

# **Quality and Accountability Initiatives by Inter-Agency Working Group Members and Partners in East and Central Africa**

Prepared for the Inter-Agency Working Group

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AAP	Accountability for Affected Populations
ACF	Australian Council for International Development
AIP	Annual Implementation Plan
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ASALs	arid and semi-arid lands
AtB	Accountability to Beneficiaries (Initiative of International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies).
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CACH	Caritas Switzerland
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community based organisation
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
CSO	Civil society organization
CwC	Communication with Communities (an OCHA initiative)
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EAC	East African Community
EAIIOI	Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands Region
EARO	East Africa Regional Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSNWG	Food Security and Nutrition Working Group
HAF	Humanitarian Accountability Framework (of the Danish Refugee Council)
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HoA	Horn of Africa
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
ICT	Information communication technology
IDP	Internally displaced person
IEC	Information education communication
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IPCRM	Integrated Public Complaints Referral Mechanism
IR	International Rescue
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSA	Non-state actors

O&M	Operations and maintenance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
P-FIM	People First Impact Method
PSEA	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
Q&A	Quality and accountability
RPP	Regional Programming Paper
SCI	Save the Children International
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMS	Short Messaging Service
SOMREP	Somalia Return Program
TI-K	Transparency International Kenya
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WASH	Water ,Sanitation and Health
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations
WVI	World Vision International

## Executive summary

Accountability is currently a key feature of development work and humanitarian aid. It is a subject of great interest to scholars and practitioners who recognize its potential to improve implementation of programs for better results. Despite the interest in accountability, little is known about the scale and characteristics of accountability initiatives in East and Central Africa.

Save the Children International, East Africa Regional Office (EARO) in partnership with the Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG), specifically the Quality and Accountability sub-group, commissioned a consultancy to undertake regional mapping of accountability initiatives, innovations and best practices being implemented by IAWG members in East and Central Africa.

The study was launched in July 2015 with the objective of strengthening quality and accountability in programmes designed for communities by providing a database of on-going accountability initiatives in the region. The aim is to improve learning and exchange of best practices/innovations on accountability among development and humanitarian agencies. Using a defined framework, this study mapped initiatives in 13 countries across East and Central Africa namely, Burundi, CAR, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The study report offers an overview of initiatives of both emergent and developed initiatives.

The study is based on desk research covering existing research, publications and materials in accountability along with responses from representatives of IAWG member organizations. The study outputs comprise a mapping report which brings together the findings of the mapping exercise with a snapshot and a database of on-going accountability initiatives across the region. This accountability mapping exercise is not an assessment of the accountability initiatives. Rather it is a description of the nature of such initiatives and regional trends in their development.

The IAWG Q&A sub-group agreed that specific reference be made to the HAP standard to benchmark the process. The four accountability benchmarks borrowed from HAP standards are transparency and information sharing; participation; feedback and complaints handling; and learning and continuous improvement.

## Findings

During the mapping exercise it was observed that the operationalization of different initiatives by IAWG member organization working in the East and Central Africa region were largely the result of adherence to other national, regional and international or sector wide accountability initiatives. These initiatives include

reporting frameworks; implementation guidance and resources; codes and standards; networks and working groups; donor standards; capacity building and awards and certification schemes. The accountability initiatives are also driven by the quest to make organizations more effective in working with beneficiaries. Though organizations make reference to commitments to accountability from these external mechanisms, the link between the initiatives and the organizations' commitment seems weak. Some of the initiatives by organizations are more of stand-alone activities than accountability initiatives per se.

### Transparency and information sharing

Beneficiary communities need access to information if they are to access services, make informed decisions for themselves and hold aid agencies to account. Organizations on the other hand need to enhance their transparency and information sharing capabilities to help foster openness in an organization's operations, activities and decision making processes. To achieve this, organizations must build capacity to communicate in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate for different parts of the community, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups in order increase access to information and awareness of their rights and entitlements.

Different IAWG members across the East and Central Africa region are using a variety of approaches to share information with beneficiaries. The choice of strategy by the IAWG members was found to be influenced by four main factors; the type of message sent to beneficiaries including alerts, awareness creation messages and service prompts; the intended geographical reach, vast or restricted; the characteristics of the beneficiary community such as literacy levels, culture and language; and, the resources allocated for accountability activities. IAWG members and partners are gradually embracing the use of information and communication technology to share information with benefiting communities. This may be attributed to the tremendous expansion of ICT infrastructure in the region which has changed the dynamics of communication and made communication technology easily accessible as a tool for development and humanitarian work. ICTs are often combined with legacy media such as radio and interpersonal communication depending on the needs and the communication preferences of target communities.

The use of radio broadcast in vernacular language is popular among IAWG agencies. Radio facilitates wider reach, is considered more participatory and uses more culturally accepted communication models. Local radio stations also fill the void left by mainstream radio which tend to use national or official languages that in most cases, are not understood by populations whose literacy levels are low. Despite its widespread use, radio remains a relatively costly means for communicating with beneficiaries.

Film remains an important medium and entry point for engaging communities on multifaceted social issues.

Apart from the ascendant use of technologies in communication, agencies continue to use the more familiar IEC (information, education and communication) materials and noticeboards. The use of IEC materials in initiatives implemented by IAWG members - especially programmes geared towards creating awareness of societal issues and concerns - assumes that people are more likely to take action once they have adequate information about their situation. The organizations also use IEC materials to make information about the services and entitlements of beneficiaries available within the community. Use of images and symbols in IEC materials makes it easy to reach illiterate or semi-literate communities. Some organizations also use noticeboards to share information with beneficiaries although such materials requires special protection from vandalism and damage by the elements.

The IAWG memories underline the importance of local structures within the beneficiary communities to share information with different audiences including local government, community meetings and local leaders.

## Participation

Involving beneficiary communities in all stages of the life of a project enables them to play effective roles in the process and impact the outcomes. It also enhances ownership of the project for sustainability. According to the HAP standard, best practice in participation initiatives ensure that opportunities for community engagement, including that of vulnerable groups, are in place before the project begins and throughout the programme cycle. This further ensures that affected communities are able to provide feedback and to influence decision-making at every stage and that vulnerable groups have equal access to the resources and services provided.

This mapping exercise found that organizations participating in this study normally use community meetings, community committees and local administrative structures, social audits and interactive media as the primary means of involving communities in planning and improving program design and implementation. A number of tools have been developed by IAWG member organizations to enhance participation of beneficiary communities. The People First Impact Method (P-FIM) is one of the tools that agencies in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania have been trained to use. It is primarily a methodology for assessing and evaluating impact where the beneficiaries play key roles in the process. Village implementation committees formed by agencies were mentioned as another mechanisms for enhancing the participation of beneficiaries. Some organizations allow beneficiaries to conduct social audits of the projects designed for them. There are, however, very few initiatives associated with social auditing in East and Central Africa.

There are also initiatives that specifically target the inclusion and participation of vulnerable groups. Save the Children International has, for example, implemented programmes that put children at centre-stage in decision

making in the planning and implementation of programmes. These programmes allow children to be part of community meetings, to make decisions on the content of teaching and learning materials and to conduct their own research.

Despite the broad range of examples cited by agencies as evidence of accountability initiatives the nature of such activities, such as the popular community meetings, is very weak and they have been used by organizations to rubber-stamp participation. Some respondents interviewed during this study said there is need for a more focused approach to encourage participation by first building a relationship with the beneficiaries. This is the reason why P-FIM, for example, as a tool encourages frontline staff to focus on building relationships with communities through a systematic approach.

### Complaints and feedback mechanisms

Some organizations have established feedback and complaints mechanisms with the purpose of enabling their project beneficiaries to hold them accountable. These mechanisms comprise of toll-free hotlines, suggestion boxes, email, help/feedback desks, Call Centres, community committees and web-based platforms among other mechanisms. It is interesting to note that most organizations involved in relief and disaster related work usually already have such initiatives in place when compared to agencies implementing development programs.

The inclusion of information about the reporting mechanisms on various IEC materials and most importantly the key documents seen and used by beneficiaries was seen as a calculated approach to making sure that beneficiaries have information on how to provide feedback or lodge complaints. One organization has initiated the integration of the whole feedback and complaints handling system using a combination of methods to receive information from beneficiaries including SMS, phone calls, complaint centres and email.

Hotlines are a constant feature among humanitarian agencies in the region while call centres are commonly used by UN agencies to support communication with beneficiary communities. The cost of making phone calls and the purchase of mobile phone devices remains an impediment to users. To solve this problem, organizations are gravitating towards the use of toll free lines so that beneficiaries and stakeholders are not constrained by the cost of a call. Some organizations have gone to the extent of handing out a few phone handsets.

Web based platforms have recently gained popularity among organizations and are commonly an element of the collaboration between partners working in a certain area. The platforms are built such that complaints can be forwarded to the online system either by directly accessing the portal or using other means to post the complaint such as SMS. The web-based mechanism has an appointed administrator whose work is to open the complaints and refer them to the relevant parties for action.

The challenges associated with complaints and feedback mechanisms mainly have to do with capacity to ensure that they run effectively. Capacity to investigate, follow up and resolve a complaint is frequently a challenge. In as much as organizations seek to resolve complaints quickly they often encounter impediments such as cases requiring involvement of government authorities which can be long and tedious. While organizations report that they do use technology to help maintain the anonymity of complainants, there was little mention of concrete mechanisms to protect whistle blowers.

## Learning and continuous improvement

Learning is a critical step in building accountability within an organisation. The mapping exercise sought to know whether there are initiatives to conduct accountability assessments periodically; integrate accountability criteria into external projects' evaluations; share evaluation findings and lessons learnt with staff, communities and other stakeholders for continuous improvement and use recommendations from accountability assessments to inform decision making.

There are a few initiatives focusing on participation of beneficiaries in evaluation of interventions and the documentation of beneficiary feedback that is then used by organizations to improve their programmes. UN agencies, SCI and World Vision have produced accountability related materials such policy briefs, success stories, learning videos<sup>1</sup> and documentaries. These resources are key to continuous learning by organizations in the region.

In terms of learning and continuous improvement specifically relating to accountability initiatives, the IAWG members said there is a wide gap in terms of documentation of their accountability initiatives resulting in many missed opportunities to learn and share experiences in different contexts.

## Recommendations

- 1. Transparency and information sharing:** Organizations should be proactive in their adoption and development of new media and communication technologies as a means of responding to the dynamic nature of communication needs in emergencies. This will require the development of working relationships with ICT sector specialists and service providers to harness the tremendous opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> Videos (see video links :

SC Accountability <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgMfCwwu4nY&feature=plcp>

10 steps to setting up a CRM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXvIn3rddmA>

Somalia <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eqcer2y8up79fuc/AAAtjx8YXZP5LSTGKwbGHPW3a?dl=0>

presented by new technologies for enhancing communication and for knowledge management. There is also need to build partnerships and encourage collaboration towards coordinated communication initiatives especially during emergencies. In coherent, collaborative partnerships the prohibitive cost of using broadcast media would be shared and openings for negotiating free or low cost PSA messaging partnerships with media expanded to the benefit of all partners.

2. **Participation:** Participation of beneficiary communities must be mainstreamed into the conceptualization, development, planning and implementation of all projects and programmes for accountability to hold. Ad hoc inclusion of one-off events may provide some feedback to IAWG member projects and programmes but will not give full accountability. In this regard there is need for greater creativity and innovation in identifying and designing mechanisms to encourage participation. Participation must also be designed to identify and include the most vulnerable members of each community.
3. **Feedback and complaint handling:** The trend towards integration of complaints and feedback referral mechanisms in all activities should be adopted by IAWG along with the recommendation for expanding collaboration in communication in times of emergency. A collaborative, integrated complaint and feedback structure such as that proposed would offer many benefits including, support to beneficiaries by providing a one-stop shop for reaching the services of a number of agencies; data gathering, follow-up and tracking of issues as they emerge; mechanisms for oversight; automation of responses and feedback to beneficiaries regarding common complaints and issues; continuous learning and sharing among IAWG peers and support for informal or formal peer regulation. It will also mainstream the feedback/ complaint handling aspects of the accountability process.
4. **Continuous mapping of accountability initiatives:** This mapping exercise is an invaluable learning initiative by IAWG and provides useful insights into how various actors are addressing accountability in their work. It would be useful to make this a continuous process geared towards updating the accountability database. New initiatives and learning are always emerging from different organizations. Consolidating best practices from different organizations will mainstream focus attention on accountability processes and enable agencies to learn from each other's experiences without interruption.

## Section 1: Introduction

Accountability has become a key concern in development work and humanitarian aid. Years of observation and learning have shown that projects and programmes where beneficiaries are centrally involved have better development outcomes. They face fewer implementation hurdles and are cost effective. This focus on accountability represents the knowledge that engaging people affected by emergencies and other crises at the heart of all decisions and actions and at every stage of a project or programme can reduce the risk of making mistakes, reduce corrupt practice and also protects the dignity and wellbeing of affected communities.<sup>2</sup> An accountability-focus assists organizations to design and implement accountable, high quality programmes. Given the potential benefits that can accrue from using accountability to improve the implementation of programmes, it is currently a subject of great interest to scholars and practitioners.

This new impetus for accountability in the aid sector has prompted different actors to look for innovative ways to make organizations more accountable to beneficiary communities. Recognizing the potential gains to development initiatives that would accrue from enhanced accountability, Save the Children International East Africa Regional Office (EARO) in partnership with the Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG), specifically the Quality and Accountability sub-group, commissioned a consultant to undertake regional mapping of accountability initiatives and innovations being implemented by IAWG members. IAWG members are mainly INGOs and NGOs working in East and Central Africa. The specific objectives of the consultancy were to:-

- Provide a database of accountability initiatives in the region as a tool for strengthening the quality and accountability of development efforts in target communities.
- Improve learning and exchange of accountability best practices and innovation among development and humanitarian agencies.

The Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) is a forum for regional organizations including NGOs, the International Federation of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies. It was formed to enhance information exchange and regional coordination in response to emergencies such that they are timely and cost efficient. The Quality and Accountability subgroup of IAWG implements a forward-thinking agenda to support agencies in the region to improve programme quality, field collaboration and coordination and to assess the impact and accountability to affected populations and communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian Accountability Partnership website <http://www.hapinternational.org/what-we-do/hap-standard.aspx>  
The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management

## The mapping study brief

In line with the terms of reference (TOR), the mapping study comprised two main tasks:

<b>Task 1:</b> Map on-going accountability initiatives from IAWG members and their implementing partners in humanitarian and development contexts in the region (Burundi, Central African Republic, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). Include the context of each initiative and describe whether it is emergency, recovery or development,	<b>Output:</b> Database of on-going accountability initiatives with details of contact person, reference links and a brief description of each initiative, methodology and tools used.
<b>Task 2 :</b> Identify, document and disseminate best accountability practices.	<b>Output:</b> An accountability mapping report with five to ten best practices documented

This study is based on desk research and is informed primarily by existing documents and published materials made available by IAWG member organizations. Annex 1 describes the methodology used for the study in detail.

## Scope and limitations of the mapping exercise

Using a defined framework adapted from the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Standard in Accountability and Quality Management (HAP Standard) and Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) this study mapped initiatives in 13 countries across East and Central Africa namely, Burundi, Central African Republic, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The report offers an overview of initiatives of both emergent and developed initiatives.

The conceptualization of accountability and other terms used in this study were defined by the input of the IAWG Q&A subgroup members and also borrowed from definitions in accountability standards such as HAP. Whereas there seems to be convergence towards a common definition of accountability, the term remains amorphous and subject to a multiplicity of interpretations as do many terms.

Earlier mapping exercises asserted that the term “mapping exercise” is a generic expression implying no pre-defined methodology or format<sup>3</sup>. Failure to accurately define and agree on the scope of a mapping exercise mandate can pose a challenge in mapping what is relevant. On the flipside, having an ‘absolute scope’ for mapping exercise risks leaving out initiatives that do not fall within the pre-defined categorization or that are multi-dimensional. In the case of this study the decision by the team to use four key accountability benchmarks

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<sup>3</sup> See *Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003*, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – August 2010.

borrowed from HAP standards - namely; transparency and information sharing, participation, feedback and complaints handling and learning and continuous improvement - made it difficult to include accountability initiatives that could not be analyzed using these measures. It was also difficult to categorize initiatives that were multidimensional in nature using the agreed benchmarks.

The term ‘initiative’ has diverse meanings and is synonymous with many other terms including plan, deal, proposal, act, action, measure, scheme, strategy, technique, suggestion, procedure, gambit and many others. Although the team arrived at a level of mutual agreement regarding the scope of the term ‘initiative’ in reference to ‘accountability practices’, this was found to be limiting when applied to initiatives that had other manifestations of the term and it was not easy to quantify what an ‘initiative’ was.

Borrowing from past Q&A exercises<sup>4</sup>, the mapping exercise also sought to distinguish between an initiative and the organization hosting the initiative. This was crucial because organizations offer a variety of services. The mapping exercise therefore emphasized accountability initiatives, rather than the wider work of the organizations studied. While this exercise was keen to determine the functionality of each initiative, it was not always easy to ascertain the validity and authenticity of the information provided especially that relating to performance outcomes of these initiatives and in-depth understanding of their dynamics in different contexts. There is need for follow-up and support to these initiatives to determine their effectiveness.

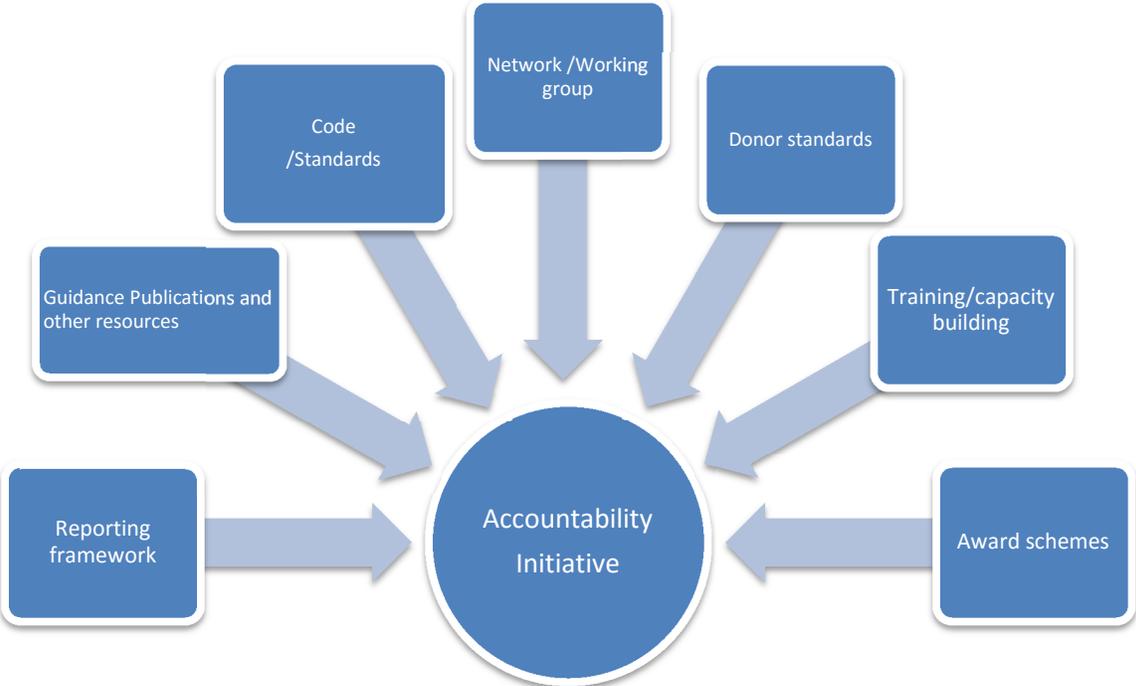
## **Conceptualizing the operating environment of accountability initiatives**

The operationalization of initiatives by IAWG member organizations working in East and Central Africa is significantly influenced by other national, regional and international or sector wide accountability initiatives. These initiatives include reporting frameworks, implementation guidance and resources, charters, codes and standards, networks and working groups, donor standards, capacity building efforts and awards and certification schemes. (See Annex 2 for the list and description of initiatives that IAWG member agencies are linked to).

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Standards Initiative, January 2013. Mapping exercise on Quality & Accountability initiatives.

Figure 1: Accountability initiatives by IAWG members are influenced by other accountability initiatives.



The types of initiatives and corresponding examples from the region are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Initiatives within the operating environment of the IAWG member agencies**

	Type of initiative: definition <sup>5</sup>	Corresponding examples mentioned by IAWG members
1	<b>Donor standards:</b> Criteria or standards applied by donors in order to allocate funding	Various
2	<b>Charters/Codes/Standards:</b> A statement of principles and/or standards with assessment and compliance mechanism.	HAP, Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), Sphere Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)), The INGO Accountability Charter. Global Standard for CSO Accountability, Code of Conduct on Images and Messages, Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS, Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel.
3	<b>Network/Working Group:</b> A formal or informal gathering and/or an on-line community.	IAWG, CDAC
4	<b>Reporting framework:</b> A defined format for presenting information on results.	Program Accountability Framework (PAF) by World Vision, HelpAge Accountability Framework, Program Participants Protection Policy by Concern Worldwide, Humanitarian Accountability Framework by Danish Refugee Council , Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network
5	<b>Awards and certification schemes:</b> Some form of recognition of good practice.	Viwango, NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM), Uganda <sup>6</sup>
6	<b>Training/capacity building:</b> Courses, training, on-line training, training materials.	Red-R , P-FIM
7	<b>Implementation/practice guidance:</b> Publications and other resources that seek to improve practice.	SCI Accountability Pack.

The mapping exercise found that information sharing mechanisms among members are mainly driven by the factors listed in Table 1. In some cases implementation of accountability initiatives offered strategic value addition aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of organizations. The widespread voluntary implementation of accountability initiatives may in part, be attributed to the fact that IAWG member agencies are well established NGOs and UN agencies.

## Structure of this report

The report is divided into four sections. This introductory section is followed by Section 2 which provides operational definitions of accountability, the mapping exercise and related concepts. Section 3 provides an overview of accountability initiatives in the region while Section 4 offers conclusions and recommendations

<sup>5</sup> Categorizations and definitions are adapted from the report: Mapping Exercise on Quality & Accountability Initiatives in the Humanitarian Sector. Prepared for the Joint Standards Initiative by Liza Cragg, December 2012

<sup>6</sup> See Annex 2 for a brief description of these initiatives.

based on the findings of the mapping exercise. At the end of the document several annexes are appended and provide the following supporting information:-

Annex 1: Methodology

Annex 2: Codes, standards, commitments, charters, working groups

Annex 3: Geographical reach of IAWG organizations.

Annex 4: Criteria for assessing level of innovativeness

## Section 2: Defining accountability

Accountability as a concept continues to feature in development debates. These debates build on arguments begun by ancient theorists in political philosophy grappling with the need to restrain government power and prevent abuse at the hands of authority. The idea of accountability has evolved over the years from being a component of public finance management to encompass every sphere where persons or institutions hold and exercise power and authority on behalf of people and communities. Despite this development in scope, the word itself remains amorphous and it is sometimes defined relative to the focus of a specific field of work.

Accountability is dominantly described as processes through which organizations commit to take into account the needs of stakeholders in decision making processes and activities, and deliver on these commitments. Gray (1996)<sup>7</sup> defines accountability as a duty to provide an account (not necessarily a financial account) or reckoning of those actions for which one is held responsible. HAP in reference to humanitarian accountability, defines accountability as the means through which power is used responsibly<sup>8</sup>. One World Trust on the other hand defines accountability as the process through which an organization makes a commitment to respond to and balance the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making processes and activities, and delivers against this commitment<sup>9</sup>. The Sphere Project defines accountability as the ways in which organizations and projects involve different groups in making decisions, managing activities, and judging and challenging results.

The variety of definitions given by different theorists and practitioners converge on accountability as a measure of both answerability and enforceability.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gray, R (1996), *Accounting and Accountability, Changes and Challenges in Corporate Social and Environmental Reporting*, Prentice Hall, London.

<sup>8</sup> HAP: Guide to the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management, 2013.

<http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/guide-to-the-2010-hap-standard-printer-friendly-version-new.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> One World Trust: Principles of Accountability, 2008.

[http://www.oneworldtrust.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=72](http://www.oneworldtrust.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=72)

<sup>10</sup> Goetz and Jenkins, 2001 in *IDS Working paper 168*, “Mapping Accountability Origins, Contexts and Implications for Development” by Peter Newell and Shaulla Bellour (2002)

Figure 2: Definitions of accountability converge on answerability and enforceability.



In the past two decades, accountability has become a “buzz” word in the aid sector, increasingly asserting its prominence in debates by academicians and practitioners. The prevalence of accountability discourse in the aid sector is as a result of factors such as the proliferation of humanitarian principles raising concerns about the stakeholders.

In the 1990s - specifically after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 - humanitarian agencies faced severe criticism over their response to the disaster. This led to efforts to strengthen their accountability to people affected by disasters. Individual organizations and sector-wide mechanisms focusing on accountability were created with the goal of making organizations more accountable in their work. These mechanisms include standards, principles, protocols, projects, working groups, networks and evaluations and others. Mechanisms that emerged included codes and standards such as the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct, the HAP Standard (HAP), the People in Aid Code; accountability learning networks such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and projects such as the Sphere Project, the Ombudsman also known as the HAP Project. These networks and working groups provide forums for accelerated peer learning to improve accountability in the sector at large.

Codes and standards have developed beyond providing operational definitions of accountability in humanitarian and development work and now also provide benchmarks for compliance, assessment and certification.

The term ‘accountability’ is multi-dimensional as has been noted. Consensus within the humanitarian aid and development work sectors is converging around three cardinal dimensions of accountability. These are participation; complaint handling and provision of information to stakeholders. For the purpose of this

mapping exercise, the references were made to definitions by HAP, One World Trust, the Sphere Project and other variations of the same as provided by key member organisations of IAWG.

Specific reference is made to the HAP standard during the mapping exercise because IAWG in East and Central Africa uses four accountability benchmarks borrowed from HAP standards namely, transparency and information sharing, participation, feedback and complaints handling and learning and continuous improvement. The categorization and overview of accountability initiatives in the next chapter were done using these benchmarks.

**Table 3: IAWG benchmarks on accountability (borrowed from the HAP standard).**

Benchmarks used by IAWG
<p><b>Leadership in accountability</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resources allocated for accountability (funds, staff time and staff capacity).</li> <li>2. Accountability framework/strategy/plan in place.</li> <li>3. Induction programmes include principles of, and the agency's commitments to accountability commitments.</li> <li>4. Senior managers assessed on accountability commitments and performance.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Participation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community engagement, including engagement of vulnerable groups, in place throughout the programme cycle.</li> <li>2. Affected communities are able to provide feedback and to influence decision- making.</li> <li>3. Vulnerable groups have equal access to resources and services provided.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Feedback and complaints handling</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established accessible, safe, transparent and user-friendly complaints and feedback mechanisms (internal and external).</li> <li>2. Established specific mechanisms and referral systems to deal with sensitive issues such as gender based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and child abuse.</li> <li>3. Stakeholders are aware of the mechanisms in place and how to use them.</li> <li>4. Staff with capacity to handle complaints effectively (including investigating sensitive allegations like SEA).</li> <li>5. Effectiveness of complaints mechanisms assessed periodically.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learning and continuous improvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accountability assessments conducted periodically.</li> <li>2. Integrated accountability criteria in evaluation of external projects</li> <li>3. Evaluation findings and lessons learnt shared with staff, communities and other stakeholders for continuous improvement of initiatives and projects.</li> <li>4. Recommendations from accountability assessments and evaluations inform decision making.</li> </ol>

## Section 3: Accountability initiatives by IAWG members and partners in East and Central Africa

IAWG in East and Central Africa borrowed four accountability benchmarks from the HAP standards. These are transparency and information sharing, participation, feedback and complaints handling and learning and continuous improvement. In Section 3 these benchmarks are used to categorize accountability initiatives of IAWG members as well as to:-

- Examine accountability activities in the wider environment of humanitarian aid.
- Define the stakeholders, practices, approaches, locus of operations and partners and length of the time they have been doing such activities.
- Give a descriptive assessment of the initiative by appraising its innovativeness.

### Where IAWG members work

IAWG member agencies and their implementing partners work in twelve countries in East and Central Africa namely Burundi, Central African Republic, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Each member agency has a specific country focus for their humanitarian or development work.

The assumption was made that the magnitude and distribution of accountability initiatives identified from mapping would correlate and hence be determined by the geographical reach of these organizations and so it was important to establish the reach of each individual IAWG member implementing humanitarian and development work in the region. (See Annex 3 for more details).

Kenya has the highest number of IAWG member agencies working in the country (33) followed by Ethiopia (21) and South Sudan (21) and Somalia (19). Very few IAWG member agencies work in Djibouti (9) while Burundi, Sudan and CAR each have eleven IAWG agencies working within their borders.

### Transparency and information sharing initiatives

Beneficiary communities need information if they are to be able to access services, make informed decisions for themselves and hold aid agencies to account. In order to meet this community need organizations must enhance their transparency and information sharing capabilities to help foster openness in the organization's operations, activities and decision making processes:

According to OCHA, communication with communities (CwC) - an emerging field of humanitarian response that helps to meet the information and communications needs of people affected by crisis - communication is a form of assistance as important as water, food and shelter. Without access to information, disaster survivors cannot access the help they need, make informed decisions or be effective leaders in their own recovery<sup>11</sup>.

The recently published Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) emphasizes the need for organizations to:

- Provide information to communities and people affected by crisis about the organization, the principles it adheres to, how it expects its staff to behave, the programmes it is implementing and what it intends to deliver.
- Communicate in languages and through media that are easily understood, respectful and culturally appropriate in formats for different parts of the community, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, in order increase access to information and awareness of their rights and entitlements.<sup>12</sup>

This growing recognition of communication as an important need is supported by the expanding access to means of communication within communities. According to the International Data Corporation (IDC), 2015 android phones currently represents 80% of the market's volume in Africa.<sup>13</sup> Using a smart phone and internet connectivity, messages can be passed to millions of other social media users across the globe. The traditional media broadcast companies are no longer the main custodians of information sharing. There is also a growing trend of combining these newer ICTs with traditional interpersonal communication methods through local leaders such as village committee members in situations where ICT network coverage is a challenge or the technology is unaffordable.

Traditional media do still have a role in communication with affected communities. The use of local radio stations which broadcast in vernacular language is becoming popular among agencies. Radio facilitates wider reach, is considered more participatory and uses more culturally accepted communication models. Local radio stations fill the void left by mainstream radio which tend to use national or official languages that, in most cases, are not comprehensible to populations whose literacy levels are low. Despite its widespread use, radio remains a relatively costly means for communicating with beneficiaries. Radio does not guarantee two-way communication with beneficiaries unless feedback mechanisms are put in place - and in most cases this does

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<sup>11</sup> OCHA on Message: Communication with Communities, [http://www.coordinationtoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/OCHA\\_-What-is-CwC.pdf](http://www.coordinationtoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/OCHA_-What-is-CwC.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Core Humanitarian Standards guidance notes and indicators Pg. 20

<sup>13</sup> "Middle East and Africa Smartphone Market to Top 155 Million Units in 2015 as Sub-\$200 Segment Surges". Press release from International Data Corporation (IDC) dated 12 July 2015. <https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prAE25737515>

not guarantee a response. Messages passed through radio may not reach the target beneficiaries and are also prone to distortion due to technological challenges. IAWG agencies tried to find creative ways of using radio to maximize its potential while reducing the cost of buying broadcasting slots. By establishing working relationships with radio broadcasting companies the agencies have been able to get services at a subsidized rates. Some organizations like BBC Media Action have initiated projects around radio messages to ensure that messages reach their intended listenership and feedback is received.

Agencies are also using bulk SMS to share information with beneficiaries. This medium is mainly used to target specific beneficiaries who have access to mobile phones. Use of bulk SMS also provides the ability to capture and store data for knowledge management and documentation purposes.

### Initiatives by IAWG members to share information with beneficiary communities

There are a number of mechanisms used by agencies to share information with beneficiary communities in the region. The use of these mechanisms is varied and mostly dependent on the context of the initiative. Table 3 below shows a list of initiatives modelled along different lines by IAWG organizations with the aim of strengthening accountability.

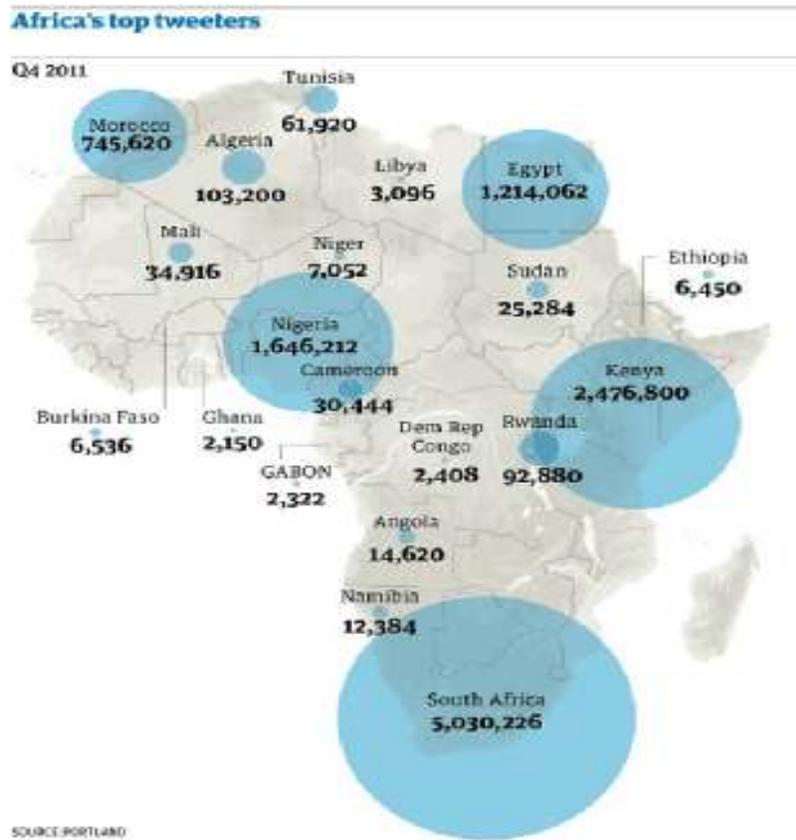
**Table 3: Information sharing initiatives by IAWG members**

	Initiatives to share information with beneficiary communities	Nature and features of the initiative (Initiating agency, practices, approaches, context, locus of operations, partners and duration)	Challenges and opportunities
1	Organizations use mass media such as radio, television, newspapers to reach a large population of beneficiary communities	<p><b>Organizations that use radio:</b> Transparency International – Kenya; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Somalia; UNICEF South Sudan; UNHCR Kenya and Somalia and OCHA</p> <p><b>Partnering radio broadcasting organizations in the East and Central Africa:</b> Radio Ergo, Catholic Radio Network, United States Institute of Peace (USIP), BBC Media Action, Internews, Groupe Speciale, Kalya FM, Radio Akicha and Wajir Community Radio in Kenya</p>	

		<p><b>Key highlights/trends</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Radio has the widest geographical reach of all media in sub-Saharan Africa.</li> <li>— There is a surge in local FM stations broadcasting in local language in the region.</li> <li>— Some broadcasting stations are partnering with agencies to enhance accountability to beneficiary communities.</li> <li>— Use of film has not been explored despite significant potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Radio is most practical when targeting a wide audience.</li> <li>— High cost of radio broadcast slots for airing programs</li> <li>— Immediate feedback not always readily available. Experimental use of call-ins and SMS lines for audience feedback on-going.</li> <li>— Use of film has great potential especially where beneficiaries are concentrated in one geographical location.</li> </ul>
2	Organizations use SMS on cell phones to pass information to beneficiaries.	<p><b>Organizations using SMS:</b> FilmAid, Kenya; UNHCR (Kenya and Somalia); FAO Somalia, ADESO Africa (Kenya , Somalia , South Sudan and Transparency International-Kenya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Use of bulk SMS software to reach as many community members as possible is becoming common.</li> <li>— Data storage for documentation is made possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Some beneficiaries cannot afford to buy handsets.</li> <li>— Lack of network coverage or poor coverage.</li> <li>— Illiteracy among beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
3	Use of village committee members to pass information at household level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mostly used by organizations that have interventions at household level.</li> <li>— Information sharing roles given to village committees, notably where other formal mechanisms cannot work for various reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Good for communication where there are cultural barriers</li> <li>— Prone to abuse by committee members who assume power as custodians of information.</li> <li>— Opportunity for the committee to build ownership of the project, provide reliable information which strengthens programmes.</li> </ul>
4	Organizations assign specific information sharing roles to members of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Full time or part-time staff dedicated to sharing information with beneficiaries. Usually the role is held by the organization's accountability officer.</li> <li>— Scheduled periodic visits/ meetings to share information.</li> <li>— Frontline staff dedicate time to sharing information especially on beneficiary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Limited resources for employing staff especially if the organization covers a vast region.</li> <li>— No specific guidelines on how the staff should share or deliver information.</li> <li>— Failure where there are language barriers between staff and beneficiaries.</li> </ul>

		entitlements, organizations principles, work plan and expected results among others.	
6	The use of signs, noticeboards and other IEC materials such as fliers, and posters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Mostly used for awareness creation programmes and alerts.</li> <li>— Use of noticeboards and fliers common where beneficiaries are concentrated in one geographical area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— IEC materials prone to vandalism.</li> <li>— Not guaranteed to reach the specific beneficiaries</li> <li>— Costly to reach beneficiaries when applied in vast regions.</li> <li>— Use of powerful imagery and symbols makes it easy to drive complex messages home.</li> <li>— Opportunity to involve the community in the installation or distribution of the materials.</li> </ul>
6	<i>Sharing information through government administrative units and technical departments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Use of lowest level administrative unit forums to share information with beneficiaries for example, through the Chiefs in Kenya; Local Council 1 in Uganda, Kebele in Ethiopia, Omdas in Sudan, Prefets and Regional Councils in Djibouti.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Designated days of the week for sharing information</li> <li>— In some cases local administrators are given roles in sharing information with beneficiaries that are not discrete from that of agencies. This is very common during targeted communication.</li> </ul>
7	Use of new media /social media: twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— In 2014 the region saw a record 83% growth in the number of smartphones.</li> <li>— All the IAWG member agencies have websites</li> <li>— The number of Twitter and Facebook users in East Africa is growing rapidly (See Figure)</li> <li>— Social media is growing in popularity among the younger generation.</li> <li>— Most of IAWG member agencies and partners have Facebook, and Twitter accounts which they use to communicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Can only be accessed by people who have some literacy and who own smartphones.</li> <li>— Most effective when combined with other community information sharing mechanisms.</li> </ul>

Figure 4: Africa's top tweeters



During the mapping exercise it was observed that most members' information sharing mechanisms are driven by commitment to accountability standards, and in some cases initiated as strategic value addition to make the organizations more effective. This may be attributed to the fact that most IAWG member agencies are well established NGOs and some are UN agencies. Despite having these mechanisms in place most organizations do not have operational guidelines for the mechanisms they use to share information.

In terms of languages, formats and media to share information, the IAWG members and partners are gradually moving towards broader use of information and communication technology including fixed line and cell phones, SMS, radio, websites and social media to share information with benefiting communities. The choice

of strategy by the IAWG members was seen to be predominantly influenced by the type of messages sent to beneficiary, the geographical reach and the characteristics of the beneficiary population.

The following is a snapshot of some of the mechanisms used by IAWG member agencies and partners in the East and Central Africa region.

### Use of broadcast media to communicate with beneficiaries

Broadcast media use a variety of electronic communication technologies to reach large audiences, transmitting information electronically in different media formats such as film, radio, recorded music and television. Radio is the dominant mass-medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and the highest audiences compared with other information and communication technologies (ICTs)<sup>14</sup>. Radio broadcasters operating in the East and Central Africa region can be divided into four categories: state-controlled public radio broadcasters; privately owned commercial radio broadcasters; community-controlled radio broadcasters and international radio broadcasters.

Notably, the use of radio broadcasting to share information with beneficiaries is becoming common among agencies working in the East and Central Africa. Radio is regularly used by organizations to provide alerts and service prompt messages to the benefiting communities especially during emergency situations. In addition, radio is used to enhance project implementation especially for behaviour change oriented projects and programmes. In some cases, through specific call-in programs, radio has become a referential point for public opinion.

The four categories of radio stations have different strengths and weaknesses and therefore the choice of type of radio to communicate with beneficiary communities squarely lies with an organization's purpose and context. However, according to some IAWG member organizations, local FM radios which broadcast in vernacular language facilitate a wider reach, are more participatory and use culturally accepted communication models. Transparency International, Kenya for example, is using local FM station, Radio Akicha in Turkana County, Kalya FM in West Pokot and Wajir Community Radio in Wajir to create awareness about their *Uwajibikaji Pamoja* initiative which also encourages communities to embrace the integrated system for complaints handling. So far 15,359 complaints have been received through the system, an average of 1706 complaints per month.

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<sup>14</sup> Radio and Development in Africa, Concept paper prepared for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada by Mary Myers. August 2008.  
[http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/12481943581Radio\\_and\\_Development\\_in\\_Africa\\_a\\_concept\\_paper.pdf](http://www.amarc.org/documents/manuals/12481943581Radio_and_Development_in_Africa_a_concept_paper.pdf)

There has been a sharp increase in the number of citizens lodging complaints through the mechanism since they started the radio campaign.

The approach to sharing information using radio is often influenced by the working relationship that organizations have with the radio stations in their programme region. Some organizations are buying broadcast time to share information with beneficiaries and affected communities while others have built working partnerships with the broadcasters to share information with beneficiaries for free or at subsidized rates. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Somalia for example partners with local Radio Ergo International to conduct campaigns geared towards informing the public on upcoming projects and to give updates on the projects. Radio Ergo International plays a key role in the success of the programme by broadcasting these messages, by also partnering with local radio stations for a wider coverage.

Most radio stations create independent programming and invite organizations to participate in the programme with an aim of enhancing communication with the beneficiary communities. BBC Media Action – the BBC’s international development charity – has partnered with broadcasting companies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania to strengthen information sharing with affected communities. (See mapping database for more information).

*Internews & ACTED: "Boda Boda Talk Talk: Taking radio to the Displaced People in South Sudan*

Internews collaborated with ACTED in South Sudan to develop an innovative recorded audio program to provide life-saving and life-enhancing information to people displaced at two of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) Protection of Civilians sites in Juba following the conflict in South Sudan that broke out in mid-December 2013. The service utilizes a quad bike that moves around the site playing the programs in dedicated public spaces, at “Listening Stops”, through speakers that are bolted to the bike. A USB flash drive with the twice weekly professionally produced program is plugged into speakers. The people living in both UNMISS Tong Ping and UN House are provided with relevant, accurate, timely information, enabling them to make choices and decisions about their own lives. It updates the affected community on services and aid provided by various humanitarian agencies, and provides a platform for people to share their views and experiences with camp management. The audio broadcast program is named Boda Boda Talk Talk (Boda Boda means motorbike taxi across the region). To date nearly 40 programs have been researched, professionally produced and broadcast in Tong Ping, while nearly 15 have been produced in UN House. An estimated 200 listeners hear the program every day in each site at the pre-mapped “Listening Stops.” The service provides information in both sites to an estimated 30,000 people." *Adapted from: <https://internets.org/our-stories/project-updates/boda-boda-talk-talk#sthash.cBs2Wlcb.dpuf>*

### *The Somalia Return Consortium: Use of radio drama to share information with beneficiary communities*

Radio drama has been used to empower communities by developing drama that is directly related to the specific concerns expressed by the community. The plays are performed by community members and are used to build awareness about critical topics for specific groups or communities. Storylines are developed by listening to community concerns and then encouraging community members to voice and solve their own problems. The content is delivered through creative dramatized expression and aims to leave the benefiting communities with awareness messages and understanding of their own role in solving problems. The Somalia Return Consortium, composed of UNHCR, IR, the Danish Refugee Council and FAO, provides assistance to Somali refugees in Kenya wishing to return to Somalia. The aim of the programme is to ensure voluntary and informed return of refugees and that returning refugees are guided and supported throughout the process.

In order for the refugees to make an informed decision about their voluntary return to Somalia, FM radio channels broadcasting in Dadaab, Kakuma and Nairobi are used by UNHCR and partners to organize regular talk shows to discuss and answer questions on implications of voluntary return. The programme discuss the voluntary return process and various issues ranging from safety and security, rule of law, and political and socio-economic conditions. Since this programme is dealing with Dadaab and Kakuma this is no longer IDPs but refugees.

Drama series are also produced by Radio Ergo in Somalia to sensitize the returnees on their new environments. The use of radio drama has enabled the consortium to pass key messages especially around the uncertainties associated with the new environments

Film remains one of the most powerful of all media and has been used for many development purposes including passing of development messages through entertainment by dramatizing complex social situations. Properly produced films can create a powerful starting point for discussing and engaging communities and hence their judicious use can have powerful results and outcomes. The popularity of film has persuaded several organisations to use it in their development work as a means of widening popular engagement and education. In order to make it more interactive, beneficiaries play active roles in the production of the films by dramatising their own stories. According to Film–Aid Kenya, film has great potential to communicate with beneficiaries especially in awareness campaigns and can help spread ideas of development by integrating pictures and sounds. It is especially effective for communicating with beneficiaries in distinct communities such as confined areas

like refugee camps, relief camps, schools and health facilities. Such centres also make accessible the technical structures and facilities necessary for screening films including equipment for image projection, availability of power, light and sound equipment among others.

The themes selected for films are used to generate discussion among audiences and as a result have an effect on beneficiaries and impact their lives. Despite the strength of film, very few organisations in the region use film as a tool to communicate to and with beneficiaries. This is largely because film production is expensive and requires heavy up-front investment.

Film Aid uses film to communicate with beneficiaries. The organisation works with refugees in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps as well as in informal urban settlements in Nairobi, Kenya to deliver information to these audiences showing informative films about their rights and responsibilities.

### *FilmAid, Kenya: Using film to communicate with refugees*

Communities in crisis need information and empowerment. FilmAid provides both to millions of people suffering from the effects of war, poverty, displacement and disaster. Films offer a way to reach many people at once, overcoming language and literacy boundaries, providing information where it is needed and inspiring hope where it is lacking.

Through its activities FilmAid makes a practical impact on critical issues, from health education to human rights, conflict resolution to economic empowerment. By offering marginalized communities a voice on issues that affect them, FilmAid programs allow the possibility of self-advocacy and self-determination. The same programs are designed to alleviate problems associated with trauma, isolation, idleness and despair, offering hope through the simple joy of the movies and the creative outlet of self-expression.

Partnering with UNHCR and WFP in Kenya, FilmAid ensures new refugees arriving in the camp have the information they need as soon as they arrive, by showing informative films about their rights, responsibilities and what to expect in their new and unfamiliar home. FilmAid's mobile cinema units show uplifting and entertaining cartoons and movies throughout the camps, as well as delivering life-saving public service announcements (PSA) and films on critical health and social issues.

### *Use of new media, email and social media sites*

Social media is user-generated content distributed through the Internet with the intent to be shared and facilitate conversation between users.<sup>15</sup> There are numerous social media tools and platforms including social networks and blogs. Newer forms of social media include location services such as mapping and geotagging.

The growth of the Internet, use of mobile phones and the rise of social media are changing the dynamics of communication in the world. As at June 2015, four countries in East and Central region namely Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania, were in the list of the top -10 countries with largest number of internet users in Africa<sup>16</sup>. According to International Data Corporation (IDC), 2014 saw a record 83% growth in smartphones in the region.

The use 'new' media is already affecting people's behaviour in humanitarian and development work. This is because the use of this mechanism to pass information does not require a big investment in terms of resources - smart phone and internet connectivity is enough to share information to millions of other subscribers. It is also about the conversation surrounding the media.

All the IAWG member organizations and most of their implementing partners have websites which they use to share information about their work in different countries in the region. Most of the agencies are subscribers of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. Though the use of internet and social media in emergencies continues to grow, caution needs to be exercised to ensure these tools are used effectively and safely.

#### *Crowd-sourcing for social activism and public accountability - Ushahidi*

Ushahidi Inc. is a non-profit software company that develops free and open-source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. Ushahidi (Swahili for "testimony" or "witness") created a website in the aftermath of Kenya's disputed 2007 presidential election (see 2007–2008 Kenyan crisis) that collected eyewitness reports of violence reported by email and text message and placed them on Google Maps. The organization uses the concept of crowdsourcing for social activism and public accountability, serving as an initial model for what has been coined as "activist mapping"— the combination of social activism, citizen journalism and geospatial information. Ushahidi offers products that enable local observers to submit reports using their mobile phones or the internet, while simultaneously creating a temporal and geospatial archive of events.

More information at: <https://www.ushahidi.com/>

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.prsa.org/intelligence/prjournal/documents/2013\\_wrightinson\\_2013.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/intelligence/prjournal/documents/2013_wrightinson_2013.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Source : <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>

### *Sharing of information through village committees*

Most agencies have formed committees within the project areas as part of project/program implementation process. Apart from supporting implementation, the committees are also given information sharing responsibilities by the implementing agencies. Being the link between the organization and benefiting communities, the village committee members share information through village meetings and sometimes conduct door to door visits. The use of committees to share information is common in the rural areas of East and Central Africa especially where there are poor communication technology systems. The appointed committee members are in most cases people with considerable influence over the members of community. In the event of emergency or crisis, the committee members by default become part of the ground team for humanitarian agencies.

The use of village committees to share information is considered effective by organizations operating in the region because it gives the committee sense of ownership of the humanitarian or development action. The committees therefore form a sustainable and suitable structure at the lowest level which is most likely to be trusted and appreciated by the community members.

In Kenya for example the use relief committees to share information to the beneficiary communities by World Vision International (WVI) and partners has ensured that the messages reach the beneficiaries of relief even in places that do not have good telecommunication network coverage. In Uganda, WFP has been using Food Committees at community level to pass information to the community. HelpAge in Kenya at the grassroots uses Rights Committees to reach out to the communities.

#### *Save the Children International (SCI) in Uganda: Involving children in Village Committee meetings to share information*

In Uganda, Save the Children International conducts monthly Village Committee community dialogue meetings for children and adults to discuss general community issues that affect children in protection, health, education and livelihoods areas. These forums serve as a means of communicating with the community. The involvement of children in the forums is a good practice because the community committee is able to hear directly, issues that affect their children regularly.

### *Sharing information through field staff and partners*

A general trend among IAWG members has been to share information with beneficiaries through their own staff in the field. Some of the organizations using field staff to pass information to beneficiary communities in East and Central Africa are Save the Children International, UNOCHA, UNHCR and WFP, Save Our Souls (SOS), FAO, HelpAge International and WVI. A common approach across these organizations is to appoint an accountability focal point who ensures information is shared with benefiting communities.

UN agencies such as UNOCHA, UNHCR and WFP implement their activities through partner organizations and therefore depend on partner staff to share information with beneficiary communities. These organizations also have field offices with staffs that are also in close contact with communities to share information with them. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for example, in addition to implementing partners, uses own field staff in sharing information in all their programs in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. This is also the case with WFP which has staff in the field to share information with benefiting communities. HelpAge International Kenya shares information through contracted local partners in four (4) Counties in Kenya.

Some IAWG member organizations stated that beneficiary communities find information coming directly from representatives of organizations more solid and trustworthy. The benefiting communities reported that they feel appreciated when they are given the opportunity to voice their opinions directly to the implementers. According to CHS, when beneficiaries feel appreciated by the organization it enhances their sense of wellbeing.

This mechanism is very effective in bringing beneficiaries and implementers closer. In a few cases, however, where there are language and cultural barriers between the implementing staff and the benefiting communities, this strategy is bound to fail.

#### *Danish Refugee Council: Benchmark Champion to foster sharing of information with beneficiaries*

DRC Humanitarian Accountability Framework Implementation in field offices (mostly in refugee camps) provides for a designated accountability Benchmark Champion for each benchmark (i.e. Information sharing, Participation, Feedback and Complaint mechanism). The information sharing champion for example plays an active role in invigorating activities around information sharing which include assigning information sharing roles to other staff.

### *Sharing of information using IEC materials*

Information, education and communication (IEC) activities include developing posters, T-shirts, flyers, leaflets, brochures, booklets, messages stickers, carry folders, flashcards to raise awareness. The activities are sometimes developed as part of beneficiary information sharing plan or sometimes as separate action for a specific programs within the organization. The use of IEC materials especially for programmes geared towards creating awareness of societal problems with an assumption that people are more likely to take action once they have adequate information about their problems.

#### *SOS Care for me Campaigns: Senior Staff talk to the Community on service and purpose of interventions*

Using frontline project staff, Save Our Souls (SOS), Kenya has been sharing information with beneficiary communities using the “care for me campaigns” which are geared towards promoting child protection in the country. The organization has gone a step ahead to hold special sessions for senior members of the organization to talk to community members about child protection and different services provided by the organization and government ministries. The beneficiary communities are also given an opportunity to voice their opinions. This enables the benefiting community to hold the organization accountable. Other frontline staff members also engage children and caregivers through, lectures and discussion forums to pass information on the project.

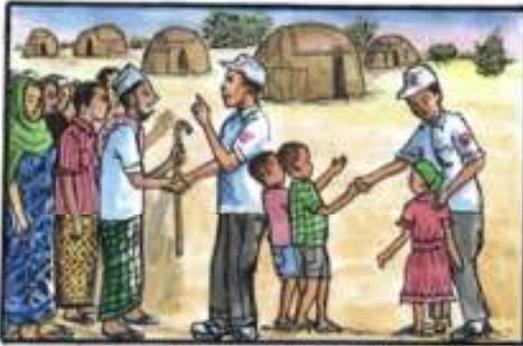
Agencies in the East and Central Africa region that use IEC materials to pass key messages to the community include SCI, WVI, FAO, Somalia and African Development Solutions (ADESO). These organizations say printed materials are easy to use, portable and can be produced at low cost.

#### *SCI: Use of IEC materials to share on organizations’ accountability standards*

Save the Children International (SCI) in the region has printed and distributed its accountability standards for specific programs. They stipulate what is expected of the organization to the beneficiary communities in terms of information sharing, participation and feedback and Complaint handling.

The presentation of these standards has been done in colorful pictorial form and symbols making it comprehensible even to the members of the community who are illiterate. In addition to that, SCI, Somalia have a ‘chart of rights’, an IEC material detailing beneficiaries entitlements.

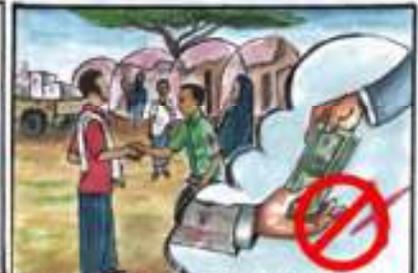
## NUTRITION PROGRAM STANDARDS



SAVE THE CHILDREN WILL RESPECT & ENGAGE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS



SAVE THE CHILDREN WILL EXPLAIN THE PROGRAM AND ADMISSION CRITERIA TO BENEFICIARIES



NO DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF AGE, SEX, CULTURAL GROUP OR ANY OTHER REASON. COMMUNITY MEMBERS THAT MEET THE PROGRAM CRITERIA WILL RECEIVE NUTRITION SERVICES.

FREE ACCESS TO ALL SERVICES. COMMUNITY MEMBERS WILL NOT PAY ANY MONEY TO RECEIVE NUTRITION SERVICES.

PLEASE CALL THE FOLLOWING HOTLINE NUMBER TO REPORT ANY COMPLAINT OR GIVE YOUR SUGGESTION TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES.

SAVE THE CHILDREN MAY ALSO CONTACT BENEFICIARIES TO KNOW THEIR FEEDBACK OR COMPLAINTS OF SERVICES.

ALL FEEDBACK/COMPLAINTS REPORTED BY BENEFICIARIES OR NON BENEFICIARIES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.



Hotline Number:

- + 252618661687 - SC Hiran
- + 252616 948474 - SC Mogadishu
- + 252618900199 - CPD Mogadishu

email: [som.feedback@savethechildren.org](mailto:som.feedback@savethechildren.org)



TIME: 8.00 AM TO 5.00 PM  
SATURDAY TO THURSDAY



**Save the Children**



*Use of food/inputs distribution vouchers to share information with beneficiaries*

World Vision International , FAO Somalia and ADESO Kenya , Somalia , South Sudan have been using the Food and inputs Distribution vouchers to share information related to the distribution . Beneficiary feedback channels which includes a hotline number and other information about the distribution is printed on the voucher for the beneficiaries to make reference in case they need the information.

The use of local language in the IEC materials common among the organisations . In FAO , Somalia , messages on IEC materials are in Somali language thereby ensuring that the printed information can be easily understood.

*Sharing of information using Short Messaging Service (SMS)*

The use of mobile technology is changing the way organizations are sharing information with benefiting communities. The use of Short Messaging Service (SMS) has been embraced in many parts of the East and Central Africa because of the wide usage of mobile telephone attributable to the expansion of mobile telephone network coverage. In most African countries Mobile phone penetration stands at above 50 percent<sup>17</sup>. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular has recorded the fastest growth in the last 5 years.

Some of the IAWG members using Short Messaging Service (SMS) to share information with beneficiaries include Film Aid in Kenya, UNHCR, FAO Somalia, ADESO Africa and Transparency International-Kenya. In most cases the organizations use bulk SMS systems to share alerts to specific project beneficiaries whose contacts are mostly recorded during targeting. The use of bulky SMS has improved due to the development of new computer software that work in conjunction with SMS systems that allow users to send SMS to as many people as possible. This innovation also provides needed data storage capacity for knowledge management and

<sup>17</sup> <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/technology/adrianhon/100006956/mud-huts-and-smartphones-how-mobile-internet-is-transforming-life-in-sudan/>

documentation purposes. In partnership with UNHCR, Somalia, Film Aid, Kenya has an SMS alert system in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps that is capable of sending alerts to refugees using mobile phones. There are two types of alerts: general alert that provides general information or announcements and the thematic alert which requires feedback along certain thematic areas such as health, food, rape etc. Beneficiary's feedback is fed into the server which automatically flags key words for example rape, violence and other topics which are of interest to the organization for prompt action.

### *Use of notice boards and sign boards*

Some organizations are using noticeboards to share information with beneficiaries. The use of noticeboards requires that they are safeguarded from vandalism. Durability of the materials used to make the boards also matters a lot. In addition, for the noticeboards to be effective, there is need for the target beneficiaries to be literate.

#### *ADESO Africa: Use of Frontline SMS software to share alerts (Somalia, South Sudan and Kenya)*

ADESO Africa uses Frontline SMS software to send messages to its project beneficiaries in Somalia, South Sudan and Kenya.

Frontline SMS software is an open source software which can be downloaded onto a standard laptop or desktop computer. This computer is then connected to a mobile phone line through a modem stick. Broadcast messages can be sent from the Frontline SMS hub to defined contact groups. These contact groups vary in size from two people to several hundreds.

The system does not require an internet connection, but the computer must remain switched on continuously so that it can send and receive SMS messages. The Hub's contact list is classified into programs for ease of sending messages to targeted persons; therefore, the messages have to be tailored in Context, content and style to the recipient: This initiative enhances two-way communication between the agency and its respective beneficiaries and focal points in rural communities in various regions.

#### *World Vision, Somalia: Noticeboards and community ownership*

In Baki, Somaliland, WVI, Somalia has placed notice boards, signboards and banners in strategic areas such as trading centers, schools and markets. To ensure effective use of the notice and sign boards, an accountability team sat with community members at inception of the project to decide on how information about the project will be shared.

The community, for example decides on strategic points to install the notice boards and how the information should appear on the notice boards. This has enabled the community to take total ownership of the information sharing mechanism including safeguarding the noticeboards from vandalism. Through the notice boards, WVI is able to reach specific targeted communities with the specific messages.

### *Sharing information through government administrative units*

Most of these agencies use community meetings organized by the government administration to share information with the beneficiary communities. Agencies that use this mechanism include in the East and Central region include: Transparency International- Kenya, Concern Worldwide, UNOCHA, WFP, ADESO, WVI, SOS, UNICEF, FAO, the Australian Council for International Development (ACF) and Save the Children International.

Community meetings are mostly used to raise awareness especially when introducing and explaining the targeting and distribution process for humanitarian programs or when introducing a development projects. The meetings are commonly organized through the lowest level of the government administration structure. In Kenya, agencies organize meetings through the chief who mobilizes the community to attend the meetings. The meetings are commonly referred to as the Chief's barazas and are held once a week. They bring together the village elders from different villages and general members of the public. In Uganda the Local Council 1 which is close to the community is the information sharing entry point by most agencies. In Ethiopia, organizations go through ward (Kebele which is a subset of the Woreda (District) where the Kebele Committee conducts mobilization for meetings where agencies can share information with the beneficiaries. In Sudan, agencies arrange their meetings through the state authorities and the District (Wilayat) and share information to the beneficiaries through the Omdas – chiefs. In Djibouti information sharing meetings are organized through Prefets and Regional Councils.

However, most IAWG members expressed a general concern on how information is shared with the community through the local administrative units. Most community members have in the past insisted that local administrators are dictatorial and not transparent. Community members also insist that local administrators are biased on who they share information with.

Public meetings organized by the government administrative units draw people in a geographic area to discuss issues that concern their day to day life. Organizations use public meetings to communicate information to the members of the public. Some organizations have organized the meetings in such a way that they are focused on Accountability to the beneficiaries.

### *Government of Rwanda: Rwanda Public Accountability Day*

Every three months Kigali City and its districts hold a public accountability day. Accountability open day is an initiative led by the Government of Rwanda where all development partners in a district meet to showcase their achievements. Accountability open day presents an opportunity for the whole Kigali community to explore the City Council, get involved in a range of activities and learn what both government and non-government sector actors are doing.

## Participation

Some IAWG members in East and Central Africa continue to seek views from community members to improve program design and implementation. Through community meetings, community committees and local administrative structures, social audits and interactive media technologies, beneficiaries are given an opportunity to participate in the implementation of activities by the agencies. A number of tools have been developed by IAWG member organizations to enhance participation of beneficiary communities. These tools are used to guide or encourage participation of beneficiary communities and enable them to contribute to development and humanitarian program implementation.

### Tools to encourage participation

Three tools that have been used to enhance participation of beneficiary communities were mentioned by the IAWG members. The People First Impact Method, the Water Integrity Management Toolbox and Johanniter's Partner Assessment Tool.

#### *P-FIM (People First Impact Method)*

P-FIM is an approach meant to 'give communities a voice'.<sup>18</sup> It identifies the causes of positive, negative and neutral change in the lives of the communities. The P-FIM tool adds value to agencies that endeavour to engage communities fully in their own development. It is complementary to existing participatory approaches. It is primarily a methodology for assessing and evaluating impact with the beneficiary playing key roles in the process. It is designed to be implemented by front-line programme staff and emphasizes listening to and identifying changes taking place in communities.

The first two days of a P-FIM training exercise focus on aspects of human development, inter-personal communication and social change, so that training participants are able to engage, facilitate, listen and record properly. Each of the sessions are transformative in assisting field teams to form relationships of respect, trust and openness with communities to make them participate in programs.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://p-fim.org/>

Since 2010, 699 national front line staff from 262 organizations have been trained in P-FIM and engaged with 6,084 people in multiple inter-agency exercises. In East and Central Africa, training in the use of P-FIM has been done for agencies in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania.

### *Water Integrity Management Toolbox*

Caritas Switzerland and the Water Integrity Network (WIN) have developed an Integrity Management Toolbox for rural small scale water supply systems. In Kenya, rural water supply is mainly managed by community groups operating outside the regulatory framework. Poor governance, failures in operations and maintenance (O&M) and cost recovery often lead to poor services and non-functional infrastructure shortly after the supporting agency exits. Caritas Switzerland (CACH), in partnership with Caritas Kericho, has implemented the project “From Emergency Response to Development – Sustaining Water Services Delivery through Increased Focus on Integrity in Kericho, Kenya”. The project, which started in June 2014 is financed by the Water Integrity Network (WIN) as part of their Local Water Integrity Programme (LWIP) to promote integrity in local water supply, sanitation and water resources management.

The main output of this project is the toolbox “Integrity Management Toolbox for Small Scale Rural Water Supply Systems”. The toolbox aims to promote integrity and enhance sustainability in rural water service delivery in the light of the evolving regulatory framework in Kenya. The toolbox is inspired by a similar one developed for urban water service providers also supported by WIN.

The toolbox supports communities to become compliant within the water sector regulatory framework and to professionalize their operations. The expected outcomes of using the toolbox are threefold - enhanced accountability upwards to oversight authorities, downwards accountability to the community served and the sustainability of water services that are managed by community groups.

The methodology has been tested in Kericho County, Kapelartet sub-location in Kenya where CACH and Caritas Kericho have supported the community for over two years, to improve water supply in six villages. The initial testing showed that the methodology and related tools are effective in enabling community groups to identify integrity issues, visualize their water system from a business perspective, identify core issues affecting performance, understand their key stakeholders and relevant regulation and make collective decisions about how to address emerging issues. Once the toolbox has been finalized – after further testing in Kericho and elsewhere, it is expected that it will be ready for use with any community group that is managing a water supply system in any county, with minimum adaptation.

### *The Johanniter's Partner Assessment Tool*

The Johanniter's Partner Assessment Tool was designed to enable the organization to assess implementing partners' commitment to accountability. The conditions for qualifying for funding include the evidence from the organization that it regularly involves the community (especially people with disabilities) in planning and implementation of activities. The partners commit to consult with the community and are assessed using the tool. The Partner Assessment Tool has encouraged implementing partners be proactive in involving members of the community in their activities. The tool has been used in Kenya, South Sudan, DRC and Djibouti.

### Participation through community meetings

IAWG members included attending community meetings and trainings, joint activities, social audits, planning and budget meetings in their definition of participation of beneficiary communities. Attending community meetings and trainings was cited as the main way of ensuring participation by beneficiary communities. In most cases community members, through the village committee formed by implementing agencies, were able to participate in interventions.

Most of the organizations said they conduct inception meetings at the beginning of each project with community members, government officials and local community based organizations (CBOs). During these meetings project beneficiaries are encouraged to give their opinions on how they want the project to be conducted. However, in most cases, guidelines for conducting participation in a systematic way are not available. In other words accountability mechanisms are embedded in implementation as practice. It is necessary to have guidelines to make sure that there is uniformity in implementation.

#### *Save the Children International Uganda: Use of community dialogue to enhance beneficiary participation in Uganda*

Although community dialogue has been used for a long time in programmes, it was not seriously considered to be an accountability platforms. This initiative serves to enhance programme delivery and accountability by enabling communities to participate in these dialogues and share their views on issues affecting them. Community dialogue meetings are arranged by Save the Children International (SCI) Uganda, for children and adults to:

1. Discuss general community issues that affect children in protection, health, education and livelihoods.
2. Share information about SCI and its activities in various locations
3. Receive feedback and complaints from beneficiaries about services provided by SCI – quality and quantity of SCI services, behavior of staff and volunteers, procurement processes and recruitment – hiring and firing processes.

## *Participation through community committees and local administrative structures*

Participation of the beneficiary community is also done through committee members appointed by or volunteering from the community. These committees are given an opportunity to participate in the implementation of programmes and serve as representatives of the beneficiary communities.

### *Save Our Souls - Kenya: Area Advisory Committees*

Save Our Souls (SOS)'s Family Strengthening Programmes enable children who are on the brink of losing family care to grow up in a caring family environment. To achieve this, the organization works together with families and communities, empowering them to effectively protect and care for their children. Each SOS implementation target area has an Area Advisory Committee which serves as a link between the organization and the community and also encourages participation of the beneficiary communities.

## *Participation through social audits*

Social audits are meant to enhance social accountability and purpose different communities benefitting from an intervention to monitor and assess the organization's performance against their targets. Members of such communities are thus able to participate in the strengthening of the intervention by the organization. The format in which 'social audit as participation' is implemented varies; in some cases implementing agencies train beneficiary communities they are working with to conduct an audit of the organization itself whereas in other situations the initiatives being implemented equip communities with the capacity to hold government and non-

### *TI-Kenya: Social Accountability Project*

TI-Kenya works with local partners to raise beneficiaries' awareness of identified corruption risks and to build their capacity to monitor aid and projects implemented in their communities. TI-Kenya through implementing partners in Wajir (WAPNET), Turkana (LOKADO) and West Pokot (SIKOM) counties has initiated a social accountability project. This social accountability initiative seeks to monitor and assess governmental and non-governmental organization's performance against the targets set for each initiative.

The assessment evaluates the level of information shared with beneficiaries during targeting and registration and information available regarding project budgets and timeframes. It also evaluates the processes in place to consult community members during all stages of implementation of the intervention as well as the existence of safe, accessible and effective complaints and response mechanisms put in place by the organization. Community members are trained as social auditors so that they can hold service providers accountable and report suspected cases of corruption. The resulting social accountability reports are shared with stakeholders at the county level on a quarterly basis.

governmental actors accountable. There are very few initiatives associated with social auditing in the East and Central region.

## Participation through interactive media

Organizations have are using interactive media and technology products to encourage beneficiaries to participate in their programs. Enhancing information sharing and feedback and through appropriate complaints mechanisms encourages participation by beneficiary communities. The BBC Media Action has, for example, implemented interactive radio programmes addressing several programmatic areas including hygiene promotion, violence, WASH in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania. The charity runs a youth-focused project *Hiigsiga Nolosha* (meaning “desire” or “aspirations for life”) in Somalia which includes radio drama, radio phone-in programmes and mentoring for partner stations.

Through its interactive radio drama, *Maalmo Dhaama Manta* (A better life than today), young people are able to participate in discussions about both the opportunities and the obstacles that they face in Somalia.

### ***SCI Rwanda - Child participation and accountability approach in education programmes***

In SCI's Education Signature Programme, six key priority areas were identified to integrate children's' participation for the successful delivery of the education, child protection and rights programmes. Staff were inducted on the need to have children's' opinions and needs incorporated throughout the project cycle, developing approaches that enable children to raise their voice in order to influence decision making and empowering children to be effectively involved in influencing the programme.

The initiative has now been extended to two education programmes. As part of the literacy programme children are given an opportunity to voice their opinions on the kind of storybooks and stories they prefer and then SCI takes the initiative to advocate for increased publishing of those type of books. The children also directly influence, advise and shape the development of teacher training curriculum and materials and the revision of the existing toolkit including content, design and delivery.

Building on existing national and local infrastructures for the programme, a Children's' Advisory Board was successfully established and ran effectively throughout the duration of the Education Signature Programme, from April 2015. Children-influenced policy briefing position papers and advocacy initiatives have been developed to advise and influence decision makers including policy makers, service providers, leaders, parents, government

## Initiatives by organizations encouraging participation of vulnerable groups

### **Feedback and complaints handling**

Accountable organizations seek the views of affected and beneficiary populations to improve policy and practice in their programming. They ensure that feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined and made accessible and appropriate for dealing with complaints about breaches in policy and stakeholder dissatisfaction.<sup>19</sup>

There efforts by different IAWG member organizations and partners to enhance feedback and complaint handling within their organizations and in the sector at large. These organizations have established feedback and complaints mechanisms with the purpose of enabling their beneficiaries to hold them accountable. These mechanisms include toll-free hotlines, suggestion boxes, email, help and feedback desks, community committees and web-based platforms among others.

A noticeable trend is the inclusion of details about the reporting mechanisms in organizations' IEC materials and most importantly the key documents used by beneficiaries such as the vouchers in the case of a cash transfer programmes. Organizations are also leaning towards integrating feedback and complaints handling systems. The following is a snapshot of some mechanisms that were mentioned by respondents from governmental and non-governmental organizations across Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti and the Sudan.

### Feedback and complaints mechanisms used by IAWG members

#### ***Hotlines***

A hotline is a complaints and feedback mechanism through which a call from a complainant is directed to a predefined destination without any further manipulation by the caller. The call takers record all call and information and refer it to a designated person for handling. Agencies that are currently using hotlines to receive complaints and feedback include FAO, WVI, SCI, German Agro- Action Kenya, Concern Worldwide Kenya, Danish Refugee Council, Burundi Red Cross Society, IOM, Caritas Burundi and UN-OCHA.

These agencies generally have a dedicated mobile phone line to receive complaints. The mobile phone number is shared with members of the public who are invited to give feedback or make complaints as part of strengthening complaint and feedback system. In all the agencies mentioned a similar procedure is followed

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<sup>19</sup> IASC, AAP

from receipt of the initial phone call through to resolution of the concern. Normally, a complaint is lodged via call or SMS. It is then entered into a log book by the Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer or officer designated. Feedback may be given through the same medium or face-to-face. For complaints and feedback that is sensitive in nature, beneficiaries are directed to call designated leaders and managers of the organization. Representatives of organizations reported that these hotlines are in most cases used by anonymous callers and it was sometimes hard to verify the information provided by the caller. Usage is low in situations where publicity is weak and poor mobile network connectivity and coverage also contribute. The cost of the call and the mobile phone device can also be an impediment to the user. However the representatives upheld the value of the mechanism and said it is good for safeguarding confidentiality of callers especially in the case of sensitive complaints. Organizations are gravitating towards use of toll free lines in order to remove the restraint of costs of call from beneficiaries and stakeholders. Some have gone to the extent of providing handsets.

### ***SCI & Somalia Return Consortium: Providing phones to enhance beneficiary feedback***

In order to improve the use of the hotline some organizations have taken the initiative to provide beneficiaries of their interventions with phones so that they are able to give feedback and make complaints. Although the phones also serve other functions such as being used for mobile cash transfers, they have been instrumental in encouraging beneficiaries to use the hotlines for feedback.

Somalia Return Consortium hosted by UNHCR Somalia and is composed of UNHCR, IR, DRC and FAO. The project aim is to return internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their original homes in Somalia. The IDP returnees are given a “return package” which includes a phone that they are encouraged to use to provide feedback through SMS and phone calls.

SCI gave mobile phones to beneficiaries of a Cash Transfer Programme in Kenya in order to improve communication and also to allow them to transact through mobile money transfer processes. Mobile money transfer is very common in Kenya. Households benefitting from the intervention were encouraged to use the phones to make complaints or give feedback on the SCI intervention. Although the benefit of this kind support to the agency and the affected communities is obvious, the venture can be very costly and is

### *The Burundi Humanitarian Hotline*

The Burundi Humanitarian Hotline is a joint initiative of the UN Country Team, NGOs, the Government and the Burundi Red Cross Society. While the project is spearheaded by World Vision International, other partners like IOM, Burundi Red Cross, Caritas Burundi and OCHA East Africa are supporting various aspects of the initiative. The project's major aim was to allow some sharing of information about the humanitarian landscape in the absence of five private media stations which were destroyed in May 2015 ahead of general elections in July. This imposed a media blackout that continues to challenge communities who need life-saving information about humanitarian support and humanitarian workers who have limited information about beneficiary communities' needs. The humanitarian community worried about high food prices and the sharp decline in tax revenue.

The hotline demanded accountability from humanitarian aid organizations by requiring that they fill the un-met need for information sharing about the situation of affected communities and responses to the crisis facing these populations. The hotline referral system will be from the telephone managers to the Humanitarian Task Force which covers many sectors including food security, livelihoods and health. The Humanitarian Task Force's feedback on assistance is then communicated to callers in the shortest time possible. The project kicked off on 1 October 2015 and is in a three month initial pilot phase with the possibility of extension based on success and evaluation of the initiative.

### *Call Centres*

Call centres are used by organizations for receiving and transmitting voice messages especially in situations where there is heavy phone traffic. An inbound call centre is operated by an organization to administer incoming support or information inquiries from beneficiary groups. Outbound call centres are operated by organizations sending information to the target groups.

Call centres are common among UN agencies operating in the region. The FAO Somalia uses its call centre to monitor FAO projects and initiatives with specific focus on monitoring that beneficiaries receive their entitlements and stem cases of aid diversion. The FAO call centre is also used in conducting results-based studies. The UN-OCHA call centre in Somalia was also set up to verify implementation of projects by partners.

Although most beneficiaries still rely heavily on telephones to deliver their messages, the growing use of social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter is forcing organizations to re-think and re-organize the call centre strategy.

### *The FAO Somalia Call Centre*

The FAO Somalia outbound Call Centre (CC) was set up in 2012 at the peak of the humanitarian emergency in Somalia. The CC makes use of mobile technology to communicate with thousands of programme beneficiaries on FAO interventions as part of a wider remote management system, with the primary focus of ensuring that affected populations receive their entitlements in a timely and transparent way.

This information is utilized by project management staff to make improvements in projects during implementation, and provide lessons for future interventions.

The Call Centre ensures a continuous two-way communication between FAO and the beneficiary community, routine transparency and provides project management staff with timely information on compliance issues for AAP and other project related information.

Complementary to the Hotline, the FAO Somalia Call Centre also receives complaints and feedback from direct and indirect beneficiaries, leading to action and follow up.

### *Short text messaging - SMS*

Organizations working in East and Central Africa have introduced SMS platforms for communicating with beneficiaries to allow them to make complaints and give feedback. Being able to use a free SMS service provides a direct link between beneficiaries and the agencies and allows for the safe reporting of cases of malpractices and corruption. Organizations receive feedback through SMS using phones in the first instance and transfer them to another media for analysis.

Organizations that have used SMS platforms to receive feedback include; BBC Media Action, UNICEF, ADESO, FAO, Film aid, German Agro, UN-OCHA, SOMREP and TI-Kenya among others. SMS data can be easily captured, analysed and stored for documentation purposes. Organizations regularly review the feedback obtained in this way and make recommendations for improvements to the system.

### *Suggestions and complaints boxes*

Suggestions and complaints boxes are locked boxes located within the community and into which beneficiaries of development or humanitarian aid interventions can place a written complaint, feedback note or letter. Agencies have used suggestion and complaints boxes to receive feedback from the beneficiaries or users of a

service. Focal persons are identified to manage – regularly open and pick, analyze and record - complaints that are then recorded in a database. Depending on the nature of the complaint or feedback, responses are provided individually or to a group. Complaints are analyzed to understand any trends and findings are used to inform programming. This mechanism has been used by ADDESO in Somalia, Kenya and South Sudan and SCI, Uganda.

### ***Community help desk***

A community help desk is described as a committee of community members that are available during distributions and meetings to receive, record and respond to community members' complaints and feedback about an agency's programs, commitments or conduct.<sup>20</sup> It serves as a source of information for both the community and agency on beneficiary selection, distribution programme and other services. Sometimes it is manned by staff of the organization providing relief.

This mechanism is very common in food relief programmes. WFP and WVI used community help desks during food distributions across East and Central Africa. In Hargesia, Doro Burawo Somalia, three member help-desks are placed during food distribution to document complaints and feedback and address them. WVI has also created the Child Help Desk (CHD) in Kenya so as to share programme and project information with children, hear children's voice through collecting and acting on complaints and feedback from children.

### ***World Vision International, Kenya – Community Help Desk***

A Community Help Desk (CHD) is a committee of selected project members of standing integrity who may range from 4 – 8 men and women who serve as a first line complaints response mechanism in the implementation of projects. World Vision Kenya has operated CHDs since 2005. After training the CHD committee members are facilitated with working materials including a complaints log book and a luminous green jacket and stationery. A project beneficiary may lodge a complaint with the CHD upon which it is entered in the complaints log book in duplicate. The form has two parts; the top most for the 'complaint' and the bottom one for the 'response'. The complainant is issued with a copy of the complaint once it has been resolved and the complainant confirms that they are satisfied with the resolution.

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<sup>20</sup>World Vision Global Accountability Discussion Series, #2 1 Global Accountability- Overview of NGO – community complaints mechanisms

All committee members on the help desk follow a set of guidelines covering their roles, responsibilities and conduct and complaints are handled according to strict protocol. Training is provided to committee members and an awareness programme within the community informs beneficiaries of the aim of the desk and the process for making a complaint. Although the help desk committee is capable of resolving many issues and complaints locally, all complaints are recorded for verification by the agency. Sensitive complaints are immediately addressed to the agency for follow-up and may also be simultaneously directed to the police.

### ***Complaints and feedback committees***

A complaint and feedback committee is usually formed by an agency to provide a link between the organization and the beneficiary community. These committees serve as a way of enhancing ownership of the complaint mechanism and also provide transparency at the grassroots. Agencies such as FAO, WVI and SCI have used this mechanism for complaints and feedback handling in the region.

FAO for example recommends that its implementing partners to set up local complaints mechanisms including community based committees to handle complaints in real time considering their close physical proximity to affected populations. Gender representativeness is a crucial requirement during the formation of these committees to ensure that female committee members are available to handle complaints from female beneficiaries.

In some cases committee members were drawn from citizens who are not part of the main community governing authority. They provide advice to the organization and participate in most of the work that links the organization with the community. FilmAid in Kenya has used such committees to receive and give feedback in refugee camps. Fifteen members were selected to volunteer from each camp and tasked with providing regular feedback on behalf of the camps.

#### ***Save the Children International (SCI) – Accountability Committees***

SCI, Kenya established Accountability Committees for its money transfer project in Ijara, Hulugho, Balambala and Lagdera. The committees consist of a head teacher from a local school, religious leaders and other respected community elders. Membership is voluntary. Accountability Committees were made aware of the most anticipated questions and trained to answer these questions in a simple way using the local Somali language. Accountability Committee members were appointed by the community and were very supportive in the data collection for this study.

### ***Web-based integrated complaints and referral mechanisms***

Web based platforms have lately gained popularity among organizations. Such initiatives usually result from a collaboration of partners working in a certain area. Platforms are built in such a way that the complaints can be forwarded to the online system by either directly accessing its portal or using other means to post the complaint such as SMS. The web-based mechanism usual has an administrator whose work is to open the complaints and refer them to the targeted parties. The following are highlights of examples of these initiatives in East and Central Africa.

#### ***Transparency International - Uwajibikaji pamoja***

*Uwajibikaji pamoja* (Accountability together in Kiswahili) is an automated web-based integrated complaints and referral mechanism aimed at improving accountability and quality of aid and service delivery at county level by facilitating the referral of public complaints from one provider to another. The mechanism is being implemented in Turkana, Wajir and West Pokot counties in Kenya and has attracted over 50 governmental and non-governmental organizations' offices working in the three counties.

This service enables members of the public and organizations to submit and refer complaints to the relevant public or non-public service providers through a toll free SMS-line and email. People with no access to phones and internet and also those who cannot read and write can visit the nearest participating partner's office and lodge their complaints. All complaints received are fed into the web-based system and referred to the organization concerned. The complainant is given a tracking number and is notified by SMS on the status of their complaint. In case the concerned partner has not responded after a defined lapse of time a reminder is sent by the convener. The project also conducts outreach to the public for the purpose of making the public aware of the mechanism through radio and collecting complaints forms from members of the public.

So far, 15359 complaints have been received through the system, an average of 1706 complaints per month. There has been a sharp increase in the number of members of the public lodging complaints through the mechanism.

### ***World Vision International (WVI) - Ethics point***

WVI uses a leading third-party provider of ethical reporting services to support its expanded "whistleblower" mechanism. A confidential telephone hotline and an online reporting tool are available to staff, partners in the field, contractors and others wishing to report suspected illegal or unethical conduct by WVI or its personnel. To make an online report, complainants can go to [www.worldvision.ethicspoint.com](http://www.worldvision.ethicspoint.com).

This site is hosted and operated by NAVEX Global a provider of ethics and compliance reporting services, and is available for staff and board members throughout the World Vision Partnership, including full-time, part-time, contract and temporary employees, interns, volunteers, board members and advisory council members. Additionally, this service is available as a reporting mechanism to all beneficiaries, donors, sponsors, visitors, contractors and vendors of World Vision.

### ***Integrated Public Complaints Referral Mechanism (IPCRM) Kenya***

The Integrated Public Complaints Referral Mechanism (IPCRM) platform has brought together six institutions namely; Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission (EACC), the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), National Cohesion & Integration Commission, Transparency International-Kenya and the National Anti-corruption Campaign Steering Committee (NACCSC) to receive and refer complaints from members of the public on corruption, mal-administration, human rights violations, discrimination and hate speech through an automated system.

Since its inception, the IPCRM has provided a platform for ease of receiving complaints and referring them to the relevant agency for resolution. A pilot phase was done in 5 centers in Mombasa, Kisumu, Nyeri, Kitale and Wajir between 2012 and 2015. Thereafter, the IPCRM was made accessible to all other regions including the pilot centers and is now hosted in more than 20 centers, represented by the participating agencies. The Centers have been hosted by the relevant agency within the specific region with the objective of enhancing partnership amongst the participating agencies, saving administrative costs of running an office and facilitating enhanced access by the public to the oversight complaints mechanism.

## Learning and continuous improvement

The design, monitoring and evaluation of goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations is emphasized. Learning must continuously feed-back into organizations and reporting of results of the process enhanced. The IAWG Q&A subgroup emphasizes the need to conduct accountability assessments periodically; integrate accountability criteria into the evaluation of external projects; share evaluation findings and lessons learnt with staff, communities and other stakeholders for continuous improvement; and, use recommendations from accountability assessments to inform decision making. This dimension of accountability can be examined from two levels; the emphasis of involvement of beneficiary communities in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programs. Secondly, the evaluation and continuous learning specifically about accountability.

Some IAWG members have monitoring and evaluation systems that seek to track and assess performance of the project. Some mentioned that they had incorporated the community members as key actors during monitoring and evaluation activities. Some organizations conduct joint monitoring visits with representatives from the beneficiary communities. Although this is seen to be a good initiative at organizational, level there is little evidence including the supportive allocation of resources, to indicate the rate of success of involvement of the community in monitoring and evaluation.

In terms of learning and continuous improvement, specifically on accountability initiatives, organizations mentioned that there is a wide gap in terms of documentation of accountability initiatives and therefore the organizations miss opportunities to learn and share their experiences in different contexts.

The UN agencies, SCI and WVI have produced accountability related materials including policy briefs,<sup>21</sup> success stories, learning videos<sup>22</sup> and documentaries. These resources are key to continuous learning by organizations in the region. During the mapping exercise evidence of concrete and successful integration of the information gathered from communities' into programmes was difficult to find.

### *Participation of beneficiaries in evaluation of interventions*

Some organizations conduct assessment of interventions together with beneficiaries. FAO Somalia for example conducts post distribution assessments together with partners and beneficiaries to verify that beneficiaries have

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<sup>21</sup> Improving Impact-Do Accountability mechanisms deliver results)  
SC/ChristianAid/HAP) <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/accountability-impact-report-2013.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Videos (see video links :

SC Accountability <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgMfCwwu4nY&feature=plcp>

10 steps to setting up a CRM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXvIn3rddmA>

Somalia <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eqcer2y8up79fuc/AAAtjx8YXZP5LSTGKwbGHPW3a?dl=0>

received entitlements as expected. The beneficiaries take part in discussions geared towards improving future interventions.

### *Documentation of community feedback*

The recording of complaints and feedback followed by analysis in some of the organizations and then sharing the same during program meetings is seen as a good initiative to enhance learning. ADESO Africa, World Vision in Kenya and Somalia have specific books for documenting complaints. The book is periodically analyzed and findings are shared with beneficiaries.

### *Data management to support M&E*

#### *Joint Assessment Mission (JAM)*

A Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) is conducted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP to assess the food and non-food needs of refugees and other communities of concern to both organizations. A JAM is conducted where there is a new influx of refugees following a crisis and has the priority aims of assessing food security and self-reliance of long-term refugees as well as laying the groundwork for voluntary repatriation and reintegration. Partner agencies are involved in the design of tools and data collection during JAM. Community members are engaged through focus group discussions and their input feeds back to enhance the sound implementation of programmes.

#### *Save the Children International (SCI) - The Programme*

##### *Accountability Guidance Pack*

SCI Accountability Team has put together a Programme Accountability Guidance Pack which brings together practical and tested 'how-to' guidance and training materials designed to help development and humanitarian workers put accountability into practice. The pack includes a DVD, with four films developed to improve understanding and facilitate discussions of programme accountability. It is primarily aimed at country-level SCI and partner staff responsible for implementing development or humanitarian projects and programmes.

#### *German Agro - Accountability Assessment*

German Agro is one of the largest non-government aid agencies in Germany. It provides integrated aid from rapid disaster aid to reconstruction and development projects in conjunction with local partners. In the East and Central Africa region, it works in Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Somalia.

An accountability baseline study was conducted in 2013 and accountability initiatives initiated in seven project countries out of the 39 countries in which German Agro implemented its programs. This activity has since seen the consolidation of aspects of accountability that have in the past been seen as separate entities. Integration of accountability and related codes in staff management and capacity building for example, a child protection policy, prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation policy, grievance and staff code of conduct. Staff have undergone training in accountability. The Kenyan office now has an accountability framework as a result of this baseline.

## Section 4: Conclusions and recommendations

### Conclusions

This study maps accountability initiatives implemented by IAWG members and partners in 13 countries, defining the features of the initiatives and their context.

The study finds that there is a growing interest among members of IAWG to enhance accountability in their work and their organizations - especially in initiatives for improving information sharing, participation and feedback mechanisms with beneficiary communities. There is also need for organizations to enhance learning and use this learning to continuously strengthen accountability.

The operationalization of different initiatives by IAWG member organizations working in the region is largely the result of adherence to other national, regional and international or sector-wide accountability initiatives. Although organizations refer to commitments to accountability made under these external mechanisms, the linkage between the actual initiatives and their commitments. Some initiatives operate as stand-alone activities and not like accountability initiatives per se.

### *Transparency and information sharing*

Different agencies across East and Central Africa are using a range of approaches to share information with beneficiaries. The choice of strategy by the IAWG members was seen to be influenced by several concerns among them the type of messages sent to beneficiary (which include alerts, awareness and service prompts); the geographical reach of the organizations whether vast or restricted; the characteristics of the beneficiary or beneficiaries (including literacy levels, culture and language); and the resources allocated for accountability activities.

### *Participation*

It was found that IAWG organizations in study countries mostly seek views from the community members through general community meetings, community committees and local administrative structures, social audits and interactive media. The goal of seeking community views was to improve planning, program design and implementation. A number of tools have been developed by IAWG member organizations to enhance the participation of beneficiary communities. Some initiatives specifically seek to enhance the inclusion of vulnerable groups throughout the programme cycle enabling them to provide feedback and to influence decisions at all stages.

### *Complaints and feedback mechanisms*

Some organizations have established feedback and complaints mechanisms with the purpose of enabling their project beneficiaries to hold them accountable. These mechanisms comprise of toll-free hotlines, suggestion

boxes, email, help and feedback desks, community committees and web-based platforms among other mechanisms. Organizations working in relief and disaster related work tend to have most these initiatives in place compared to the agencies implementing development programs.

The challenges associated with complaints and feedback mechanisms were found to centre on capacity to ensure the efficient and effective running of the mechanisms. For example, staff capacity to investigate and resolve a complaint sometimes is a challenge due to resource and staffing capacity constraints.

### *Learning and continuous improvement*

There are few initiatives around participation of beneficiaries in evaluation of interventions and the documentation of beneficiary feedback that is used by the organizations to make improvements on programmes. In terms of learning and continuous improvement specifically on accountability initiatives, there is a wide gap in the documentation of accountability initiatives and organizations therefore miss opportunities to learn and share their experiences in different contexts.

## Recommendations

- 1. Transparency and information sharing:** Organizations should be proactive in their adoption and development of new media and communication technologies as a means of responding to the dynamic nature of communication needs in emergencies. This will require the development of working relationships with ICT sector specialists and service providers to harness the tremendous opportunities presented by new technologies for enhancing communication and for knowledge management. There is also need to build partnerships and encourage collaboration towards coordinated communication initiatives especially during emergencies. In coherent, collaborative partnerships the prohibitive cost of using broadcast media would be shared and openings for negotiating free or low cost PSA messaging partnerships with media expanded to the benefit of all partners.
- 2. Participation:** Participation of beneficiary communities must be mainstreamed into the conceptualization, development, planning and implementation of all projects and programmes for accountability to hold. Ad hoc inclusion of one-off events may provide some feedback to IAWG member projects and programmes but will not give full accountability. In this regard there is need for greater creativity and innovation in identifying and designing mechanisms to encourage participation. Participation must also be designed to identify and include the most vulnerable members of each community.
- 3. Feedback and complaint handling:** The trend towards integration of complaints and feedback referral mechanisms in all activities should be adopted by IAWG along with the recommendation for expanding collaboration in communication in times of emergency. A collaborative, integrated complaint and feedback structure such as that proposed would offer many benefits including, support

to beneficiaries by providing a one-stop shop for reaching the services of a number of agencies; data gathering, follow-up and tracking of issues as they emerge; mechanisms for oversight; automation of responses and feedback to beneficiaries regarding common complaints and issues; continuous learning and sharing among IAWG peers and support for informal or formal peer regulation. It will also mainstream the feedback/ complaint handling aspects of the accountability process.

4. **Continuous mapping of accountability initiatives:** This mapping exercise is an invaluable learning initiative by IAWG and provides useful insights into how various actors are addressing accountability in their work. It would be useful to make this a continuous process geared towards updating the accountability database. New initiatives and learning are always emerging from different organizations. Consolidating best practices from different organizations will mainstream focus attention on accountability processes and enable agencies to learn from each other's experiences without interruption.

## Annex 1: Methodology

The mapping study went through six key steps.

1. **Desk review:** Terms of reference (TORs), relevant documents and available secondary data on accountability were reviewed.
2. **Inception note:** The inception brief was shared with the IAWG Q&A sub-group steering team detailing the understanding of the TORs and work plan for the implementation of the mapping exercise.
3. **Tools development:** The consultant developed mapping tools including a mapping tool for gathering information on the initiatives and criteria for identifying the best accountability practices.
4. **Primary data collection:** Telephone interviews and face to face interviews with representatives of IAWG member agencies and partners were undertaken.
5. **Mapping data organization:** Data collected was entered into a database and tabulated under fields including contact information of the organization; accountability dimension; type of initiative; date established; target group; focus; geographical coverage and summary description of the initiative. The data items above were consolidated in one database.
6. **Data interpretation and report drafting:** Data was analyzed and interpreted. The resulting draft report was submitted for review and further input.

### Methods of data collection

The mapping exercise is a way of finding the spread of Q&A initiatives in countries where IAWG members operate and is not an in-depth scientific analysis. Two methods were used to gather information on the nature and spread of the initiatives and the relationship between different accountability initiatives in the region.

### Desk review

Documents from various sources were gathered and reviewed. Documents were downloaded from the official websites or acquired directly from the agencies. These documents include organizational policies, project reviews and evaluations, annual reports, concept notes, minutes from meetings and workshops, strategic plans, humanitarian standards and codes.

### Key informant interviews with agency representatives

Key agency representatives from 34 agencies reached were engaged in telephone and face to face interviews to find out whether there were internal (within the organizations) or external (across the region) quality and accountability initiatives.

The mapping exercise delivered the following outputs:

<p><b>Task 1:</b> Map on-going accountability initiatives from IAWG members and their implementing partners in humanitarian and development contexts in the region (Burundi, Central African Republic, Djibouti, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). Include the context of each initiative and describe whether it is emergency, recovery or development,</p>	<p><b>Output:</b> Database of on-going accountability initiatives with details of contact person, reference links and a brief description of each initiative, methodology and tools used.</p>
<p><b>Task 2 :</b> Identify, document and disseminate best accountability practices.</p>	<p><b>Output:</b> An accountability mapping report with five to ten best practices documented</p>

## Annex 2: Operating environment of accountability initiatives

The operationalization of initiatives by IAWG member organizations working in East and Central Africa is significantly influenced by other national, regional and international or sector wide accountability initiatives. These initiatives include reporting frameworks, implementation guidance and resources, charters, codes and standards, networks and working groups, donor standards, capacity building efforts and awards and certification schemes. (A list and description of the initiatives that IAWG member agencies are linked to follows).

The types of initiatives and corresponding examples from the region are given in the following descriptions

### Learning Groups and Networks

Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) members are actively involved in quality and accountability learning groups and networks where they share information and enhance learning among members.

#### The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)

ALNAP is a unique system-wide network dedicated to improving humanitarian performance through increased learning and accountability.<sup>23</sup> It was established in 1997 as a mechanism to provide a forum on learning, accountability and performance issues for the humanitarian sector following the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR). The JEEAR is a system-wide evaluation of an international response to a humanitarian crisis. It led to demands for increased professionalization of the humanitarian sector.

#### International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

This is a global network of non-governmental organisations whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice.<sup>24</sup>

#### Accountability Peer Learning Group

The Accountability Peer Learning Group (APLG), convened by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), is a community of humanitarian and development professionals working towards expanding the body of knowledge, evidence and tools supporting accountability to affected populations in the context of emergency relief and development action. The APLG brings together 60 members from over 40 organizations, including

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.alnap.org/who-we-are/our-role>

<sup>24</sup> <https://icvanetwork.org/>

INGOs and NGOs, quality and accountability initiatives, UN agencies and bilateral donors. It has committed to work on the following research streams:-

1. Developing the evidence base looking at the impact of accountability on programme quality. This has led HAP, Christian Aid and Save the Children to develop and pilot a methodology assessing this, with the support of APLG members and ALNAP.
2. Analyzing the contribution of certification, codes, and other tools, such as accountability frameworks, on accountability practice within aid organizations.
3. Identifying challenges complex organizations such as federations have in implementing accountability good practice and providing strategies to progress this.

Membership is open to any interested stakeholder. However, participants are expected to commit to:

- Sharing learning and good practice, and
- Undertaking research activities that add to the existing knowledge, evidence, and tools.

### The Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network

The CDAC Network is a cross-sector collaboration bringing together a diverse group of organizations, including humanitarian and media development organizations and technology providers. The key principles of collaboration and partnership underpin the way network members work together to respond to the challenges facing humanitarian action as emergencies increase in magnitude and complexity.

The CDAC Network's purpose is to position communicating with beneficiaries at the heart of preparedness, response and recovery. This will enhance the effectiveness of aid, foster greater accountability, transparency and trust and improve the outcomes experienced by affected people. Importantly, it will enable stronger communications within affected groups and between affected groups and other stakeholders.

The aims of the CDAC Network are that:

1. Affected communities are better able to access life-saving information, voice their needs, ideas and feedback, and make informed decisions about their immediate recovery.
2. Humanitarian practitioners and organizations are better prepared and able to provide life-saving information and to communicate with crisis-affected communities, enhancing the effectiveness of their response.
3. The humanitarian system has the capability to ensure that communication with affected communities becomes a predictable, consistent and resourced element of disaster resilience, response and recovery, including through the use of innovative technology and partnerships where appropriate and cost-effective.

Several IAWG members are also members of this initiative.<sup>25</sup>

## Codes, standards, commitments, charters and working groups

Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) members are actively involved in both implementing and initiating codes, standards, commitments and charters that set standards and benchmarks for quality and accountability within the sector and also at the individual organization level. Some of the organizations which host these initiatives (codes, standards, commitments and charters) have worked with different organizations to enhance accountability in East and Central Africa. Some representatives of these international initiatives are also active members of the IAWG. The analysis looks at these initiatives at two levels:

1. Codes, standards, commitments charters and networks within the East and Central Africa context which members of IAWG are party to.
2. Codes, standards, commitments and charters by individual IAWG member organization and partners.

### Codes, standards, commitments, charters and networks within the East and Central Africa context

This section provides a scan of the different codes, standards, commitments and charters within the region where IAWG members are actively involved or, where they have initiatives targeting the sector at large or where they are working to improve quality and accountability within their respective organizations.

#### *Viwango: Toward civil society excellence*

"Viwango is Swahili for "standards". Viwango' is an independent, standards setting and certification organizations for CSOs in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). Viwango was founded to help guide organizations to greater accountability; helping them raise the quality and sustainability of their programs, increase awareness of accountability in the sector and help other organizations working in East Africa increase the effectiveness of their work. Viwango targets quality of work especially among organizations doing capacity building. Key highlights of this initiative include:

- Code of practice: Viwango has a code of practice which has eight (8) standards of credibility and accountability.<sup>26</sup>
- Organizations self-assessment tool: A self- assessment tool for grading internal organizational performance.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/about-the-Network/members/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.viwango.org/>

- Certification scheme: Certification by Viwango signifies that an organization has demonstrated sufficient implementation of CSO standards through a process that includes rigorous assessment on a standard-by-standard basis. After every self-assessment and third party verification, performance is graded as gold, silver or bronze. An institutional improvement plan is developed and a re-assessment conducted again after 3 years.
- Certification Council: An independent Certification Council has been set up to make certification Viwango's main focus.

Figure 5: Viwango facilitator takes participants through the code of practice



### *Commitments on accountability to affected populations (CAAP) by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)*

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is an inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The IASC was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. In 2012, The IASC piloted Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) which member agencies are supposed to adhere to. The AAP commitments have been integrated into the work of FAO, WFP, UNHCR and Action Aid who are also members of the IAWG. Reference to the IASC CAAP has also been made by other organizations operating in the region.

#### **AAP operational framework:**

This framework was initially developed to summarize the key concepts for making programming at the field level more accountable to affected populations. It is designed to assist implementing agencies both individually

and in groups to find practical entry points for improving accountability to affected populations across the project cycle.

**The five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) are:**

1. **Leadership/governance:** Member organizations demonstrate their commitment to accountability to affected populations by ensuring feedback and accountability mechanisms are integrated into country strategies, programme proposals, monitoring and evaluations, recruitment, staff inductions, trainings and performance management, partnership agreements, and highlighted in reporting.
2. **Transparency:** Organizations provide accessible and timely information to affected populations on organizational procedures, structures and processes that affect them to ensure that they can make informed decisions and choices and facilitate dialogue between an organization and target affected populations over information provision.
3. **Feedback and complaints:** Organizations actively seek the views of affected populations to improve policy and practice in programming, ensuring that feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined, appropriate and robust enough to deal with (communicate, receive, process, respond to and learn from) complaints about breaches in policy and stakeholder dissatisfaction. Specific issues raised by affected individuals regarding violations and/or physical abuse that may have human rights and legal, psychological or other implications should have the same entry point as programme-type complaints but procedures for handling these may be adapted accordingly.
4. **Participation:** Organizations enable affected populations to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them through the establishment of clear guidelines and practices to engage them appropriately and ensure that the most marginalized and affected are represented and have influence.
5. **Design, monitoring and evaluation:** Organizations design, monitor and evaluate the goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations feeding learning back into the organization on an ongoing basis and reporting on the results. The IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team is chaired by the UNHCR and Action Aid International.

**Membership criteria:** Participation is open to all interested humanitarian organizations including NGOs, UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and other international organizations willing to work together on equal footing.

### ***Core Humanitarian Standard***

HAP, People in Aid and Sphere - three of the longest established quality and accountability initiatives in the sector, came together under the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) in 2011 with the common goal of bringing about greater coherence between their respective standards. The result was the Core Humanitarian Standard which was officially launched in Copenhagen on 12 December 2014. The Core Humanitarian Standard has nine key

commitments which members adhere to and monitor. The CHS was shared at training workshops and at a dissemination event in Kenya in early 2015 which was attended by a number of IAWG members including HelpAge, ADESO, TI-Kenya, WVI, UNHCR, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam and Save the Children among others.

Figure 6: CHS commitments place communities and people affected by crisis at the centre.



### *The INGO Accountability Charter*

The INGO Accountability Charter is an initiative of international NGOs demonstrating their commitment to transparency, accountability and effectiveness and is hosted by the International Civil Society Centre. The Charter provides the only global, cross-sectoral accountability framework for INGOs. The Charter defines commitments towards which members report annually and is designed to trigger organizational developments to improve the effectiveness of NGOs.

Its key initiatives include:

1. **Global Standard for CSO Accountability:** This is an initiative of nine well-established CSO accountability networks from across the world including Viwango (a member of IAWG), Australian

Council for International Development (ACFID), Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), INGO Accountability Charter, InterAction (USA), NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism QuAM (Uganda), Rendir Cuentas Latin America and Voluntary Action Network India (VANI). The overarching aim is to strengthen the effectiveness of CSOs worldwide by devising a collective Global Standard on CSO Accountability. Over a period of three years these networks aim to build a Global Standard for CSO Accountability by cooperating and learning from each other, gaining a global view on CSO accountability, improving their codes and reducing transaction cost. The Global Standard will be built bottom up drawing from common elements and core parameters for CSO accountability in all participating codes and developing these further. It will be used as a key reference standard for the nine networks and serve as a global point of orientation for CSO accountability. The Global Standard will be written in a succinct language and serve as a collective base for CSOs from the North and South to engage from.

2. **CSO Accountability in the Digital Age:** Thought leaders from Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam and Transparency International as well as from digital movements such as 350.org, Purpose, Campact or 38 Degrees will systematically explore how to best manage the opportunities and risks of large scale, real-time stakeholder engagement in humanitarian and development work to enhance long term impact. The result will be a guiding document that provides very practical information and examples for implementation. The aim is also to form a network of relevant peer practitioners in this field to drive further developments.

### *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*

The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief expands the principle of humanity to include the right to receive and to give humanitarian assistance. It states the obligation of the international community “to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Article 9 of the Code states: “We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources;” and thus identifies the two major stakeholders - donors and beneficiaries.

#### **Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes**

1. The humanitarian imperative 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 recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

Currently there are 587 signatories to the code of conduct. Most of IAWG members are signatories to the Code.<sup>27</sup>

### *Code of Conduct on Images and Messages*

Initiated by Dochas, Code of Conduct on Images and Messages provides a framework to which organizations can refer when designing and implementing their public communications strategy. The Code offers a set of guidelines to assist organizations in their decision-making about which images and messages to choose in their communication while maintaining full respect for human dignity. By signing the Code, humanitarian and development NGOs commit to a set of principles ensuring that they will avoid stereotypical or sensational images. The adoption of the Code means that aid agencies will choose images and messages that represent the full complexity of the situations in which they work and that they will seek the permission of the people portrayed in the photos they use. The code has 89 signatories. Some members of IAWG are signatories to this code (See list of signatories).<sup>28</sup>

### *Code of Conduct of Good practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS*

This code is a joint initiative of ActionAid International, CARE USA, Global Health Council, Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+), Grupo Pela Vidda, Hong Kong AIDS Foundation, International Council of AIDS Service Organisations (ICASO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Harm Reduction Association, International HIV/AIDS Alliance and the World Council of Churches.

This Code sets out a number of guiding principles which apply a human rights approach to the range of HIV/AIDS-specific health, development and humanitarian work undertaken by NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS. It is a self-monitoring code that commits organizations to ensuring best practice in responding to the needs of those beneficiary communities who are living with HIV/AIDS.

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<sup>27</sup>

[http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Code%20of%20Conduct%20UPDATED\\_AUGUST%20%202015.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Code%20of%20Conduct%20UPDATED_AUGUST%20%202015.pdf)

<sup>28</sup><http://www.dochas.ie/signatories>

### ***Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel***

Initiated by IASC and UN-OCHA as a hosts, this statement, affirms determination to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel in accordance with the UN “Secretary-General’s Bulletin: Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse”.

### ***The NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM)***

The NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM)<sup>29</sup> is a self-assessment initiative aiming to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of NGOs. QuAM seeks to promote generally acceptable ethical standards and operational norms among Ugandan NGOs. It sets principles and standards to protect the credibility and integrity of participating NGOs. QuAM was initiated by DENIVA which is a network of non-governmental and community based organizations providing a platform for collective reflection, action and voice to voluntary local associations in Uganda.

QuAM was established in 2006 and includes three levels of certification - provisional, full, and advanced. QuAM also includes detailed implementation guidelines. The QuAM standards place special emphasis on management systems, mission focus, collaboration, and assessment and demonstration of impact. There are 32 minimum standards (including 18 standards for start-up NGOs) and 27 standards for further improvement.

### **Internal codes, standards, commitments and charters by individual IAWG member organization and partners**

### ***Accountability to Beneficiaries (AtB) by International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands Region (EAIIOI)***

This is an initiative of International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands Region (EAIIOI). The aim of the AtB programme is to provide practical support and guidance to IFRC National Societies and Partner National Societies on how they can incorporate better beneficiary accountability into their programmes, emergency operations and organizations. Minimum standards were developed after consultation with Red Cross Society offices and reference was also made to other codes and standards. Tools and resource have been designed to help meet these standards. A training curriculum to build knowledge, understanding and skills in achieving the standards and using the toolkit were developed in close collaboration with the Burundi Red Cross Society, the Kenya Red Cross Society, the

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.quamuganda.org/about-quam>

Madagascar Red Cross Society and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society. The Accountability to Beneficiaries commitments include:

1. **Participation:** Involve beneficiaries in activities, incorporating their views into programme decisions. National Societies and the IFRC will enable beneficiaries to play an active role in all programming phases, ensuring they have the ability to influence the planning, processes, activities and decisions that affect them so that assistance is appropriate and meets their needs and priorities.
2. **Transparent communications:** National Societies and the IFRC commit to sharing information with beneficiaries about their organization and what they are doing in a way that they will understand. National Societies and the IFRC will ensure regular and transparent communications with beneficiaries regarding the organization and its activities. Communications shall enable the sharing and discussion of information which is timely, relevant and accessible.
3. **Handling complaints and feedback:** Ensure beneficiaries can complain and provide comments and that the organization acts and responds to their concerns. National Societies and the IFRC shall establish complaints and feedback mechanisms at a community level, which invite beneficiaries to share concerns regarding the assistance provided. The National Societies and the IFRC shall ensure complaints are acknowledged, documented, analysed and responded to and acted on within a reasonable timeframe.
4. **Monitoring, evaluating and learning:** National Societies and the IFRC commit to asking beneficiaries for their opinions and using this information to measure progress and inform programmes. National Societies and the IFRC shall regularly and systematically collect community-level information and beneficiary feedback and use this to monitor and evaluate the progress, impact and success of activities and to plan future programmes.
5. **Holding the organization accountable:** National Societies and the IFRC make an organizational commitment to accountability to beneficiaries and embed it into IFRC ways of working. National Societies and the IFRC shall set out clear commitments of what will be delivered in a given situation and where and how these commitments will be delivered. These will be set out in a written statement and implementation plan and this information will be shared with beneficiaries.
6. **Personnel:** The organization commits to ensure that staff and volunteers have the competencies and resources needed to meet the organization's commitments. National Societies and the IFRC shall train staff and volunteers and ensure they have the necessary competencies and resources that enable them to meet the organization's commitments to accountability to beneficiaries.

### *Program Accountability Framework (PAF) by World Vision*

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization which work with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. The organization has a Programme Accountability Framework. The document defines the minimum accountability standards for World Vision programmes and how the organization engages with communities. This framework is relevant to all World Vision programming activities and in line with the fulfilment of HAP principle No. 2 and benchmark No. 1, both which require setting of accountability standards and establishment of a quality management system.

According to WVI, this framework is not intended to pass judgment about how WVI is performing in accountability. The main purpose of this framework is to help WVI identify and follow up capacity building needs in a way that provides continuous improvement in relation to programme accountability in World Vision. The framework defines four areas of programme accountability - Providing Information, Consulting with Communities, Promoting Participation and Collecting and Acting on Feedback and Complaints. WVI also adheres to requirements of a number of internationally recognized codes, policies and initiatives.

The Interagency Standing Committees Commitment to Accountability to Affected Populations

### *HelpAge Accountability Framework*

HelpAge International is an international NGO that helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty so that they can lead dignified, secure and healthy lives. HelpAge International (East West and Central Africa Region) works in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda focusing Health and Care, Livelihoods and Social Protection Programmes, towards supporting older people. The organization has subscribed to a number of Accountability standards but draws most from its commitments from four standards namely, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP),<sup>30</sup> the Red-Cross, Sphere Code<sup>31</sup> and the People in Aid<sup>32</sup> Code (Currently CHS). The HelpAge Accountability Framework has been shared with the organization's country and field offices where senior and middle management are required to adhere, implement and report progress on its implementation.

#### **HelpAge Accountability Framework is anchored on six principles**

1. **Participation:** Making sure that older people and other stakeholders such as local partners are involved in planning the emergency response and can influence how it is delivered.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/guide-to-the-2010-hap-standard-printer-friendly-version.pdf>  
<http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/><sup>31</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.peopleinaid.org/code/>

2. **Transparency:** Sharing information about the organization and program that HelpAge is delivering in an appropriate way.
3. **Complaints and feedback:** Give an opportunity for people HelpAge is aiming to support to comment on or complain about the organization's work. This can be done by setting up help desks, hotlines, suggestion boxes or holding community meetings. HelpAge staff are required to make sure that anyone who makes any suggestion or complains receives a response.
4. **Staff competence:** Make sure that staff have the skills they need and that they behave in a respectful way.
5. **Monitoring, evaluation and learning:** HelpAge commits to regularly assessing the difference its programmes have made and learning from experience to improve future work.
6. **Programme quality:** HelpAge has a sound financial and management system.

### *The Program Participants Protection Policy by Concern World wide*

The Program Participants Protection Policy was initiated by Concern Worldwide to ensure that staff are accountable to the beneficiaries of humanitarian interventions. Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy was developed to ensure the maximum protection from abuse and exploitation for beneficiaries. Anyone contracted to work with Concern, or working on behalf of Concern, must formally agree to adhere to this policy. Acceptance of, and compliance with, this policy is a condition of any partnership agreement that Concern enters into with other organizations.

### *Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF) by the Danish Refugee Council*

The Danish Refugee Council's international operations comply with the HAP 2010 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management. The Danish Refugee Council's key accountability instrument is informing their beneficiaries and other stakeholders about the Humanitarian Accountability Framework - in other words what the beneficiaries should hold them accountable for.

The accountability framework comprises a global accountability framework which applies to all international operations of the Danish Refugee Council and a local accountability frameworks which defines country-specific accountability commitments in addition to the global accountability framework. Every field office has an accountability Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) to ensure that staff are aware of their responsibility to enhance and practice accountability.

There is also countrywide training geared towards enhancing knowledge on accountability. Each field office has a HAF focal point person. There is a designated Benchmark Champion around the different benchmarks which include information sharing, participation and feedback and a complaint mechanism. During

implementation of programs there are guidelines for each of the accountability benchmarks and documentation for 'accountability in action' is encouraged through success stories, minutes of meetings and photographs. Some of the tools designed primarily to collect feedback for programme implementation are also used by beneficiary communities to channel and raise complaints.

## Annex 3: Geographical reach of IAWG members

Table 4 shows where IAWG members work. Blue represent the reach of each organization in 2014/2015.

Table 4: Geographical reach of IAWG member agencies in East and Central Africa.

Agency	Burundi	CAR	Djibouti	DRC	Ethiopia	Kenya	Rwanda	Somalia	South Sudan	Sudan	Tanzania
Save the Children International											
Caritas Switzerland											
ACF											
ADESO Africa											
APHRC											
Care Kenya											
Care International											
Concern World Wide											
DRC											
FAO											
FilmAid											
German Agro											
Goal Ireland											
HelpAge International											
IFRC											
International Medical Corps											
IR Worldwide											
Johanniter International											
KHRC											
NRC											
Oxfam GC											
People in Aid											
P-FIM											
Kenya Red Cross											
SOS											
Transparency International - Kenya											
Trocaire											
UN-OCHA											
UNHCR											
Viwango											
VSO											
WFP											
No. of agencies	11	13	9	16	21	33	14	19	21	11	14

## Annex 4: Criteria for assessing level of innovativeness

	Value to Beneficiary					
<b>1</b>	Reach	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	Usability	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b>	Purposefulness	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b>	Inclusivity	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Initiative set up &amp; implementation</b>					
<b>1</b>	Pegged on Organization's Accountability commitments	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	Specific Staff assigned	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b>	Resources allocated	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Characteristics of the initiative</b>					
<b>1</b>	Scalability	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	Replicability	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b>	Sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b>	Uniqueness	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b>	Cost-effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5