



A woman carries food to her tent in a settlement of Syrian refugees in Minyara, a village in the Akkar district of northern Lebanon.

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The author wishes to thank François Grünewald and Paul Harvey for providing invaluable comments on the draft versions of this chapter. The views and opinions expressed in this chapter are however solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the CHS Alliance, or those of the peer reviewers. Details of all reviewers can be found on the inside back cover of this report.

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Taking accountability to the next level

For the World Humanitarian Summit to deliver more effective and accountable humanitarian response, it will need to push the humanitarian community to rethink its governance and find ways to be collectively accountable, argues Dorothea Hilhorst.

The Rwanda genocide triggered major transformations in humanitarian response, which led to significant progress in the areas of accountability, standards, staff duty of care, coordination, timeliness, information, logistics and effectiveness. As a result, the dignity of communities and the rights of aid recipients have become more central to the humanitarian response. While congratulations for these achievements are in order, now is not the time to sit back. What has been achieved pales in comparison to the rapidly increasing challenges the humanitarian sector faces: the multiple and complex crises of today; the high numbers of IDPs and protracted refugee situations; the increasingly insecure conditions of aid; increasingly 'fragile' contexts; the rise of terrorist-related violence; and the growing frequency of disasters triggered by natural hazards. All of these demand still greater efforts to make humanitarian response more effective.

In December 2014, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), the Sphere Project, People In Aid and Groupe URD launched the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). In June 2015, People In Aid and HAP merged to form the CHS Alliance, an organisation with over 200 members, which aims to facilitate high-quality, accountable assistance to people affected by disaster, conflict or poverty through the use of the CHS as a common quality framework.



The CHS was designed to reflect the evolution of the aid landscape: affected communities have taken a more prominent role in service delivery; there are more capable service providers locally and regionally; and national governments are taking more responsibility for the coordination and provision of aid, especially in contexts of natural disaster. Rapidly changing technology is making it possible to scale up low-cost innovations in many areas of service delivery and accountability, facilitating the delivery of aid tailored to specific contexts and people, for example through the provision of cash relief. And finally, more attention has been devoted to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and other activities that are weaving together humanitarian aid and development like never before.

These issues will be central to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, and this report has put forward different perspectives, approaches and concrete suggestions that can help improve both accountability and effectiveness. As the contributors to this report have so eloquently illustrated, there are still major improvements to be made with regard to the accountability of humanitarian response. In particular, it was suggested that accountability must be strengthened

beyond the narrow confines of direct distribution of aid. I call this ‘taking accountability to the next level’. Key aspects of this ‘next level’ are: acting on the key (political) concerns of affected people; rethinking the implications of accountability for the governance of aid; reforming agencies towards more internal and mutual accountability; and considering accountability at the level of the humanitarian system, rather than the individual agency level alone.

There is no discussion about the ethical case for accountability: affected populations are the primary stakeholders, and at the core of aid stands the principle of humanity – the imperative to relieve the suffering of affected people. They are the *raison d’être*, on whose behalf agencies raise money and operate. However, as Nick van Praag points out in chapter 4, accountability is about much more than just ‘good manners’. Accountability goes hand in hand with an approach based on the humanitarian principles. Indeed, without transparency and listening, no one can credibly claim to truly respect the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality or independence. When the link between accountability and effectiveness of aid was posed at the opening ceremony of the CHS Alliance,

one of the panel members declared: “This relation is obvious, when we only look at the enormous wastes encountered in programmes that did not meet people’s needs or failed to take into account risks and threats to succeed...”

This concluding chapter reviews the accountability and effectiveness issues presented in this report on two levels. Firstly, it looks at them at the project or programme level. Secondly, how can we take accountability practice to the level where it leads to change in the humanitarian system itself, its governance and the collective humanitarian response.

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Improving programme-level accountability

Accountability consists of 'taking account' (listening, participation and engagement), 'giving account' (transparency and communication with communities), and 'responsibility' (taking ownership for actions and non-actions, and accepting credit and blame).¹ In chapter 1, we noted that accountability initiatives have traditionally been strongest at the programme level because they are usually in the direct sphere of influence of a single humanitarian agency. Organisations are better at giving account, and aid has become more transparent. Taking account has developed as far as soliciting feedback is concerned. There has however been less progress on participatory programming and taking responsibility. Accountability includes being held to account and this ought to mean that sometimes people get disciplined or poor agency practice is named and shamed.

Nonetheless, significant change can be seen: recipient councils, participatory programming and feedback score cards have become common aspects of programmes. A major change is that we increasingly see flexible service delivery that does not provide a fixed package, but enables people to set their own priorities. Cash relief, in particular, is coming up as such a mechanism that puts people in control over the assistance they need. The different chapters of this report provide lessons and suggestions to build on this progress and make service delivery in crisis situations yet more accountable and effective. Here are five elements that stand out:

Taking smart and context-sensitive approaches to principles

In chapter 2, Jérémie Labbé highlighted the importance of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, which continue to be key anchor points underpinning the humanitarian policy of agencies, the UN and nation states. His chapter points to the strong connection between accountability, principles and effectiveness, whereby principled action both allows and requires proximity. In order

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to be perceived as neutral and independent, agencies need to engage populations and talk to people on all sides of the conflict. This is closely related to transparency and listening – in other words, accountability – and thus enhances aid effectiveness.

Chapter 2 also reminds us of the need to see the application of the principles (and approaches) in context. Principles should be taken less as a rigid dogmatic framework, and more as a flexible and useful guide to cope with the political complexities of the environments in which humanitarian actors work. This means that aid needs to be adapted to the type of crisis (conflict, refugee crisis, prolonged conflict, state fragility, etc.) and that aid providers need to have a process and approach where context-sensitivity is seen as central to more accountable practice.²

Making more effective use of technology and communication

New technologies and means of communication have opened up huge opportunities and already started to change the aid landscape: the use of electronic payment systems (e.g. mobile phones, ATMs, pre-paid cards, etc.) has made providing cash (when appropriate) simpler, more efficient and more effective; Geographic Information System (GIS) applications allow us to effectively map damages and facilitate disaster response; and big data can be used for early warning of food security or health issues, and improve targeting, registration and monitoring of disaster-affected populations.

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With the rise of social media, aid actors no longer have a monopoly on information or control of the way in which needs are identified. Ways to respond meaningfully to unsolicited feedback, where affected populations find their own channels to express critical opinions about aid, need to be found. More should be done to systematically use this feedback, and mainstream tools that can help in this endeavour. One example as described by Nick van Praag in chapter 4 is the use of recurring surveys to obtain feedback from affected communities on an ongoing basis, rather than through one-off data gathering. Transforming this potential will be a key challenge of the innovation agenda, as the sector works out how to make sense of and use the increasing amount of data and information available.³

Connecting humanitarian and development processes

Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) is often a key priority,⁴ yet for a long time humanitarian aid has been criticised for not effectively linking with and even undermining development. There are many institutional obstacles, and the more relief activities move towards development, the more messy and political they tend to become.⁵ In contexts of natural disaster, and prolonged crises within contexts of institutional and state fragility, agencies increasingly frame their programmes in a resilience paradigm, focusing on the ability of households and communities to address shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability.

It is acknowledged that relief, rehabilitation and development cannot be seen as a linear process whereby a brief period of relief is followed by reconstruction and then development, each phase supported by a specific methodology.⁶ LRRD requires a flexible approach, where agencies can quickly adjust their modalities to changing conditions, doing what must be done and taking advantage of opportunities to enhance more structural development. There is much to be gained to make humanitarian aid as developmental as possible in a given situation. There are situations where aid can only concentrate on saving lives. Yet, in each situation, agencies should aim to make as much use as possible of existing capacities, resources and markets so as to protect or enhance development conditions and – at the very least – minimise disturbance for local development processes.

1/ See chapter 10.

2/ See chapter 7.

3/ See chapter 12.

4/ See also: ALNAP. (2015) 'Good Humanitarian Action is Consistent with Longer-Term Political, Economic and Social Processes'. <http://www.alnap.org/node/20656.aspx>

5/ Otto, R. M. (2013) 'Linking Relief and Development: More than old solutions for old problems?' The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department).

6/ Buchanan-Smith, M. and Fabbri, P. (2005) 'Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A review of the debate'. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition. Mosel, I. and S. Levine (2014) Remaking the case for linking relief, rehabilitation and development. How LRRD can become a practically useful concept for assistance in difficult places. HPG commissioned report. <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8882.pdf>.



Lebanese women cook side by side with Syrian refugee women to prepare soup that will feed 240 Syrian refugee families living in the Akkar district of northern Lebanon. © International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), ACT Alliance/IOCC

Yet, in each situation, agencies should aim to make as much use as possible of existing capacities, resources and markets so as to protect or enhance development conditions.

Fostering coherent accountability throughout the organisation

Where agencies have improved their accountability in field operations, they may still want to conduct an internal review to make sure they have developed a coherent accountability system in terms of policies, organisation and management. Are policies, decision-making procedures,⁷ standards and operational processes organised transparently? How does the organisation make sure that lessons learned become lessons applied? Proven methods for doing this include internal and peer reviews. There is also mounting evidence that external verification helps agencies to develop coherent accountability processes.⁸

Making accountability more than a ritual

Taking a whole-organisation approach to accountability can also ensure that accountability becomes more than a ritual. Accountability should be about more than just transparency and soliciting feedback. Much can be gained by advancing participatory programming and taking ownership for actions and non-actions, and accepting credit and blame.⁹ It is important to critically monitor the working of accountability in practice (what to do with unwelcome feedback when listening; is communication and transparency well-received; are adjustments on the basis of feedback more than just tokenistic?). Establishing accountability mechanisms is an important step but not a guarantee

How does the organisation make sure that lessons learned become lessons applied?

of effective aid for the most vulnerable people, as accountability relations like every other social relationship are shaped by power and inequality.¹⁰

Taking accountability to the next level

Some people speak of a humanitarian system, but this evokes an image of control and design that is far removed from the unpredictability of environments in which organisations operate and the complexity of the aid system itself. Humanitarian aid can better be imagined as an arena where a large variety of different actors negotiate the relations, politics and practices of aid, including the meaning of effectiveness and accountability.¹¹ Service providers include the government, a range of local institutions, large international agencies, donors and a plethora of private and diaspora initiatives. Aid is also shaped by the people affected by crises, host communities, local institutions, the media, political actors and other stakeholders.

7/ See chapter 3.

8/ See chapter 8.

9/ See chapter 10.

10/ Davis, A. (2007) 'Concerning accountability of humanitarian action'. Networkpaper 58. Humanitarian Policy Group. Overseas Development Institute.

11/ Hilhorst, D. and Jansen, B. (2010) 'Humanitarian Space as Arena: a perspective of everyday practice'. *Development and Change* 41(6): 1117–1139.



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Most of the literature on the accountability of aid agencies to crisis-affected communities takes the aid agency as the point of departure. Accountability then appears to be something that agencies grant to the local population, which tends to make the language of accountability quite patronising.

The different chapters of this report agree that major opportunities and lessons for the future are found in advancing accountability beyond the level of projects and direct service delivery.

Taking accountability to the next level refers, in my view, to three key questions:

- How can humanitarian actors respond to people's needs beyond the services they have to offer?
- How can agencies, inter-agency structures and donors enhance system-wide accountability?
- What does accountability mean for the governance of aid?

There are a number of key themes in this report which point the way forward:

Moving from patronising forms of accountability towards co-governance of aid

Most of the literature on the accountability of aid agencies to crisis-affected communities takes the aid agency as the point of departure. Accountability then appears to be something that agencies *grant* to the local population, which tends to make the language of accountability quite patronising. So what does 'real' accountability mean for the governance of aid?

There has been a shift away from considering people solely as vulnerable recipients and towards recognising and seeking to enhance their resilience, as well as making people and communities the starting point. Likewise, post-crisis restoration of infrastructure and services is increasingly framed as community-driven, with communities as much as possible in the driving seat. This change is also illustrated by the fact that the CHS is written from the point of view of crisis-affected communities.

Notwithstanding these developments, discussions on accountability often slip back into more patronising ways of thinking and changing this will demand more than just a shift in language: it will require rethinking the nature of accountability to people

affected by crises. While agencies define all other accountability relationships as mutual, the primary accountability relationship to affected communities is often conceptualised as a one-way street: that is, focusing on the rights of people to quality services. Citizen voice and rights are key in defining accountability. However, in the relationship between state and society, citizens have rights and responsibilities. Crisis response should more effectively build on people's capacities, existing solidarity mechanisms in communities, and the responsibilities of local elites, institutions and state agents. External aid should not duplicate or undermine local responses, and may call upon local forces to shoulder their share of the responsibility. In other words, accountability relations between aid agencies and crisis-affected people should be reciprocal.

Secondly, a real accountability revolution requires the rethinking of the governance of service providers. In chapter 11, Jonathan Potter forecasts a future in which national and international NGOs are not for the community but of the community. As long as humanitarian agencies are self-governed, they determine the level of accountability they 'give'. A key question is therefore that of co-governance systems. How can relevant constituencies have an actual say in policy setting and the delivery of aid? How can they enforce accountability, including applying sanctions when performance is not up to agreed standards?¹² And how could such

12/ Ackerman, J. (2004) 'Co-Governance for Accountability: Beyond "Exit" and "Voice"'. *World Development* (32: 3). pp.447-463.

approaches be made compatible with the principle of independence, especially in relation to the state. One of the options could be to move from feedback mechanisms to local level audit processes.¹³

Thinking about ‘sideways’ accountability: the relation between aid providers

Matthew Serventy (chapter 10) examined the important issue of how inter-agency structures such as the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and clusters can become more accountable. But how about inter-agency accountability? The ultimate objective of each agency is to improve the lives of affected people, which provides a moral incentive to take up responsibility for the response as a whole. There is also an effectiveness and legitimacy incentive for sideways accountability: affected communities often don’t distinguish between different aid providers, and problems with one agency can easily tarnish the credibility of the entire sector, jeopardising the effectiveness and legitimacy of the whole response. Finally, there is a learning incentive in sideways accountability, as there is immense potential in peer reviews and other inter-agency forms of monitoring to find benchmarks and good practices that can be used to improve agencies’ service delivery.

In recent years, humanitarian agencies have become highly aware of the importance of sideways accountability and invested more systematically in joint learning initiatives such as peer reviews, seminars to exchange and share information, inter-agency community feedback, response mechanisms, and so on. Developments in coordination, such as the introduction of the cluster approach, can also be seen to enhance sideways accountability, including to local authorities. There have however also been setbacks: since the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami evaluation,¹⁴ there have not been any joint evaluations.

Humanitarian aid is a competitive field and agencies (NGOs as much as UN agencies) can at times engage in ‘turf wars’ or prioritise their own programmes over investing in the sector as a whole. Coordination is more geared to the practical issues of ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘where’, without touching on ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. Programme managers may be overburdened with everyday logistical challenges and don’t always make time to consider the bigger picture.

This report highlights several areas that require inter-agency accountability measures to respond to challenges that affect humanitarian effectiveness. One such issue is the fight against corruption and abuse of aid. Another relates to political complications and finding principled ways to deal with these. Finally, we can ask whether the presence of a large number of international agencies is always appropriate and effective.

International aid is expensive, distorts local economies, undermines local institutions and is not sustainable.

Localising service delivery: moving international agencies to an auxiliary and facilitating role

Balancing the role of international agencies with national service providers is a crucial issue. International aid is expensive, distorts local economies, undermines local institutions and is not sustainable. Nevertheless, there will also be crises that outstrip local capacities and require an international response capacity. The question therefore is how to render the international presence as minimal as possible. The UN and INGOs have strong discourses on subsidiarity (international organisations only step in when local resources are lacking) and partnership. There are indeed an increasing number of INGOs that operate through local partners. Nonetheless, the Global Humanitarian Assistance report finds that only 0.2% of total international humanitarian assistance went directly to local and national NGOs, and just 3.1% to the governments of affected states.¹⁵

In the case of natural disasters, the Hyogo Framework for Action and now the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction place a premium on the roles and responsibilities of national actors. In the case of conflict, national governments continue to have responsibilities to the population and must abide by International Humanitarian Law.

There are reasons for caution too. The purpose of humanitarian aid to save lives and restore dignity must always be the central consideration, and national governments and service providers can stand in the way of this. In conflict situations this is often obvious, yet natural disasters also happen on account of bad governance and often coincide with conflict.

Localising service delivery means that international organisations will – much more than they do today – play an auxiliary role in enabling and facilitating national governmental and non-governmental service delivery. The aim should be to assist in rendering national service delivery effective and accountable. It will truly be a change in aid culture when national service delivery becomes the norm, and international service delivery needs to be justified (for example, what makes the situation so special that direct international service delivery is required? Why are national service capacities not ready to take over and what can be done to make this happen?).

Fine-tuning accountability systems to people and institutions

A classical distinction between humanitarian assistance and development aid is that development is more geared towards strengthening institutions and works through state authorities and NGOs, whereas humanitarian assistance focuses more on individuals and households in need. Their respective accountability systems are likewise different: following the Paris and Accra declarations, new models of partnerships have been developed where donors and partner countries aim to hold one another mutually accountable for development results. Humanitarian agencies, on the other hand, seek more direct relations with the people they are assisting, and have accountability systems to actively seek feedback from service recipients.

These differences have grown over time, but aren’t necessarily any longer appropriate or relevant to today’s realities. Communities affected by poverty or crises do not see the distinction between crisis response and development, since they are intertwined in many ways, as development and humanitarian communities alike acknowledge. With the Busan ‘New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States’ of 2011,

13/ See <http://www.pogar.org/publications/ac/books/practicalguide-socialaudit-e.pdf>

14/ For details, see, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), 2007, “Synthesis Report: Expanded Summary: Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami”, by John Cosgrave.

15/ <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2015>

for example, the developmental view on mutual accountability and state ownership has gained some prominence in fragile states as well, and to some extent bridges the two types of accountability.

Humanitarian agencies often shy away from local government, traditional or religious leaders, or local NGOs, out of concern that they may be perceived as taking sides in conflict. However, independence and neutrality should not be seen as excuses not to engage with these actors. The key is to find ways to be accountable to national institutions and safeguard principled and effective humanitarian aid.

Development actors, on the other hand, can learn from humanitarians about the importance of direct accountability to affected people. Connecting to government, traditional or religious authorities, and civil society organisations is not a substitute for direct accountability and participation, as there is often a mismatch between authorities and people.

Taking accountability to the next level means developing accountability systems that balance relations with authorities and other institutional stakeholders and direct accountability to crisis-affected communities. This means that accountability systems need to be fine-tuned to the context and the type of crisis.

Transforming internal accountability: the crucial role of implementing staff

Accountability to affected people gets a lot of attention, but according to Jonathan Potter in chapter 11, it is equally important for agencies to listen to the people who work directly with affected communities. Implementing staff work with communities on a daily basis, and they often know better than anyone what the problems are with the provision of aid. Implementing staff are also responsible for many of the innovations that come out of humanitarian assistance, as they find creative ways of dealing with the obstacles they encounter as they go about their work.

Humanitarian agencies have invested a great deal in improving human resource systems. The CHS incorporates a number of explicit and implicit references to the importance of employing competent staff under fair and just working conditions. It is important to have well motivated staff and to respect workers' rights.

A point for discussion is whether agencies have enough space to listen to the stories of aid workers. Chapter 3 dealt with the tension that often exists between 'gandalfs' (experience-driven humanitarians) and 'geeks' (evidence-driven humanitarians). Agencies should aim to accommodate both. Staff are used to accounting for their actions: they report what they have done and achieved on a regular basis and in standardised ways. However, accountability should be about more than reporting on finances and numbers. The word 'account' refers as much to a story as to a report. Accountability can thus be read as 'report-ability' as well as 'tell-a-story-about-ability', and we need to ensure that staff and affected populations can tell their stories and experiences and be taken seriously.¹⁶

Has aid become too bureaucratised to listen to and act on the stories of implementing staff? There is a strong preference for relying on externally derived knowledge and evidence, and this may be at the expense of building on the good judgment of affected communities and the people who work with them on a day-to-day basis. It is important to create unrestricted 'upward' flows of information (i.e. from the field) in organisations and make internal accountability more mutual. It pays off to listen to implementing staff in order to pick up early warning signals when problems occur, and learn from everyday innovations to make programmes more effective and accountable to affected people.

Taking a systemic approach: understanding the importance of advocacy and diplomacy

Aid agencies want to support affected people to build livelihoods and access services in order to lead a healthy life with dignity. Aid programmes are usually temporary and minor contributions to this ambition. Sometimes, there is simply an immediate imperative to save lives, but in other more protracted situations, vulnerable people want aid actors to assist in structurally improving their life prospects by addressing oppressive politics and supporting systemic changes in their institutional and physical environment. James Darcy's warning from the 2013 edition of this report is still relevant: "We have to be careful not to see accountability in narrow programmatic

terms; and in isolation from the nexus of other (sometimes more fundamental) accountability relationships of which it forms part."¹⁷

Advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy begin with understanding the frameworks that governments have committed to, and enabling staff members to use these in their daily diplomacy and negotiations with authorities. International Humanitarian Law, national law and international human rights treaties provide a strong basis to call upon international and national actors to better protect civilians and ensure assistance is provided, with respect for constituents' voice and rights.

A systemic approach requires that aid agencies carefully analyse the (political) context and strategise to enhance the accountability of national governments, and international political accountability for the protection of civilians and the provision of funding. It also requires that agencies monitor potential negative effects of their engagements in the medium and longer term. A particular challenge is to address the shrinking space for civil society in a number of crisis-affected countries. Again, this issue points to the need for principled engagement with states: not using principles as an excuse for disengagement but anchoring engagement in these principles and International Humanitarian Law.

In cases where local citizens have more room for manoeuvre, agencies can also assist local communities to enhance their advocacy skills. Some agencies choose not to provide direct services to crisis-affected people, but instead train local communities and accompany them as they negotiate quality service provision with local authorities, NGOs and other service providers for themselves.

Conclusion

Accountability is important. Apart from the ethical imperative to be accountable, good accountability relations also enable principled and safe service delivery and they condition effectivity of aid.

Service delivery to crisis-affected people has become more accountable in the last 20 years. There are still gaps between what agencies have committed to do and what they actually do, between the systems in place and how they work in practice, and between lessons learned and lessons

16/ This distinction was already forwarded in 1967 by Harold Garfinkel in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. p.33.

17/ Darcy, J. 'Have we lost the plot? Revisiting the accountability debate'. *Humanitarian Accountability Report*. 2013 Ed. p.5.



Somali children who fled drought and war at home walk joyfully through their new home neighbourhood on the outskirts of the Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Kenya.

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It takes a village to build a well. Residents of the Khamsadegaig Camp for internally displaced persons look down a well they built with help from the Darfur Emergency Response Operation, a joint programme of Caritas Internationalis and Action by Churches Together (ACT). © ACT Alliance/Paul Jeffrey



applied. The chapters of this report provide valuable pointers and reminders on: improving accountability in service delivery underpinned by humanitarian principles; using technology effectively; internalising accountability instead of ritualising it; linking relief to development; and seeking coherence in accountability relations through all levels of the organisation. These issues can be summarised by the idiom that agencies have to “walk the talk”.

This is not a straightforward operation of adding on accountability measures. It implies that agencies have to adopt working processes that are sensitive to feedback, have a strong antenna for contextual change and the politics of aid, continuously monitor their work including the effect of measures to improve accountability, and have the power and courage to adapt the course of their actions where necessary.

The second part of the chapter dealt with issues that can take accountability to the next level. Accountability to affected populations in service delivery is within the immediate sphere of influence of agencies. The major challenges and opportunities to address, in the view of many contributors to this report, exist on a level beyond that of single-agency projects.

Bringing accountability to the next level will transform the character of service delivery in response to crises and poverty. Accountability relations and the promotion of aid effectiveness involve a complex system of donors, national governments, service providers and communities. If aid programmes are to become more effective and adjustable to contexts and respond to people’s priority needs, changes are required by all these different actors. Humanitarian agencies will be taken far outside of their comfort zone, being held to account more systematically

and developing a proactive culture that maximises principled engagement with affected people and other stakeholders. Humanitarian donors will change who they fund and how. Aid workers will do their jobs in a different way: relating to local and national authorities and the people they are trying to help will be central in their job descriptions. Moving out of the comfort zone in which too much of today’s humanitarian action takes place and enduring some discomfort in the process of change is needed in order to deliver more genuinely accountable humanitarian action.

The major challenges and opportunities to address, in the view of many contributors to this report, exist on a level beyond that of single-agency projects.

Acknowledgements

The CHS Alliance would like to wholeheartedly acknowledge the assistance of the people who committed their time to review the 2015 Humanitarian Accountability Report. However, all views and opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the CHS Alliance or peer reviewers.

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ACW

2015 CHS Alliance Report

Published by

CHS Alliance

Designed and produced by

ACW, London, UK
www.acw.uk.com

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Published in September 2015