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Final Assignment / Mémoire / Trabajo final:

Competing constraints: Investigating operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practises

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1.6 Acknowledgements

For the successful completion of the research, many people incalculably contributed their time and resources. In this regard, the author appreciates their contributions and would like to thank them all.

I would like to appreciate the immense contribution of study respondents. They made the research easier than expected.

1.7 Dedication

I dedicate this research to my parents; Clements and Marien Madzura. To them, I owe everything. They always wanted to see me succeed in life.

2 About this document

2.1 Categories

Countries	Document Type	Subject		Institutions	Language
Zimbabwe ...	Report	**Responsibility**	**Humanitarian Assistance** **Humanitarian principles**	**World Vision**	**English**

2.2 Author

Richie Madzura (6 May 1989) holds a Master of Social Science in Public Policy and Development Management, Post Graduate Diploma in Project Management, Bachelor's degree in Economics and Finance and an Executive Certificate in Project Administration and Finance for NGOs.

Richie is an emerging humanitarian assistance specialist. He has worked for organisations that include Save the Children, United Methodist Committee on relief, GOAL, and World Vision focusing on Food Security, Livelihoods, Child Protection, and Disaster Management. Richie Has expertise in managing USAID, ECHO, DEC, WFP, UNICEF, and ADH grants

2.3 Executive Summary

It's time for a new age of accountability in the humanitarian sector, one that truly reflects the sector's increased responsibilities and commitment. The gap in community responsibility should close, and a more structured approach to accountability should result in less harm to communities. Several organizations have advocated for a more meaningful accountability mechanism that ensures that policies are implemented rather than merely written down and filed away.

Donors have given implementing organisations a chance to expand their accountability systems beyond the law's limits by ensuring that accountability systems are key and should determine access to funding. However, as alluded to, organisations continue to do justice to donors through having robust systems that ensure that the accountability commitments to the donors are fulfilled. Accountability to humanitarian support recipients is still a challenge.

They face a variety of challenges, from insufficient capacity to unwillingness to include good accountability practises in project implementation is the big problem that still lies in the humanitarian sector. There is need for research to establish the problems that are driving humanitarian organisations to depart from the principles they agree to abide to at proposal writing. This paper research the operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practises and what could be done to improve vertical downwards accountability (to communities).

3 Introduction and Background of the study

(The following structure / sections are not compulsory but are frequent in a research work. Therefore you can adapt it to your needs)

The research recognizes that the importance of accountability is to ensure humanitarian organisations respect the values, norms, needs, and capacities of the intended beneficiaries. This involves creating an environment that encourages participation and a transparent environment for giving feedback and complaining. Accountability seeks to identify the critical needs of vulnerable communities and endevour to address them ensuring their right to receive assistance, right to life with dignity and protection. The research recognises that community involvement and full participation in all in planning in all interventions affects communities reaffirming commitment to respect their opinions and ensure timely responses and appropriateness of interventions. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to denounce the operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practises. The research results will inform planning and designing for the community’s preferred channel feedbacking to improve humanitarian organisations interventions.

Following the humanitarian interventions in the Great Lakes after the Rwanda Genocide in 1994, great concern over the quality of humanitarian work was raised. Dubuet (2002) postulates that the rise in the number of disasters, as well as the number of people affected, over the last two decades, as well as the number of humanitarian organisations, mobilized to help propelled the need to set up guiding principles for humanitarian work. Multiple reports and anecdotes in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake cast more doubt on the real, constructive contribution of humanitarian interventions, as well as the motives behind these aid efforts. This sparked a renewed interest in accountability in the humanitarian world. The number of quality and accountability measures and instruments more than tripled from 42 to 147 between 2000 and 2012 (Andrew and Schreeb, 2015). Even though humanitarian agencies such as World Vision, Save the Children, Care International, Plan International, and Oxfam have established accountability systems to improve humanitarian service delivery there is no universally agreed concept of transparency.

ALNAP (2015) acknowledge the significant change in downward accountability (accountability to the beneficiary) over the last decade, as demonstrated by an increase in programs on various aspects of accountability, an increase in organisations with complaints and feedback mechanisms, and positive change in participation and degree of consultation with the beneficiaries. Knox-Clarke and Mitchell (1999) also posit that Humanitarian responsibility is, in certain ways, becoming a victim of its success. The proliferation of accountability frameworks and programs is now in danger of causing chaos, adding to the workload of organizational workers, and jeopardizing humanitarian organizations' results. Although humanitarian accountability is often attributed to the desire to increase accountability to affected populations, there seems to be an imbalance as the demands and adherence to upward accountability (mainly to the donor) still outweighs downward accountability. Humanitarian organisations are more concerned with securing future funding than improving lives.

Vehemently, The CHS Alliance (2015) finds that the degree and type of involvement a stakeholder has with a humanitarian intervention can also influence how accountability is interpreted. Each individual may have different expectations and assumptions about the assistance they receive, which will vary depending on the background and culture of the area. In the case of humanitarian organisations, effectiveness is normally measured by several people reached, timeliness, and quality of support. On the other hand, the affected population considers their survival and recovery. In this regard, Accountability definitions may differ drastically from those of humanitarian organizations and may be influenced by previous experiences with assistance, gender, or local power dynamics.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian accountability is becoming widely recognized as critical to assisting in a dignified manner while minimizing protection concerns. Accountability will benefit humanitarian organizations and the communities they serve if it is understood and used for more than simply formal purposes. A feedback mechanism was a key aspect of this approach, which aimed to connect aid beneficiaries directly with the humanitarian organizations working in their communities. The majority of complaints received via this mechanism tried to question the humanitarian action in favor of the project recipients, according to an analysis of the input received. Community members asserted their voice through multiple components of the accountability system, opposing how the humanitarian organization conceived and limited their interests, and opposing calls for legibility to operationalize humanitarian programming. The organization's subsequent actions to address community concerns only went so far as to fix procedural irregularities, ignoring more deeply held egalitarian views, which could have resulted in additional multiplier advantages. Organizations have recently moved their focus from vertical upwards accountability (to donors) to horizontal downwards accountability (to communities). The paper argues that the gap between humanitarian accountability principles and practices should be bridged. It argues that improving humanitarian accountability practices requires the active engagement of recipient communities based on principles of deep listening and action to radically inform and revise humanitarian projects. This study aims to expose the operational gap between accountability principles and accountability practices in this context.

Research goal & Research questions

1. What is humanitarian accountability?
2. What is the difference between accountability principles and accountability practises?
3. What operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practises in the humanitarian context?

4. How can these gaps be addressed?

3.2 Significance of the Study

The study was successful in identifying the major points of contention in the use of accountability principles in humanitarian interventions. It also aided in the closing knowledge gap that existed between accountability concepts and actions. They will gain a lot from the outcomes of this study because it will inform them on the best techniques for adopting accountability principles. The study also aims to establish a foundation for continuous development in the accountability process. This will be a reference paper for researchers who want to perform more research in the domain of humanitarian accountability implementation.

3.3 Scope of the Study / Added value

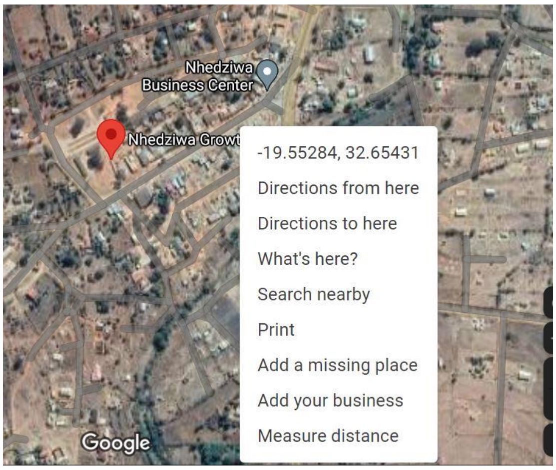
The research was conducted explore operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practises in Nhedziwa, ward 4 of Chimanimani district. The study interrogated the current practises by organizations and what is expected from them. Recommendations were also improved to improve the humanitarian organizations practises.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

The research was conducted in Chimanimani, Ward 4, which has distinct characteristics and exposed to unique hazards and disasters, therefore the findings may not be easily extended to other regions.

3.5 Description of the Study Area

The researcher carried this study in the Chamanimani area. Chimanimani is a mountainous area situated in the Manicaland Province and about 83.5 kilometers south of Mutare CBD. The area is close to the border of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The 2012 national census reported that there are approximately 135 000 people in Chimanimani district. The flash floods due to Cyclone Idai that destroyed infrastructure in Manicaland did not in any way spare Chimanimani district. Prior to the cyclone, the area has been lagging in terms of development such that the destruction of roads, bridges, schools, and schools further worsened the delivery of education for people in the Chimanimani area. Considering that the study was meant to elucidate accountability in humanitarian setup, the extent of NGOs and INGOs in the district makes ward 4 in Chimanimani district the best area to conduct the study.



4 Research results

4.1 Introduction

This research is about understanding the denouncing operational mismatch between accountability principles and accountability practices. It endeavours to contribute immensely to better ways and methods that can improve accountability to partners, donors, and mainly to beneficiaries. The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings that stemmed from arduous fieldwork in ward 4 of Chimanimani district from April 2021 to May 2021. The findings are derived from the data which was gathered through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and documentary analysis. The chapter also gives a detailed interpretation of the findings.

4.2 Information provision

Information provision is key to accountability. All other pillars of accountability are reliant on the level of participation and feedback from project participants. 20 community members representing different socio-economic groups indicated that of the 23 projects that were implemented in the ward since 15 March 2019 (Cyclone Idai), the project engaged in the following information provision mechanisms:

4.2.1 Inception meetings

All projects commenced with an inception meeting to inform the intended project beneficiaries about the new project. The inception meetings helped beneficiaries to understand the objectives of the project, duration of the project, transfer modalities, beneficiary selection criteria, and how the project aligns with the ward priorities. In addition, the inception meetings enabled beneficiaries to understand how the project fits into the current scope of the project in progress in the ward. The FGD indicated that other partners also participated in the inception meetings to check for duplication of partner efforts. KII highlighted that information provision also strengthens coordination of development partner interventions to eliminate double-dipping and increase intervention reach.

The respondents also mentioned that development partners used their discretion to share information. KII with the councilor highlighted that only 7 of the 23 projects that were implemented in the wards since the 15th of March 2019 shared their budgets. **"*Organisations tend to share their scope of work and timelines without budgets. Only 7 organisations have done so from the onset of Cyclone Idai response. This limits the beneficiaries in terms of proposing improvements in the implementation of some project activities due to a lack of budget information. There is a need for transparency in terms of the budget, scope, and project timelines to empower the recipients."*** The councilor also added that organizations that have presented their budgets gave the beneficiaries power to also give feedback for improvement during project implementation.

Information provision at the onset of project implementation can even improve projects that are usually imposed on communities. One of the FGD with community leaders indicated that ***"…there is a tendency for partners to source funding without assessing the needs of the communities. If partners present their information well at the inception level, intended beneficiaries can help the development partners to tailor the project in line with the needs of the communities. This is not the best practise but it helps to modify the project before it duplicates or targets needs that are already being addressed by other interventions in ward 4."*** Some partners continue to sensitize communities on project information through public address and caucus meetings.

4.2.2 Public address and caucus meetings

The FGD indicated that partners involved in food aid in the form normally prioritize caucus meetings and public addresses. **Caucus meetings** are meeting with community leaders, community volunteers, and other individuals representing different socio-economic groups. At these forums, partners normally unpack their intervention from project objectives, project duration, transfer modality, size of the food basket, targeting and selection criteria, the project donor, and whether the intervention is conditional or conditional. The community leaders and other members present are also given time to also bring out their suggestions for the intervention. The caucus meetings help to ensure that all information that is then cascaded to the ward has been understood and /or improved by the community leaders.

Public addresses then follow after the caucus meeting. At this stage, partners would provide information that has already been shared at the caucus meeting. The partner is no longer mandated to answer questions from the ward since the community leaders will be at the same level as the partner. One responded indicated that ***"…these meetings promote project ownership by the recipients. Community leaders are empowered to address issues that may arise without even engaging the partner because they are involved and have knowledge of the intervention."*** Community members are well versed with the World Food Programme food insecurity intervention implemented by World Vision in 2019 and 2020. Communities could reiterate all information pertaining to the project which is a sign of the high level of information provided the projects reached.

Below is the flow of information witnessed in food aid interventions distributions and beneficiary registrations;

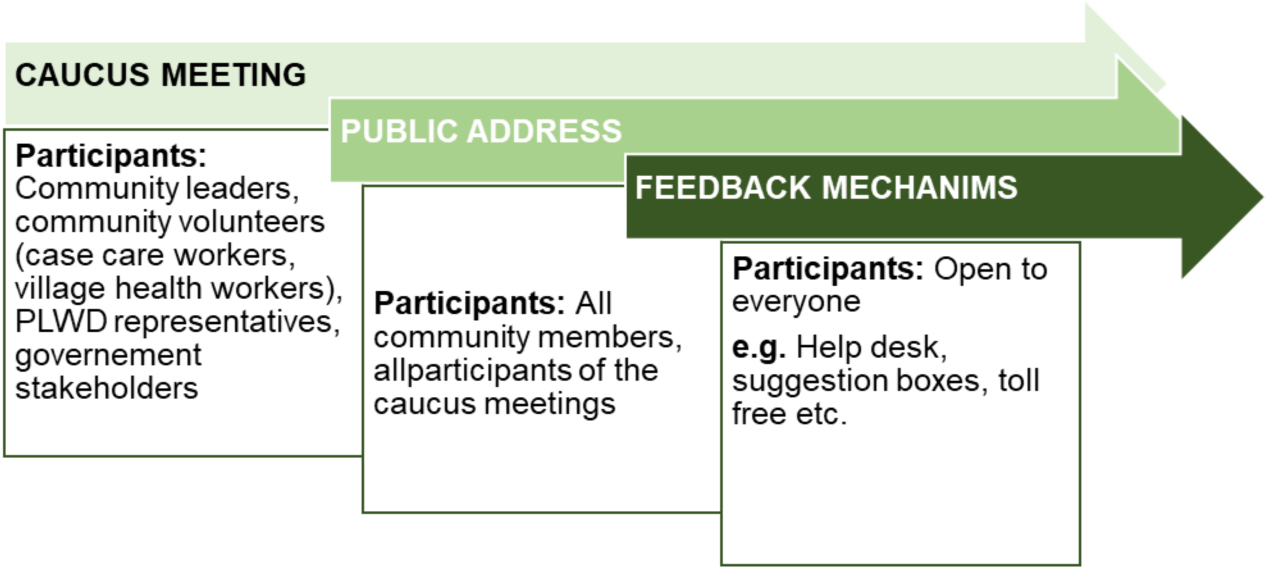


Figure 1 Information flow during food/cash beneficiary registration and distributions

4.2.3 Feedback meetings

Partners in the district have also been using monthly and quarterly feedback meetings to provide all project stakeholders with progress information including challenges, lessons learned, best practises. All stakeholders are able to decide on the best measures that can help the project achieve its intended objectives. FGDs indicated that some projects have only informed the communities about their failure to finish intended outputs in the last month of implementation which then highlights the failure of partners to account for their actions. White elephants are a result of failure to involve all stakeholders in monitoring activities.

4.3 Level of participation for transparency, evaluation, and learning

Community participation was well active and community members were able to take part actively and participate in project implementation,

Both Focus group discussions and key informant interviews indicated that beneficiary registrations involved full participation of the community members. Community members ranked each other using vulnerability indicators in their villages aligned to the intervention. For example, in food security interventions, community members ranked their villages and then wards households using food insecurity indicators compiled by the community members. The process is always participatory and community leaders are encouraged to de-roll so that the process becomes transparent.

The respondents also indicated that in some instances, political figures in the ward influenced the process. Community members at the village level were asked to rehearse the ranking process and do a pre-ranking before the project registration process. The ranking is done through political affiliation and members of the ruling party would benefit more and are ranked as the most vulnerable. The beneficiary selection process is proclaimed to be transparent to the implementing partners and donors yet it would have to be done before the actual registration day. In 2019, some village members *(names withheld)* decided to report the issue through the toll-free, and village registration was verified and nullified. The households that reported the incident were expelled from the villages by the village heads. Community members stay silent even though the registrations are determined by political figures in the ward. KII respondent highlighted that, ***"… cash-based interventions experience more corruption (pre ranking) during registration as compared to other modalities."***

Respondents also indicated that beneficiary participation is more pronounced through the provision of labour. In WFP funded conditional cash and in-kind interventions, the respondents commended that the project also acknowledged that vulnerable communities still have capacities by using locally available labour. In Food Assistance for Assets, respondents concurred that provision of labour in community gardens and irrigation schemes establishment promoted asset ownership.

Key informant interview respondents indicated that stakeholder participation in project monitoring is limited. A government stakeholder key informant interview respondent indicated that development partners noticed the importance of involving relevant stakeholders when the projects experience some challenges and when they want to certify completion of the intervention. On the other hand, development partners KII highlighted that the government stakeholders are incapacitated in terms of transport while partners cannot also support infield monitoring by government stakeholders. Another KII interview highlights that the stakeholders are not willing to do joint monitoring activities when there is no certain payment. ***"…if you have no budget to pay stakeholders for lunch they do not join the monitoring exercises. It is their workstations but you have to pay them to monitor the project which poses a challenge for development partners because the cost is not recognized by donors."*** Another respondent mentioned that ***"Some organisations can pay the stakeholders subsistence fees hence government***

stakeholders are more aligned to such projects at the expense of the projects that have no capacity to meet such costs."

4.4 Level of consultation with communities to promote transparency and learning

The consultation was discovered to be cross-cutting across all the pillars of accountability. However, the community leaders highlighted that 90% of the projects received in the ward were preconceived without the direct involvement of the community members. FGDs indicated that development partners do not prioritise needs assessments. In this regard, ward development plans are not considered hence the needs of the ward are being partially addressed and in some instances, partners are duplicating their efforts. One KII responded highlighted that development partners are more reliant on government-led assessments. ***"… government-led assessments are politically motivated hence results are tempered with, for example, crop and livestock assessments are altered to ensure that government programs are not considered failures…"***

Another KII respondent also highlighted that non-government organisations transfer the cost of needs assessment to communities. This means, instead of directly consulting communities, they end up enrolling in interventions that do not address the needs of the ward. Some projects have also caused harm in communities due to failure to engage communities and access important information reduces harm. One KII respondent indicated that ***"…Cash based interventions (CBI) are not encouraged in ward 4. The development partners have heavily relied on market functionality without considering protection issues. Gender-based violence (GBV) towards women sharply increased during CBI intervention by World Food Programme and World Vision in 2019. Women have no power over cash decisions which make in-kind transfers for preferable..."***

Development partners have heavily involved community members for evaluation and learning purposes. Respondents concurred that the process is very engaging and communities participate willingly to ensure that organisation can improve future programs. However, INGOs and NGOs continue to repeat mistakes. Lessons are not implemented which is a sign that the evaluation process is done as a formality to meet donor requirements.

4.5 Collecting feedback and complaints

Respondents indicated that the commonly used feedback mechanisms in the ward. Most respondents indicated that they know suggestion boxes, help desks, and toll-free lines. Below is the feedback from respondents:

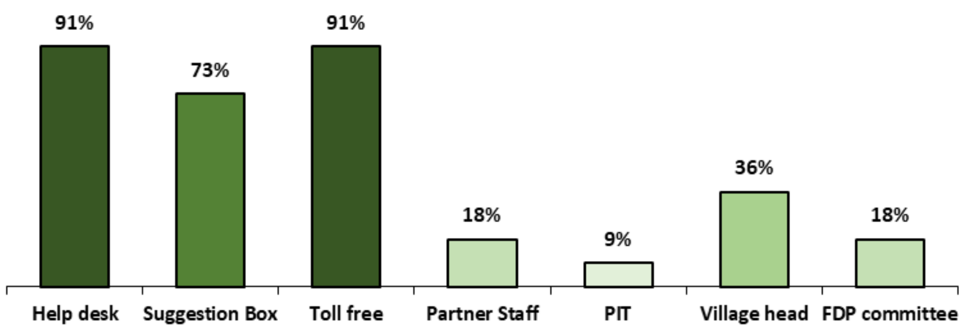


Figure 2 Knowledge of feedback mechanisms used by partners

One KII respondent indicated that in practise partners have made sure that these feedback mechanisms are always available during the intervention. Utilisation is the challenge. Respondents concurred that NGOs and INGOs do not invest in accountability assessments to check for feedback mechanisms that communities found useful and transparent.

Another respondent indicated that lack of education affects the utilisation of feedback mechanisms. 20% of the respondents (FGD and KII respondents) indicated that they know how a suggestion box is opened and the composition of the committee. Another respondent highlighted the extent of participation of community members in deciding effective feedback mechanisms with an example, ***"…no one engages the target group on the positioning of the suggestion box. At several schools, you find the suggestion box in front of the school head's office which makes it difficult for learners to utilise the box because it exposes the person reporting. Even during food aid, you find the suggestion box placed at the main food stack where it is visible to everyone. …there is need to engage communities than to impose."***

The respondents concurred that toll-free lines have been effective feedback mechanisms since they are monitored by independent members. However, one respondent highlighted that the feedback is sent back to the ward through the development partner for investigation. The respondents also concurred that they are effective when the perpetrators are community members and donors and development partners who will cover up their issues to maintain a good reputation.

5 Conclusion and recommendations (or main message)

5.1 Conclusion

In the area of humanitarian accountability, NGOs are more intensely and frequently confronted with competing demands to achieve project objectives and satisfy stakeholder needs specified in humanitarian governing principles and standards such as the HAP, Sphere standards, and the good enough guide. Accountability exists in levels that are vertical upward accountability (to donors), horizontal accountability (partners and government), and vertical downward accountability (to communities). Humanitarian organisations should establish an effective and efficient communication system to promote smooth sharing of information, participation, consultation, and sharing of feedback between the organisations and communities.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The research recommends the following;
2. Complaints and feedback mechanism setup should involve the communities. They should be confidential and easily accessible to everyone.
3. Effective communication systems should be set up to ensure smooth communication between all Project stakeholders. Project information should be easily accessible to everyone affected by the Project.
4. Humanitarian organisations should not assume that project teams are well versed with humanitarian accountability. All staff should be trained before project inception.
5. In terms of information provision, humanitarian organisations should share all project information with communities including budgets so that they can participant and make well-informed decisions.

6 Annexes

6.1 List of Acronyms

ACC	Accountability to Affected Populations
ADH	Aktion Deutschland Hiftht
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance

□

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CBI	Cash based interventions
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease on 2019
CRS	Christian Relief Services
DEC	Disaster Emergency Committee
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender based violence
HA	Human Accountability
HAP	Human Accountability Standards
HPN	Humanitarian Practise Network
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OWT	One World Trust
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Foof Programme

WHO World Health Organisation

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6.3 Literature Review

6.3.1 Defining Humanitarian Accountability

It is worth stepping back and looks at the general definition of the concept of humanitarian accountability (HA). The Humanitarian Accountability Standards (HAP) defined HA as involving two sets of principles and mechanism that individuals, organisations and states accounting for their actions and being held responsible for them; and principles and mechanisms by which individuals, organisations, and states can safely and legitimately report concerns, complaints and abuses, and get redress where appropriate. In 2006, One World Trust (OWT) published the first Global Accountability Report (GAR) in which it concurred with HAP definition of HA defining it as using transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response mechanisms. Humanitarian accountability encompasses the use of power and acting responsibly, taking into consideration, and being held accountable for all actions by, different stakeholders, and primarily by those who are impacted by the use of such power (CHS Alliance 2014). Andrew and Schreeb (2015), CHS Alliance (2014), and Humanitarian Practise Network concur that humanitarian accountability applies to all individuals and organisations that provide direct assistance to communities and people affected by crisis and those that deliver technical support to other humanitarian organisations with direct contact with the affected population.

Most proponents of accountability concur that accountability flows in three directions that are:

1. Vertical upwards (accountability to donors)
2. Vertical downwards (accountability to communities)
3. Horizontal/Peer accountability (Other Agencies, Business, Research or Government Partners)

Figure 1 below shows the diagrammatic flow of humanitarian accountability in emergency responses, disaster recovery, and preparedness interventions.

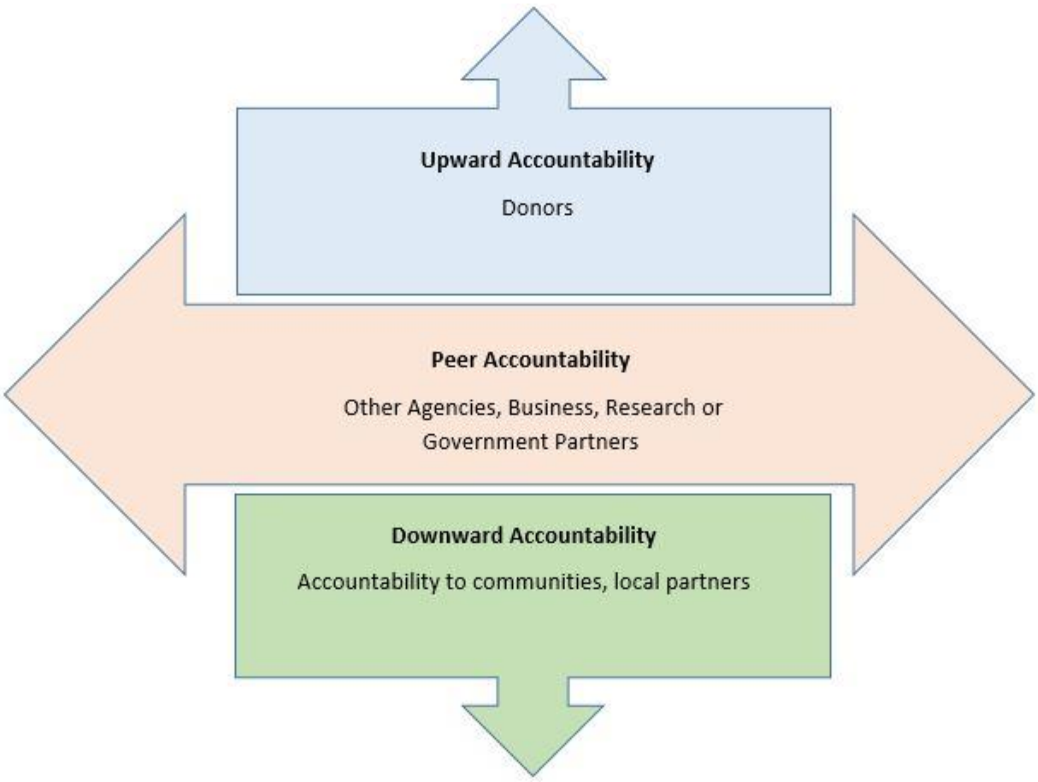

Figure 3 Humanitarian Accountability Flowchart (Edwards and Hulme, 1996)

In all stages of any humanitarian intervention, accountability should be considered. The main focus of this paper is to delineate the gap between *Accountability in Principle* and *Accountability in Practice.*

6.3.2 The Four Dimensions of Accountability - Accountability Continuum

In our strategies, processes, and practices, we must follow four dimensions of accountability.

1. **Transparency**
    - Providing accessible and timely information to all stakeholders
    - Ensuring communities are informed of their rights and
2. **Participation**
    - Creating a conducive atmosphere for key stakeholders to participate actively in events and decision-making processes that affect them.
3. **Feedback and complaints mechanisms**
    - Providing channels for our stakeholders to provide input or make complaints, with the assurance that these complaints will be carefully reviewed and addressed.
4. **Evaluation & Learning**
    - Monitoring, assessing progress and outcomes in relation to priorities and objectives; continuously feeding learning back into the organization to enhance our work

6.3.2.1 Transparency

Transparency describes how an organization makes knowledge about its programs and goals accessible to the public. When it comes to research organizations, this may include the data they gather and use as the foundation for their policy recommendations (Gibelman and Gelman, 2001). It will also provide information on their jobs, experience, and main stakeholders (Global Accountability Report (GAR)). The provision of timely and usable information to stakeholders, as well as the evaluation of organizational policies, systems, and processes. Transparency refers to an organization's willingness to share details about its operations, including what it's doing, where and how it's doing it, and how it's doing it (Knox-Clarke and John, 2011). These are the essential details that stakeholders need to keep track of an organization's activities. It allows stakeholders to determine whether a company is working within the law, whether it is adhering to applicable requirements, and how its performance compares to its goals. As a result, stakeholders are better able to make informed decisions and choices about the organization. According to (Gibelman and Gelman, 2001), transparency entails not only the organization's account to stakeholders but also the organization's response to their requests for information. It all boils down to giving stakeholders the knowledge they need to participate in decisions that concern them. Transparency is not a one-way flow of data, but rather an ongoing conversation between an organization and its stakeholders about data. According to (Gibelman and Gelman, 2001), most emergency programs in the countries visited were implemented in places where organizations had previously (or concurrently) implemented development projects; as a result, beneficiaries received no additional details about the organization as part of the emergency response. Project progress reports, reporting data, and exit strategies were disseminated through committees or local government if made publicly accessible, but this practice was patchy at best (Bagchi, Castro and Michaelowa, 2016). When asked why such information was not routinely made available, the majority of respondents said they hadn't considered it. Further investigation revealed that field workers can quickly find ways to provide information to illiterate communities if their organization requires it. Publicly available financial data ranges from zero to just direct costs of particular interventions. The above is usually included in a project agreement between the neighborhood committees and the department (Kilby, 2010). Unlike progress reports or reporting data, the lack of publicly accessible budget information and expenditure reports is not an omission. Most workers (many of whom had never seen their project budget) were wary of such public disclosure, and some questioned whether beneficiaries needed to have such details. Complete disclosure, it was feared, would lead to unwanted jockeying for project resources by powerful individuals and organizations in the community, jeopardizing the agency's ability to provide a needs-based solution based on impartiality and neutrality (Knox-Clarke and John, 2011). Most participants believed that societies would need a significant amount of contextual knowledge to correctly interpret and comprehend financial data.

6.3.2.2 Participation

Concerns about how an organisation involves stakeholders in its decision-making processes and activities. Participation gives stakeholders a voice in the activities of the organisation, creating ownership of the results and a greater likelihood of the uptake and legitimacy of the research (Andre and John, 2003). The process through which an organisation enables key stakeholders to play an active role in the decision-making processes and activities which affect them (Christian Aid, 2013). An organization must consider the wishes and desires of key stakeholders to be accountable. This is best accomplished by participation and involvement in decision-making. According to Christian Aid (2013), organizations should put in place processes that enable stakeholders to have a say in decisions that concern them. This may necessitate involvement at the organizational, policy, and/or strategic levels. An organization that is committed to transparency must enable stakeholders to participate in the development of wider policies and strategies, rather than limiting participation to operational issues (Featherstone, 2016). According to Andre et al., (2003), participation must result in change; it must go beyond obtaining approval for or acceptance of a decision or activity or involving stakeholders in its implementation and evaluation. Participation means that the organization considers its members and gives them a voice in how and what decisions are taken. All organizations have made community engagement a specified principle. Community-level committees organized by local government, organization initiatives, or affiliate workers are most often in charge of beneficiary targeting and project activity selection. While agencies acknowledge that the 'quality of community-level committees differs, and all agencies check beneficiary lists before implementing project activities, there were no structures in place to track or audit committees. In Northern Uganda, one IWG Agency employee mentioned that there were mixed feelings on how well the project activities met community-identified needs. Insufficient funds to meet all identified needs, as well as activity selection based on agency funding, expertise, and competencies, were cited as constraints. Staff at one Ugandan organization reported that they spend a lot of time articulating their approaches to participation during the preparation of donor proposals, but very little of that can be applied on the ground during implementation due to the constant pressure on staff to meet implementation deadlines (Mays, Racadio and Gugerty, 2006). While some organizations keep track of evolving needs during project initiation, most respondents agreed that donor limitations make it difficult to alter activities once a project is up and running.

6.3.2.3 Feedback mechanisms

Describe how an organization invites feedback and criticism on its operations. A feedback process allows stakeholders to comment on the research organization's previous actions and, if appropriate, seek redress (O'Dwyer, 2007). Mechanisms by which an organization allows stakeholders to express their dissatisfaction with its decisions and activities, and ensures that these issues are adequately investigated and addressed. According to Monica, De Las Casas, and Robert, (2005), a crucial element of transparency is allowing stakeholders to request and receive responses to complaints and the alleged harm. This is the process by which stakeholders may keep an organization accountable by questioning a decision, action, or policy and providing a satisfactory answer (O'Dwyer, 2007). To reduce the need for complaint mechanisms, transparent, participatory, and assessment systems should be used. According to Tan and Schreeb (2015), complaint and response processes are the last resort for stakeholders to keep the organization accountable and for organizations to become aware of a problem that needs to be addressed. None of the respondents knew if their agency had a "formal" beneficiary grievance process. Although some organizations were already discussing the development of a structured feedback process, many of them had already introduced some aspects of one. Save the Children (Bolivia), for example, has a policy of responding to all grievances in writing. Every three years, World Vision conducts a self-review and peer review of its program, through which input from communities, local governments, and partners is systematically sought; the review's findings are then communicated with these interlocutors. Beneficiaries' most popular method of lodging concerns about a project or agency practice is by community committees (Pareena and Sheila, 2009). Post-distribution use and utilisation or satisfaction surveys are typical in food distribution projects. All of the participants agreed that providing a structured framework for systemic input and grievances is a good idea, but most agencies find it difficult to take meaningful measures to implement one. It should be remembered that, of all the humanitarian values and criteria, this (beneficiary reviews and complaints) is the most difficult to put into practice in a reliable manner (Pareena and Sheila, 2009). According to Christian Aid (2013), expecting beneficiaries to complain simply because there is a process to complain is impractical given their powerlessness (in relation to humanitarian agencies) and the culture of silence that most communities in need of humanitarian assistance are steeped in. Any complaint mechanism must be accompanied by a comprehensive education and empowerment program (Pareena and Sheila, 2009).

6.3.2.4 Evaluation

Head of Research and Communications, ALNAP, Paul Knox-Clarke mentioned that evaluations allow organizations to focus on their past experiences and learn from them. Furthermore, Cosgrave highlighted in the Synthesis Report: *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami research* that organization can only report on its activities to its stakeholders through a straightforward assessment process. Knox-Clarke (2016) also indicated that the mechanisms by which an organization tracks and evaluates its progress and performance toward goals and objectives with input from key stakeholders, feeds learning back into the organization on an ongoing basis, and reports on the results of the process. Joint Standard Initiative (2013) submitted that evaluation ensures that an organization learns from its success and is held responsible for it; it ensures that priorities and targets are met and that agreed-upon expectations are met (Christian Aid, 2016). Evaluation allows an organization to account for its success and effects, allowing stakeholders to keep it accountable for the outcomes it promised. Learning is at the heart of the relationship between assessment and responsibility (Featherstone, 2013). The assessment process and the findings can be used to guide current operations and future decision-making, presenting insight that can help an organization enhance its performance and become more accountable to its goals and objectives. Most agencies are currently taking measures to ensure that 'large' emergency projects are routinely evaluated and that all responses are subject to after-action assessments and lessons learned workshops. However, assessing small or recurring responses (such as flooding in Bolivia and drought in Malawi) is still not a common practice. Furthermore, there are no processes in place to make assessment results public or to ensure that they are used to change practices. CRS has a monthly reporting framework in Uganda, but no process for an annual evaluation or report for the country program. Depending on the needs of the donors, project assessments and evaluations are carried out. In November 2005, an end-of-project assessment revealed that communications with partners were lacking. Staff members stated that they are working on ways to fix this flaw in their software.

6.4 Research design and methodology

6.4.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the research methodology that was utilized by the researcher in his quest to understand accountability practices employed by organizations in ward 4, Chimanimani district. The chapter outlines discuss and justify the research design that was utilized by the researcher in undertaking the study. Research methods, sampling techniques, and ethical issues that guided the researcher are also discussed in this chapter.

6.4.2 Study design

The research employed a qualitative research method. Kothari, (2004) defined a qualitative research approach as the collection of data that yield categorical or non-numeric responses. The researcher is dependent on participants' insights, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analysed these words for themes and conducts the inquiry subjectively.

6.4.3 Research approach

Padgett (2008) and Flick (2007) concurs that qualitative research methodology is ideal when little is known about the topic under scrutiny as it enables one to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Considering that very little is known pertaining to the topic under scrutiny, the researcher resorted to a qualitative research approach as it is the most ideal in determining the accountability practices employed by organizations.

Through qualitative research, the researcher gains an in-depth of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Patton (2005) further posits that qualitative research methodology enables the researcher to understand a phenomenon from the participant's perspective. Guided by the key characteristics of qualitative, the researcher inevitably resorted to qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology was employed by several researchers in their studies. The researcher also chose qualitative research methodology due to several advantages associated with it. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) argued that through the qualitative research methodology, the researcher will obtain a piece of detailed information on the phenomena he or she is studying. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) note that qualitative research technique is associated with flexible research methods, unlike quantitative research methodology that is associated with rigid research techniques.

6.4.4 Study target population and respondent selection

6.4.4.1 Target population

Welman et al (2007) define a target population as all units under study. Kothari (2004) also defines the target population or the universe as all the elements of any field research universe. The research targeted both male and female participants. The respondents included community leaders, community volunteers, government stakeholders, development partners, and general community members.

6.4.4.2 Respondent selection

The purposive sampling technique was utilised to select participants and key informants. Utilizing a judgemental sampling technique, the researcher purposively selected the research participants from the population. Purposive sampling also enabled the researcher to select key informants and Focus on very knowledgeable group participants and he managed to obtained detailed information from the key informants.

6.4.5 Research instruments

6.4.5.1 Focus group discussions (FGDS)

Focus group discussion is one of the research methods that was utilised by the researcher during the study. Flick (2010), defines focus group discussion as a group interview held by the researcher with a group of research participants. Utilising his flexibility and good listening skills, the researcher fruitfully conducted focus group discussions. While conducting focus discussions, the researcher kept in mind the guidelines put forward by the World Health Organisation (WHO) of social distancing in a bid to control the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The researcher also encouraged all members to participate during the sessions, the researcher encouraged all members to speak their views pertaining to the phenomena under scrutiny.

Several interpretivisms such as Bailey et al (2011) endorses the use of focus group discussions when one decides to use qualitative research methodology. Although there is a chance of arguments among group members, the researcher solved this by giving every participant chance to speak out his or her mind. Conducting focus group discussions in such a manner also solved the issue of dominance.

In this study, the researcher managed to conduct two focus group discussions with the research participants, one with research participants who were at the primary level when cyclone Idai ravaged Manicaland province and the other one constituted those who were at a secondary level during that time. Gilbert (2012) note that a focus group must constitute between six to ten members. Keeping this in mind, the researcher held focus group discussions with six participants in all sessions.

Although it was difficult for one person to moderate and focus group and take notes as he did not have a research assistant, the consent that was given by the participants to the researcher to record using his phone effectively solved the challenge. Through his phone, the researcher managed to capture the responses that were given by the responses by the participants.

6.4.5.2 Key informants interviews (KII)

Utilizing purposive sampling, the researcher managed to identify key informants. The researcher selected headmasters and teachers who were teaching in Chimanimani when cyclone Idai ravaged Chimanimani. The key informants were selected on the premise that they are well acquainted so they have a compendious understanding of the efficacy of disaster risk reduction inclusive. Armed with key-informant interview guides, the researcher managed to solicit information from the key informants.

6.4.5.3 Documentary analysis

Although documents are slowly marginalised by social scientists as they normally opt for techniques used to collect primary data such as focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and observations, the researcher used documents as one of the research methods during the study. Through documentary analysis, the researcher managed to have a compendious understanding of the disaster risk reduction inclusive curriculum. The authenticity of the documents was put into consideration in the selection of the documents that were used during the study. Documents were also useful in coming up with the background to the study. Journals, textbooks, and reports are some of the documents that were used by the researcher during the study. Hart (1998) observes that reports published by organisations contain detailed information that can be used by researchers when conducting their studies. Reports were quite useful as they helped the researcher to know statistics of the number of schools destroyed, the number of people that were displaced and the general trends of disasters across the globe and in Zimbabwe.

6.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was done concurrently with data collection using thematic data analysis. After every session of collecting data, the researcher would then transcribe that data. After transcription, data was then sorted and put into categories. The researcher further analysed the data that he had transcribed as he sought meaning themes and the themes which he sought through this analysis were useful in giving answers to the research questions which the study sought to answer. Having created themes and reviewed that emerged as the researcher was analyzing data, the researcher then grouped his data and the grouping was paramount as it made life easy for the researcher in the presentation of research findings.

6.6 Ethical considerations

Cresswell (2005); Flick (2014) as guidelines guide the researcher during a study. Flick (2014) further posits that ethics are generally important across all fields as they protect participants. With this in mind, the research ethics guided the research during the study

6.6.1 Informed Consent

Before soliciting data from research participants, the researcher sought their consent using plain language which they clearly understood. In seeking consent from the research participants, the researcher emphasised the aim of the study. The researcher only interviewed the participants after they have agreed to participate.

6.6.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is one of the ethical considerations that underpinned the research. Pseudonyms were used in the presentation of data. The use of pseudonyms ensured the anonymity of the participants. Before the collection of data, the researcher assured the participants that the data they will give will be kept confidential. This is in line with Gray et al (2007), who argued that confidentiality, participants' identity is kept anonymous.

6.6.3 No harm

During the study, the researcher did not harm the participants in any way. Flick (2014) posits that researchers must not pit participants at risk when conducting their studies. Through this ethic, no participant was neither physically nor psychologically harmed by the researcher.

6.6.4 Ensuring trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that qualitative researchers must strive for credibility. Over the past years, the issue of credibility has become a topical issue among interpretivists. In his endeavor to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher triangulated the methods employed in data collection. Considering that all research methods have strengths and weaknesses, the researcher employed a number of data collection methods. Utilizing a number of methods was premised on the fact that the weakness of one method is compensated by the strength of another.

6.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was employed by the researcher during the study. In doing so, the researcher started by discussing and justifying the research design by giving the advantages associated with the case study design. Thereafter, the researcher discussed the research approach that was utilized in this study the sampling that was used by the researcher to select research participants was then discussed. Thereafter, the researcher then discussed the research methods that were utilized by the researcher during the study. The advantages associated with the data collection techniques were discussed. Data analysis and limitations of the study were also discussed. Lastly, the researcher discussed the ethics that guided him during the study.

6.8 Other Annexes

6.8.1 KII: Accountability and Community Response Mechanism Questionnaire

Introduction

Greetings. I am (name of enumerator) and I am a student at Kalu Institute studying towards a Masters in International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid. I am conducting a research on Humanitarian Accountability. Your answers will inform my research to understand to what extent organisations working in your area abide to the accountability standards. Please provide honest answers to the questions asked.

Please confirm that you agree to participate in this survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. 1. Yes – continue 2. No - end the survey

Thank you!

D1. Location D1.1. AP/t	Name of the community _______________ Name of Ward _______________
C1. Have you benefited from humanitarian interventions in your area?	
Which interventions have you benefitted from? *Which Do not prompt respondent.*	
Have you ever participated in the planning, selection, monitoring, and reflection or evaluation process on interventions? Which program(s)?	

Have you ever been consulted in the assessment/design/monitoring/evaluation process of interventions?
Have you ever received information concerning interventions in your area? What information did you receive? How did you receive the information?
Have you ever been consulted on your preferred complaints/feedback mechanism?
How can organizations improve in acting on complaints from the community?
How can organizations improve in providing feedback on complaints shared?
Please list and record

Thank you for your participation!

6.8.2 HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS: Accountability Assessment: Key Informant Interviews

1. INTRODUCTION

Greetings. I am (name of enumerator) and I am a student at Kalu Institute studying towards a Masters in International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid. I am conducting a research on Humanitarian Accountability. Your answers will inform my research to understand to what extent organizations working in your area abide to the accountability standards. I want to thank you for agreeing to meet with me today.

Please confirm that you agree to participate in this survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. 1. Yes – continue 2. No - end the survey

Do you have any questions?

2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

a. I would like to start this discussion by better understand the key people or groups that play a role in this community. Can you tell me which people or groups are important to this community? These could be individuals, community groups, local organizations, government bodies or officials, humanitarian organizations, religious leaders, etc.

   (Probing: can you think of any others?)

b. You have identified the following groups and people…, of these can you tell me which ones are most important to you?

   (Probing: why are they most important to you? What are they doing here?)

c. Which ones are least important?

d. How close are each of these people and organisations to your community?

   (Probing: how often to you interact with this stakeholder, how do you feel about them?)

3. INFORMATION PROVISION

a. Can you tell me what you know about organizations working in your area?

b. What kind of interventions are being implemented in your area?

   (Probing: can you tell me a little about that activity, are there any others?)

c. How did you find out this information?

d. You have outlined what you currently know about organisations working in your area. What kind of information would you like to have in the future about humanitarian organizations?

e. There are various ways in which we can share information with you. Some of the methods we can use are print materials, community meetings/focus group discussions, individual meetings like this one, notice boards, video presentations, etc.

   Think about how we have worked with you in the past and how you would like to interact with humanitarian organizations. Consider how information can be easiest to understand, most interesting, and best shared. From this list, can you select which three methods you think are the best and rank the most preferred, the second best and the third best? (Show the voting sheet and explain each option)
   (Probing after methods are selected: why do you prefer this method, what do you like about it?)

f. In what language would you like to receive this information?

4. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

a. While we hope that the projects meet your satisfaction, we recognize that there may need to be adjustments made to them or other issues may come up during implementation which you are unhappy about.

   How do you currently provide feedback to the humanitarian organizations if you have a suggestion to improve a project in your community?

b. What do you do if you are unhappy with an aspect of the humanitarian organizations' work including services, staff behavior, or actions?

   (Probing: Can you think of a time when you were not happy with the humanitarian organizations? What happened? What did you do? Did you hear back? How long did it

take? How did the humanitarian organizations respond? Were you happy with the response?)

c. What do you know about the humanitarian organization's rules for making a complaint?

(Probing: How did you find this information out?)

d. There are many ways that community members could share a complaint with the humanitarian organizations or suggest a way to improve an activity. From this list can you select which three methods you think are the best and rank the most preferred, the second best and the third best? (Show the voting sheet and explain each option)

(Probing after methods are selected: why do you prefer this method, why do you feel comfortable with it?)

e. Would you feel comfortable using these methods to make a sensitive complaint?

(Probing: for example, what if it was about a staff member behaving badly with girls?)

f. Is there anyone in your community that would find it difficult to give feedback or complain in the ways you suggested?

(Probing: why? Is there anyone else?)

5. CONSULTATION

a. Does the humanitarian organizations meet with people from this community?

(Probing: how often? What is discussed?)

b. Who attends these meetings?

(Probing: how are they selected/elected to attend? Do you think those who attend meetings represent your views?)

c. Do you attend these meetings?

(Probing: why or why not? which meetings have you attended? What was discussed at these meetings? Did you speak at the meeting? Why or why not?)

d. What other opportunities have been given to you to provide views on how the humanitarian organizations projects should be planned and implemented? For example through home visits, or questionnaires.

(Probing: what were you asked your opinion on? How did the humanitarian organizations ask your opinion? Do you think your opinion influenced the humanitarian organization's decision? How did this make you feel?)

e. Which decisions would you like to be consulted on in the future?

(Probing: why? How would you like to be consulted?)
Nb. Some vulnerable people may not feel that their views are important. It may be necessary to explore which projects impact on them and ask what they would like to

see The humanitarian organizations do different in the future as a way of identifying areas of interest).

6. PARTICIPATION

a. How are beneficiaries or those that benefit from the humanitarian organizations projects selected?

(Probing: do you know anyone who has received assistance? Why were they/you picked?)

b. What are the criteria for selection?

c. Who is involved in the selection process?

(Probing: are your views similar or different from theirs? Can you give an example when you would have suggested something different to a decision that was made?)

d. How do you currently participate in the humanitarian organizations projects?

(Probing: do you have an example of a project you've helped to design and implement? How have you helped?)

e. How would you like to participate in the future?

7. CLOSING

That is all I wanted to discuss with you today. I want to thank you very much for your time. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping my organization improve the way we work with communities in the future.

Do any of you have any questions about what we discussed today?

Thank you for your participation!