitarian agencies’ activities and ways of working, and iii) opportunities, risks and threats.
- proactively and regularly seeking communities’ perspectives and feedback⁴ on the humanitarian response and key aspects of humanitarian agencies’ performance,

³ *“Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivise participation as a way of working for GB signatories”*, Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream, July 2017.

⁴ Feedback includes affected people’s perspective on the relevance and quality of services, the adequacy of engagement, trust in aid workers, and their sense of ‘agency’ or empowerment. Providing relevant information to affected people on the organisation’s mandate or mission, competencies, capacities and commitments goes hand in hand with feedback.

including service quality and relevance and responsiveness to beneficiary concerns. This dialogue should entail understanding of communities' practices, capacities and coping strategies.

The *“Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivise participation as a way of working for GB signatories”*, (Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream, July 2017) provide practical recommendations and guidance to donors, humanitarian organisations and decision-makers including participatory processes which are inclusive of the specific needs of at risk groups based on sex, age, gender, disability and other contextually-relevant criteria, preparedness, need assessments, complaints and feedback mechanisms, funding and grant compliance. Alongside the CHS Manual, there is a growing body of useful and practical guidance to support good practice. However, this recognizes that senior decision-makers at all government levels must take appropriate action which is then clearly and consistently communicated to the affected population.

Effective and meaningful participation has been characterised by seven core elements at all appropriate levels of decision-making:

Clear goals and expectations; a focus on results which participants can influence; community engagement at every step; adequate social, cultural and political contextual understanding; inclusion of all affected stakeholders, including host populations; trained facilitators; effective coordination⁵.

The UN Secretary General, reporting on the World Humanitarian Summit, pointed out that effective participation and local responders are central to response: *“People are the central agents of their lives and are the first and last responders to any crisis. Any effort to reduce the vulnerability of people and strengthen their resilience must begin at the local level, with national and international efforts building on local expertise, leadership and capacities”* (UN GA A/70/709). A multi-country study has demonstrated how communities can and should be driving humanitarian responses without the intervention of any national, local or international NGO. There is also an evolving body of practice to support local capacities and enable the local and national NGO leadership of humanitarian response⁶. Ensuring that humanitarian response and development action is shaped and led by those internally displaced makes for effective responses and durable outcomes.

⁵ *“Moving Beyond Rhetoric”*. Brookings Institution, 2008.

⁶ *Linking Preparedness, Resilience and Response*, Christian Aid et al, 2017; *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships*, Christian Aid, Cafod, ActionAid, Oxfam, Tearfund, Care (current, ECHO funded); DFID DEPP-funded projects managed by Start members eg Shifting the Power; Financial Enablers.

Resources

UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, UN General Assembly, 24 July 2017 A/72/202.

Agenda for Humanity, Annex to the Report of the UN Secretary General for the World Humanitarian Summit, UN, 2016.

“Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivise participation as a way of working for GB signatories”, Grand Bargain Participation Revolution Workstream, July 2017.

Africa Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), 2009. (See especially, Art 9(2) (k), Art 11(2)).

Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, Inter- Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations, IASC, 2012.

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, published by CHS Alliance, Groupe URD, and the Sphere Project, 2014.

Linking Preparedness, Resilience and Response, Six Core Principles, Christian Aid, Kings College London, Muslim Aid, Oxfam, World Vision, Saferworld, Concern Worldwide, ActionAid, 2017.

The Accountability Assessment of the Rohingya Response, Christian Aid and Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), February 2018.

Moving Beyond Rhetoric: consultation and participation with populations displaced by conflict or natural disasters, Brookings Institution, 2008.

Manual for Law and Policy-Makers on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, Brookings Institution, 2008.

Policy on Internal Displacement, UN HCR, (forthcoming 2018).

Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, UN HCR, 2006.

A FAIR deal for IDPs (funding, ambition, inclusion, respect for international law), series 2017-2018:

Leave No One Behind, Christian Aid, 2017;

Funding for Internally Displaced Persons, Christian Aid, 2018;

Agenda 2030: What Ambition for IDPs? Christian Aid, 2018;

Respect the Laws that Protect Uprooted People, Christian Aid, 2018.