



An examination of AAP practices in Rakhine and Kachin States by UNICEF and implementing partners- identifying gaps and areas for improvement

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ı.	INTRODUCTION	3
H.	OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH	3
III.	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS WORKSHOPS	3
	a. Current approaches: what indicators are we collecting?	4
	b. Current approaches: who are we collecting information from?	
	c. Challenges & gaps	3
	d. Ideas generation	6
	i. Ideas to improve coordinated information sharing	6
	ii. Ideas to build capacity in partners & the community	6
	iii. Ideas on feedback mechanisms & tools for AAP	. 7
IV.	DISCUSSIONS WITH AFFECTED COMMUNITIES	
	a. Rakhine state	7
	b. Kachin state	
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS	9
	a. Short-term	9
	b. Medium-term1	
ΔΡΡΕΝΙ	DIX A: WORKSHOP AGENDA	12

I. Introduction

Since the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, humanitarian actors have increasingly committed to accountability to affected populations (AAP), acknowledging that people are the central agents of their own lives, and the first and last responders to crisis. The launch of the Grand Bargain called for a participation revolution, to ensure that humanitarian response is relevant and timely, and, importantly, that affected communities are provided with accessible information and with opportunities to participate, influence decisions that concern them, and give feedback.

II. Objectives and approach

In an effort to support AAP and ensure that communities and people are at the center of humanitarian action in Myanmar, UNICEF Myanmar engaged with its implementing partners and internally displaced populations to understand how to operationalize AAP effectively and support a coordinated, intersectoral mechanism to reach and engage with beneficiaries. To achieve this, UNICEF engaged in two process:

- (1) Three workshops were hosted by UNICEF in Yangon, Rakhine, and Kachin with UNICEF implementing partners working in the conflict affected areas of Kachin, Shan and Rakhine; and
- (2) Focus group discussions and interviews were held with affected communities in internally displaced people's (IDP) camps in Central Rakhine and Kachin.

The objectives of these two complementary processes were to:

- Gain insights into what UNICEF implementing partners are currently doing in AAP
- Share good practices and any innovative approaches to AAP that can be replicated
- Identify challenges to and gaps in current approaches to AAP
- Gain insights into what affected communities in Kachin and Rakhine know about AAP mechanisms
 available to them, the barriers they experience in accessing them, and their preferences on how
 to be engaged with.

This report summarizes the findings from the two process and concludes with key recommendations on how to strengthen AAP both within UNICEF and among its implementing partners.

III. Implementing partners workshops

National level implementing partners were invited to a workshop in Yangon where participatory approaches were used to understand baseline knowledge of AAP, what AAP related information is being collected across the program cycle, who it is being collected from, and challenges that partners face in implementing a strong AAP mechanism. This information was then validated and further unpacked with state-level implementing partners through two workshops, one in Kachin and one in Central Rakhine. A third workshop was planned in Lashio but did not take place due to insecurity.

All three workshops also used activities to generate ideas on how to strengthen coordinated AAP in the Myanmar context. Workshop objectives and a detailed agenda can be found in Appendix A.

Yangon: July 8, 2019	Rakhine: August 9, 2019	Kachin: August 21, 2019
11 participants	13 participants	12 participants

a. Current approaches: What indicators are we collecting?

Most partners are collecting some AAP related indicators. However, the responses from all three workshops indicated a diversity of indicators collected by different organizations. Indicators covered quality of services, sufficiency of services, satisfaction with services, numbers of complaints, numbers reached by services, timeliness, community acceptability, PSEA.

While these indicators are being collected from various organizations, there are no common guidelines as to the type of AAP indicators that should be collected systematically. Further, there is no formal mechanism for reviewing or sharing the collected information in either Rakhine or Kachin other than through informal conversations via cluster meetings or ad-hoc phone calls.

Only Oxfam and DRC report having a formal feedback loop to respond to complaints. Oxfam collects information regarding services via tablets equipped with Kobo Toolbox by going door to door or wearing a shirt that indicates the person is available for complaints and feedback. Upon reporting a complaint, contact and demographic information is collected from the beneficiary, the complaint or feedback is recorded and directed through the system and for review. Once a complaint has been closed, an Oxfam staff member returns to the person who complained, informing them of the outcome. This same approach, using Kobo, is also applied by DRC.

b. Current approaches: Who are we collecting information from?

In all three workshops, it was clear that information is largely being collected from pre-formed groups such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), parents at school, village leaders, Camp Management Committee (CMC) and camp volunteers. This information is generally collected during spot-monitoring visits or through suggestion boxes placed in camps.

c. Challenges & Gaps: Top Barriers to Effective AAP Reported by Implementing Partners

During the workshops, participants were given the opportunity to share and discuss they top challenges preventing them to implementing effective AAP. These, together with a description of each, are summarized in the table below.

Yangon					
Weak coordination	Refers to the lack of an organized system for approaching AAP between agencies.				
Lack of confidence/trust by community members	Refers to lack of confidence on the part of community members that anything will be done with complaints or feedback, meaning they tend not to engage in the first place.				
Limited staff capacity	Limited understanding of AAP among implementing partners and UNICEF staff members, affecting the quality of AAP activities.				

Rakhine

Low literacy

Despite varied literacy levels in Rohingya communities in central Rakhine, overall literacy levels are low. This makes verbal communication essential, however IPs perceive verbal communication as more time and cost- intensive.

Language barriers

While the ability to translate from Rakhine or Rohingya to Myanmar language is not entirely lacking, interpretation often needs to go through a minimum of three language (Rohingya, Rakhine and Myanmar). This makes the translation process complex and increases the chances is mis-communication. Further, the power differential between a monolingual speaker and a multilingual speaker leads to decreased agency for the monolingual speaker. Additionally, Rohingya is not a standardized language, making it difficult for certain terms to be translated correctly.

Lack of interest of communities

Refers to a lack of interest on the part of affected communities in participating in the program cycle or complaining about services.

Kachin

Difficult access to certain community members

Partners in Kachin State explained that access is one of their hardest barriers, especially because this does not allow them to confirm the limited information they receive from non-government controlled (NGC) areas.

Limited understanding from the community of the complaint mechanisms available to them

Partners noted how many community members do not understand how to make a complaint, are unaware of their rights to complain, and are fearful of potential consequences of complaining (e.g. fear of losing aid, or facing stigma for being ungrateful).²

Weak coordination

Although referrals between agencies are not seen as problematic, partners confirmed that there are no systems in place to share information between agencies, nor to feedback to communities.

¹ Recent evidence in Rakhine State documents the effect of this power differential. *Translators Without Borders. Misunderstanding + misinformation = mistrust: How language barriers reduce access to humanitarian services, reduce the quality of those services and aggravate social exclusion for Rohingya communities.* September 2019. https://translatorswithoutborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ENG-Myanmar-Report online FINAL.pdf

² This information was further confirmed by focus group discussions in Kachin, where IDPs indicated their unease with regards to complaining for fear for loosing benefits or being perceived as ungrateful.

d. Ideas Generation:

A mapping exercise was used to generate discussion around ideas for addressing challenges and strengthening AAP in Myanmar. Three areas were proposed to guide this discussion: (1) coordinated information sharing, (2) capacity, and (3) tools and feedback mechanism.

Ideas to Improve Coordinated Information Sharing

1. Develop an inter-agency/joint AAP framework including:

- Guidelines/standard operating procedures for AAP informed by Grand Bargain Indicators
- Crowdsourced information by geography using a common digital software platform to collect, display and share information (i.e. Kobo)
- Formal inter-agency referral pathways to share and monitor data and feedback with other relevant organizations (to be defined in the proposed standard operating procedures)

2. Collective reflections and data on modality most used/preferred for feedback and information provision by the community

 Data that agencies collect relating to community preferences, and generic AAP data should be shared with all agencies working with the same community. This will ensure that preferences are being respected, while avoiding community fatigue due to multiple partners asking the same questions.

3. Information sharing for geographic/camp-specific data coordinated by the camp management agency (CMA)

• To complement data sharing through a digital platform as suggested in point 1, the CMA for each camp could play a central role referring complaints and feedback to relevant agencies.

4. Establish AAP working group as a sub-group of the ICCG

• This subgroup would meet regularly to review and track AAP related information and oversee the successful implementation of the aforementioned inter-agency AAP framework (point 1).

Ideas to Build Capacity among UNICEF Staff, Partners & Community

1. Conduct a practical, action-oriented training for UNICEF staff and implementing partners

- Conduct a training for UNICEF staff and implementing partners to ensure a common understanding of AAP
- The training should focus on agreeing on key actionable steps that UNICEF and partners can commit to in the short, medium and long term to ensure a coordinated, monitored and effective approach to AAP.

2. Develop an open-source AAP learning platform

- Building on point 1, which provides one-time, targeted capacity building effort, suggestions
 were made to develop a context-specific open source platform which takes into consideration
 Myanmar's complex nature.
- The AAP learning platform can be developed for use by anyone working in the humanitarian context in Myanmar to improve understanding of AAP.

Ideas on Feedback Mechanisms & Tools for AAP

1. Increase opportunities for face to face conversations when discussing topics relating to AAP

- Set up feedback corners by project staff at village level
- Prioritize on door to door visits (especially to obtain sensitive information)
- Assign feedback focal points (especially for vulnerable and illiterate populations)

2. Create a hotline to collect feedback from the community

 Set up a hotline for affected communities to raise complaints and provide feedback. This can help particularly where face-to-face conversation is challenging, but is also a way of diversifying available communication mechanisms and increasing opportunities for affected people to provide feedback.³

3. Use of applications such as Facebook, WeChat, Viber, or WhatsApp to communicate with affected populations

• This was suggested primarily in Kachin to allow for communication with those in non-government-controlled areas.

4. Increase the number of youth facilitators

- This suggestion refers to involving youth facilitators in AAP related activities as it was noted that youth facilitators are successful in working with agencies on their programs thanks to their enthusiasm and commitment.
- Youth facilitators are well-respected, and partners felt they are a valuable resource to obtain insights from communities.

IV. Discussions with affected communities

To complement the findings from the workshops with partners, focus group discussions (FGD) and interviews were held with IDPs in three camps in Rakhine and Kachin. The objective was to gain insights into how communities understood and engaged with AAP mechanism. A brief summary of the findings is provided below.

Central State TKP Camp (Sittwe Township): 8th August 2019

- Focus group discussion with PTA members (3 women, 7 men)
- Interview one camp leader (1 man)

The PTA said they tend to receive information about services and any specific issue from a network of designated 10-household leaders, who in turn receive information from the CMC (composed of 15 members). The CMC is the point of contaact for the CMA, who informs them regularly of services or any

³ Save the children is working of developing a hotline in Rakhine and can provide an entry point for this type of complaints and feedback approach.

messages that need to be relayed to the community. The CMC will then meet with the designated 10-household leaders who will in turn disseminate the information to the households under their catchment area.

The CMC and the household leaders prefer to use phone calls and SMS messaging, but will go directly to those households that do not have access to a phone. They also use a megaphone for messages that need to reach the entire camp. The camp leader interviewed noted that the 10-household leaders are frequently not motivated to spread information effectively to households. Despite this barrier, the focus group discussion members confirmed that they support the use of community members to spread information and that the CMC is a trusted entity within the camp.

The 10-household leaders are also available to receive complaints from community members and relay them back to the CMC, who in turn shares them with the CMA if required. Additionally, some community members go directly to any agency they see working in the camp. FGD participants suggested that the 10-household leaders could be more proactive and seek feedback from camp residents, in particular from vulnerable community members that may be excluded from the process.

FGD participants said that the CMA responds to their feedback, however, when feedback is provided directly to agencies visiting the camps, receiving a response is not consistent. Nevertheless, all participants affirmed that they have a trusted and strong relationship with organizations working in the camp.

When asked about needs and gaps for their families, respondents described four priority areas: (1) freedom of movement, (2) citizenship, (3) return to their original homes, and (4) access to work, education, and healthcare. Respondents know that these issues are tied to government and not within the control of individual agencies, however they expressed being poorly informed of any developments in these areas. The camp leader explained that they know their camp is on the closure list, however they feel that the concerns that camp leaders raise about this move are not listened to or taken into account.

Kachin StateMaina AG & Le Kone Ziun Baptist Camps (Waingmaw and Myitkyina Townships) 22nd August 2019

- 1 focus group discussions with CMC in Maina AG Camp (7 women, 2 men and 1 female camp leader)
- 1 focus group discussion with women (4 women)
- 1 focus group discussion with men (5 men, including one with disabilities)
- 1 focus group discussion with CMC in Le Kone Ziun Baptist Camp (3 women, 1 man and 1 male camp leader)
- 3 household interviews with women, 1 being a women-headed household

In all conversations, the community reported that the CMC is their main source of information about services and issues concerning families in the camps. The CMC uses different approaches to communicate with communities, including holding meetings to disseminate specific information, relaying information at weekly religious gatherings, and using a loudspeaker for camp-wide messaging. The female camp leader also reported using WeChat with community members who have mobile phones to share information with family and friends in non-government controlled (NGC) areas, however, few families have access to mobile phones.

The community expressed satisfaction with the CMC's ability to share information and act on complaints received. There is a trust between community members and CMC, with the CMC makes a recognized effort to reach the majority of community members with AAP related and sector specific information. Community members indicated that communication with communities can be improved by diversifying the communication tools to include audio visuals, such as leaflets, videos, storytelling, demonstrations and role-playing.

If people have a complaint, they raise it with the CMC or a camp leader, who will then subsequently refer the complaint to the CMA if necessary. Community members are satisfied with this approach despite disclosing some barriers that prevent them from raising complaints effectively. These include fear of burdening the CMC who is already very busy, past experience of complaints not having been acted upon, fear of gossip and of being perceived as ungrateful for complaining. Language is also considered a barrier, particularly for those who only speak Kachin, such as the elderly, as service providers tend to only speak Myanmar.

Some FGD participants said they had been asked about their needs and gaps in services, but no one said they had seen a program responding to this, especially for complaints relating to food security. Others claimed that they had not been asked about their needs, thinking that organizations leave the responsibility of seeking feedback from communities to the CMC. The CMC said they are interviewed by the CMA 2-3 times a year on camp needs.

The person with disabilities participating in the FGD expressed feeling included in feedback mechanisms and services. Overall, community members indicated that all camp residents look out for each other and that the CMC has organized a network of individuals specifically to help people with disabilities access services and ensure that they receive information being disseminated across the camp.

V. Recommendations

The recommendations below are the results of the partner workshops, discussions with affected communities and with UNICEF staff. They are categorized in recommendations that can be implemented in the short-term and those that require medium-term implementation.

Short-Term Recommendations

1. Essential Common Indicators & Common Data Collection Tool

- It is recommended that all UNICEF implementing partners report on a set of agreed essential indicators relating to AAP. A clear set of indicators will provide a picture of the state of accountability in the humanitarian response and allow for tracking of collective progress in a coordinated and accountable manner.
- A standard data collection form can be developed for all sectors, for consistency, comparisons and data sharing.
- Nearly all partners in Kachin, and many in Rakhine, reported using Kobo toolbox for data collection. It is recommended that partners crowdsource information on complaints and feedback through Kobo and monitor the essential indicators by geography. Additionally, within Kobo, formal inter-agency referral pathways to share monitoring data and feedback with other relevant organizations can be developed.

2. Conduct an action-focused training for relevant UNICEF staff and implementing partners

- The workshops and discussions with partners and UNICEF staff indicated limited and diverse understandings of AAP, with partners implementing AAP to differing extents. While most partners are actively collecting information from the communities they serve, there is little understanding of the type of information that should be collected and how.
- Capacity for coordination and implementation of AAP needs to strengthened as currently there is no system in place for organizations to systematically track or share the data they collect, and in very few cases, do partners close the feedback loop reporting back to communities.
- A training with UNICEF staff and implementing partners is recommended to ensure a common
 of understanding of AAP and identify practical actions that can be agreed upon by partners to
 strengthen all aspects of AAP: needs assessments, accessibility and inclusion, communication
 tools and two-way communication processes, tracking, coordination and sharing of data, and
 complaints and feedback mechanisms, including closing the feedback loop.

3. Establish AAP working group as a sub-group of the ICCG

• To bolster a coordinated, systematic, interagency approach to AAP, an AAP sub-group of the ICCG is recommended. This group would meet regularly at national and at subnational level to review AAP related data and feedback mechanisms, identify gaps and needs, promote referrals and strengthen the overall AAP agenda across agencies.

4. AAP agenda item at cluster meetings

 We recommend that cluster coordinators commit to adding a regular AAP agenda item to each of their meetings where AAP specific information is shared, reviewed and discussed.

Rakhine Specific Recommendations

Strengthen information provision on advocacy efforts

- The FGD in Rakhine expressed frustration that the issues of most concern to them, namely camp closure and freedom of movement, are not addressed by service providers. This indicates a disconnect between what organizations are doing and how this is perceived by affected populations, highlighting the need to improve two-way communication.
- In the short term, we recommend that all actors entering camps are prepared to provide information in participatory, two-way manner, on the state of freedom of movement, citizenship, camp closure, and access to education, livelihoods, and healthcare.

Kachin Specific Recommendations

Clear, accessible messaging about AAP mechanisms

- Both partners and communities in Kachin indicated that providing feedback or complaints is associated with stigma, gossip, and fear of being perceived as ungrateful.
- We recommend a campaign that disseminates accessible information about available complaints and feedback mechanisms. providing clear instructions on how to access those mechanisms, building trust confidence that no entitlements will be lost as a result of complaining. It is expected that this will increase knowledge, skills and confidence to raise complaints.

Medium-Term Recommendations

1. AAP open-source learning platform

- Training aimed and UNICEF staff and implementing partners is proposed above as a short-term, one-time and targeted recommendation to initiate the AAP strengthening process. To promote sustainability in developing the capacity of UNICEF partners and other services providers, the development of a culturally competent, context-specific AAP learning platform is suggested.
- The learning platform would focus on providing a common understanding of AAP and contextspecific recommendations on how to implement it, including the use case studies and examples. It is expected for the platform to also include practical tools that learners can access to help them conduct effective AAP.

2. AAP Hotline

- To help overcome the barrier of low literacy and power differentials affecting people's ability to complain, a hotline for collecting feedback and complaints is recommended for both Rakhine and Kachin.
- Save the Children indicated they are working on a hotline in Rakhine for feedback. Further
 exploring how it operates and its potential for bolstering AAP in Rakhine and beyond is
 recommended.
- In Kachin if was suggested that such a hotline could be implemented with sharing roving responsibility among partners.
- Despite recognizing that access to phones is limited among affected populations, the AAP
 hotline and other applications such as WeChat and Facebook, are recommended as an
 additional tool to diversify the available communication channels and increase options and
 likelihood for people to complain and provide feedback.
- The use of applications and mobile technologies is particularly recommended for inaccessible and NGC areas.

3. Suggestion box coordination

- It is recommended that suggestion boxes in each camp be limited to one single, accessible box managed by a neutral person/organization.
- Complaints/suggestions in the boxes would be recorded via Kobo and reported to the relevant sectors. Generic AAP related data would be shared at AAP and cluster meetings.

Rakhine-specific

Strengthen information provision on advocacy efforts

To complement short-term the recommendation of keeping affected communities informed of progress on issues that concern them (freedom of movement, camp closure), it is recommended that the APC team, work with the C4D specialist and implementing partners to develop messaging that can be disseminated regularly to Rohingya communities on advocacy efforts and the state of their rights.

Kachin-specific

Food distribution awareness raising

 Across the board, in all conversations in Kachin, the criteria for food distribution per family was raised as a concern. Families do not understand the distribution criteria and feel short-changed. Despite having raised the issue multiple times, their questions remain unanswered. It is recommended that this dissatisfaction be relayed to WFP, the agency responsible for food distribution, so that they can ensure clearer communication with the populations they serve.

APPENDIX A: AAP Workshops with UNICEF Implementing Partners

How Can We Improve Accountability To Affected Populations? Workshop with UNICEF Implementing Partners

Concept and Suggested Agenda

Background

Since the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, humanitarian actors have increasingly committed to accountability to affected populations (AAP), acknowledging that people are the central agents of their own lives, and the first and last responders to crisis. The launch of the Grand Bargain called for a participation revolution, to ensure that humanitarian response is relevant and timely, and, importantly, that affected communities are provided with accessible information and with opportunities to participate, influence decisions that concern them, and give feedback.

To support AAP and ensure that communities and people are at the centre of humanitarian action in Myanmar, UNICEF proposes to bring together its implementing partners and other key actors in a participatory, action-focused workshop.

Purpose of the workshop

The overall purpose of the workshop is to establish a coordinated, multi-sectoral, collective and systematic approach to AAP among UNICEF implementing partners.

Specific objectives for the workshop include:

- Share good practices and innovative approaches to AAP that partners are currently using and that can be replicated
- Identify challenges to and gaps in current approaches to AAP
- Agree on key steps in the short and medium term that partners can commit to address identified challenges and strengthen coordinated AAP

Expected Outputs

At the end of the four workshops, the following outputs are expected:

- A brief on current practices in AAP in Myanmar, their strengths and areas for improvement.
- An agreed mechanism for collating, analyzing, utilizing and responding to the data currently collected by implementing partners in ways that it can benefit all sectors.
- Agreed plans of actions from implementing partners and concrete steps that can be implementing
 in the short and medium term, towards strengthening a collective approach to existing AAP
 activities.

Suggested Date and Time

The workshop will take place on Friday 9th August from 9.00am to 1.00pm in Rakhine.

Participants

Approximately 16 of UNICEF's humanitarian implementing partners and key relevant actors (such as UNOCHA).

Suggested Agenda

Time	Topic	Objectives	Methodology
9.00 -	Welcome and introduction		Work in pairs or game
9.20			
9.20 – 10.00	 What is AAP? What does AAP mean to you? Definition and purpose of AAP Key components of AAP 	To create a common understanding of AAP and what is required to implement it	Exercise using VIPP cardsShort video explaining AAPPresentation
10.00 – 10.50	What are we currently doing in AAP • Partners activities and approaches to AAP	 To understand what different partners are doing in AAP To review how key elements of AAP (complaints mechanisms, feedback loops etc) are addressed by partners 	- Group work (divided geographically) to identify what partners do for AAP along the programme cycle and to respect key AAP elements
10.50 – 11.20	 Coordination, referral and feedback What indicators are being monitored? How is information utilized? What mechanisms are in place for a coordinated, intersectoral AAP approach? 	 To identify strengths and areas for improvement of current coordinating mechanisms To identify key indicators for improved inter-agency utilization of data 	
11.20 – 11.30	• Good practice examples of AAP	 To increase understanding of how quality AAP can be implemented 	- Presentation summarizing case studies
11.30 – 12.30	Challenges and potential solutions for implementing effective AAP • How can UNICEF support/be a leader to strengthen this across sectors • Coordinated system	 To map the main challenges that partners experience to implementing effective AAP To identify short and medium-term actions to improve AAP across sectors 	- Mapping exercise
12.30 – 13.00	Next steps and closure	To agree on key next steps, including follow- up workshops in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan	