

ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW

Myanmar, June 2015



OCHA

United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The following report is a snapshot of the community perspective in ten IDP camps of how accountable the humanitarian response is. 30 focus group discussions in Rakhine and Kachin states, with over 300 IDPs, expressed common concerns:

- Fears that aid was reducing and/or going to stop.
- The disconnect between organizations and the general IDP population; organizations rely on the established committees, sub-committees and networks of camp-based staff and volunteers.
- The most commonly articulated unmet need was livelihoods and income generation.
- The lack of information about organizations, but an even greater emphasis was placed on the need for the practical information about service delivery e.g. distribution dates.
- The lack of feedback from agencies to complaints or feedback from the community.

Generally the focus groups in Kachin were more positive than in Rakhine, possibly reflecting the role local NGOs play in the response. With a similar language, culture, and sometimes religious denomination, community engagement is easier and helps in delivering accountability.

Whilst there are a multitude of differences between the contexts, which limits the value of direct comparison, there are several common recommendations for both contexts. These include:

All organizations should:

- increase efforts to engage with IDPs who are not part of the camp committees, sub-committees or are volunteers.
- prioritize efforts to provide timely feedback community complaints.
- review their participation practices to ensure that marginalized groups within the general IDP population have an opportunities to meaningfully participate.

Camp management agencies should:

- use focus groups as part of the complaint response mechanism.
- develop a short communications plan for every managed camp, which includes reaching vulnerable groups, to enable effective and efficient community engagement.

AAP REVIEW KACHIN

RATIONALE

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Myanmar commits all humanitarian organizations to being more accountable. This study voices the community's perspective on how accountable we currently are, with the aim to help humanitarian organizations better deliver on the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations¹ (CAAP).

METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through focus group discussions with Camp Management Committees, women and men. Efforts were made to ensure that the women's and men's groups were comprised of IDPs that did not have roles as volunteers² or camp-based staff for agencies. The content of the focus groups was derived from a methodology developed by OCHA and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership³. This report focuses on the feedback from the groups of men and women.

SCOPE

This study targeted five camps in Government Controlled Areas of Kachin State⁴ to provide a snapshot of the accountability landscape. The dynamics of the camps and their individual nature mean a truly representative sample is almost impossible to accurately achieve. However, the issues raised are likely reflected in other managed camps in Kachin State.

CAMP DYNAMICS

Each camp has its own dynamics and social structures. Some camps are home to multiple ethnicities but for the large part ethnicity is relatively homogenous. Typically the camps are in the ground of a religious building, usually a church of which the camp community is members are of the same denomination. Churches have played a key role in Kachin society for generations, providing spiritual as well as practical support for the communities. Management of these camps is handled by local NGOs that

have been working in the areas for many years. Sometimes these organizations have been working in the community for a long period of time and have built trust and a good relationship. A common language and culture enable easier engagement and foster a more open relationship, which in turn helps with being more accountable.

Heads of household often will try to find jobs to provide extra support for their families. Both men and women take jobs as migrant laborers to provide for their families. Camps that are nearer towns can have more opportunities, sometimes allowing the breadwinner to return to the camp at night. However, rural camps have less opportunities and this can mean going further to look for work and being away for extended periods of time.

The feeling that support is reducing, as local organization advocate, is one that is echoed in the communities. They express fear that aid is running out. Some organizations have been trying to explain why there is less money, but this is not necessarily easily understood. Rumours and misinformation spread quickly through the communities. The top priority for everyone is the peace process and when they can return home. In particular they want to know what support they will get when they go home. The concern being that once people go home they will not get support. There was concern expressed about that lack of equity in distributions between camps and even between vulnerable groups in the same camp.

1. <http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-people>

2. This term also covers "incentivized worker" and other terms for community members informally employed by the agency

3. <http://hapinternational.org/pool/files/Methodology%20-%20Participative%20evaluation%20of%20AAP.pdf>

4. Maw Hpaung Lhavo Baptist Church, Hkat Cho, Shing Jai, Nawng Hee village and Nan Kway St John Catholic Church

FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

Q.1 Do humanitarian agencies respond to the most urgent needs in your community?

- The men were far less able to articulate which agencies worked in their community, this is due to many of the men usually working outside of the camps.
- In three of the camps there was concern expressed for rumours about aid reducing or being stopped completely.
- Generally people felt their most urgent needs were being met by the humanitarian organization. However, all groups expressed needs for:
 - Money for extra food to supplement the food rations “curry money”, which in some camps had been distributed but had no stopped
 - Cash assistance for education – for paying for extra tuition (room hire and teacher hire), school fess or supplies
 - Cash assistance to start livelihoods

Q.2 How do you judge the ability of the humanitarian agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in your community?

- No groups could identify the different people in their community who had extra needs without prompting. However, once prompted groups were able to articulate different needs, particularly for children and the older people.
- Women were the most critical about the provision of support to vulnerable groups and give the fact that they have more knowledge of the situation in the camps than men, in particular about which agencies provide what support; therefore this response could be seen as more accurate.
- There was a lack of consistency between camps but also within the camps. For example, some camps had some support targeting female-headed households, others had no special support.
- Of the vulnerable groups, pregnant women in all camps received some assistance before birth, either in the form of cash assistance and sometimes baby supplies.

Q.3 How do you judge the quality of the relationship with organizations that work in your community?

- Generally communities have a good relationship with humanitarian agencies in the majority of the camps. This could be due to the fact that often the camps are in church compounds and some of the camp management agencies are from the same denomination, which helps with the quality of the relationship. It is also helps that local NGOs have often worked in the community for years, establishing networks and building trust.
- However, groups did identify several ways to improve the relationship:
 - Direct communications with the IDPs, not just through the CMC
 - Warm and friendly staff
 - Patient and respectful staff that are willing to explain things several times. Some of the community do not have high levels of education and things need to be explained many times
 - Detailed explanations of who visitors are, what they are doing, in advance of visits
 - Delivering on promises made to the communities
 - Speaking the local language/dialect

Q.4 What levels of information have you received about the humanitarian agencies and their activities in your community?

- Generally men got the least information because they are often away at work. However, they were confident in the information sharing that was happening with other members of the community, most notably with the women.
- Common challenges in information and understanding were around:
 - Selection criteria
 - Why all camps did not get the same assistance
 - The different roles and mandates of organizations, their background etc.
 - Need accurate information about distributions. In particular, exactly which day it will arrive - in some cases where adults are away at work, children are the ones who have to collect the food ration. If it is delayed they miss more school waiting for the distribution.
- Everyone wants information on the peace process, when they can return home (not relocation sites but to their places of origin), what support will they receive, and what support will they continue to get in the camps (i.e. is it running out)?

Q.5 What degree of participation have you experienced with humanitarian programmes in your community?

- Men are the weakest in terms of participation because they are away at work usually.
- However, generally there was a limited meaningful participation (i.e. being involved in decision making about programmes and resource allocation) beyond volunteering etc. However, there was not a huge demand for more participation; the benefits of increased participation were not expressed.
- In the one remote rural camp visited there was concern raised that educated people have more chance to participate. Typically this would be those who had come from more urban backgrounds, whilst the rural communities typically have less access to education.
- Groups expressed that generally people were informed, and sometimes consulted, about programmes. However, there was no involvement in design or monitoring expressed.

Q.6 How do you raise problems with organization working in your community?

- Culturally there is not a culture to complain, partly because they do not want to appear ungrateful. Generally feedback is in the form of thank you letters and suggestions not complaints.
- Three ways were identified by the majority of groups:
 - Direct to agency staff when they visit the camp
 - Through the CMC, who then submit feedback either in person or on the phone
 - Via letters to suggestion box, which is opened by CMA staff (less popular choice)
- Usually there is a response. If the local NGO is the service provider the feedback can be given immediately. However, sometimes the feedback goes to other organizations and there is sometimes never an answer. There was neither a way to provide feedback about the Camp Management Committee, nor was there the suggestion from the community that this was a need.

KACHIN - RECOMMENDATIONS

IASC CAAP	RECOMMENDATION
Leadership / Governance	<p>Clusters and sectors should positively reinforce good practice and document lessons learned around AAP in Kachin State.</p> <p>All agencies should commit to providing timely responses to community feedback (even if it is not a positive answer, to at least explain why not).</p>
Transparency	<p>Each camp should have a short communications plan for reaching different vulnerable groups in the camp, both as tool for camp management and for implementing agencies.</p> <p>The information boards provided should be more effectively used as one element in the communications plan. The use should be discussed with the community about what goes on there and who updates it, how often etc.</p> <p>Outreach to camp-based communities should factor in the 'migrant worker dynamic' – making sure that information is also shared at times when more of the community is present – evening or weekends, before or after church services etc.</p> <p>Outreach and community engagement should happen in the local language of the different ethnic groups. Where there is not staff capacity within an organization, focal points should be identified within the camps and provided training to be able them to act as interpreters.</p>
Feedback and Complaints	<p>All organization staff working in, or visiting the camps (including volunteers, incentivized workers and camp-based staff) should know what to do if they receive feedback. There should be a simple system to record this feedback, effectively communicate and respond within a set period of time.</p> <p>There should be regular focus groups with IDPs (not directly involved with humanitarian agencies) as part of the complaint response mechanism.</p>
Participation	<p>Organizations working in the camps should review their participation practices to ensure that the general IDP population has opportunities to participate; this will require community mobilization and capacity building to enable meaningful participation.</p>
Design, Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Organizations working in the camps should find additional ways to include the general IDP population in discussions about design of programmes.</p> <p>Organizations working in the camps should consider using community-based monitoring systems.</p>

AAP REVIEW RAKHINE

RATIONALE

The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for Myanmar commits all humanitarian organizations to being more accountable to the communities they serve. This study voices the community's perspective on meeting that commitment, with the aim to help humanitarian organizations better deliver on the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations¹ (CAAP).

METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through three focus group discussions in each camp with Camp Management Committees, women and men. Efforts were made to ensure that the women's and men's groups were comprised of IDPs that did not have roles as volunteers² or camp-based staff for organizations. The content of the focus groups was derived from a methodology developed by OCHA and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership³. This report focuses on the feedback from the groups of men and women.

SCOPE

The study targeted five camps in rural Sittwe⁴ to provide a snapshot of the accountability landscape. The dynamics of the camps and the individual nature of each camp suggest a representative sample is difficult to accurately achieve. However, the issues raised in the selected camps are very likely reflective of the situation in other managed camps in Rakhine State.

CAMP DYNAMICS

Each camp has its own dynamics and different social structures. One common division mentioned was between educated and less educated people. The educated people, typically from an urban background, were able to get work with humanitarian organizations as camp-based staff or volunteers. Less educated people, typically from rural backgrounds, could only find work as casual or day labourers. The availability of casual or day labourer work is greatest during construction projects within the camps. However, most of the large scale construction work has finished, so the access to these kinds of jobs has reduced greatly. There is a sense of competition and jealousy over the jobs that exist.

The Government-appointed Camp Management Committees are tasked with being the primary interlocutors between the humanitarian agencies and the communities and this puts them in a position of power. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the role is not functioning effectively; messages and information do not get shared as intended with either the community or the organizations.

1. <http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-people>

2 This term also covers "incentivized worker" and other terms for community members informally employed by the agency

3 <http://hapinternational.org/pool/files/Methodology%20-%20Participative%20evaluation%20of%20AAP.pdf>

4 Baw Du Pha 2, Khaung Doke Khar (1), Sat Roe Kya 1, Thet Kae Pyin , Ohn Taw Gyi (South)

FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

Q.1 Do humanitarian agencies respond to the most urgent needs in your community?

- Generally, people felt that the response was meeting the basic needs but it was lacking in quantity. A common concern was that assistance was reducing, compared to support at the start of the crisis.
- The priority unmet needs identified across groups were:
 1. jobs/livelihoods for both men and women;
 2. health services including improvement in the quality of services and the emergency referral system;
 3. food, either people were not on the list, for example new arrivals in the camp and newborn babies, or not enough rations; and
 4. shelter repair.
- The groups of women also raised needs relating to non-food items, hygiene kit distributions, school supplies and individual bathing spaces for women in the Muslim camps. Humanitarian organizations noted that non-food items and hygiene kits that are distributed are sold quickly in the market, suggesting that these requests were motivated by the issue of livelihoods and need for income generation.
- The answer that “there was no humanitarian response in the community” by 17 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men indicates that there was a lack of understanding of the question.

Q.2 How do you judge the ability of the humanitarian agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in your community?

- Nearly all groups needed prompting on different vulnerable groups within their community: children, youth, pregnant and lactating women, female-headed households, people with disabilities and older people.
- Generally women were a better able to articulate the different needs of the groups. They were also more negative about the targeted support from humanitarian agencies.

Q.3 How do you judge the quality of the relationship with organizations that work in your community?

- The highly negative response from men could be due to the fact that there are very few, if any, projects that target men, meaning they have a more negative experience of the response than women.
- The most common issue affecting the relationship that was mentioned was the fact that organizations do not come to talk directly to the general IDP population. Most organizations talk to the Camp Management Committees or to their own camp-based staff.
- Key factors affecting the quality of the relationship were: attitudes and practices of staff, the frequency of community meetings, distributions and service delivery.
- Positive staff behavior included: being soft spoken, a good listener, humble and patient to explain things. These attributes were seen as the exception rather than the norm.
- To improve the relationship both men and women groups suggested that organizations meet with the general IDP population, listen to them and respond to their feedback. The same kind of meeting (focus group discussions) was suggested as a good way to engage with communities.

Q.4 What levels of information have you received about the humanitarian agencies and their activities in your community?

- Women said that they had better information about organizations and their activities than the men did. This finding goes against the assumed trend that women have less access to information in a traditional Muslim society. Some organizations have been making efforts to ensure that information is shared with women, as

typically they are the ones who are running the home and acting as caregivers. There are no specific projects that target men, which could also be a reason for the lack of information.

- However, no groups were able to say that they knew about the different organizations working in their community in detail e.g. where they were from, how they worked, etc. When asked all groups said they would like to have this information. However, they were more interested in service delivery than organizational information.
- People wanted advance notice of distributions, especially when neighboring or nearby communities have already had a distribution. Late distributions cause concern in the camps, even if only a few days late and communities want to know. It can be assumed that this feeds into the perception that slowly aid is being reduced.
- People also want advance notice of visitors to the camps and to have the reason for their visit explained clearly.
- The most common information need articulated was information about when they will be allowed to go back to their homes.

Q.5 What degree of participation have you experienced with humanitarian programmes in your community?

- The concept of participation was often understood as who was employed by, or receiving assistance from, organizations. The idea of being involved in identifying the problems and solutions, as well as being involved in monitoring was not something either men or women were familiar with.
- Contributing factors to the fact that women reported participating more than men could be that organizations working in the camps have made an effort to involve women based on vulnerability, or that organizational focus has been on supporting families, and traditionally women would be central to this.
- There were no examples expressed of “meaningful participation” i.e. having a role in decision-making about resources or services affecting the community.
- Some groups expressed a desire to be more involved, whilst others said they did not have the time to be more involved. There was no obvious pattern to the desire to participate, it crossed gender and education level divides.

Q.6 How do you raise problems with organizations working in your community?

- The majority of people knew how to complain and identified three ways: through the CMC, using the complaints or suggestion box, or directly to the camp management agency staff. However, some did not even know they could complain.
- It is interesting to note that 90 per cent of the most positive responses from women and 92 per cent of the most positive responses from men came from one camp. In this camp the camp management agency also provides many of the services and has invested time in piloting different approaches in this camp to improve accountability, including mapping information flows and channels and looking at using a more systematic way of capturing face-to-face feedback and complaints. Other possible contributing factors include the fact that camp receives a high number of visits from delegations (due to proximity to urban Sittwe) and is comprised of formerly urban population.
- The biggest issue raised was the lack of response to the complaints. When questioned if they meant there was not a favourable action, several different groups said there was just no response. The groups who raised the point said they would like to know why something cannot happen, rather than just not receive any feedback.
- The Camp Management Committees were a primary channel to raise feedback. However, most groups said that they do not trust these committees. In two camps men and women reported that the Camp Management Committees opened the complaints box and took out anything critical of them.
- Women mentioned that those who could not write did have to rely on “trustworthy” people to scribe their complaints. Half of the groups were also happy to raise their complaints with the camp management agency directly. However, the majority of groups said they would be more comfortable being asked for feedback rather than proactively giving it.

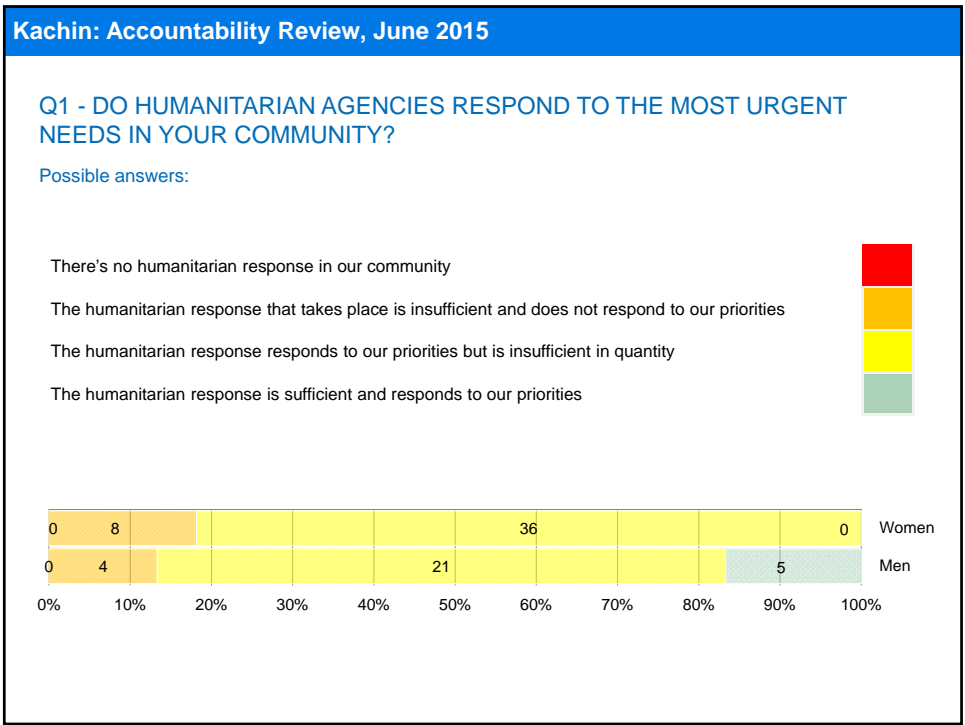
RAKHINE - RECOMMENDATIONS

IASC CAAP	RECOMMENDATION
Leadership / Governance	<p>The HCT members should assess their delivery on the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP).</p> <p>Agencies should develop practical AAP actions plans that ensure accountability improvements in Rakhine State</p> <p>Clusters and sectors should positively reinforce good practice and document lessons learned.</p> <p>All agencies should commit to providing timely responses to community feedback (even if it is not a positive answer, to at least explain why not).</p>
Transparency	<p>Each camp should have a short communications plan for reaching different vulnerable groups in the camp, both as tool for camp management and for implementing agencies.</p> <p>The information boards provided should be more effectively used as one element in the communications plan. The use should be discussed with the community about what goes on there and who updates it, how often, etc.</p> <p>Outreach and transparency initiatives should target men to build better understanding.</p>
Feedback and Complaints	<p>All organization staff working in, or visiting the camps (including volunteers, incentivized workers and camp-based staff) should know what to do if they receive feedback. There should be a simple system to record this feedback, effectively communicate and respond within a set period of time.</p> <p>There should be regular focus groups with IDPs (not directly involved with humanitarian agencies) as part of the complaint response mechanism</p>
Participation	<p>Organizations working in the camps should review their participation practices to ensure that the general IDP population has opportunities to participate; this will require community mobilization and capacity building to enable meaningful participation.</p>
Design, Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Organizations working in the camps should find additional ways to include the general IDP population in discussions about design of programmes.</p> <p>Organizations working in the camps should consider using community-based monitoring systems.</p>

Annex - Voting Results by Women and Men Groups

Accountability Review, June 2015

- 30 Focus Group discussions with 301 IDPs
 - Camp Management Committees
 - General IDPs (always disaggregated men/women)
 - 114 IDPs in 5 camps in Kachin
 - 40 IDPs from Camp Management Committees
 - 74 IDPs not belonging to any coordination structures
 - 187 IDPs consulted in 5 camps in Rakhine
 - 67 IDPs from Camp Management Committees
 - 121 IDPs not belonging to any coordination structures

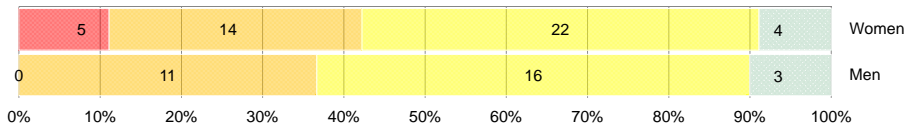


Kachin: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q2 - HOW DO YOU JUDGE THE CAPACITY OF THE IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- The most vulnerable are not consulted and do not have access to the assistance given
- The most vulnerable are not consulted but have access to the assistance in the same way as other members of the community
- The most vulnerable are consulted but do not receive any special treatment
- The most vulnerable are consulted and their special needs are taken into account in the assistance provided

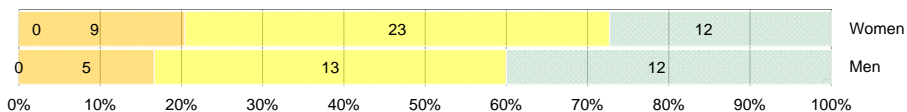
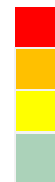


Kachin: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q3 - HOW DO YOU JUDGE THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- Promises are not kept. Communication is bad.
- Activities eventually take place, but in an unpredictable way
- There's regular and respectful communication, and promises are kept
- We feel listened to and respected. All decisions that have been taken are explained to us

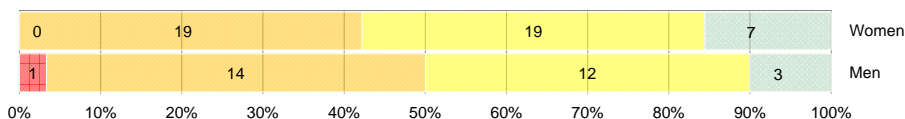


Kachin: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q4 - WHAT LEVEL OF INFORMATION HAVE YOU RECEIVED ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- I have no information about the aid organisations working here and their activities
- I've received some information about the aid organisations and their activities
- I've received all necessary information about the programmes from the aid organisations
- I've received all necessary information about the organisations, their programmes and the budget of their activities

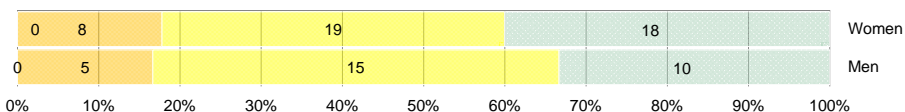


Kachin: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q5 - WHAT DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- Ignored. The activities are planned and implemented without us being informed or consulted.
- Informed, but not involved. They tell us what has been decided and how the project will affect us.
- Consulted. The organisation asks our opinion about the planning and implementation of projects and informs us of the decisions that have been taken.
- Involved: Our voice counts in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects.

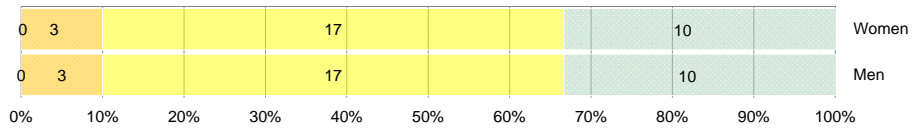


Kachin: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q6 - HOW DO YOU RAISE PROBLEMS WITH ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- We do not have any possibility to communicate our complaints.
- We can complain, but we never receive a detailed response.
- Organisations have explained to us how to raise complaints or problems, and complainants receive a response most of the time.
- There's a system for complaints handling. Those who file a complaint get a response quickly, and actions are taken to resolve the issue.

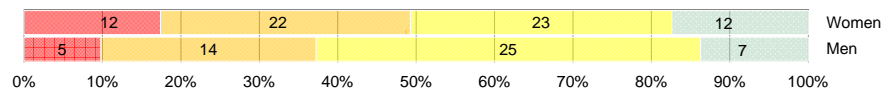


Rakhine: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q1 - DO HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES RESPOND TO THE MOST URGENT NEEDS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- There's no humanitarian response in our community
- The humanitarian response that takes place is insufficient and does not respond to our priorities
- The humanitarian response responds to our priorities but is insufficient in quantity
- The humanitarian response is sufficient and responds to our priorities

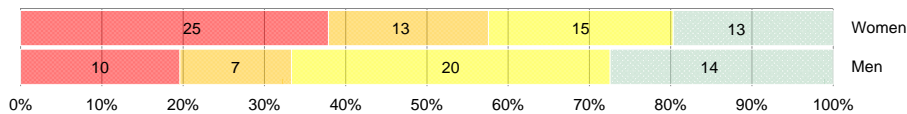
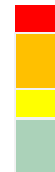


Rakhine: Accountability Review, June 2015

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Possible answers:

- The most vulnerable are not consulted and do not have access to the assistance given
- The most vulnerable are not consulted but have access to the assistance in the same way as other members of the community
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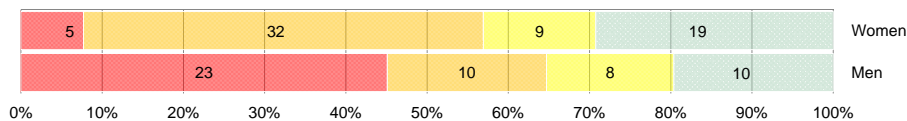


Rakhine: Accountability Review, June 2015

Q3 - HOW DO YOU JUDGE THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- Promises are not kept. Communication is bad.
- Activities eventually take place, but in an unpredictable way
- There's regular and respectful communication, and promises are kept
- We feel listened to and respected. All decisions that have been taken are explained to us

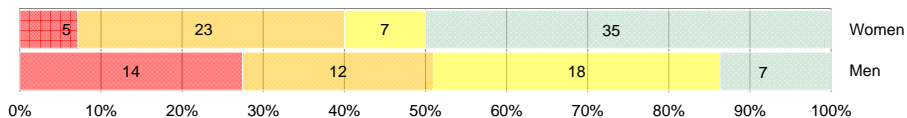


Rakhine: Accountability Review, June 2015

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Possible answers:

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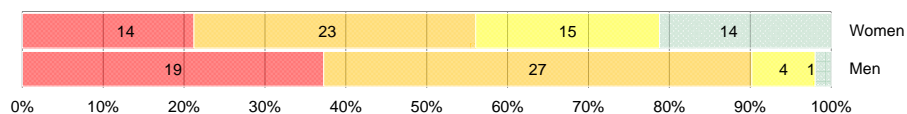


Rakhine: Accountability Review, June 2015

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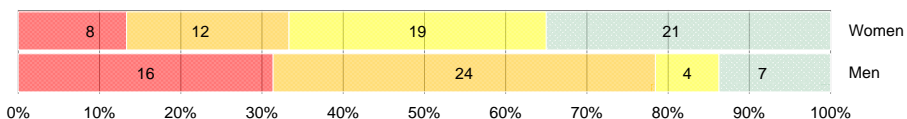
- Ignored. The activities are planned and implemented without us being informed or consulted.
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- Consulted. The organisation asks our opinion about the planning and implementation of projects and informs us of the decisions that have been taken.
- Involved: Our voice counts in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects.



Q6 - HOW DO YOU RAISE PROBLEMS WITH ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Possible answers:

- We do not have any possibility to communicate our complaints.
- We can complain, but we never receive a detailed response.
- Organizations have explained to us how to raise complaints or problems, and complainants receive a response most of the time.
- There's a system for complaints handling. Those who file a complaint get a response quickly, and actions are taken to resolve the issue.





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