

# PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ The participation of the camp population in decision-making and in the daily life of the camp helps to ensure that programmes are equitable and effective.
- ▶ Participation can positively impact the health, well-being and safety of the camp residents and camp staff.
- ▶ Special attention should be given to ensuring that all groups are able to participate, including those with specific needs and/or those who are marginalised and lacking a voice in decision-making.
- ▶ Whilst developing participation structures and procedures may require targeted effort and additional resources, it is an essential way of reinforcing a sense of dignity, reducing vulnerability and helping to build local capacity without undermining peoples' own coping strategies in times of crisis.
- ▶ Participation should be based on assessments of existing structures which can be used to support participatory methods.
- ▶ While participatory approaches should respect local culture there needs to be due regard for culturally-embedded power relationships which may be exploitative or oppressive.
- ▶ Participation and community involvement can take many forms, and should be planned and integrated into all stages of the project cycle – assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – and all phases of a camp's life cycle – from design and set-up to closure.

## INTRODUCTION

It is vital to remember that participation is a basic human right and that it promotes many other rights. It is enshrined in article 27(1) of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits”.

The aim of this chapter is to provide Camp Management Agencies with the insights required to ensure that camp residents are empowered to play an active role in decision-making and in the daily life of the camp community. Participation and community involvement is an extensive topic and this chapter aims to heighten awareness, not provide an exhaustive list of methodologies. Please refer to the additional guidance provided in the Tools and Reading and Reference sections at the end of this chapter.

Participation and involvement is part of any social group and fundamental to developing and strengthening a well-functioning community. The dynamics of a particular participatory structure are determined by the culture(s) of the group, and their beliefs, norms, values and power relationships. Best practice for a Camp Management Agency is to observe and understand existing or developing participatory structures and dynamics in the camp, and to use, support and strengthen them, in order to ensure a well-functioning, living and working environment which respects local culture and maximises local skills and capacities.

The aim of participation in camp settings is not just to ensure that different groups have a voice, but that they are heard and able to take part in making crucial decisions which affect their lives. There is a fundamental difference between consultation and participation. Whilst there may be considerable frustrations if a Camp Management Agency does not consult the community, it can be even worse to consult, but then not act on, or simply ignore the recommendations.

Humanitarians sometimes make the mistake of assuming that participation is automatically viewed as a ‘good thing’ by all. While the humanitarian community may tend to aim for an equitable and all-inclusive approach, this is not the norm for many cultures. Camp Management Agencies may therefore find themselves at odds with the population in this respect. That is why it is essential that they understand the context and find a balance between cultural sensitivities and giving voice to those who would otherwise not be heard.

Ensuring effective participation and community involvement can be time-consuming and require targeted effort. Decision-making or the completion of a

task can be slowed down because of it. Sometimes Camp Management Agencies may find themselves needing to make decisions without the full participation of residents that they would normally seek – especially when lives are at stake. There is a balance to be struck. Camp Management Agencies, while always aiming for the fullest participation possible, may sometimes need to make fast, urgent and judicious decisions with a smaller group of people.

Expectations of participation need to be clear and agreed by both the displaced population and the Camp Management Agency. Transparent and well-managed expectations are important. The camp residents or the Camp Management Agency may expect much more from participatory initiatives than is realistically feasible. For some, successful participation may be measured by personal gain instead of community gain. Where this is the case, promoting community participation may become a very demanding and disappointing exercise. The Camp Management Agency should be realistic, transparent and specific about what can be achieved for everyone involved.

### **What Do We Mean By Participation and Community Involvement?**

For all humanitarians the goal of participation is to include all key stakeholders. In the context of camp management, participation means that the residents, and in some cases the host community, are involved in discussions and decision-making concerning the day-to-day life of the camp. This includes how it is set-up, how it is run, cared for, maintained and how adjustments are made to ensure maximum and equitable protection and service delivery for all residents.

Participation can take many forms, and it should be planned for and implemented as part of the complete programme cycle:

- during assessments
- as part of strategic planning and design
- through implementation
- during monitoring
- in evaluation processes.

The ultimate goal of participation is a feeling of ownership – that residents feel they are investing in, and responsible for, the camp and the activities that take place within it.

Participation should be understood as an on-going process, a means to coordinate between agencies and displaced people to uphold rights, achieve goals, improve assistance and reduce vulnerability.

**!** Community participation is a planned process whereby individuals and groups from among the displaced community identify and express their own views and needs, and where collective action is taken to reflect those views and meet those needs.

## **Why is Participation Important?**

Populations that are living in camps or camp-like settings during times of conflict or due to natural disaster are more vulnerable to deprivation, violations of their basic human rights, violence and abuse. Displaced populations are likely to feel disempowered, living in a place that is not their home and does not grant them access to many of the assets – such as a house, land or job – that give them security and independence in normal times. In a camp setting, communities are to a large extent reliant on others for goods and services they are normally able to find or provide for themselves and their families. Participation, especially in governance, mitigates those effects by giving people back some power – building self-reliance and a sense of achievement, influence and control – restoring some of the dignity that has been taken away. It gives people an opportunity to make choices that restore some sense of normality, enabling them to be the subject, and not the object of their own lives. Participation and involvement creates opportunities for people to solve their own problems and can lead to growing self-esteem and help them overcome trauma.

Participation is important because:

- it builds dignity and self-esteem
- it helps to ensure that interventions are appropriate and effective
- it raises standards in the camp
- it develops skills for life after displacement
- it puts people back in control of their own lives – decreases dependency and increases self-reliance.

Participation can have a positive impact not only on camp residents, but also on camp staff. Well-managed participation leads to a trusting and more open environment where both the residents and the staff feel respected and able to communicate their views and contribute. This environment leads to greater transparency and accountability and may reduce conflict and corruption. Participation contributes to a sense of ownership and the resulting responsibility

is likely to have a positive impact on the achievement of overall objectives. For example, where the displaced community is actively and directly involved in activities such as the construction of washing facilities, they will generally take more responsibility for their maintenance and care.



### **Participatory Approach to Cleaning Camps in Sri Lanka**

Camps in post-tsunami Sri Lanka were faced with the challenge of how to deal with garbage. Camps were small and routinely littered with rubbish, only a fraction of which was collected by municipal councils. Using the Buddhist concept of shramadana ('donation of work'), everyone in one camp – residents together with the camp (site) management team – got together on a 'clean-up day' with tools provided by the Camp Management Agency. As follow-up, camp committees were established to monitor and to work with private and local government service providers which are now employed to keep the garbage under better control.

### **What are the Different Levels of Participation?**

As stated above, the ultimate goal of participation is a sense of ownership. Depending on the phase of the disaster and particular context, the Camp Management Agency may plan for any or a combination of 'levels' of participation and a variety of involvement strategies and methodologies. This 'participation ladder' is a helpful way to understand the degree to which there is community involvement:

DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION	DEFINITION
Ownership	The community controls decision-making.
Interactive	The community is wholly involved in decision-making with other actors.
Functional	The community fulfils only a particular role with limited decision-making power (for example, forming a water committee which is then supervised by an NGO staff member).
Material Motivation	The community receives goods or cash in return for a service or role.
Consultation	The community is asked for their opinion on what they would like to see, but their opinion has limited sway in decision-making.
Information Transfer	Information is gathered from the community, but they are not involved in the resulting discussions which inform decisions.
Passive	The community is informed of decisions and actions, but have no say in either the process or the result.

## KEY ISSUES

### ACHIEVING PARTICIPATION

There are many ways in which the Camp Management Agency can encourage and develop participation, but the most common way is through representational groups. After assessing the context and existing participatory structures, camp management works to find ways to support and further develop and/or adjust them to ensure that participation is as representative as possible. Other ways of involving camp populations include feedback and complaints mechanisms, training, information campaigns and employment of camp residents. Members of the host community may also benefit if included in these mechanisms.

### Assessing Existing Social Structures

In a camp setting the population is rarely homogeneous. They may come from different geographical locations and be differentiated by ethnicity, language, religion and/or occupation/livelihoods. Accounting for this diversity, ensuring

that everybody is represented, and that differences are managed can be a challenging aspect of effective participation. However, groups from the displaced populations will doubtless share at least some commonalities. Either they come from the same group of villages or region, or maybe they belong to the same ethnic group or speak the same language.

Whilst in one context, established and cohesive social structures might therefore already be present in the camp elsewhere there may be multiple, disparate and/or badly-fractured social structures – limited cohesion at best and tensions or conflicts at worst. In addition, camp populations change and are often highly transitory, with essential elements of the population leaving and/or arriving at different times. It is all context dependent. An entire village may be rapidly relocated and transformed into a homogenous camp, while another camp may contain people from widely scattered origins and grow steadily over time. The usual situation is somewhere between these extremes. Commonly people from several communities arrive in the camp at different times, with their respective leadership structures more or less intact.

It is the role of the Camp Management Agency to determine what different social and leadership structures exist in the camp, what their status is and how they can best be used in developing participation.

### **Examples of Participatory Structures**

Representation, participation and involvement can take many forms and employ a variety of tools and methodologies. These include:

- community groups
- focus groups
- camp committees for technical sectors (and sub-committees)
- camp committees for cross-cutting issues
- advocacy groups
- interest groups
- grievance committees
- working or project groups
- employing camp residents as volunteers or paid employees.

It is not expected that all of these groups are present in any one camp setting.



## Conflict Management

However small, cohesive or well-organised the leadership and representation structures of a camp might be, participation in any social forum, in almost any culture, inevitably and often frequently leads to situations of differences of opinion and disagreements. More often than not, this results in tensions and sometimes conflict. This is simply human nature. It is often exacerbated in a camp where life is more stressful than usual. Conditions may be crowded, resources may be scarce, unfamiliar communities may be co-habiting and feelings of insecurity, boredom, fear and resentment may be high. Camp Management Agencies need to be prepared to manage this, and to empower their staff to deal with it effectively, as part of their participation strategy.

This may include providing training for staff and camp residents in effective communication – for example: non-violent communication skills, conflict mediation and management training; using and enforcing codes of conduct; following up complaints, and the use of procedures to remove or replace group membership. It will also involve security procedures that can be implemented to keep people safe if a situation gets out of hand.

### Talking Stick

A simple but effective example of a communication tool for use in representational groups is to use a ‘talking stick’ for ensuring that people take turns in contributing to debates and that the others listen. This is simply a stick which must be held by whoever is talking. Anyone, at any time, who is not the holder of the stick, is obliged to listen until it is their turn. It can be an effective way of preventing some voices dominating, and of preventing a heated debate degenerating into a shouting match.

## Community Leaders

When there is a sufficient degree of cohesion to allow leaders to be identified, the Camp Management Agency should ensure that sheltered space is made available for them to meet in comfort. In some cases, materials such as notebooks and pens, sports and recreation materials may be provided. Frequent meetings between the Camp Management Agency and groups of leaders should take place and groups and representatives should take part in planning, programming, monitoring and evaluating service provision and protection.

Terms of reference and objectives for each group, particularly those making decisions on behalf of the greater camp population, should be developed. A code of conduct which establishes ethical guidelines and procedures for removal or re-election may be required.

Community leaders is a broad category which is wholly context-dependent. They may be:

- elected
- self-appointed
- traditional
- religious
- strong or charismatic people who came forward when the community was in crisis.


Generally, community leaders are an important asset for a Camp Management Agency and are easily identified simply by asking camp residents. It is important to understand whom the leaders represent and whether they all have the same level of representation and authority. For example, whether they are all leaders of different villages, or claim to represent groups of villages.

It is also essential that every individual in the camp be represented at some level, so gaps need to be identified, especially for groups with specific needs. Asking the leaders to draw a common map showing their various supporters or geographical areas can help clarify where there may be overlap or gaps.

If they have not already organised themselves according to traditional structures, it is helpful to do this by having geographical block or sector leaders. In very large camps, it may be necessary to encourage several hierarchical tiers (for example having community, block and sector leaders) so that a Camp Management Agency can speak directly with a manageable number of individuals who act as spokespeople for their constituency.

In some cases, there may be many people with various claims about their role in the community, making it nearly impossible for an outside agency to discern with whom it should be dealing. In these cases, it may be that the only approach is to start afresh and ask the community to put forward representatives and/or elect its leader(s). Traditional community leaders may feel threatened or undermined in situations of new leadership. Electing and/or selecting those with positions of power and representation needs to be handled with sensitivity, care and respect. It should be done in a way which does not exclude anyone from coming forward and volunteering for active participation. The Camp Management

Agency needs to be aware of exploitative or manipulative activities undertaken by those whose agenda is to gain or misuse power.

 In all leadership and participation initiatives the balance among different groups (gender, ethnicity, religion), should be considered and the choice of participants should ideally reflect their groups' approximate proportions of the total camp population.

### IDP Camp Management Capacity Challenges – Voice from the Field

“One key strategy used here to build capacity in camp management has been the training of IDP camp residents to take a leading role in the management of their own sites. Camps here are increasingly run by camp residents, as agencies and authorities become less active after the emergency phase. IDPs often have more challenges in coordinating with service providers to get the assistance they require. Possible reasons for this are lack of telephone access and reliable communication mechanisms and a lack of legitimacy in relating and referring their needs directly to service providers, without the support of authorities or agencies.”

**Community groups** are usually made up of people who have a common characteristic – for example women, adolescents or older persons. In large camps, there may be several groups within each category. It is important to involve them in governance issues. Whilst a culture may discourage women and youth from having direct leadership roles, the Camp Management Agency can encourage the acceptance of representatives from these groups. Community groups can also advocate either within the larger coordination structure or directly to the Camp Management Agency about issues of concern to them. Thus, for example, youth groups may seek educational or vocational opportunities.

The formation of community groups may or may not be a widely used or accepted part of a community's culture. In general, small group meetings are welcomed, and are seen as a positive force in a camp environment. This may be especially true where other social opportunities may be lacking or disrupted, and should therefore be encouraged.

**Focus groups** are one of the participatory assessment methods, outlined in *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*. Focus groups are discussion groups, which enable understanding and analysis of a certain topic. The group is selected on the basis of a common characteristic – such as gender, age or socio-economic status. The group’s discussion is facilitated by a member of camp staff, whose role is to gain insights from members on their experiences of a specific service or issue. The discussion is structured around a few key questions, to which there are no ‘right’ answers. Focus groups are especially effective because women, men, boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds are affected differently by displacement and have different needs and perceptions. Comparing the qualitative information provided by different focus groups can help to provide a balanced and representative assessment of a specific issue.

**Camp committees** are groups of community representatives, who have a specific sectoral or cross-cutting focus. Examples include committees for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, women and the environment. There may be many committees in a camp and they meet regularly. They may have some technical expertise, but not necessarily, and may be trained to carry out monitoring tasks for the Camp Management Agency, in their particular sector, as well as representing the camp population at camp coordination meetings. They then meet with other stakeholders, such as on-site authorities, service providers, the camp manager and a representative from the host population. They may also contribute to disseminating information to the camp population following these meetings, giving feedback and following-up on agreed actions. Sub-committees can be set up as a division of interest groups or committees. Usually, their tasks and therefore lifespan are time-bound, and their responsibility to the larger group is smaller or more specific.

**Advocacy groups** provide a voice to those who may otherwise not be heard such as children, the mentally or physically disabled, those who are sick, older people and those living with HIV/AIDS. This can be the most difficult type of group to help form and sensitivity is needed. Members of these groups may not wish to come forward, or members of the family or community may not see their participation as necessary or positive. Some will be able to advocate for themselves and others may find people to advocate on their behalf. For others, the visibility involved in participation could jeopardise their security or further increase their vulnerability or marginalisation. It is the responsibility of the Camp Management

Agency, along with protection actors and other agencies, to ensure that these groups and individuals are appropriately represented and supported.

**Interest groups** are centred on a common interest or issue which can be similar to committees. Depending on the situation, interest groups can be less formal than committees, in terms of monitoring and representation duties. The focus might be camp security, teacher-parent liaison or water point maintenance. These groups may liaise directly with relevant members of the population, or with the NGO managing the relevant technical sector, but can also bring particular issues to the Camp Management Agency's attention.

**Grievance committees** can be established in order to deal with minor disputes and violations of rules in the camp with a set of by-laws. Members of grievance committees should be generally respected by the camp population and elected. Punishments mainly consist of fines or community work. Areas in which grievance committees can be involved must be clearly defined and the Camp Management Agency should monitor their work closely. When defining issues which a grievance committee can deal with, it is important to observe to what extent the values of various groups in the camp population, as well as local legislation, correspond with human rights, international laws and codes.

▶▶ *For more information on accountability and its relationship to participation, visit the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP): [www.hapinternational.org](http://www.hapinternational.org)*

### **Working or Project Groups**

These are also groups set up for a specific time period and with a specific task or objective, which is sometimes unexpected or urgent. Often these groups will be selected on the basis of their expertise or knowledge, to compile information or carry out a technical task. For example, if due to an unexplained illness the water in several different wells needs to be tested or if there is a sudden decline in the number of children attending a camp school, a project group or task force might be set up.



### **Participation in Northern Uganda- Voice from the Field**

“In the northern district of Lira the insurgent Lord’s Resistance Army displaced thousands of people in 2003. IDP camps were set up as people poured in from insecure villages. There was no contingency plan of how the continued war and the displacement would be handled. With little knowledge of camp design and set up, one camp was spontaneously occupied by over 24,000 IDPs from about 4,200 households. Over the years the camp saw persistent outbreaks of fire that burned out two or three blocks every time it happened. Sanitation was poor and conditions crowded with no consideration given to space for toilets or drainage.

When the Camp Management Agency arrived in 2006 they identified and trained staff who worked with the local council on issues around camp design and maintenance. Sensitisation workshops were carried out with the community, and a fire management committee was set up. They were supplied with whistles and were tasked to alert the population in the event of fire outbreak. Using labour from the camp, sanitation facilities were upgraded. Block leaders and camp leaders headed the six groups – each of 50 men – who identified community priorities, drew up work plans and implemented the work. They relocated some of the shelters and created fire breaks and drainage for improved sanitation. Part of the work plan involved especially vulnerable individuals who were helped to construct safer and energy-saving stoves. The result of these initiatives was a reduction in fire risks in the camp and greatly improved sanitation facilities.”

## **ASSESSING CAPACITIES**

In addition to assessing the different social and leadership structures within the camp, the Camp Management Agency should also proactively seek and identify individuals with needed professional and personal skills. Information about education levels and professions is often gathered during registration.

Even if that information is not readily available, it can be gathered through:

- information campaigns
- replies to vacancy announcements
- asking several persons already identified to locate others with their skills.

Agencies implementing technical programmes will be seeking people such as teachers, engineers or health workers among the population while all agencies will require support staff such as administrators, translators and accountants. Credentials such as diplomas may be lost but this should not pose a major challenge as tests can be sufficient to identify proficiencies and qualifications.

The Camp Management Agency should also think imaginatively about skills within the population that could be used to enhance their relationship with the wider community. For example artists or story-tellers can assist with information campaigns and older people can provide much needed historical background or contextual analysis.

### **Local Expertise – A Voice from the Field**

“In the Democratic Republic of Congo one international Camp Management Agency has hired locally, meaning that local camp managers are running camps of up to 20,000 people that might more often be run by expatriates. One of the positive consequences of this has been their thorough knowledge of the local situations and ethnic tensions. Local staff are well aware of the importance of religious leaders and the need to involve them in decision-making. A committee for religious leaders has been created whose president is a member of the camp executive committee.”

## **EMPLOYING CAMP RESIDENTS**

Employment, whether paid or unpaid, is an example of direct participation. For reasons of equality of opportunity, and in order to avoid corruption or nepotism, community leaders should not be involved in the recruitment process.

In addition:

- The application and recruitment process needs to be formalised.
- The agency seeking staff should openly announce any vacancy.
- The agency must follow transparent and objective employment criteria.

A proportion of employment opportunities should be open to people from the host community if at all possible. This not only provides economic support to the host community, but helps establish contacts and can mitigate friction between the locals and camp residents.

**!** If technical work is being carried out in the camp requiring skilled labour, and the expertise is not available within the camp, one option is to recruit ‘master trainers’ from the host community who can be employed to lead the project in the camp. Camp residents may then apply for positions on the team as trainees. This arrangement allows the camp population to work alongside the ‘master trainer’ in a sort of apprenticeship role, being directly involved in the project and the life of the camp, upgrading camp facilities and in the process learning a new skill, which may lead to skilled and gainful employment opportunities in the wider community.

### **VOLUNTARY VERSUS PAID/COMPENSATED PARTICIPATION**

Deciding on which kind of jobs should be paid or otherwise remunerated while others are not, can be a great source of friction. When it comes to participation in committees or community groups such as teacher-parent associations and child welfare associations, working on a voluntary basis may seem more acceptable. However, opinions about paid and unpaid work are highly context-specific and a Camp Management Agency needs to consider its strategy and the justification for it, carefully. There are, however, a wide range of jobs which need to be done, for which staff can either be employed earning a salary or receiving compensation, or they can be mobilised to work on a voluntary basis.

**!** In situations where labour is paid, the Camp Management Agency should see to it that all service-providing agencies harmonise salaries of paid employees and expect equal amounts of output for volunteer work. There should be agreement on which kind of employment will be paid/compensated and which kind will not, early on in the life of the camp.

When it comes to deciding whether or not to offer compensation there are several factors to be considered. It may be justified to pay somebody who is working full time as this will mean that s/he is unable to take on other paid work to support family members. Work which serves the wider interest – such as cleaning



latrines in the marketplace – may justifiably be remunerated, while somebody cleaning latrines in dwelling blocks may not. It is important to consider the risks taken by the employee and whether offering payment will reduce susceptibility to soliciting or accepting bribes.

**!** A Camp Management Agency needs to be transparent in its communication about decisions over paid and unpaid work to avoid misunderstandings or mixed messages and to lessen the risk of rumour-generated tensions.

### **ENSURING APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS**

Some groups or individuals are constrained from involvement by cultural, physical and/or psychological reasons. For a Camp Management Agency developing representative participation can require a great deal of time and support. Often the most challenging task is to ensure those excluded or marginalised are able to participate appropriately. In working with these groups the goal is most often to reduce vulnerability to physical harm and/or exploitation. For a Camp Management Agency, effective planning for their appropriate participation requires accurate information but this may be difficult to come by. Often the most vulnerable groups are also the least visible and the least known. For example in a camp where most publicly available and disseminated information comes from middle-aged men, it may be that they know very little about – or are prepared to share little about – those who are sick, older widows living alone, children with disabilities or women vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV).

**!** Access to information in relation to groups with specific needs and those at heightened risk needs to be approached sensitively and strategically with a view to reducing vulnerability.

## Persons with Specific Needs

In general, the following are groups at risk of insufficient levels of participation in a camp:

- women
- children and youth
- child-headed households
- female-headed households
- older people
- persons with physical or mental disabilities
- ill persons
- persons living with HIV/AIDS.

As every context is different it is important for the Camp Management Agency to identify other groups with specific needs and those at heightened risk or marginalised within the camp. These may include members or ethnic or religious minorities, single fathers or people not from the same areas of origin as the rest of the camp.

### Power and Participation

Engaging groups at heightened risk is far more difficult than engaging the powerful. If only the powerful are involved, participation reinforces existing power structures which may be exploitative or oppressive. The Camp Management Agency should assess the potential barriers to the involvement of certain groups. Barriers may be visible, but many if not most, are not.

The Camp Management Agency needs to assess cultural opinions on types of participation. Some societies are not familiar at all with participation through expression of opinions or decision-making. Strong hierarchical structures may complicate participation.

Understanding the protection needs of women and involving them in planning, design and decision-making can prevent many protection-related problems. Whilst it is sometimes complicated and challenging, involving women is not always as difficult as it is said to be. Even in male-dominated societies where women are not in the public arena they are often key decision-makers within the household. Humanitarian agencies can support women's participation by focusing on issues around household concerns and the influence of the domestic arena. Even if an issue is of camp-wide relevance, the Camp Management Agency should try to bring it into the household level, thereby accessing women's opinions and recommendations without raising indignation or causing tensions. This method is also found to address the needs of the community more effectively as it depends on relationships, behaviours and influences which work. Strategies to effectively involve women can make use of their specific social position and existing cultural roles rather than trying to involve them in ways which go against tradition.

**!** Camp Management Agencies need to be cautious, however, that strategies chosen do not result in female repression being condoned, supported or reinforced. Managers must be aware that displacement, violence and conflict may sharpen the differences and/or the tensions and inequalities between genders.

Constraints on women's participation may in part be due to the many time-consuming household tasks that are culturally seen as women's responsibility. Displaced women often have backbreaking responsibilities in caring for family members and lack the time needed for other activities. Any type of participatory initiative therefore, must be thoroughly planned, to take into account the daily realities of people's lives, their aspirations and others expectations. Goals, objectives, potential constraints, additional support and follow up should all be given due attention. Examples of additional support are child-care schemes and, as appropriate and feasible, encouraging the sharing of domestic chores.

### **Reach the Women! Voice from the Field**

“In a refugee camp in Burundi, I soon realised that only men, both young and old, came to the office with their problems, wishes or concerns. Thinking that women should have no problem approaching me (a female camp manager), I wondered why this was happening. As I daily made at least two walking tours of the camp, I understood that one of the factors to explain this was that the women were busy – too busy to come and see us, forever cooking, washing and looking after smaller children around their hut. My daily trips became a tool to reach busy women. Walking around enables camp management staff to ‘feel’ the atmosphere, to listen and learn, to make oneself available and reachable for those who don’t dare or don’t have time to come to your office. There is also the visibility factor; the refugees feel that we are interested, we get to know people, where they live, that babies grow... It is extremely important.”

Some hold the view that communities should care for those unable to care for themselves. In reality however, people are most often too busy caring for their own families to care for others in the camp. Camp Management Agencies must be aware of any traditional support systems and build on those in cooperation with community leaders. Where absent, community support for those unable to build their own shelter, collect their own water or walk to the community hall must be organised. Camp Management Agencies may have to provide some form of payment, either stipends, or food or construction material for work, to ensure this level of care for vulnerable members of the community and those with specific needs. Humanitarians need to remember that situations of crisis and deprivation do not necessarily bring out the best in people. Most people would rather spend their time looking for ways to support their own households, and for many camp residents this in itself is challenging enough.

**!** Participation and community representation are processes in which relations and trust must be built, and are highly context dependent. We must not reinforce traditional roles that restrain opportunities for some or go against international protection standards but at the same time we cannot openly challenge traditional norms, values and community structures. We should be careful not to impose simplified ideas of democracy and decision-making processes or try to reshape displaced communities. Without compromising protection standards, we should identify more neutral strategies which can be both culturally acceptable and effective.

## **TRAINING AND COACHING**

Participation can be promoted through training and education, which can be ways of identifying and maintaining existing skills or developing new ones. Raising awareness or providing education on:

- human rights
- refugee rights
- the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- right holders and duty bearers
- roles and responsibilities in the camp
- the importance of participation (amongst other topics)
- how to inspire, motivate and support community-based activities
- how to contribute to the development of coping strategies.

Coaching can be an effective way of following-up an initial training programme, and providing on-going support and guidance for groups within the camp who are developing new skills, or carrying out specific activities. For example, camp committees trained in camp management may then have a weekly or fortnightly coaching session with camp staff to support them to monitor a specific technical sector.

Training is an important way of creating a pool of qualified staff. The Camp Management Agency should liaise with other service providers to provide additional training where needed and to pool training resources with other agencies. It should be remembered that recruitment needs change over time, staff may rotate between positions and new members of committees are elected.

**!** Training needs to be a continuous and on-going initiative and is the responsibility of the Camp Management Agency.

Once again, when it comes to training, the needs and existing skills of local communities and local authorities should be considered. Local government officials may have an interest in camp management training and local communities may be in need of job opportunities.

Training for staff can be planned for specific and technical activities, for example registration, distribution or drainage projects, or can be more generic and broadly applicable to various other camp management tasks, such as administration, minute-taking or updating information boards.

Training of protection monitors and social workers must address contextual needs and cultural issues and should also involve sessions on:

- protection and human rights
- monitoring methods
- interviewing techniques
- confidentiality and data security
- documentation
- groups at risk
- participatory assessment methods
- feedback and follow-up of monitoring.

Camp committees should receive training in involvement, participation and representation as well as technical subjects related to their objectives.

### **Participation in Situations of Protracted Displacement – A Voice from the Field, Kenya**

“In situations of protracted displacement, several years of assistance can totally undermine community coping mechanisms. Accepting handouts and taking no initiative in self-sufficiency leads to increased dependency, which in turn only reinforces vulnerability and leads to a loss of dignity and self-confidence. Over the years hundreds of agencies, monitors, experts and assessment teams have visited, for hundreds of focus group discussions, interviews and meetings. With hardly any improvement in their lives, the people end up giving stereotyped answers, and it gets harder to build trust or to get to the truth. The majority of community representatives have taken part in numerous trainings over their life in the camp. Most of these have related to raising awareness on key issues within the camps, such as breastfeeding, drug abuse and living with HIV/AIDS – which are all very much needed. What is important is for the Camp Management Agency to support a more participatory approach – to make training more interactive. Training needs to be more inclusive too. Some camp leaders have been trained repeatedly while others have never had the chance. In protracted situations the Camp Management Agency needs to look into other sorts of training too that can build life and professional skills, and technical training in professions which are in high demand within the camp community.”

## **INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS**

Information campaigns are a powerful tool for achieving wider community awareness and participation on specific topics and activities. Unless security concerns are too great, Camp Management Agencies may consider posting public information about the conditions in the places of origin of the camp residents. This not only helps to mitigate the frustration which can occur when displaced persons do not receive news from home, but can also support informed decision-making, encouraging the population to have a realistic timeframe and to participate in discussions about long-term solutions.

Camp Management Agencies should arrange information campaigns around their areas of responsibility, for example, the proper use and maintenance of infrastructure. Other NGOs may also arrange campaigns around specific issues such as measles vaccinations or personal hygiene.

**!** Information campaigns are more effective when they are creative and use techniques which are familiar to the residents, for example using pictures or composing songs. The needs of the non-literate, and other groups with specific needs, should be taken into account.

## **MISUSE OF PARTICIPATION**

Misuse of funds and assets and manipulation or diversion of aid is a real risk in any humanitarian endeavour. Staff recruited from the displaced community may be under daily pressure from their peers. In particular, staff involved in registration and distribution, may face many challenges and find it hard to resist bribes or coercion from relatives, friends or community leaders. There are no quick-fix solutions to address or mitigate these risks. It does help, however, to:

- recruit with care and transparency
- provide training
- introduce a code of conduct
- frequently rotate staff
- ensure that all teams are comprised both of locally-hired staff and those from the displaced community
- develop clear job descriptions, with roles, responsibilities and terms of employment clearly specified
- use monitoring and appraisal procedures
- encourage and model transparency, honesty and openness
- institute confidential complaints procedures
- be consistent in following up issues of misconduct
- acknowledge and reward high standards of integrity.

**!** The Camp Management Agency should be aware of how participation opportunities are perceived. Those who feel they are not allowed to participate may be frustrated and angry. Tensions may increase if participatory approaches are thought to privilege certain groups or individuals.



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PARTICIPATION

Displaced individuals, in particular in conflict environments and when living in camps, may experience feelings of stress, anxiety and suspicion which may easily fuel internal friction. The Camp Management Agency should be aware of any intact traditional conflict resolution strategies and mechanisms among the population. These should be built on to deal with camp conflicts and may involve:

- grievance committees to solve internal conflicts peacefully.
- older people in peace-building initiatives – but only if they have the respect of younger people
- community and group representatives, provided they are respected
- clarifying codes of conduct and camp rules and sanctions for infractions.

**!** Community leadership may also be a source of conflict. When leaders are not acknowledged or are perceived as corrupt or non-representative, service providers and the Camp Management Agency may be seen as biased by working with them.

Pre-displacement strategies may have vanished or have altered and it is the job of the Camp Management Agency to identify alternative ways of mitigating conflicts amongst camp residents. In certain non-emergency situations, the introduction of camp by-laws may be considered. UNHCR has experience in introducing camp rules and regulations and can be consulted on this.

Mitigating tensions and conflicts also involves:

- ensuring equal access to assistance and services
- transparent, timely and accessible information
- clarity of information on programmes, procedures and entitlements
- complaint procedures and response mechanisms
- effective follow-up and feedback in communication and decision-making processes

## HOST COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

As mentioned above, competition over resources and neglecting local needs may increase friction between camp residents and local populations. The Camp Management Agency plays an intermediary role between the displaced population and local communities and should be proactive in identifying factors which may give rise to increased tensions and working with both communities to find solutions.

Assessing local needs is especially important in situations where local communities are themselves impoverished or affected by the conflict or the disaster. In some cases it may be that the host community has a standard of living that is lower than that of the camp population. They may feel threatened by the presence of the camp and that it undermines their access to firewood, land, water and employment. The host population may have concerns about the behaviour of camp residents who leave the camp, especially if they are associated with – or are thought to be linked to – armed groups. Local men may be worried if women and children mix with camp residents, fearing threats to their culture, religion, life-style and/or language.

Addressing such tensions between local and displaced communities touches on many different aspects and requires an interagency approach. The Camp Management Agency should establish contacts between camp residents and local population and ensure that host community representatives are consulted and present at camp coordination meetings. Possible ways to build relationships include:

- employing local people in the camp
- advocating for service providers to assist the host population
- conducting social events and encouraging both communities to participate
- planning and engaging jointly in reforestation activities
- supporting income-generating activities.

The Camp Management Agency needs to monitor interactions between communities and frequently liaise with local leaders and authorities in order to identify potential friction and, hopefully, nip it in the bud.



### **‘More than People in Need’ – A Voice from the Field**

“When the camp’s football team took part in the provincial football cup – and managed to win it against local sides which included the police and the military – I experienced the players and the trainer and all the spectators as so much more than ‘just’ refugees or ‘camp residents’ – more than always demanding, always in need, always in difficulty. I saw this crazy interest and engagement in the football tournament; this crazy happiness that I recognised so well from football matches at home. Suddenly we all had more in common, a relationship and more to talk about than needs and problems.”

## CHECKLIST FOR A CAMP MANAGEMENT AGENCY

- The time and resources needed for developing effective participation as part of camp management is planned and budgeted for.
- Camp staff are trained and supported in participation and involvement mechanisms.
- The current participatory structures in the camp have been assessed.
- All the different groups in the camp population are identified.
- Their differences and similarities are used to inform inclusive and appropriate participation structures.
- Groups with specific needs, those who are vulnerable or marginal are represented, involved and participating.
- The value of participation and involvement is advocated for by the Camp Management Agency. Service providers in the camp employ participatory methodologies.
- Identified existing leaders have been met and participation is built from there with additional meetings and mapping exercises.
- Existing power structures within this population are used where possible and representational and direct participation is ensured.
- Traditional power inequalities have been identified and work is done to monitor and redress the balance without alienating certain segments of the population.
- Leaders have been elected, appointed or chosen.
- ToRs, job descriptions and codes of conduct have been developed.
- Capacity in the camp has been assessed among the displaced population and the host population.

- ❑ All service providers are encouraged to identify, hire and train men and women from both local and displaced communities.
- ❑ Training and education is being used to encourage direct participation.
- ❑ Information campaigns are being employed as necessary.
- ❑ Different groups are meeting regularly, have adequate space and a consistent schedule.
- ❑ Camp staff and residents are trained in effective communication and conflict management.
- ❑ Participation and involvement of the camp population is planned at each stage of the project cycle – assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- ❑ There are agreements between the Camp Management Agency and service providers about paid/compensated and voluntary employment in the camp.
- ❑ There are complaint and response mechanisms in place.
- ❑ The host community is involved and participating in the life of the camp.
- ❑ There is a monitoring system in place to check that there is an acceptable level of community participation and involvement.
- ❑ The misuse or abuse of power in participation is being kept in check and monitored (for example, by creating indicators on the number of groups, the percentage of the population represented and ensuring this is disaggregated by sex, age, and vulnerability).
- ❑ The abuse of participation through corruption, nepotism, peer pressure and the pursuit of self-interest is being monitored and managed adequately by the Camp Management Agency.
- ❑ Participation and involvement are evaluated as part of the Camp Management Agency's project cycle.

## TOOLS

! Almost all the tools, publications and other documents referred to are available on the Toolkit CD attached to every hardcopy binder. Weblinks are provided for downloadable online resources.

- **M.B. Anderson, 1994. *People-Oriented Planning At Work: A Practical Planning Tool for Refugee Workers.*** [www.sheltercentre.org/shelterlibrary/items/pdf/UHCR\\_POPatwork.pdf](http://www.sheltercentre.org/shelterlibrary/items/pdf/UHCR_POPatwork.pdf)

This programming tool designed for UNHCR staff and partners, helps to identify essential facts about any groups of refugees/displaced persons. These facts (on demographics, cultural values and customs) are necessary for effective planning. It also provides instruments to organise the information in such a way that it can be used to make good decisions regarding programmes and to implement effective programmes.

- Checklist for setting up and running a committee
- Checklist running a focus group
- Checklist for setting up a complaints and response mechanism (adapted from the Good Enough Guide)
- Checklist for involving beneficiaries
- **Minu Hemmati, 2002. *Principles of Stakeholder Participation and Partnership: Stakeholder Checklist.*** [www.aiaccproject.org/meetings/Trieste\\_02/trieste\\_cd/Stakeholders/StakeholderChecklists.doc](http://www.aiaccproject.org/meetings/Trieste_02/trieste_cd/Stakeholders/StakeholderChecklists.doc)
- **Idealist On Campus. *Power Mapping: A Tool for Utilizing Networks and Relationships.*** [www.idealist.org/ioc/learn/curriculum/pdf/Power-Mapping.pdf](http://www.idealist.org/ioc/learn/curriculum/pdf/Power-Mapping.pdf)
- Les Termes de Référence du Comité Directeur du Camp des Réfugiés Congolais de Gihinga (NRC Burundi). Developed in cooperation between Camp Administration, Camp Management Agency, other agencies present in the camp and refugee representatives – while finally made official by the Camp Administration.
- **Mac Odell, The “Do It Now!” *Appreciative Toolkit.*** <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/Do%20It%20Now-%20ExercisesPhoto-031.doc>

A collection of over 30 exercises that can be used as ice-breakers or in specific workshops to illustrate concepts of Appreciative Inquiry.

- **Linda Richardson and Gill Price, 2007. *All In Diary. A Practical Tool for Field Based Humanitarian Workers*.** [www.allindiary.org/uploads/final\\_All\\_in\\_Diary\\_cd.pdf](http://www.allindiary.org/uploads/final_All_in_Diary_cd.pdf)
- **William M Weis, Paul Bolton and Anita Shankar, 2000. *Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP): Addressing the Perceived Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons through Participatory Learning and Action*.** [www.jhsph.edu/refugee/publications\\_tools/publications/rap.html](http://www.jhsph.edu/refugee/publications_tools/publications/rap.html)

Provides useful tools and information for practitioners in any field who are interested in using Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques. In addition to introducing PRA conceptually, the manual guides practitioners in thinking through what kind of organisational capacity is required to conduct PRAs and offers suggestions on how to get started and issues to consider.

## READING AND REFERENCES

**ALNAP, 2003/04. *ALNAP Global Study on Consultation and Participation of Disaster-affected Populations*.** [www.odi.org.uk/alnap/publications/participation\\_study.htm#](http://www.odi.org.uk/alnap/publications/participation_study.htm#)

**British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND), 2006. *A BOND Approach to Quality in NGOs. Putting Beneficiaries First*.** [www.civicus.org/new/media/putting\\_beneficiaries\\_first.pdf](http://www.civicus.org/new/media/putting_beneficiaries_first.pdf)

**Centre for African Family Studies, 1998. *Empowering Communities: Participatory Techniques for Community-Based Programme Development*.** <http://pcs.aed.org/documents.htm>

Handbook used as part of a hands-on course to familiarise staff with the history and concepts of participatory learning and action approaches, as well as provide concrete tools for designing, developing and implementing participatory programmes. The handbook also provides tips on effective facilitation and planning of participatory processes.

**Charlotte Dufour, François Grünewald and Karla Levy. 2003. *Participation by Crisis-affected Populations in Humanitarian Action. Practitioners' Handbook (Draft)*.** [www.odi.org.uk/alnap/publications/g\\_s\\_handbook/g\\_s\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/alnap/publications/g_s_handbook/g_s_handbook.pdf)

**ECB Building Trust Working Group, 2007. *Building Trust in Diverse Teams: The Toolkit for Emergency Response.***

<http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/display.asp?isbn=9780855986155>

**Karen Freudenberger, 1999. *Catholic Relief Services PRA Manual.***

[www.crs.org/publications/pdf/Gen1199\\_e.pdf](http://www.crs.org/publications/pdf/Gen1199_e.pdf)

**OXFAM/Emergency Capacity Building Project, 2007. *The Good Enough Guide: Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies.***

[http://ecbproject.org/publications\\_2.htm](http://ecbproject.org/publications_2.htm)

**Sarah Thomas, *What is Participatory Learning and Action (PLA): An Introduction.***

Definition of key techniques/tools used in PLA (complete with illustrations) as well as a select bibliography of text and Internet resources.

**The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998.**

[www.brookings.edu/projects/idp/gp\\_page.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/projects/idp/gp_page.aspx)

***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.***

[www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

**UNHCR 2006, *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations.***

[www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Em%20Shelter/Tollkit%20Field/7.2%20Assessment/7.2.2%20Guidelines/7.2.2.8%20UNHCR%20Participatory%20Assessment%20Tool.pdf](http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Em%20Shelter/Tollkit%20Field/7.2%20Assessment/7.2.2%20Guidelines/7.2.2.8%20UNHCR%20Participatory%20Assessment%20Tool.pdf)

**USAID/Center for Development Information and Evaluation, 1996. *Conducting Participatory Evaluation.*** [www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/eval/file30.pdf](http://www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/eval/file30.pdf)

**WFP, 2001. *Participatory Techniques and Tools – A WFP Guide.***

[www.livelihoods.org/info/pcdl/docs/self/Participation%20tools%20WFP/Participatory%20Tools.pdf](http://www.livelihoods.org/info/pcdl/docs/self/Participation%20tools%20WFP/Participatory%20Tools.pdf)

**David Wilcox, 1994. *Community Participation and Empowerment: Putting Theory into Practice.*** [www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/h4.asp](http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/h4.asp)