



Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Engaging Affected People

What is accountability to affected populations (AAP)?

Accountability is one of the core values that helps WFP to provide the best possible service to the people it assists. It represents a change in mind-set from an almost exclusive focus on accountability towards donors to a recognition that WFP must also be accountable to the people that it assists and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. It is a shift towards perceiving affected people as key partners and stakeholders, not simply beneficiaries.

WFP defines AAP as an active commitment to give account to, take account of, and be held to account by the people it assists.

WFP's commitment to AAP is founded on two main principles:

- **Affected people have a right to be actively involved in the decisions that affect their lives.** Ensuring that programmes are accountable to affected people is therefore a key aspect of rights-based programming.
- **Engaging affected people in programme decisions makes food assistance more effective.** Basing programmes on the views of affected people helps ensure that needs are correctly identified and understood and that programmes are designed in a manner appropriate to the context. Engagement with affected people can also help flag problems in programme implementation allowing for adjustments to take place.

Key components of AAP

To operationalise its commitments to AAP, WFP focuses on three key components: information provision, consultations, and complaints and feedback mechanisms.

- **Information provision**
Give account to – providing information to affected people regarding programmes
- **Consultation**
Take account of – consulting affected people on programme design and implementation
- **Complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs)**
Be held to account – providing platforms to receive complaints and feedback

Integrating AAP in WFP's operations

In WFP, accountability to affected populations is considered a cross-cutting issue. This means that WFP sees AAP as an issue informing all aspects of its response. Examples of AAP initiatives are found in all types of programmes and contexts, from emergency operations to country programmes, and both formal and informal avenues for engaging affected communities are utilised.

WFP is accountable not only for achieving results, but also for the manner in which programmes are implemented. Issues related to staff conduct, prevention of fraud and sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as humanitarian protection and gender are all a part of AAP.

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Information provision

Providing information to affected people is critical to enable them to participate in and fully benefit from WFP's programmes. Communities and people who are well informed about WFP's programmes are better equipped to contribute to decision-making, raise concerns, flag problems, make suggestions for improvements to programmes, and plan for the future.

Clear and timely information can also strengthen WFP's credibility and cooperation with communities and improve programme outcomes.

Lao People's Democratic Republic: Overcoming Information Provision Challenges

In Lao PDR, WFP staff conducted a survey among the population in 35 districts. The survey found that in 32 of the 35 districts, women do not speak or read Lao but rather a multitude of indigenous and minority languages. To address this challenge, WFP employed a variety of communication channels and complemented them with pictures and captions in both Lao and other local languages. Further consultations were conducted with community leaders to share information verbally through multilingual monitors and interpreters.

Consultation

Consultations are an important aspect of ensuring that affected people have influence over and participate in programme design and implementation. They are a means to enhance the appropriateness and effectiveness of programmes by ensuring that needs are correctly identified and that programmes support people's own strategies and capacities.

Consultations are also an end in themselves in that they help reinforce people's dignity by engaging them in the decisions that affect their lives. They are therefore a key aspect of ensuring accountability.

Complaints and feedback mechanisms

A complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) is a formal mechanism for receiving information from people in communities where WFP operates. The main objectives are to increase the influence of affected communities over programmes and enhance programme quality. A CFM can take a number of different forms including telephone hotlines, complaints and feedback desks or boxes, and social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter.

An effective CFM must include established procedures for recording complaints, investigating, taking action and providing feedback to the complainant in a safe, dignified and timely manner.

Other terminology

Organisations and interagency initiatives use a variety of terms to refer to AAP or a specific aspect thereof. These include:

- Communication with Communities (CwC)
- Communications with Affected People (CAP)
- Community Engagement (CE)
- Community Engagement and Social Mobilisation (CCES)

Within WFP, all of the above are considered to be part, or a subset of, AAP.

Learn more

For WFP Staff, visit the accountability to affected populations topic page on WFPGo.

For partners and others interested in learning more, visit wfp.org/emergency-programming