

Section seven: programming in emergencies



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Section 07

- Human rights-based approach – ActionAid believes that poverty is a violation of human rights: **poverty underlies and is exacerbated by people's vulnerability and their inability to cope with shocks and hazards. Disaster-affected people living in poverty have the right to assistance.**
- **Accountability is the responsible use of power in the interests of people living in poverty and exclusion and affected by disasters.** This is done through various tools and techniques including community-led assessment and change plan and implementation processes, social audit, community reviews, public hearings, economic literacy and budget accountability for government (ELBAG) etc, in accordance with international standards that ActionAid is signatory to.
- **When disasters strike, people need information as much as they need shelter, food, water and safety.** By providing the right information, at the right time, from the right source, lives and livelihoods can be saved.
- Advancing women's rights is unapologetically taking sides **with women living in poverty and exclusion and affected by disasters.** Our response must take into account women's specific needs and right to protection and dignity. We strengthen and facilitate women's leadership and ensure that they effectively lead the assessment, response, preparedness and resilience building process.
- **Psychosocial work is an essential component of our response that is built on 4 Rs: relieve/re-grieve, recreation, rebuild, refer.** We enable community-based volunteers to facilitate and support the process.
- **Livelihood support enables affected communities to maintain and rebuild their ability to support their families and build resilience** for future disasters.
- **Secure access to food is a universal human right.** Support can be provided through food distribution, cash support, cash transfers, lobbying government. All interventions must link to the restoration of livelihoods and resilience to future disasters.
- **Providing non-food items (NFIs) in emergencies is essential to ensuring the safety, security, health, dignity and wellbeing of people affected by disasters.** This will primarily depend on the context, but usually includes clothing, kitchen utensils, hygiene kits etc.
- Conflict sensitivity is the ability of an organisation to understand **the conflict and power dynamics** in the context it operates in, and the interaction between intervention and that context. This understanding is applied to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict throughout the emergency response and resilience building cycle.
- **Policy should start from day one** and is a core component of emergency response. It should be led by community demands and should link local, national and international discourse.

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KEY POINTS

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Contact details – primary emergency focal points – IHART focal points

Name	Job description	Location	Phone	E-mail
Amar Nyak	International Programmes Manager, Asia	India	+91 965 0312 922	Amar.Nayak@actionaid.org
Bijay Kumar	Head of IHART	London, UK	+ 44 (0)20 3122 0721 +44 7 5959 63 801	Bijay.Kumar@actionaid.org
John Abuya	International Programmes Manager, Africa & Americas	Nairobi, Kenya	+254 20 4250 000 +254 721 734 040	John.Abuya@actionaid.org
Lois Appleby	Information Officer	London, UK	+44 (0)20 3122 0580 +44 7725 423355	Lois.Appleby@actionaid.org

Communications focal points

Name	Job description	Location	Phone	E-mail
Natalie Curtis	Journalist – Emergencies & Content ActionAid UK	London, UK	+44 (0)203 122 0641	Natalie.Curtis@actionaid.org
Ryan Gawn	Head of International Communications	Johannesburg, South Africa	+27 11 7314519 +27 (0) 715 278 354	Ryan.Gawn@actionaid.org
Tricia O'Rourke	International Communications Media Manager	London, UK	+44 (0)203 122 0824 +44 (0)7850 312 438	Tricia.O'Rourke@actionaid.org

Security focal point

Name	Job description	Location	Phone	E-mail
Javeria Ayaz Malik	Global Security Advisor	Nairobi, Kenya	+44 7809 657 901 +254 731 000 022	javeria.malik@actionaid.org

About this section

This section provides detailed guidance on key programming areas in disaster response. It is intended to help managers, field staff and partners design disaster response programmes. This section builds on **Sections 2-6**, which summarise the key operational activities that should be implemented during a disaster response.

This section describes how ActionAid approaches disaster response in several key programme areas:

- human rights-based approach
- accountability
- communicating with disaster-affected communities
- women’s rights
- psychosocial work
- livelihoods
- food security
- non-food items
- conflict sensitivity
- policy.

8. we build credible **alternatives** to the traditional top-down model of humanitarian response.

7. we ensure **links** across levels – local, national, regional, international

6. we monitor, evaluate our **impact**, critically reflect and **learn** to improve our work

5. we are **accountable and transparent**

4. we work in **partnership**

3. we advance **women’s rights**

2. we analyse and confront unequal **power**

1. we put people living in poverty first and address **immediate needs as basic rights** in emergencies, enabling their active **agency** as rights activists

There are eight key principles that guide ActionAid’s disaster response:

ActionAid’s HRBA approach and the principles that guide long-term social change work also apply in disasters.

Human rights-based approach (HRBA) in emergencies



Why does ActionAid take an HRBA approach in emergencies?

- ActionAid believes that poverty is a violation of human rights: poverty underlies, and is exacerbated by, people’s vulnerability and their inability to cope with shocks and hazards.
- Disaster-affected people living in poverty have the right to assistance.
- ActionAid believes that change will only happen and be sustainable if rights holders are aware, conscious and organised to challenge power and hold the state and other duty bearers accountable.
- ActionAid believes that rights of disaster-affected people living in poverty and exclusion will be achieved if ActionAid, supporters and allies stand in solidarity with rights holders and their institutions.
- Disasters have a disproportionately negative affect on women. ActionAid puts women’s needs and rights at the centre of our emergencies work and seeks to challenge the power dynamics that underlie and exacerbate women’s vulnerability.
- ActionAid believes that rich and powerful institutions like the state and the market act to control productive resources and build wealth during/after disasters, and that this dynamic denies people living in poverty and exclusion their rights.

What does HRBA in emergencies mean in practice?

Providing relief in an emergency is not contrary to ActionAid’s HRBA. ActionAid sees immediate needs such as food, water and shelter as the basic rights of disaster-affected people. Addressing these immediate needs is an important component of any disaster response. However it is important that even in the initial service delivery phase, an HRBA approach is followed. This means people living in poverty have a say in what goods and services are provided, and that these are delivered in ways that respect their dignity.

Alongside providing immediate relief, ActionAid must at the same time be working to empower affected people living in poverty and exclusion, particularly women. For example, we should be supporting them to organise and mobilise with others, to have a voice and develop their ability to negotiate with the powerful in order to claim, secure and enjoy their human rights. This can mean:

- Ensuring that people have information and analytical ability to claim their rights and entitlements.
- Undertaking political-economic analysis of discourse, ideas, laws, policies and practices – both existing and emerging – to determine whether women and other excluded people’s rights are ensured.
- Empowering and strengthening capacity organisation of women and excluded people – and promoting their active agency and actions.
- Building local community institutions, federating these and fostering alliances with other like-minded groups at local and national levels.
- Policy-advocacy work in solidarity with others, to influence the policies and practices of national governments, international donors and private companies to ensure the rights of disaster-affected people living in poverty and exclusion are secured and protected in emergency situations.

Humanitarian workers can further disempower people – particularly women – by treating them as helpless victims who lack capacity and are unable to steer their own recovery. Good intentions, without examination of one’s own attitudes, behaviour and ways of working, are not sufficient to overcome the policies and practices of structural discrimination and exclusion, or to bring about fundamental change in the power relations which systematically violate people’s rights.

The ActionAid principles above have been translated into a set of minimum standards. The checklist below will help ‘assess’ if a programme is consistent with ActionAid’s human rights-based approach in emergencies – see **Section 1** of this handbook.

To the right is an outline of a process of implementing an HRBA approach in practice, which ActionAid has used in various disaster contexts. It is a guide, rather than a standard formula – HRBA is about a mindset and a principle. However, this gives an idea of how programmes can be designed with HRBA in mind. Note the steps do not necessarily have to be implemented in sequence: they can happen in parallel.



Examples of HRBA programming in practice

Example: Asia tsunami response, Sri Lanka
The example following describes how ActionAid’s emergency response supported a specific household following the 2004 tsunami: Sara (alias) had previously been raped during the Sri Lankan civil war, and conceived a child. As a result she was marginalised by her community and lived on the periphery of the village before the tsunami struck.

Example: Syria refugee response
The following example describes the programme design for an on-going response in a refugee camp in Jordan housing over 120,000 refugees fleeing in the conflict in Syria.

**STEP 1:
Changing basic
conditions**

Example: Syria refugee response

- Women’s groups were formed in the refugee camp, and women took responsibility for community mapping, identifying and prioritising needs and selecting samples from non-food items (NFI) suppliers.
- Women lead the distribution of NFIs at local ‘street’ level (demonstrating an alternative to large-scale distributions from a central distribution point, which communities had identified as problematic in terms of security and a lack of dignity).
- Women’s groups were trained on water quality testing in response to concerns about the poor quality of drinking water in the camp. The results will be raised with agencies responsible for water provision.
- Women and young people were trained on basic first aid skills, to meet an immediate gap in the provision of primary health facilities in the camp.

Example: Asia tsunami response, Sri Lanka

- ActionAid supported Sara to access a local government grant for reconstruction of houses following the tsunami, and provided part funding to meet remaining costs.
- ActionAid supported Sara’s child to enrol in a school provided by another NGO.

**STEP 2:
Critical self-awareness and
collective community action**

Example: Syria refugee response

- Community volunteers are trained in psychosocial support, and lead group sessions where people can share experiences and participate in expressive arts.
- Women’s committees are involved in planning, implementing and monitoring the activities to be implemented in their local areas.
- Capacity-building sessions will be provided for women and young people on human rights, women’s rights, and skills such as campaigning and managing groups.
- Women’s groups will be supported to identify protection issues and develop community-based plans to address these issues at local levels.

Example: Asia tsunami response, Sri Lanka

- Sara began participating in women’s group sessions within her community, including identifying issues affecting women in the emergency.
- Livelihoods support is provided to help vulnerable women like Sara to earn an income.

- Women campaigned on violence against women, culminating in the presentation of a petition to the responsible ministry in national government.
 - Representatives from the women’s federation involved in drafting national legislation on violence against women.
- Example: Asia tsunami response, Sri Lanka**
- Women and young people are consulted on key policy issues being addressed at national and international levels (including transformative justice models for Syria and addressing tensions between refugees and host communities).
 - Citizens’ reports to be developed highlighting community voices on these issues.
 - Joint advocacy led by women and youth groups from among refugees, with support from Jordanian women and youth activist networks.

**STEP 4:
Advocacy to assert rights**

- Groups of women and young people in different blocks within the camp will be linked together to jointly raise common issues with camp authorities and share ideas and learning.
 - Groups of women and young people will be connected with refugee groups in project areas outside the camp to form federations, through exchange visits and virtual platforms.
 - Refugee groups and federations will be connected (e.g. those working on violence against women, legal rights, youth engagement).
 - Women’s groups in different villages affected by the tsunami linked together into local and national federations.
- Example: Syria refugee response**
- Example: Asia tsunami response, Sri Lanka**

**STEP 3:
Solidarity and alliance building**



Accountability in emergencies

Accountability is defined as the responsible use of power; it can be understood as an obligation on the part of decision-makers or those with power to account for the use of their power. Accountability is usually seen as being about compliance and counting: assigning performance indicators and safeguards against corruption and inertia. But accountability is fundamentally about shifting the balance of power. Through raising their voice and exercising their rights, people can demand just and accountable governance.

In disaster situations there is an increased risk of mismanagement and misappropriation of available funds and resources, which deprives people living in poverty and exclusion of the support they are entitled to. Accountability therefore has to be a key part of ActionAid's approach to emergencies.

We are committed to being accountable to the following stakeholders:

- the communities we work with who are affected by disasters and conflict
- donors and supporters
- governments, international laws, standards and practices.

Overarching guidelines

- Accountability to the communities we work with is both a process (programme approach) and an outcome for communities and the programme.
- ActionAid views accountability as more than programme management compliance. It is a political process that aims to enable the communities we work with to hold duty bearers accountable, and thus shift power dynamics in their favour.
- ActionAid implements specific accountability programmes as a core component of all emergency responses. ActionAid and partner staff, as well as volunteers, must demonstrate their commitment to delivering accountability to the communities we work with through their attitudes and behaviour at all times.
- A risk register for the emergency response is developed, reviewed and updated in Oversight Group meetings.
- ActionAid's open information policy (<http://goo.gl/asTkFk>) requires us to share financial information through our websites and/or locally available means.

ActionAid has developed a number of mechanisms for delivering accountability to disaster-affected communities during emergency responses, including social audits, community reviews and people's hearings. These mechanisms aim to support communities to empower themselves to ask questions and challenge the typical 'donor/recipient' mindset, facilitating a shift in a person's view of her/himself as a beneficiary/recipient of aid to that of a person with a right to assistance and active agency in the process of their recovery. ActionAid's experience shows that by going through such processes with ActionAid, the communities we work with can gain the confidence and skills necessary to demand accountability from duty bearers.

Accountability to disaster-affected communities

What does accountability to disaster-affected communities mean?

There are five key areas of accountability to disaster-affected communities: participation; transparency; complaints; review and reflection; and sanctions.

Participation

- Humanitarian response should prioritise the participation of the affected communities at all stages, including needs assessments, selection of people to receive support, decisions on which relief items are to be provided, procurement and delivery of items, programme reviews and evaluations, etc.
- Recognise that people within the communities we work with have different capabilities in utilising accountability mechanisms. Often the most marginalised people are not aware or lack the necessary skills, knowledge, capacity or time to hold duty bearers (including humanitarian organisations) to account. ActionAid should invest in building the capacity of communities to engage successfully with accountability mechanisms.

Transparency

- Clarify programme objectives, ActionAid's role and limit of our programme as part of being transparent.
- Conduct a contextual analysis to understand the type of information the communities we work with may need to be aware of, and ensure that any information shared is contextualised as part of the overall emergency response.
- Consider using transparency boards to share information on the emergency response with communities, but be careful to consider issues such as literacy and language. Be open to alternative ways of sharing information as suggested by disaster-affected communities.

- ### Complaint mechanisms
- Develop locally appropriate and culturally acceptable complaints mechanisms that enable the communities we work with to feed back their thoughts on all aspects of the Emergency Response and Resilience Programme. These may include installing complaint boxes, setting up a phone line/SMS feedback mechanism, etc. Always consider issues of accessibility and the differing abilities of various groups to engage with such mechanisms. Ensure communities are clear on the purpose and how to use complaint mechanisms, and be sure to communicate what people can expect from ActionAid in terms of response to their queries.
 - Allocate sufficient resources for handling complaints in the form of grievances, protests, objections or criticisms. Handle specific complaints against individual staff members or volunteers through their line manager in the first instance, seeking support from your in-country HR officer as necessary.
 - ActionAid has a complaints mechanism policy that can be accessed here: <http://goo.gl/WBKxg1>
- ### Review and reflection
- Put in place locally appropriate mechanisms such as social audits and community reviews to enable the communities we work with to analyse our work – and provide feedback.
 - Ensure programme plans and budgets are flexible enough to accommodate feedback from the communities we work with.
 - Adopt decentralised management processes that enable partners and field offices to incorporate the community's feedback.

Sanctions

- Sanctions are a vital component of accountability. If there are no consequences for state actors and humanitarian agencies when they don't meet commitments and standards, the entire accountability process fails. Even with the most comprehensive and insightful information on performance, no-one can be held accountable unless there are sanctions for misconduct and non-achievement.
- Communities targeted by the emergency response must be empowered so that they can impose sanctions on humanitarian agencies, e.g. people may reject the support that is provided in their community, people may take legal recourse against agencies who act improperly.
- ActionAid should support communities to advocate for appropriate sanctions against duty bearers. For more information on the role of civil society in holding state actors to account, see ActionAid's *Accountability handbook*, part of the Just and Democratic Local Governance series of HRBA tools. <http://goo.gl/R8xhyY>
- Sanctions must be coupled with answerability. Those who have the obligation to deliver should also have a binding duty to answer questions and explain themselves when things go wrong.
- Sanctions must be enforceable. It is insufficient for sanctions merely to exist, without being put into practice. When monitoring reveals that obligations have not been met, sanctions should be enforced as a matter of course, and not as an exception to the rule.

Monitoring our commitments and ensuring compliance:

ActionAid's Accountability Charter commits us to monitor compliance on our agreed minimum standards, policies and accountability principles and their implementation in practice. Each entity in the federation is responsible for implementing the accountability standards that follow from this charter. Governing bodies have the responsibility to monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance. We will monitor and report on progress as appropriate, and take responsibility as members for upholding our commitments.

- CLPCP emphasises the following essential elements:
 - Support of community groups to analyse their own situation using participatory tools such as social, resource and mobility mapping, historical transects, wellbeing ranking, etc.
 - Use of participatory methods to address the key issues. This involves using participatory methods to decide how to act on the concerns and problems the community experiences, which have surfaced in their analysis of their situation. The participants then prioritise what actions to take.
 - Provision of space for individual planning in the context of community ownership.
 - Involvement of key external stakeholders to help build links between local communities and the resources they require.

ActionAid has developed different tools and mechanisms to operationalise accountability to disaster-affected communities. Many of these are used in ActionAid's longer term development programmes – these practices do not stop after disasters – they become even more important. Tools and resources can be found in the ActionAid *Accountability in Emergencies Resource Book* <http://goo.gl/xSZJR6>

Community-led participatory change plan (CLPCP)

CLPCP is an approach to learning and social change wherein the initiatives of planned change are from the people, for the people, and by the people. The primary objective of CLPCP is to build the capacity of local communities to analyse the causes of their poverty, establish appropriate local response mechanisms, and access available resources by creating meaningful networks and alliances with other stakeholders so that their voices can be heard at the provincial and national levels. The community itself takes up the leadership, and acts as catalyst for its own empowerment and transformation.

What does accountability to disaster-affected communities look like in practice?

Social audit

ActionAid has adopted social audit as a participatory and transparent process of ensuring public accountability, as well as a process by which all stakeholders jointly review and evaluate programme achievements, shortcomings and learnings. Social audit enables an organisation to: account for its performance to all stakeholders, especially the poor and excluded; maintain transparency and check corruption; learn to improve future performance; understand better its impact; promote wider participation and community ownership of the programme; and build a social platform at the village level for poor and excluded people to question and demand their rights.

Social audit is delivered through three key processes:

1. Transparency or display boards:

the name of the village and objectives, coverage, activities and budget of the initiatives under implementation are displayed on a board in a public place in the village (i.e. temple, road junction, or bus stand) and updated on a regular basis.

2. Vigilance committee:

community selects a group of volunteers mainly comprising members of excluded groups with equitable gender representation, to monitor and supervise the day-to-day implementation of the projects, including procurement. These volunteers receive training to enable them to take up larger responsibilities in community-based institutions.

3. Community auditing of bills and expenses vouchers:

copies of vouchers and bills for expenses incurred by partners and community members in implementing project activities in the village must be shared. The community must accept the role of the vigilance committee and approve the bills and expenses vouchers incurred in the village by passing a resolution. Any complaints against the vigilance committee or partner implementing the project must be acted on immediately. It is useful to invite other civil society organisations and government representatives to these interactions. This helps the community to ask for similar processes to be done in the village by other actors.

Community review

Community review is a process held every three months whereby nominated members from vigilance committees from different villages form a team and physically verify the programme direction and achievements in each of the villages. The reviewers move from village to village to observe the programme and verify the quality of work in each village, with the primary aim of learning from others' experiences, facilitating networking around issues, building wider solidarity in the neighbouring villages, and helping them gain a sense of ownership. The process changes the status of the community from 'the source of information' to 'the owner of the information'.

The steps in community review include:

- Clustering of villages in a functionally feasible way. Clustering is to enhance networking with government and other agencies.
- Formation of the review team comprising at least two members (one of whom is a woman) from each village.
- Orientation to the programme including: what is planned in the village, the intended coverage, intended outcome, the process planned, and agreement regarding the implementation of the programme.
- Village-wise physical verification through village visits by the team. In each village this coincides with the community auditing of the bills and vouchers of expenses in the social audit process which is described above.
- Reporting the community review – sharing lessons learnt, good practices and programme effectiveness.
- Dialogue around issues emerging from this community review.

Through the community review process, the community in general and members of the vigilance committee learn about the finances in neighbouring villages, and can undertake comparative analysis which supports them to ask questions about the expenditure of partners and other agencies.

Public hearing

The public hearing is a large gathering held once a year, usually at the level of the district or a wider region. It is attended by disaster-affected community members, vigilance committees, community review committees, partners, ActionAid staff, government officers and other stakeholders such as academics, the media and members of religious institutions.

In the public hearing, partners display and present the programme progress against plan and budget details. Groups of people from the disaster-affected community observe all the details, and achievements and missed opportunities are openly discussed. Partners, ActionAid and government officers sit together to answer questions posed by the community.

Economic literacy and budget accountability for government (ELBAG)

ActionAid views economic injustice as a core denial of rights, and we regard economic literacy and budget accountability work as a crucial instrument for strengthening governance and public policy. Government budgets play a crucial role in the economic activities of a nation, especially in poverty eradication. The overall objective of ELBAG is to build, democratise and demystify knowledge on budgets and public finance, and to look at them as political processes and priority setting mechanisms of the government, rather than merely technical processes or documents. It focuses on building capacities of communities and their organisations to engage with economic processes and to challenge economic injustice at the micro and macro levels.

Specifically ELBAG aims to:

- Build people’s capacities to monitor, track and question budgetary policies by institutionalising accountability mechanisms like local level budget analysis, social audits, community reviews and public hearings, such that the poorest and most excluded people can challenge injustice in their daily reality.
- Strengthen community and civil society organisations’ engagement with budgets on a sustained and continuous basis from the local to the national levels, in order to advocate for reform of the budget formulation process, and to influence budget allocation priorities.
- Empower communities and civil society to understand the manifestations of economic injustice around them, and to be able to challenge them.

All staff involved in the Emergency Response and Resilience Programme should read and understand ActionAid’s contractual obligations to donors and ensure these are integrated into the programme. ActionAid also has an obligation to ensure that we provide timely and accurate programme and financial information to donors and supporters. Any changes to the programme response that require amendments to a donor contract should be communicated to the donor in advance, to seek any necessary approvals.

In any emergency response the government is the primary duty bearer and should be responsible for providing support to the communities affected. ActionAid establishes links with government at different levels, informing officials of our plans and reporting on progress in our response. ActionAid’s Emergency Response and Resilience Building Plans have to demonstrate our accountability to the government at various levels – unless they are contravening international standards and laws such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ActionAid is a member or signatory of various international standards and conventions that guide humanitarian response. As an organisation we have an obligation to adhere to these standards and to operationalise them in our work in disasters.

Accountability to government and compliance with international standards and laws

Accountability to donors and supporters

Sphere standards

The Sphere project is a voluntary initiative established in 1997 that brings a wide range of humanitarian agencies together around a common aim – to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and the accountability of humanitarian actors to their constituents, donors and affected populations.

The Sphere handbook, *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, is one of the most widely known and internationally recognised sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response. These tools set out standards and guidance for different areas of humanitarian response including shelter, WASH, protection, food and non-food items.

ActionAid staff responding to disasters should be aware of the standards that apply in relevant sectors and ensure that the assistance provided by ActionAid meets these standards. They are also a useful tool for advocacy and holding government and other providers to account, as they provide a framework for identifying where response is falling short.

The Sphere handbook in multiple languages can be accessed free of charge online at: <http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook>

Hard copies can be ordered through the website, with subsidised prices for NGOs. A free Sphere e-learning course in multiple languages is also available: <http://www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/learning/e-learning-course/>

Many countries have national Sphere chapters, where humanitarian agencies come together as a community of practice to discuss and operationalise the Sphere project. You can find information on these communities, as well as training opportunities at:

<http://www.sphereproject.org/community/welcome-to-the-sphere-community/>

INGO Accountability Charter

The INGO Accountability Charter is an initiative of international NGOs to demonstrate their commitment to accountability and transparency. The charter seeks to:

- identify and define shared principles, policies and practices
- enhance transparency and accountability, both internally and externally
- encourage communication with stakeholders
- improve our performance and effectiveness as organisations.

The charter text codifies practices for INGOs in the areas of respect for universal principles; independence; responsible advocacy; effective programmes; non-discrimination; transparency; good governance; ethical fundraising; and professional management.

The full charter and more information can be found at: <http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/>

Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies

In order to achieve a minimum level of educational access and quality in emergencies, as well as to ensure the accountability of the workers who provide these services, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has developed the INEE *Minimum Standards for education: preparedness, response, recovery*.

The INEE minimum standards are designed for use in emergency preparedness, response and recovery and in humanitarian advocacy. They are applicable in a wide range of situations, including natural disasters and armed conflicts. The standards give guidance on how to prepare for and respond to acute emergencies in ways that reduce risk, improve future preparedness and lay a foundation for quality education. They provide flexibility in responding to needs at the most important level – the community – while providing a harmonised framework to co-ordinate the educational activities of national governments, other authorities, funding agencies, and national and international agencies. The INEE minimum standards are companion standards to the Sphere project minimum standards in humanitarian response: <http://www.ineeite.org/en/partnerships/sphere-companion>

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International is a multi-agency initiative working to improve the accountability of humanitarian action to people affected by disasters and other crises. HAP members range from agencies with a mandate of emergency relief and development activities to institutional donors. They are committed to meeting the highest standards of accountability and quality management.

HAP members commit to developing a code of conduct for staff responding to disasters, and to integrate the HAP principles into organisation policies and processes. Members have to report annually won progress, and have to meet further requirements to fulfil the HAP certification process.

The 10 HAP principles are:

- **Humanity:** concern for human welfare and respect for the individual.
- **Impartiality:** providing humanitarian assistance in proportion to need, and giving priority to the most urgent needs, without discrimination (including that based upon gender, age, race, disability, ethnic background, nationality or political, religious, cultural or organisational affiliation).
- **Neutrality:** aiming only to meet human needs and refraining from taking sides in hostilities or giving material or political support to parties to an armed conflict.
- **Independence:** acting only under the authority of the organisation's governing body and in line with the organisation's purpose.
- **Participation and informed consent:** listening and responding to feedback from crisis-affected people when planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, and making sure that crisis-affected people understand and agree with the proposed humanitarian action and are aware of its implications.
- **Duty of care:** meeting recognised minimum standards for the wellbeing of crisis-affected people, and paying proper attention to their safety and the safety of staff.
- **Witness:** reporting when the actions of others have a negative effect on the wellbeing of people in need of humanitarian assistance or protection.
- **Offer redress:** enabling crisis-affected people and staff to raise complaints, and responding with appropriate action.
- **Transparency:** being honest and open in communications and sharing relevant information, in an appropriate form, with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders.
- **Complementarity:** working as a responsible member of the aid community, co-ordinating with others to promote accountability to, and coherence for, crisis-affected people.

The 2010 HAP standard and more information on HAP can be found at <http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/standard/hap-2010-standard.aspx>

A short film on the ICRC code of conduct has been produced and can be found at:

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>
The full code can be downloaded from

assistance cannot be neutral. people's rights in emergencies is a political process and in this sense humanitarian with people living in poverty and exclusion. In our analysis, the assertion of ActionAid's humanitarian assistance is neutral in the sense that we never take sides with actors in a conflict or with political parties. However, ActionAid does take sides

1. The humanitarian imperative (saving lives and alleviating human suffering) comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross, Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
The Red Cross Code of Conduct is a voluntary code that seeks to safeguard high standards of behaviour and maintain independence and effectiveness in disaster relief. In the event of armed conflict, its clauses are to be interpreted and applied in conformity with International Humanitarian Law.

People in Aid

People In Aid is a non-profit organisation that aims to improve organisational effectiveness within the humanitarian and development sector worldwide by advocating, supporting and recognising good practice in the management of people. People in Aid supports organisations whose goal is the relief of poverty and suffering to enhance the impact they make, through better management and support of staff and volunteers. Members have to fulfil certain obligations to achieve certification.

The People in Aid code is an internationally recognised management tool that helps humanitarian aid and development agencies enhance the quality of their human resources management. It covers seven areas:

- human resources strategy
- staff policies and practices
- managing people
- consultation and communication
- recruitment and selection
- learning, training and development
- health, safety and security.

The ActionAid International Secretariat and its 26 associates and affiliates worldwide have been accredited with the first People in Aid quality mark called: Committed to the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in 2013. The code and more information can be found at:

<http://www.peopleinaid.org/code/online.aspx>

The INGO accountability charter:
<http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/>

The 2010 HAP standard:
<http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/standard/hap-2010-standard.aspx>

Red Cross Code of Conduct:
<http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>

People in Aid Code of Conduct:
<http://www.peopleinaid.org/code/online.aspx>

People's report: violence against women in the post-tsunami context and A call to action: citizens' charter based on voices of drought affected people in Kenya: <http://goo.gl/aSTkFk>

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

ActionAid's Accountability in Emergencies Resource Book:
<http://goo.gl/xSZJR6>

ActionAid's open information policy: <http://goo.gl/aSTkFk>

Article on ActionAid's approach to accountability and experiences of accountability to disaster-affected communities in the 2004 Asian Tsunami: <http://goo.gl/mhXoTV>

ActionAid's complaints mechanism policy:
<http://goo.gl/WBkxg1>

ActionAid's accountability handbook: <http://goo.gl/R8xhyY>

More information on the work of Sphere:
<http://www.sphereproject.org>





Communicating with disaster-affected communities

When disasters strike, people need information as much as they need shelter, food, water and safety. By providing the right information, at the right time, from the right source, lives and livelihoods can be saved.

Given the right information during disasters, people can make their own choices and decisions, and become more active participants in the process of their own recovery and claiming their rights.

Communication with crisis-affected communities is a critical component of humanitarian response

From earthquakes to armed conflicts, human survival can depend on knowing the answers to some critical questions: what is the extent of the damage? Where can I get clean water? Is it safe to go back home? As well as needing access to timely and accurate life-saving information, affected communities have the right to ask questions and get answers from humanitarian responders. They have the right to voice their needs, ideas and feedback and to take an active role in relief and recovery efforts in their country. When people are not given the opportunity to voice their opinions and provide feedback, it exacerbates their dissatisfaction, anger and frustration.

When disasters strike, people need information as much as they need shelter, food, water and safety. By providing the right information, at the right time, from the right source, lives and livelihoods can be saved. At the same time, if people have access to useful information during disasters they can make their own choices and decisions, and become more active participants in the process of their own recovery and claiming their rights. They can feed back, complain, voice their opinions and, in doing so, hold agencies like ActionAid – and other bodies like local and national government – to account.



What is communication with disaster-affected communities?

Communication with affected communities is a cross-cutting function that facilitates greater accountability and effectiveness of aid delivery; enhances resilience building; and promotes understanding between humanitarian organisations and the communities they serve. Yet despite its potential to save lives and improve aid delivery, communication with affected communities has not been given sufficient attention by humanitarian organisations and is not systematically institutionalised within the humanitarian sector. Its importance to quality programming is not widely recognised and rarely implemented effectively. This gap has been recognised in recent reviews of humanitarian response: The people who are on the receiving end of our assistance are rarely, if ever, consulted on what they need or are able to choose who will help them or how. Whilst this has been long recognised as an issue, too little has been done about it. For more information, see: www.cdacnetwork.org

To understand why 'communication is aid', watch this short film from the CDAC network:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDmKLCy7Nis>

Ways of communicating with disaster-affected communities

The key thing to remember is that communication should be two-way. It is not just about delivering information to people affected by disasters; they should also have a chance to share information with aid providers and express their views and feedback. There are many different ways to communicate with people, and lots of tools that have been developed to support this. The important points when considering how to communicate are:

- Consider information needs at the rapid and needs assessment stage (see tools below) to understand the information gaps people face and how they prefer to receive information.
- Use a range of different communication channels to ensure you reach different parts of the community, including the most vulnerable groups.
- Understand community preferences for communication channels (including cultural factors, accessibility factors such as literacy levels, access to electricity, coverage and uptake of different forms of media such as newspapers, mobile phones etc) and think about how this varies for different groups (women, older people, children).
- Consider the availability of communication channels, taking into account damage to infrastructure following a disaster.
- Consider how communication channels can be used for two-way communications (for example if you are using radio, can you incorporate listener phone ins, or community listening groups).
- Collaborate – it is important to link with clusters and other co-ordination mechanisms to ensure that the messages are coherent and communities are not overwhelmed with lots of disjointed sources of information. Also, think about how you can work with partners, including local media organisations.

Tools and resources

There are lots of useful tools and guidance available to help you design and implement activities to communicate with disaster-affected communities.

Many of these are listed in ActionAid's accountability in emergencies toolkit (under development, draft versions can be requested from IHART).

Some of the best places to start are:

Infoasaid media and telecoms landscape guides: the online guides provide comprehensive and detailed information on the media and telecoms landscapes in 22 countries, including details of coverage and community usage of radio, television, newspapers, mobile phones etc. These were developed by the Infoasaid project, which has now ended but their website archives lots of useful learning and tools. <http://infoasaid.org/media-and-telecoms-landscape-guides>

Infoasaid message library: searchable database of pre-developed and approved messages on a wide variety of topics, including cholera, gender-based violence, mine prevention etc, developed in collaboration with different clusters. These can be used to disseminate critical information to affected populations in an emergency. <http://infoasaid.org/cgi-message-library?destination=%2Fmessage-library>

Infoasaid diagnostic tools: tools and guidance on assessing information needs and capacity, including rapid CDAC 101 seminar series: series of reports from introductory '101' seminar series on communicating with disaster-affected communities. Includes using SMS in emergencies, using radio broadcasts, and humanitarian financing information. <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/public/resource/101-seminar-series-report-using-sms-humanitarian-response>

Internews: website features toolkits and reports on use of different media in emergencies, particularly how to engage with local media organisations. <http://www.internews.org>

See for example a short film on programmes developed in collaboration with local radio stations for refugees in Dadaab refugee camp: <http://vimeo.com/72501084>



Case study: SMS project in Isiolo, Kenya

Since May 2011, ActionAid has been partnering with a consortium called Infoasaid. The aim of this initiative was to:

- Mainstream communications with disaster-affected communities in our emergency preparedness and response.
- Strengthen the capacity and preparedness of ActionAid to respond to the information and communication needs of crisis-affected populations.
- Provide rapid responses to select emergencies in partnership with ActionAid to inform and support their two-way communication with affected populations.

As part of the partnership, ActionAid began implementing a pilot project in Isiolo, Kenya, where ActionAid (in collaboration with the World Food Programme) provides vital food rations to over 80,000 people every month. Distribution of the supplies is handled by community members themselves through self-organised 'relief committees', and overseen by field officers employed by ActionAid.

Broadly, the project aims to help combat food insecurity amongst communities affected by the 2011 drought. It uses innovative technology – Frontline SMS and Freedom Fone – to transmit information simultaneously to multiple recipients from a laptop computer, and to provide a channel for communities to feed back to ActionAid staff. The project provided basic mobile phone and solar chargers to 250 relief committee members, and 30 Java-enabled mobile phones to ActionAid field officers, regional office staff and others including warehouse owners and food truck drivers.

In July 2012, the project was awarded the Innovation Award in the **2012 Technology 4 Good Awards**

<http://www.technology4goodawards.org.uk>

Read more about the award:

<http://www.actionaid.org/2012/07/actionaid-mobile-phone-project-kenya-wins-innovation-award>

The review also highlighted areas for improvement, including:

- Improving the way ActionAid shares, and responds to, information received from community members. Relief committees are using the phones provided by the project to report important information such as flooding, or disease outbreaks. A systematic approach for handling this information needs to be put in place.
- Reviewing the benefit of the Freedom Fone hotline. Discussions with community members revealed that the Freedom Fone number is rarely used. In addition to some technical problems, there are significant cultural and economic challenges which are currently hindering its uptake, which ActionAid needs to investigate.

Improving the speed and efficiency of data collection

Thomas, ActionAid food monitor:
"The Frontline SMS forms are very easy to fill. They do not consume even 10 minutes. The information goes to the hub and...it is secure. Before, I gave the information on paper which can disappear."

Halima, community member:
"In the past we saw the [food] trucks arriving and we might have gone to attend to other works. Now, we get [information] one or two days before, we can put off our jobs and come to collect food."

Providing information on when food distributions will arrive means children no longer have to leave school to tell parents the trucks are on the way, as was the case previously.

Enabling community members to better plan their time

Community member in Oldonyiro:
"There is a big change now. Long before, food used to stay overnight because there was no communication. Now we get information immediately even when the trucks are still in Isiolo. We are aware that food is arriving tomorrow, and we go ready for distribution."

Field officers also report that the use of Frontline SMS has reduced the need for frequent travel to rural communities for face-to-face meetings – in one case from 24 per month to just 12 – saving time and money.

Increasing the speed and efficiency of food distribution

Fatumah, food monitor:
"We used to argue. The community wanted to know why I had not told them about the distribution dates. Now they have time to prepare. Within 30 minutes we are done. Before we had to ask neighbouring villages to help with off-loading – that could take two-three hours."

Improving relations between communities and ActionAid

Edward, relief committee secretary:
"A man asked 'how is the livestock price in Isiolo?' I told him it is lower, he immediately called people in Nanyuki so that they could go to buy [in Isiolo] and sell in other towns. He bought so he could sell at a higher price."

Boosting household income

ActionAid, by:
Benefits for both drought-affected communities and
A recent review of the project found that it had brought



Since the project began ActionAid has received questions and complaints from community members relating to the humanitarian situation and response. These communications are received and processed by ActionAid's Data Officer in the region. If the complaint does not relate to ActionAid's work it is passed onto the relevant external contact. If it does relate to ActionAid it is handled by the ActionAid's Project Co-ordinator. If the complaint is related to a serious matter it would fall under ActionAid's complaints procedures as outlined in the *Complaints and response mechanism framework* for investigation and action. While no serious complaints have been received during this time, a number of queries relating to food distributions came in. In one case, community members used the mobile phones provided by ActionAid to communicate the fact that they hadn't received food supplies for a number of weeks. When ActionAid's Project Co-ordinator reasoned that this was because community members had failed to complete work on a food-for-assets project, the community again used the mobile phones to request that the Project Co-ordinator visit the site to see that the work had indeed been finished. Following the site visit, the Co-ordinator agreed that the work had been completed satisfactorily, and as a result the food distributions were reinstated.

The different needs, risks and opportunities for women and men affected by emergencies must be analysed. Strategic Objective 4 highlights the critical importance of women's leadership in building community resilience and enabling effective disaster response and preparedness. Women and their rights must be explicit in all aspects of emergencies programming to ensure access, equity and protection.

At the heart of ActionAid's work is a commitment to promoting women's rights. This is central to all objectives in ActionAid's strategy, *People's action to end poverty*, and is non-negotiable in all programmes, including emergency preparedness and response, based on the understanding that the underlying causes of poverty and injustice are gendered. In emergencies, violence against women is exacerbated.

Women's rights in emergencies



Guiding principles

- Working on women’s rights is non-negotiable for ActionAid, and we focus on women living in poverty and exclusion.
- Women are differentially affected by disasters.
- Disasters increase women’s existing vulnerability.
- Disasters increase the burden of work done by women.
- Women are often the first responders, but the last to participate in decision-making.
- Women are not helpless victims and have an important leadership role in preparedness, response and recovery.
- Emergencies present an opportunity to challenge underlying social inequalities.

In practice, this means ensuring women’s participation and leadership in each stage of the emergency process and ensuring that women’s specific needs are identified.

Needs assessment

- Collect data disaggregated by sex and age and information on women’s specific material, psychosocial and information needs.
- Collect data on needs of women with disabilities.
- Community participation in needs assessment process (reviewing questions, organising meetings etc) must be led by women to identify their own and community needs.
- Women team members must lead the consultations with women, who must be consulted separately from men.
- The needs assessment design must be sensitive to women’s needs (e.g. timing and location, women’s psychosocial needs etc).

Participation in decision-making

- **Women must be involved in all stages of preparedness, response and recovery**, including procurement, project design and relief distribution.
- The **right to participation and decision-making are often denied to women**, and emergencies present an opportunity to redress this.
- To support women to participate in the decision-making process and access the assistance they are entitled to, **ActionAid must help women to access information and understand their rights**.
- Emergencies are an **opportunity to amplify the voices of people who are normally excluded**.
- The **planning of activities and the behaviour of humanitarian workers impacts women’s ability to participate and lead**.
- In emergencies ActionAid should work with and **strengthen existing women’s groups and institutions** (e.g. *Reflect* circles) – capacity-building is a key part of preparedness.

- The dominant political, social and cultural beliefs and practices that both accept and perpetuate violence against women and girls, profoundly influence the formulation and implementation of the legal framework.
- Violence against women and girls often increases in emergencies and should be considered in all programme plans.
- Individuals, communities, mandated agencies and states all have a role to play in protecting women and girls from violence – different approaches to protection are described in the ActionAid protection manual, available at: <http://goo.gl/8K9Frc>

Violence against women and girls

- Violence against women and girls can take different forms – physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, economic and structural discrimination.
- Violence against women and girls is not only committed by individuals, but also can be committed by the state through consistent, persistent structural discriminatory policies and processes that deny or abuse women’s rights.
- Structural discrimination results in violations of women’s human rights – mechanisms for registration, information provision, distribution or relief, inaccessibility of authorities who are there to protect.
- There are laws, policies, codes of conduct or standards at international, regional and national levels to safeguard women (including CEDAW, UNSCR 1820 and UNSCR 1325), but these are often inconsistently applied.

Immediate response

- Women have specific material, psychosocial and information needs that need to be considered in each sector (e.g. food, shelter, health, WASH, protection, psychosocial support, communications with disaster-affected communities) during the immediate response.
- Women’s participation is essential in ensuring these needs are identified and that women are able access appropriate assistance.
- The Sphere standards set out minimum standards for emergency response in each sector, including strategies for addressing women’s specific needs.
- Alongside these technical standards, ActionAid must also consider the political aspects of women’s rights in emergencies.

Women’s leadership in the policy process

- The structural causes of vulnerability that pre-exist in society persist in the emergency context, and can impact on disaster response. This is also true for the inequalities/injustices that women face.
- Policy work aims to ensure the disaster response is just and equitable, and that change is sustainable through empowering poor and affected people – particularly women – and changing power relationships.
- Policy influencing/policy advocacy means deliberately influencing governments and other power holders who decide on policy and practices that have a humanitarian impact – i.e. that deny rights of the rights of women.

- Programme and policy work are interconnected. Policy work must be grounded in the programme and affected women’s experience and concerns in the field. Practice should also be informed by policy.
- For ActionAid to effectively support affected women to claim, secure and enjoy their human rights in emergency contexts it is critical that the programme, policy and communications functions are linked.
- Women, including women living in poverty and exclusion, have the ability to make their voices heard and effectively influence policy – ActionAid’s role is to support and build the capacity of these women so that they can take a leadership role in the policy process.

See also earlier in **Section 7**, which includes a case study on policy work around violence against women following the 2004 Asian tsunami.



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

A separate manual with detailed guidance on women’s rights in emergencies is available here: <http://goo.gl/8K9FrC>
Sphere protection principles: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/how-to-use-this-chapter-5/>

The devastating impact of disasters may result in significant emotional distress, causing increased suffering and hindering the ability of survivors to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. In some cases, traditional and cultural practices of relieving such distress may not be sufficient to bring about full recovery. In emergencies where large parts/all of the community is affected, specific psychosocial activities may need to be implemented. Psychosocial work aims to enable people to adapt to their lives post-disaster, to cope with losses they may have suffered, and to begin to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Psychosocial work in emergencies



In the aftermath of an emergency, almost every individual who has been affected will suffer a degree of emotional distress that limits their ability to return to their normal lives. Establishing a relationship of trust between the disaster survivor and the psychosocial facilitator is essential. It is important to note that ActionAid will not treat serious mental issues, but rather link the disaster survivor with relevant professional institutions that have the expertise to provide sufficient support.

There are four steps that make up ActionAid's psychosocial support in emergencies:

1. **Relive and re-grieve:** create safe spaces for women where they can come together to share their experiences, and relive and re-grieve for those they have lost through structured sessions facilitated by a psychosocial worker.

2. **Recreation:** help people to find ways to relax and take recreation, for example through creating women and children friendly spaces, community drama, song, sports etc.
3. **Rebuild:** identify culturally appropriate ways for people to start to return to normality, for example by helping children return to school and helping people rebuild their livelihoods. Women will often use the safe spaces provided for recreation and reliving/re-grieving to start planning response and livelihood rebuilding.
4. **Refer:** ActionAid is not equipped to provide specialised support to treat serious mental health issues. In serious cases, we should link the disaster survivor with relevant professional services such as government services, specialised humanitarian agencies etc.

Many of these activities can be facilitated by trained people from the community, particularly women, who are familiar and understand the cultural sensitivities and practices. ActionAid can train a cadre of people, including disaster survivors themselves, to facilitate psychosocial work. Be sure to include women facilitators, as well as people from different parts of society including teachers, youth activists and health workers.



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

ActionAid has a separate manual on psychosocial support in emergencies: <http://goo.gl/kN1on4>
IASC guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings: <http://goo.gl/l2OCZs>

In a disaster, the entire population may have been exposed to the same shock, but the impact it has on people's lives and livelihoods will vary depending on the social, geographic, economic and political processes influencing and interacting with the particular event. Key variables explaining differences in impact include people's class, occupation, caste, ethnicity, gender, health status, age, the nature and extent of their social networks, their asset base prior to the hazard or living in poverty and exclusion are vulnerable. Any disaster disproportionately affects those affected by poverty, impacting their lives and livelihoods.

Livelihoods in emergencies



Disasters generally result in the loss of lives, homes and assets, and the disruption of livelihoods and social services provision, sometimes with long-term consequences. The impact on livelihoods might include the destruction of food stocks, standing crops, the death of livestock or the destruction of tools (e.g. handlooms, shops, farming implements, boats and nets etc). A 'livelihood' comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. Assets are not only human, natural, physical and financial, but also social and political.

Disasters also have the potential to further skew power relations against the most vulnerable people, as they lose their assets and income opportunities and further sink into poverty and debt. Therefore a key principle of investment is equity not equality. In a community devastated by a disaster almost all families will be affected. But in the rehabilitation process, it is most often the powerful people who grab the external resources and poor and vulnerable families are left out. As such, more resources should be allocated to the poorest and most vulnerable families rather than to a slightly-better off family. In addition, with appropriate assistance and policy change, disasters provide an opportunity to establish sustainable livelihood options for the most vulnerable people, based on substantial changes in the pre-disaster power dynamics. It is this last possibility which is the goal of all livelihood interventions of ActionAid in the post-disaster context.

Sustainable livelihoods are those "which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term," (Chambers and Conway, 1992). This concept also includes: *"lifestyles and workstyles that do not deplete the social and environmental capital of economies"*. (<http://www.iisd.org/didigest/glossary.htm#S>).

Guiding principles

- Focus on diversification of livelihoods in the programme response.
- Define minimum threshold levels of investments for disaster-affected people to make their livelihoods profitable/economically viable (e.g. 10 goats/cows could be one unit not two cows, which would not be viable). This should be based on the local context, skills and market. Those who are the poorest should benefit from a larger share of the investment, which might include supporting access to markets; capital investments and capacity building etc, so that they can achieve an equity of income with those better off.

- Backwards and forwards linkages (linking supply of inputs, production and end-product processes including marketing) are essential for successful livelihood interventions. Livelihood programme design should be informed by a thorough analysis of local context, resource and capacities, and with the active engagement of the affected communities at all stages. Tools such as wealth and wellbeing ranking, as well as matrix ranking, may be appropriate for selecting families to receive livelihoods assistance.

• Strengthen women’s leadership and capacities so they are empowered and can reduce their unpaid care work (e.g. invest in land owned by women and increase the productivity of the land). We need to ensure that there is adequate focus on the following seven areas of intervention:

1. improvement in women’s food security
 - number of meals per day
2. active participation of women in collective action (and solidarity with women who can’t join the groups)
 - number of women who are members of groups
3. improved access to basic services
 - number of women who access agricultural extension services
 - number of women who access basic services including childcare, health, education
4. improved access to and control over productive resources (individual and collective) for women
 - number of women who have access to land
 - number of women who have access to livestock
5. increased intake of sustainable agricultural practices
 - reduction in use of external inputs
 - water conservation/sustainable water management
 - diversification of crops and livelihood
 - improved access to markets

6. enhanced contributions by women to household revenues (and control over these resources)

- number of women who can decide what to do with their production
- number of women who have a say in household spending/revenue decisions

7. optimised time and resources spent in care and reproductive activities by women – policies and interventions must recognise women’s paid and unpaid work, including unpaid care work

- time spent in care activities – recognised or paid for
- time spent in unpaid work – recognised or paid for
- time spent on leisure

• Livelihood diversification must be culturally acceptable, environmentally sustainable, technologically feasible and economically viable.

• Support/build co-operatives/federations/links between producers to enhance people’s ability for collective bargaining and access to and influence over markets. Build capacity of people to understand local legal frameworks related to the livelihoods/trades they are pursuing; to negotiate with markets and manage their production themselves. Ensure institutional processes are established to enable collective procurement and marketing.

• Ensure livelihood interventions conform to the laws and policies of the country in which they are being implemented.

The community – especially women – will also identify:

- the most vulnerable individuals/families
 - agreed cash transfer/food transfer mechanisms
 - ensuring lists and coverage of the programme are reviewed at regular intervals.
 - the types of activities that they are willing to undertake
 - food combinations
 - where to procure the food from, and supervision of the procurement
 - day-to-day monitoring of activities
 - management of the food distribution/cash payment
 - cash transfers for the most vulnerable community members.
- The affected community members – especially women representatives – decide on:

Addressing immediate needs of disaster-affected communities:

• Design community based food-for-work and cash-for-work schemes. Cash-for-work normally works where sufficient food is available in the local markets. In the case of a lack of food in local markets, food-for-work is more appropriate. Consider cash – or combine cash with material support. Undertake a security analysis for any large-scale cash transfers. All food kits should adhere to Sphere nutritional standards. (<http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/1-food-security-and-nutrition-assessment/>)

Livelihood analysis and designing interventions

- Make use of available livelihood analysis from the perspective of people living in poverty and exclusion and affected by disaster, particularly women. It is also critical to understand the context that they live in such as dry zones and conflict areas; and technical areas such as market analysis.
- Adopt, where possible, a household and local economic approach to understand all aspects of livelihood systems. For example, consider four internally cohesive strands for lasting impact: a) each household's capacity and livelihood needs; b) community infrastructure and local markets that condition livelihood recovery; c) governance and environmental sustainability that affects livelihood security; and d) the power analysis within the household and community that informs livelihood options.
- Understand the policy and legal environment, which may enable or limit people's livelihood recovery – and develop advocacy and campaigning strategies around it.
- Develop a livelihood programme based on the minimum level of investment required for people to generate income and meet the needs of their household.
- Consider the differential impact of a disaster due to pre-disaster inequality in society. Utilise economic recovery as a means to address vulnerabilities, especially among ethnic minorities and women. When designing a livelihood programme, meeting the immediate needs of people living in poverty and affected by disasters is fundamental, but programmes must also strategically link to longer term recovery of livelihoods.
- Addressing disaster-related traumas through psychosocial initiatives is a pre-condition to livelihood recovery. Experience from the Asian tsunami response and cyclones Sidr and Aila suggest that people's ability to re-start their livelihood has greatly depended on their mental wellbeing, as well as their physical wellbeing. Always involve communities and local experts in deciding which varieties and species of seeds or livestock are used in any intervention – and understand and address people's capacity for restocking (not just distributing). Integrating local knowledge and experience with scientific innovation is crucial to designing an effective livelihoods programme.
- Promote campaigns to secure resilient livelihoods, and ensure that they are co-ordinated with the state agencies that provide support services to agriculture and livestock.

5. Mobilise and federate communities, and foster alliances with stakeholders to assert rights

E.g. link with government, private sector etc. to carry out advocacy and support policy on access and control over natural, financial and technological resources.

4. Facilitate the creation of co-operatives so that communities can negotiate a fair price with markets

E.g. capacity building to manage co-operatives, collective procurement of materials and marketing.

3. Initiate appropriate livelihoods support

E.g. farm-based livelihood (restart agriculture through tools, seeds for farmers and capital, boats and nets for fishermen, restocking livestock, seed distribution, agricultural loans, training etc). Non-agricultural livelihoods (ensure that affected communities have the skills and access to capital and material support for business and wage earning).

2. Livelihood analysis conducted to identify livelihood options

Analysis may assess knowledge, skills and expertise; raw materials available; production process; markets; women's perspective and equity of support to address inequality in society. Alternative livelihoods research and promote livelihoods that are resilient to disasters and climate change. See climate change guidelines at: <http://goo.gl/aSTkFk>

E.g. cash transfers, cash for work, food for work, food for assets.

Livelihood programme design is fundamentally driven by the principles outlined in this section. Programmes will greatly vary according to the context, but it is essential to recognise that the provision of livelihoods and support for communities to recover is the responsibility of the state. However, the role of civil society and agencies like ActionAid is to facilitate the process to enable communities to assert their rights. This is best done through the following steps:



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

ActionAid climate change guidelines: <http://goo.gl/asTkFk>

Sphere nutritional standards for food kits:

(<http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/1-food-security-and-nutrition-assessment/>)

ActionAid *livelihoods in emergencies manual*: <http://goo.gl/RyPszB>

Food security issues may emerge as a result of food price rises, droughts, floods, earthquakes or a combination of these factors. Food crises are more often than not a failure of public policy – an abdication of responsibility by the state to respect, protect and fulfill their citizens' right to food. It is caused because of lack of entitlements, including social capital. There may be many factors that cause a food crisis – but if adequate systems were in place, there is no reason why anyone should live with hunger given that the world produces enough food for our needs. Secure access to adequate and safe food is a universal human right, which all states of the international community are mutually obliged to respect, protect and fulfill, including an extraterritorial obligation not to violate the right to food of the people of other countries. The FAO and Sphere have defined food security as 'all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy and active life';



Recent causes of food price crises include:

- Extreme weather conditions, structural changes in commodities markets, food and energy speculation, biofuels mandates, and longer term trends on both sides of the food supply/demand equation that are driving prices up:
 - On the demand side the causes are population growth, rising affluence, changing diets, and the increasing use of grain to fuel motor vehicles.
 - On the supply side: soil erosion, aquifer depletion, loss of cropland to non-farm uses, plateauing crop yields and the growing impact of climate change are all squeezing supplies, while steadily rising oil and gas prices have increased fertiliser, production and transport costs. A weak dollar, ultra-loose monetary policies, and an explosion of speculative activity on commodity futures markets is also considered to be amplifying price movements.
- National causes includes rising cost of production (due to fuel charges, high input prices, fertilisers, pesticides, excessive interest from money lenders), transportation costs, abnormal profits by middlemen, taxes on food items, drop in food production due to weather problems etc.

ActionAid will go deeper into analysis about the experience of women and other excluded groups in assessment and identify the causes of an acute and persistent food crisis caused by:

- Availability: damage of crops as a result of disasters, displacement caused by conflict or other reasons, reduction of labour forces, depletion of pasture and grazing land and climatic factors causing failure of crop production.
- Access: caused by destruction of livelihoods as a result of disaster, restriction in access to natural resources, price hikes and unemployment.
- Consumption: including looking at dietary diversity and intra-household food distribution, where in most cases women get the least share.

Following analysis of the assessment, we design our own response and the response of our partners, and identify what is expected from duty bearers both in the short term and longer term.

- ActionAid will respond with appropriate means based on sound analysis of the severity of the crisis and alternative responses. ActionAid will respond with its core strength with a preference for livelihood support to meet long- and short-term food crisis needs – we will only intervene with free food distribution or therapeutic care if such services are not available, and there is malnutrition and significant threat to life. We will combine food distribution with our livelihood programmes.
- ActionAid will always defend people's right to food through policy research, advocacy and campaigning aimed at securing food for women and other excluded people.
- Any withdrawal of food response should be gradual and strategic, made only after careful assessment of the risks and implications on the affected population.
- ActionAid will always assess the implications of the provision of food aid – both our own and that of other actors – on people living in poverty and the local markets, and will always oppose genetically modified food or seeds.
- ActionAid will look at interventions that support increased incomes, increased wellbeing and reduced vulnerability.
- Interventions should be locally appropriate. For example, in any seed distribution, we must take into account locally appropriate seeds; and only purchase high input intensive seeds when it is appropriate to do so.

- The right to food is enshrined in human rights law and many national constitutions and policies. Country programmes need to check the legal status of the right to food in their respective constitutions. Given enough food in the world, there is no reason for food shortages – it is a failure of policy and lack of entitlement that leads to hunger. The short-term trigger could be a flood, drought, locusts, but the failure is policy failure. Governments have the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food. While ActionAid believes the state is responsible to secure the right to food, ActionAid will always respond to food crises if there are significant gaps and we have the capacity to respond.
- ActionAid's aim is to ensure that chronic hunger or silent hunger does not go unnoticed. We will put in place mechanisms to monitor hunger trends, to ensure that we have alert levels that help trigger our response before a full-blown crisis develops.
- ActionAid's response in food crisis is guided by our strategy to secure the right to food through ensuring small-scale food producers, women, and other vulnerable groups are at the forefront of the response and programme design.
- ActionAid has subscribed to the principles of food sovereignty and believes that communities should have the right to determine their own policies, especially with regards to agriculture and food security. We believe that smallholder led sustainable agricultural production and increased access and control over natural resources by rural women are two of the most effective strategies to address long-term food security.

Guiding principles

ActionAid focuses on women living in poverty and exclusion. From a food security perspective, in our work with women smallholders we need to ensure that there is adequate focus on the following seven areas of intervention:

1. Improvement in women’s food security

- Number of meals per day

2. Active participation of women in collective action (and solidarity with women who can’t join the groups)

- Number of women who are member of groups

3. Improved access to basic services

- Number of women who access agricultural extension services
- Number of women who access basic services including childcare, health, education

4. Improved access to and control over productive resources (individual and collective) for women

- Number of women who have access to land
- Number of women who have access to livestock

5. Increased intake of sustainable agricultural practices

- Reduction in use of external inputs
- Water conservation/sustainable water management
- Diversification of crops and livelihoods
- Improved access to markets

6. Enhanced contributions by women to household revenues (and control over these resources)

- Number of women who can decide what to do with their production
- Number of women who have a say in household spending/revenue decisions

7. Optimised time and resources spent in care and reproductive activities by women – policies and interventions must recognise women’s paid and unpaid work, including unpaid care work

- Time spent in care activities – recognised or paid for
- Time spent in unpaid work – recognised or paid for
- Time spent on leisure.

- If food is available in the market, adopt cash-based approaches such as cash-for-work or training.
- Do not consider cooked food and therapeutic care unless ActionAid and partners have the capacity and proven experience to do so.
- Consider food distribution in schools only when there is proven malnutrition risk among children. There are multiple benefits of food distribution when done appropriately – such as education, capacity-building and restoration of household and community infrastructure. ActionAid will support those households whose children are likely to drop out from school, enter child labour or be married early due to food shortages.
- Distribute food only preferred by women and rights holders. Food distribution thresholds to be determined by the size and requirement of households such as lactating or pregnant women.
- Intervene based on community indicators before a food crisis becomes acute – share your analysis with government and other actors.
- Promote alternatives to food distribution by strengthening means of livelihoods, and use this as a phase-out strategy.

Deciding strategy

- Understand both the causes of food crisis and the experience felt by women and children.
- Understand what capacity already exists to reduce food insecurity.
- Work with specialised agencies on nutritional assessment as it is not our core strength.
- Establish surveillance on the evolving nature of the food crisis and monitoring to understand the causes of food crisis, and impact on livelihoods, food consumption, and coping strategies of households particularly women.
- When planning any intervention, such as food or cash support, build in a plan for evaluation to look at the impact of that intervention on local markets, as they can cause pocket inflation or increase prices – doing harm to the people we aim to serve.
- Ensure that interventions planned consider gendered roles and help empower women and challenge relations in addition to addressing their food security.

Assessment

- Keep an eye on the local food prices, on media reports of shortages, and on harvest figures. You can access national price data through FAO's global food price monitor: www.fao.org/giews/english/gfpm/GFPM_12_2010.pdf. The FAO global food price monitor provides a national trend – for local prices often there isn't any published data available, in which case you could monitor the prices locally. You could keep track of the prices of key staples in local markets over two or three seasons and chart them in a graph in the DA/partner's office. Monitor your prices against this graph, and if the local price exceeds the two-three season average by more than 10% you should take note. This is just guidance, local factors are often extremely crucial and your local knowledge will be essential in making a prudent call.
- Be ready to respond and raise the issues in the media as well as with your government. You may be able to break the story in the media and get attention for your issues – if you are able to predict the crisis based on our information from the ground on harvest failures, food shortages, price rises etc.
- Demand that governments bring together all sectors to agree and implement a national food security plan to prevent current and future food crisis. If such a plan already exists, demand an urgent review to see what elements are not working or could be scaled up. The UN High Level Task Force and the FAO's Committee on World Food Security have both proposed national food security councils. The Brazilian National Council for Food Security and Nutrition is another good example of multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder councils.

- Discuss your own immediate and medium-term response with partners on the ground to ensure the basic food needs of the rights holders are met.

Implementing intervention

- In the short term consider amongst other actions:
 - Provision of food, cash, vouchers or a combination, depending on the local context.
 - Lobby the government for food price controls or subsidies for those most affected by hunger.
 - Call for expansion of social protection programmes including cash transfers, school feeding, food-for-work, cash-for-work, subsidised food rations, expansion of public distribution systems, setting up of community kitchens, provision of and scale up of community wbased therapeutic feeding.
 - Lobby governments for provision of seeds, inputs and micro-finance to farmers in time for next planting season, where appropriate expand the coverage of ActionAid's and its partners interventions of inputs.
 - Lobby for temporary reduction in tariffs or a temporary export ban (depending on if you are an importing country or if your country exports).

- Follow established standards such as Sphere to implement nutritional interventions.
- Work with specialised agencies such as WFP or UNICEF on deciding and implementing nutritional programmes.

Addressing malnutrition

- Consider local purchases to strengthen markets.
- Facilitate engagement with international actors (including the UN, social movements, G20) to put pressure on and support the capacity of the national process to initiate and sustain change.
- Facilitate engagement with international actors (including the UN, social movements, G20) to put pressure on and support the capacity of the national process to initiate and sustain change.
- Mobilise civil society and community-based organisations to engage national policymakers to address the causes of the crisis; by putting in place sustainable systems, processes, policies and programmes.
- Tracking access to social transfers (government schemes that strengthen local resilience and production) to make sure that the right people are benefiting and that coverage is sufficient.
- Mobilise civil society and community-based organisations to engage national policymakers to address the causes of the crisis; by putting in place sustainable systems, processes, policies and programmes.
- Facilitate engagement with international actors (including the UN, social movements, G20) to put pressure on and support the capacity of the national process to initiate and sustain change.
- Consider local purchases to strengthen markets.

- Over the longer term in order to help build resilience and enhance food security consider the following:
 - Facilitate a robust analysis critically examining the cause of food crisis and potential solutions at the community level, taking on board a women's rights perspective. In this analysis it is also essential that we critically look at the laws/policies/schemes that enable/inhibit the community's own efforts at becoming food secure. Some of these may be linked with national or international factors. In the last international food price rise crisis the most important coping mechanism communities resorted to was use of their own networks and community coping mechanisms. It is crucial to help support strong local networks and support structures.
 - Promotion of sustainable agriculture that is climate resilient at the local level and in our advocacy work nationally and internationally. At the local level this could include farmer to farmer exchanges, farmer field schools, support for household and community seed banks, farming co-operatives, documenting promising practices at the local level to be used for scaling up.
 - Promotion of local and national grain banks in the communities we work with, but also in our advocacy work.



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

ActionAid's guidelines on feeding infants and young children in emergencies: <http://goo.gl/Vfgajt>

UN food security cluster: <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/>

Sphere's *Minimum standards in food security and nutrition*:

<http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/1-food-security-and-nutrition-assessment/>

The FAO's global food price monitor: www.fao.org/giews/english/gfpm/GFPM_12_2010.pdf

Providing NFI support in emergencies is essential to ensuring the safety, security, health, dignity and wellbeing of people affected by disasters. Clothing, blankets and bedding materials meet personal human needs for shelter and for the maintenance of health, privacy and dignity. Access to basic goods and supplies enables affected populations to prepare and consume food appropriately, meet personal hygiene needs and build, maintain or repair shelters. All affected populations – whether they are able to return to the site of their original homes, are hosted by other families or are accommodated in temporary communal settlements – will have individual and household non-food items needs that must be assessed and met as appropriate.

Non-food items (NFIs)



Guiding principles:

- **ActionAid’s response should be guided by the principles of common sense, context and consistency.**
- ActionAid will provide NFIs to the most vulnerable groups in the immediate response phase, based on the actual needs of affected people as identified through consultative processes undertaken as part of rapid/needs assessments.
- ActionAid will engage affected communities in the selection and distribution of NFIs to ensure cultural appropriateness, dignity, transparency and accountability.
- ActionAid will prioritise procurement of NFIs from local suppliers and vendors, or neighbouring areas within the country’s borders as far as possible.
- Priority will be given to the specific NFI needs of women, children, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly and other particularly vulnerable groups.
- ActionAid will link affected communities with relevant government institutions or agencies to acquire appropriate NFIs if available to avoid any form of duplication.
- ActionAid’s NFI interventions should be guided by the Sphere standards.
- ActionAid should implement preparedness plans around non-food distributions, and may consider stockpiling materials ready for distribution during emergencies.

Assessment

- Understand what NFIs are or will be provided by the government or other agencies in ActionAid targeted areas.
- Work with specialised agencies if required on NFI needs of the communities that may fall outside of ActionAid’s core strength and understanding.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to understand the impact of NFI support on local markets, as they can cause pocket inflation or increase prices – doing harm to people.

Deciding strategy

- If NFIs are available in the market, adopt a cash-based approach such as cash-for-work, or training to enable communities to decide what to purchase and to have ownership over it.
- Consider NFI distribution for children (e.g. education kits) only if education space is functioning and available.
- Distribute NFIs only preferred by women and rights holders. The NFI distribution threshold is to be determined by size and household requirements.
- Provide capacity-building, if required, for proper utilisation of any NFIs distributed.
- Promote alternatives to NFI distribution by strengthening means of livelihood.
- Consider local purchases to strengthen markets.

In all cases items should be culturally appropriate, and guidance given on how the items should be used.



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Sphere - Minimum standards in shelter, settlement and NFIS:
<http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/how-to-use-this-chapter-2/>

Conflict sensitivity



Conflict sensitivity is the ability of an organisation to:
 1. understand the conflict and power dynamics in the context in which it operates
 2. understand the interaction between the intervention and that context, and
 3. act upon this knowledge and understanding to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict.

How can we be conflict sensitive in an emergency response?

- Application of conflict sensitivity should take place at every stage of the emergency programme cycle, including preparedness, assessment, design, implementation and evaluation.
- Conducting a structured conflict analysis and updating it throughout an emergency response to inform the way interventions are designed, implemented and evaluated, is the cornerstone of conflict sensitivity.
- Conflict analysis takes a systematic approach to:
 - understanding the background and history of the conflict
 - identifying all the relevant groups involved
 - understanding the perspectives of these groups and how they relate to each other
 - identifying the causes of conflict.
- In some situations it may be too contentious or sensitive to talk of conflict analysis. Using the broader term context analysis can help to overcome this challenge. However, it is important to differentiate between a context analysis that examines a broad array of social, economic, political and cultural issues and a conflict analysis that specifically seeks to understand conflict and power dynamics.

- Conflict profile**
- What is the political, economic and socio-cultural context? (Physical geography, population make-up, recent history, political and economic structure, social composition, environment).
 - What are the emergent political, economic, ecological and social issues? (Elections, reform processes, decentralisation, new infrastructure, disruption of social networks, mistrust, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), presence of armed forces, HIV/AIDS).
 - What specific conflict prone/affected areas can be situated within this context? (Areas of influence of specific actors, frontlines around the location of natural resources, important infrastructure and lines of communication, pockets of socially marginalised or excluded populations).
 - Is there a history of conflict? (Critical events, mediation efforts, external interventions).

Conflict causes

- What are structural causes of conflict? (Illegitimate government, lack of political participation, lack of equal economic and social opportunities, inequitable access to natural resources, poor governance).
- What issues can be considered as proximate causes of conflict? (Uncontrolled security sector, light weapons proliferation, human rights abuses, destabilising role of neighbouring countries).
- What triggers can contribute to the outbreak/further escalation of conflict? (Elections, arrest/assassination of key leader or political figure, military coup, rapid change in unemployment, natural disaster, increased price/scarcity of basic commodities).

Conflict actors

- Who are the main actors? (National government, armed groups, private sector, multilateral organisations, religious or political networks, civil society, political parties, neighbouring states, traditional authorities, diaspora groups, refugees/IDPs).
- What are their main interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships? (Religious values, political goals, access to economic resources).
- What institutional capacities for peace can be identified? (Civil society, traditional authorities, political institutions judiciary, regional and multilateral bodies).
- What actors can be identified as (potential) spoilers? Why? What are their incentives? (Groups benefiting from the war economy, leaders/authority figures who may feel undermined by a project).

Conflict dynamics

- What are the current conflict trends? (Escalation or de-escalation, decrease in inter-group violence).
- What are windows of opportunity? (Are there positive developments? How can they be strengthened?).
- What scenarios can be developed from the analysis of the conflict profile, causes and actors? (Best case, middle case and worst-case scenarios).

Good enough' conflict analysis

Applying conflict sensitivity to an emergency response can be challenging due to the complexity of the contexts in which emergencies occur and the speed with which organisations need to react, which leaves little opportunity or time for the use of sophisticated and in-depth analyses. The assessment phase of an emergency is a particularly challenging period where the demand to start providing lifesaving assistance is very high. As time is limited, opportunities to integrate conflict sensitivity need to be realistic, practical and easily understood.

Taking on board these simple steps may avert negative unintended consequences:

Assessment phase:

Undertake a **'good enough' conflict analysis** as part of the first-phase emergency response. This analysis should be short and easy to integrate with other aspects of a multi-sectoral emergency assessment, and clear enough to be used by people with no conflict sensitivity expertise. Try and use participatory methods with partners and affected communities as much as you can. In some cases, access may be restricted and it may not be possible for remote teams to complete the assessment.

If this is the case, an analysis can be drawn up in the short-term on the basis of the knowledge of existing staff and/or programmes operating in these regions, including from other agencies operational in these areas.

Design phase:

Use participatory conflict analysis from both the preparedness (if possible) and assessment stages to inform programme design and risk management.

Develop a **risk matrix** that considers how potential conflict flashpoints may be mitigated.

Try to deepen the conflict analysis in later stages of the emergency intervention. As the dynamics of any given situation are constantly changing, it is important to update the analysis at regular intervals. This can be achieved by cross-referencing with other groups who were not part of the original analysis. PRPs, real time evaluation meetings with communities or other groups who were not part of the original analysis. PRRPs, real time evaluation meetings or intra-agency co-ordination meetings are excellent opportunities to integrate a deeper level of analysis.

Guiding questions for ‘good enough’ rapid conflict analysis:

1. What is the history of the conflict in the area being assessed? What is it about and how long has it been going on? What has the intensity of the conflict been?
2. What groups of people are involved?
3. What kinds of things divide these groups (e.g. caste, tribe, access to resources) and what connects them (e.g. shared cultural practices, local peace initiatives, shared assets)?
4. Where are the conflict-affected areas geographically located?
5. Does conflict get worse at any particular time or period (time of day, season, during elections, during religious festivals etc)?
6. What are the best, worst and most likely scenarios for the future of the conflict in the context? What does each scenario depend on?

Integrating conflict sensitivity into an emergency response proposal check list

- ✓ Does the ‘background’ description demonstrate a sound understanding of the operational context (including a conflict analysis)?
- ✓ Have comprehensive assessments been conducted, including those involving the affected population?
- ✓ If the project is in a highly volatile context, have indicators for conflict sensitivity been included (e.g. whether target groups perceive that the intervention is contributing to conflict)?
- ✓ Are there mechanisms and resources in place for effective inclusion and communication with affected/targeted people, including the most vulnerable, throughout the project cycle, in particular during the project design phase? What about also talking with factions to make sure they understand that aid is neutral and based on humanitarian principles?
- ✓ Does the intervention offer effective feedback and complaints mechanisms available to all beneficiaries/participants and non-beneficiaries/participants in the project area?



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Conflict Sensitivity Consortium’s *How to guide to conflict sensitivity*: <http://goo.gl/1NjvDs>
HPN network paper: *Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency response*: <http://goo.gl/9BGF85>

Natural disasters, conflicts and other shocks and crises almost always have a disproportionate impact on the lives of people living in poverty, as the impact of disasters is often a reflection of the inequality that exists in a society. Direct service delivery and programmatic response are often not enough to enable these people to recover fully, which is why policy and advocacy work have an important role in emergency response and during the post-emergency recovery period. We can achieve a much greater impact through direct advocacy, campaigning and policy analysis than by doing programme work alone. Our integrated approach to policy and programming reflects and embodies the human rights-based approach.

Policy in emergencies



Policy work can help to address the structural causes of vulnerability such as poverty, discrimination and exclusion that were pre-existing in society, and are exacerbated during disasters. Policy work also aims to ensure that disaster response is just and equitable, and that change is sustainable through empowering poor and affected people and changing power relationships. Ultimately we must remember that in times of crises there is increased opportunity to challenge and change power relationships, and the opportunity for policy discourse is higher due to the greater visibility created by emergencies, as the people/situation and issues are at the centre of attention.

Note: there is a fine line between the end of emergency response and longer term resilience building and human rights work. Emergencies can present opportunities to launch advocacy initiatives or campaigns that address poverty and inequality broadly, as these factors of course make people more vulnerable to disasters.

Guidance on policy work

- policy work should be evidence based; especially from the ground level
- policy work should start on day one of an emergency, but should also be covered in preparedness plans
- policy work must have coverage (must be based on our work on the ground, not based on what we think, but what we do)
- programme work must have leverage
- analysis must be orientated to women’s rights. We are also taking sides with women who are living in poverty and exclusion, and are affected by disasters
- we will be led by the community (ask communities to develop plans which all agencies can use, also look at how communities are linking with other agencies, and allow the government to co-ordinate if they are able to).

How do we do policy and advocacy work during emergencies?

ActionAid’s programme and policy work form a continuum. In other words, our advocacy and policy activities are informed by the realities and facts gained from working with communities and partners on the ground. Doing policy work means helping to shape how things are done or how things are. A **policy** is a stance or a position on an issue, or can also be the rules and regulations that shape people’s actions and behaviours. **Advocacy** is the actual activities that we undertake to transform existing or establish new policies. In any situation, we must know:

- a) the current situation;
- b) what we want to change and;
- c) what we need to do to move from the current situation to our new, ideal scenario.

The process of developing a strategy is the **policy analysis**—when we analyse the present situation and decide what changes we want to push for. The **advocacy strategy** is the overall plan developed that, as already noted, will transform the present scenario into the scenario that we envisage, where people affected by disasters are able to claim their rights, and where governments and other power holders uphold these rights.

What is policy influencing work?

Policy influencing means deliberately influencing governments and other power holders who decide on policy and practices that have a humanitarian impact, i.e. violate or deny rights. Areas of possible influence include:

- laws and policies – relating to schemes, programmes etc.
- institutions – e.g. disaster management centre
- budget allocation
- discrimination in implementation.

Examples of what we can accomplish through policy work:

- strengthen the agencies of right holders in emergencies to ensure security, assistance and the right to participate in key decisions, among other human rights
- shape the policy discourse and raise issues to form public opinion and media attention for slow-onset disasters
- achieve a long-term reduction of poverty and reduced risk to climatic and non-climatic hazards and shocks.

Top level policy analysis will determine key issues on which to focus:

- research should examine the structural causes of vulnerability and poverty
- there can be short and medium/long-term issues
- must do risk analysis before deciding on an issue to take forward
- determine what other actors are doing on this issue
- ensure that communities are involved in the analysis and in the determination of which issues to take up.

Detailed strategy development for moving forward:

- know how much financing is available for this work
- understand how this will link to your other policy and programme work
- how many staff resources are available for this work?
- ensure that communities and partners are involved throughout the planning process so that it truly is representative of the people
- again, be sure of the risk involved in any specific policy area or advocacy issue.

Taking action

- determine the best approach to take in your advocacy
- targeted advocacy to specific individuals or groups
- coalition building
- campaigning
- local, national and/or international level activities.

Link with other like-minded actors where possible:

- ensure that advocacy work is connected to what is happening on the ground
- as always, ensure that community members/groups are involved and aware of all activities, especially women's groups
- always stay informed on other activities going on which may impact your work
- be flexible to change your activities in the face of a change in environment.

A call to action: citizens' charter based on voices of drought-affected people in Kenya: <http://goo.gl/aSTkFk>
People's report: violence against women in the post tsunami context, and

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES



1. analysis of existing policies, e.g. on violence against women, look at policies on protection of women
2. train partners, and turn policies into simple materials which communities can understand
3. enable communities to look at policies and review if they are working and what are the gaps. Also look at public commitments made by officials
4. federate community groups (to bring those issues up to national and international level) to agree messages
5. bringing messages to national level – e.g. sharing with government or UN locally (national advocacy)
6. bring messages to international level: community voices are key (international advocacy).

Steps for developing a citizens' report:

- Campaigning is different to other forms of advocacy because we aim to bring about significant political change through actively mobilising large numbers of people to make demands on the powerful.
- campaigning is one way to build large-scale grassroots support for an issue
- an effective campaign requires substantial input of financial and staff resources, including flexible funding to support longer-term campaigning work
- it is important to follow the ActionAid International protocols for launching any international report or press release for a wider international audience
- formulate advocacy and communications strategies for all campaigning work – with clear messages and alternative solutions.

Campaigning