

RET International FRAMEWORK ON ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

Introduction

RET adheres to the IASC's approach, which underlines the critical need to take account of, give account to, and be held to account by the people RET seeks to assist.

Presented below is RET's organisational AAP framework for action, which is part of RET's Global Monitoring and Evaluation System to which all RET staff at headquarters, regional and field levels are committed. This is particularly relevant as for RET "be accountable" is not simply a token gesture, but it is a key attitude to contribute to and improve programming. In that sense, it becomes a foundational element of programme quality assurance. Strong accountability mechanisms lead to more effective and efficient responses to those most in need.

RET's Global M&E System addresses the AAP through the collection, use and timely restitution of appropriate data on beneficiaries' feedback aiming at improving RET's humanitarian interventions, increasing cost-efficiency and relevance of the humanitarian responses, and ensuring compliance with the five Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP).

In that regard, RET's framework for action fulfils two major purposes: (1) to guide RET staff at all levels to guarantee that accountability, feedback and complaints mechanisms are integrated in all stages of their professional work, and in all phases of the programme cycle: needs and assets assessment, design, establishing agreement on partnerships, project's implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation of

completed interventions. Besides, it also seeks to (2) provide timely, accessible, adaptable and relevant information to the affected populations on procedures, services, facilities, legislation, processes and envisioned interventions that affect them, so that they are able to make sound decisions as well as make informed choices.

RET's Institutional Principles

RET fully support the principles anchored onto the five IASC Accountability to Affected Populations Commitments¹ expressed below:

1. **LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE:** 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:** 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 a dialogue between an organisation and its affected populations over information provision.
3. **FEEDBACK and COMPLAINTS:** 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 should be adapted accordingly.

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

4. **PARTICIPATION:** 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 marginalised and affected are represented and have influence.
5. **DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** Design, monitor and evaluate the goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations, feeding learning back into the organisation on an ongoing basis and reporting on the results of the process.

In short, RET's AAP vision encompasses three dimensions: (a) the legitimate and constant willingness to involve target populations/project participants meaningfully in key decisions that impact them; (b) the commitment to remain transparent with regard to choices and resolutions made. This is achievable by ensuring timely communication adjusted to the profile of the population of concern, particularly in terms of age, gender and diversity. And, (c) building trustworthy mechanisms that not only focus on encouraging quality feedback from the affected populations, but also, and importantly, ensure that adequate response will be brought by RET to any concerns raised.

RET's Major Daily Actions to ensure Accountability to Affected Populations

- Use of a set of beneficiary feedback tools tailored to specific target groups, such as education personnel, learners, parents and caregivers, civil servants, hosting community members, persons with disabilities, etc.
- Holding monthly forums/meetings/focus group discussions with the affected populations and most vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Having an open door policy whereby beneficiaries can walk in or call and give a feedback to the national staff whenever needed.
- Use of social media such as WhatsApp accounts to groups that are relevant to this as a platform for sharing ideas and also giving feed-back.

- Reaching out to populations of concern through a door-to-door approach and the use of radio programmes, for instance in Kenya RET is collaborating with Radio Gargar, a local radio station to hold “call in radio programme”. Beneficiaries have been able to connect with RET officer and feedback has been provided and recorded through the aired live programme.

Planned measures for the upcoming 6 to 12 months:

- Harmonise of a global set of tools, standardised and tailored, adaptable and relevant to multiple contexts and type of programmes.
- Create of a more systematic and regular feedback mechanism for affected populations at country level.
- Produce of structured guidance to organise, manage and use information gathered through focus groups/forums discussions.
- Mainstream into RET Global Operational Manual RET framework of action on AAP. Include AAP framework of action within training for staff and populations of concerns.
- Make stronger linkages between RET AAP Framework for Action and RET Code of Conduct, as well as, Policies on Prevention of Abuses and Violence.
- Reinforce RET Global M&E System Package, as well as RET Knowledge Management and Programme Development toolbox, by including the newly AAP tools and guidance to reinforce country level feedback mechanisms.