Negotiating with Beneficiaries and Communities

(Syria. Aid for 50,000 living in desperate conditions near the Jordanian border. Ajmal Khybari, UNHCR's Deputy Representative for Protection in Syria, speaks with community leaders and youth groups at Rukban informal settlement. Copyright: UNHCR)

Reflecting about Humanitarian Negotiation, we usually think about interactions with state or non-state actors (both civilian or military) to an armed conflict and not necessarily about negotiations with directly or indirectly affected communities. However, we are currently facing more and more occasions (in the context of migration, for instance) where we need to negotiate safe access with host communities and affected people. In this sub-group of the Think Tank, we reflected about our interactions with beneficiaries and communities and how to negotiate with heterogenous groups rather than our traditional counterparts.

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The views expressed by the contributors to this sub-group and working paper are those of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of CCHN, nor its Strategic Partners or member organisations.

Introduction

When host communities block the road to a refugee camp, families of an Ebola victim attack an isolation centre, relatives of detainees demonstrate at the office of a humanitarian organization, migrants occupy a cash centre, local youth threaten that if they are not registered in a food distribution they will forcefully take it, or we discuss the modalities of our programmes with directly and indirectly affected populations to understand their needs and get their buy-in, we find ourselves negotiating with beneficiaries and communities. In this chapter, we look at how we can negotiate access for humanitarian projects through dialogue with communities and beneficiaries by carrying out thorough stakeholder mapping and defining engagement tactics, and we reflect on

how to negotiate with groups of civilians who may oppose our actions. We see the discussion and tools proposed in this chapter as complementary to the ongoing debates around the topic of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) that is gaining prominence within humanitarian agencies. The reflections have been inspired by senior humanitarian workers who are part of the Think Tank, Peer Circle Discussions with the CCHN Community of Practice, a graduate student of International Education Policy at Harvard University, law enforcement officers, a military trainer, and a professional negotiator.

Current debate on negotiating with beneficiaries and communities

Terms related to negotiation with beneficiaries and communities vary in definition and scope. Organisations agree that such considerations are important, but they discuss and form policy around them differently. Examples of concepts and terms referring to this topic that emerged in a review of the literature include informed consent, communication, consultation, involvement, participation, engagement, partnership, empowerment, rights-based approach, community-based approach, and accountability. Placing focus on these aspects of humanitarian support is supported by normative or value-based, instrumental, and emancipatory rationales (Brookings Institution, 2008: 10). Some normative or value-based reasons to work together with communities are respecting rights, acting in solidarity, and adhering to written obligations. Instrumental reasons relate to effectiveness, security, quality, efficiency, and contribution. Emancipatory reasons encompass strengthening society, changing inequalities, honouring agency, and increasing sustainability and ownership. In other words, arguments for inclusion not only maintain that such approaches benefit programmes and people in functional and meaningful ways, but also highlight gaps where these strategies are needed.

Accountability to Affected Populations

IASC specified 5 Commitments to AAP in 2011, including leadership/governance; transparency; feedback and complaints; participation; and design, monitoring, and evaluation (IASC, 2013). According to these principles, leaders are to integrate AAP into strategies, proposals, and trainings, among other activities and reports; and design, monitor, and evaluate goals and objectives in alignment with the involvement of affected populations. Humanitarian organisations should provide affected populations with accessible information to support informed decision making and seek feedback through streamlined and functional mechanisms to improve policy and practice, and affected populations are to play an active role in the decisions and processes that affect them, including the most marginalized.

Many organisations address AAP or related concepts in their policies. For example, ICRC uses the Accountability to Affected People Framework, approaching AAP as an ethical commitment and an effective way to build trust and acceptance. The ICRC Framework is designed to use power responsibly and ensure that affected people have the power to co-design humanitarian activities. The Framework underwent external evaluation of diversity, inclusion, and AAP in operations before finalization. The Institutional Strategy 2019–2022 also includes strategies for involving people in decisions that affect their lives (ICRC, 2020). The IOM AAP Framework (IOM, 2020) sets out a Statement of Commitments on leadership, information sharing and transparency, participation, complaints and feedback mechanisms, and partner coordination toward collective approaches to AAP. AAP is also central to UNHCR's protection mandate in its Policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity (UNHCR, 2018). Its approach to community engagement accounts for ethical use of technology with pointers to ensure that staff 'do no (digital) harm'. Considerations include ownership, neutrality, data protection, digital divides, and trust (UNHCR, 2020a). The UNHCR AAP Toolkit provides a Community Mapping Guide as a

foundation for forming communication plans for information provision and feedback with different groups in communities (UNHCR, 2020b). World Vision abides by an institutional Programme Accountability Framework (World Vision International, 2019) that includes four pillars: providing information, consulting with communities so they can influence key decisions, promoting participation, and collecting and acting on feedback and complaints. The Framework outlines minimum standards for initial disaster management, within 12 months, and within 24 months. Oxfam International's Accountability Matrix (Oxfam, 2012) is based on its Programme Standards, with four progressive levels for each of its five dimensions: transparency; feedback; participation; monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and relationships. This is to mention only a few examples of AAP frameworks.

Current reflections around the interaction between humanitarian agencies and directly and indirectly affected populations may focus on how to include the needs of the communities in our planning and how to communicate in a transparent way, but they focus less on aspects of negotiation, collaboration, and power dynamics, which we will address in this chapter.

Definition

In this chapter, we will work with the following definition of *Humanitarian Negotiation with Beneficiaries and Communities*:

> Humanitarian Negotiation with Beneficiaries and Communities is a set of interactions between a humanitarian organization and members of directly or indirectly affected communities aimed at 1.) reducing the power imbalance between the humanitarian organization and directly and indirectly affected communities, 2.) designing meaningful and sustainable humanitarian projects, 3.) ensuring safe access to vulnerable groups, 4.) safely implementing humanitarian assistance and protection projects, 5.) de-escalating the situation in case directly or indirectly affected communities block or threaten humanitarian access.

We are aware that the term "beneficiary" already points to a power imbalance between humanitarian actors and the people they assist. Over the past years, humanitarian agencies tried to address this issue by changing the terminology to "affected populations", "affected communities", or "people of concern", to mention a few. However, for the purpose of this chapter, we see it key to distinguish between communities and people who are the target of our projects.

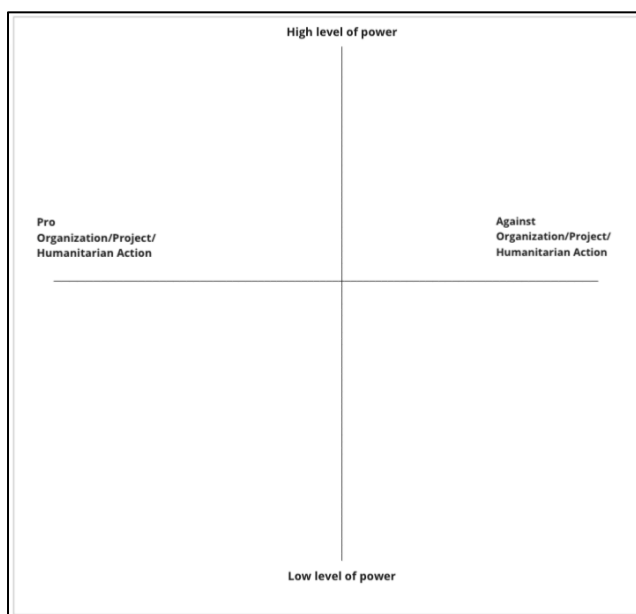
> Therefore, we use the term "beneficiary" in this chapter to refer to people who are directly targeted by humanitarian assistance or protection projects. The term "community" refers members of the civilian population who are either directly or indirectly affected by a humanitarian crisis but do not (yet) benefit from our projects. This can, for instance, be host communities in a context of migration, or people who are part of an affected community but do not fall under the criteria of a humanitarian organization to be eligible for assistance (a nutritional project that only targets children under 5 years, for instance, would exclude anyone in the community who is above 5 years of age).

Mapping the community

Before designing and implementing any humanitarian project, as a first step, we propose to carry out a thorough stakeholder mapping of all interest groups within the community.
The CCHN developed an actor mapping tool to map all the stakeholders that may have an impact on the negotiation counterpart (CCHN Field Manual, 2019: 252-277). We also found some actor mapping tools in existing AAP frameworks of different organisations (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, GPPAC, and Norwegian Church Aid, 2015; UNHCR, 2020) but to our knowledge there is currently no actor mapping tool that maps all the interest groups among beneficiaries and communities according to their influence, power, organizational structure, and vulnerabilities with a view to designing projects and negotiate safe access for the field team. The tool that we are proposing

draws on the existing CCHN tool for "Network Mapping and Leveraging Influence" (CCHN Field Manual, 2019: 252-277) but uses different axes and does not focus on one counterpart.
We propose the following process to map the stakeholders among communities and beneficiaries:

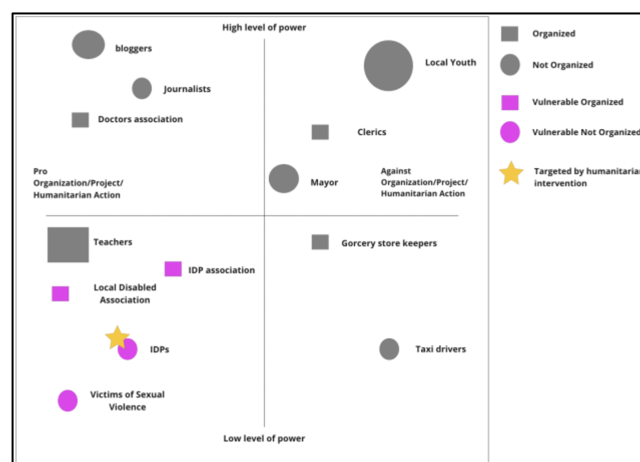
- Step 1 - Define the axes:
  - x – axes (horizontal) pro-humanitarian action/organization vs. against humanitarian action/organization
  - y – axes (vertical) high level of power to grant/block humanitarian access



- Step 2 – Put all the stakeholders among the communities and beneficiaries on the map:
  - Indicate if they are an organized group or not
  - Indicate if the stakeholders are in a vulnerable position or not
  - Indicate whether they are currently the target of our humanitarian intervention
  - Indicate their level of influence in the community with the size of the shape

Example:

You might be planning to implement a food distribution in an IDP camp and trying to map the stakeholders among the beneficiaries in the camp and the host community. You may, for instance, find that the local youth, who are not organized, have a high influence in the community and could pose a high level of risk to the organization because they are against the project. Hence, they have a high power over granting access. On the other hand, you may find that the local grocery storekeepers, who are also opposing the project, are organized, but they seem to have a lower level of power and influence. Also, you may find that the teachers, who are in favour of the project but have limited power over granting you access, have a high level of influence in the community. Furthermore, IDPs, who are the target of your intervention and are not necessarily organized, are experiencing vulnerability due to their displacement and are in favour of your project.



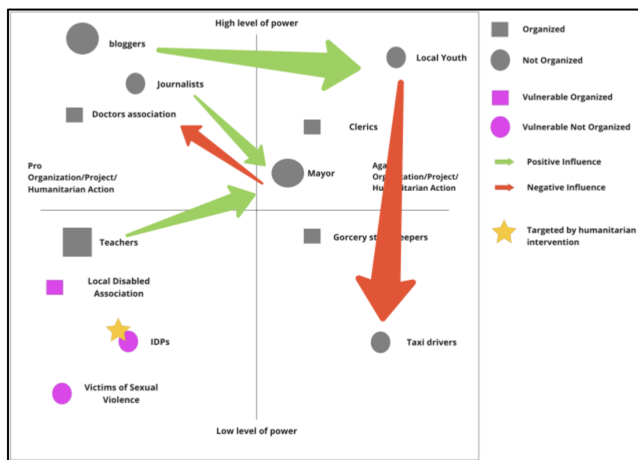
Identifying these actors is the most important part of this exercise as they may not always be obvious to the humanitarian actors. Therefore, it is very important not to apply a humanitarian lens when looking for such actors and networks in the community but to first seek to truly understand the social dynamics. Refer to Annex I for some reflection on identifying refugee networks in a migration context.

- Step 3 – Draw arrows of influence between the actors:
  - Use green for positive influence
  - Use red for negative influence

- Choose a different thickness for the arrows depending on the level of influence (strong/weak)

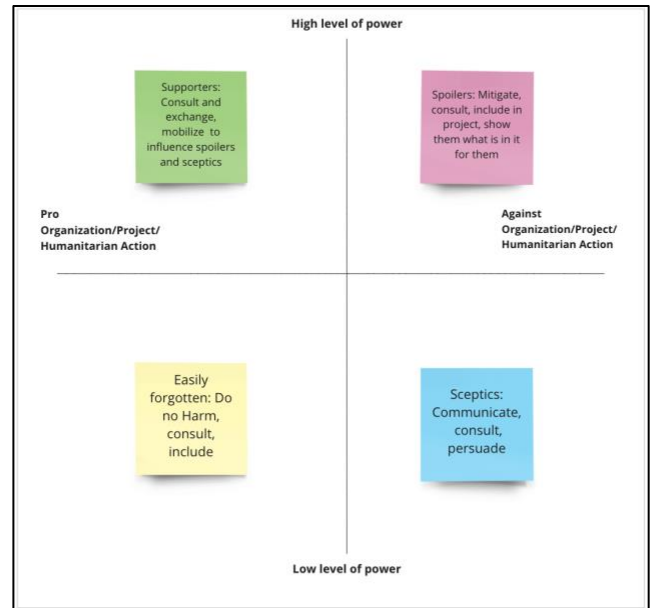
Example:

In the previously outlined scenario, you might find out that the local youth have a very strong negative influence over local taxi drivers but that some bloggers have a positive influence over the youth. Furthermore, you may find out that some journalists who are in favour of your project have a positive influence over the mayor, but that the mayor, on the other hand, has a negative influence over the doctors association, which has been in favour of the project until now.



Positive influence can be leveraged, and negative influence should be mitigated to the extent possible when planning and implementing a project.

- Step 4 – Identify engagement tactics and roles for each actor in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project:
  - Supporters (pro and high level of power): Consult and exchange, mobilize to influence spoilers and sceptics
  - Easily forgotten (pro and low level of power): Do no harm, consult, include if possible
  - Sceptics (against and low level of power): Communicate, persuade
  - Spoilers (against and high level of power): Mitigate, consult, include in project, show them what is in it for them

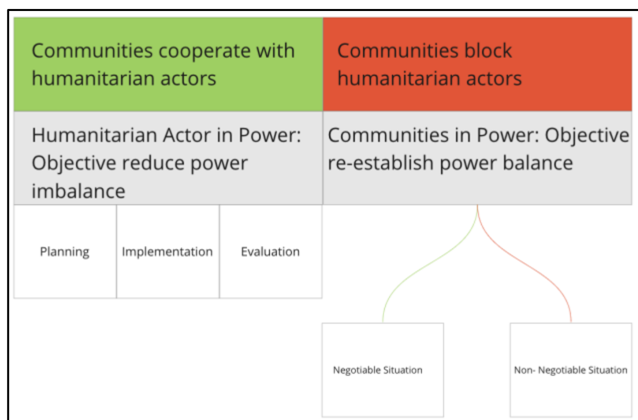


The engagement with the different stakeholders and the role that is attributed to them changes depending on the power dynamics that are at hand.

After the first peer review meeting, the members of the Think Tank would like to add some reflections here: It is important to note that identified stakeholders who have been placed in situations of vulnerability should be approached with cultural and contextual sensitivity. At times, engaging with them (with victims of sexual violence, or HIV patients, for instance) might put them in danger of stigma or worse and increase their vulnerability. Furthermore, we should not fall into the trap of always keeping people who we see as vulnerable in the bottom left quadrant. On occasion, communities may progressively build networks or even consciousness and identity around a perceived vulnerability and progressively gain power. This can happen, for instance, with women or disenfranchised minorities. Finally, we also have to be aware that our consistent engagement with certain stakeholders who are not yet organized may encourage them to organize themselves, thereby changing their position within the map. This may raise particular ethical considerations and responsibilities for humanitarian actors. In short, the map remains fluid, subject to timely updates.

Power dynamics

There is often a power imbalance between the humanitarian organization (in power/control) and the communities and beneficiaries (dependent), reflected in the way projects are designed and communicated. However, several examples show that this power imbalance can tip very quickly in favour of the beneficiaries and communities when they block humanitarian action. In these situations, the communities or beneficiaries are in power, and the humanitarian actors are dependent on their cooperation. In the best case, humanitarian actors are not able to implement a project for a few days; in the worst case, the security of the field teams is at stake. To guarantee safe access when planning and implementing projects, we propose using the previously described actor mapping tool and suggested engagement tactics to reduce the power imbalance in the negotiation between the humanitarian organisations and members of the communities and to re-establish the power balance when communities and beneficiaries block humanitarian action. If the power balance cannot be re-established, the humanitarian actors have to decide whether the situation is negotiable or not negotiable. In the latter case, they may be forced to evacuate. This shift may be caused by dissatisfaction among certain groups about the humanitarian organization and/or the humanitarian project or mis-/dis-information about the humanitarian actor or action in the community.



Communities cooperate with humanitarian actors: Planning, implementing, and evaluating humanitarian projects

Informed by Peer Circle Discussions with members of the CCHN Community of Practice, inputs from different AAP Frameworks and drawing on the experience from law enforcement officers, we propose an examination of the implementation of a humanitarian project in three phases: before (planning), during (implementation), and after (evaluation).

Before - Planning

The planning phase starts with actor mapping, described above. Once the actor mapping is complete and we understand how the different interest groups feel about our organization and the project we plan (this can be achieved through information from resident staff and their network, field visits, focus group discussions, informal conversations, and media monitoring, for instance), we reach out to them with these engagement tactics. In this phase, it is important to understand the objectives, concerns, and fears of the “spoilers” and “sceptics” in helping them achieve their objectives differently or addressing their fears.

Example:

> If the local doctors association seems to be against a humanitarian organization and its community health project in a refugee camp because they fear that it will have a negative impact on their income, the organization could consult them when planning the project and reflect on options for cooperation.

Defining the role of each stakeholder in the project is a constant negotiation. We can also use supporters to positively influence the “spoilers” and “sceptics”. Drawing on the lessons learned from crowd control in law enforcement, we found that in the planning phase it is also important to identify “representatives” of each of the interest groups who we can engage with during the

implementation phase. These representatives can be mobilized to "manage" the group they represent during the implementation phase.

Example:

During the planning phase of a nutritional project, you hear that the local youth are opposed to a food distribution to IDPs because they feel left out. You could consult with some of the youth, inviting them to nominate a certain number of daily workers to offload the trucks and appoint a representative. Then, you could inform the representative that he is responsible to make sure that the other youth do not jeopardize the distribution. This way, you give the youth a purpose, value, and voice in the project.

The Think Tank members would like to note here that identifying "representatives" needs to be done with care and should not simply reproduce existing power imbalances in a community. As such, the representative does not always have to be the obvious choice, a tribal leader, for instance, but someone we feel truly represents the needs of the identified interest groups. Furthermore, when dealing with unorganized stakeholders, it may be challenging to find a representative to speak for them all. In such cases, focus group discussions and individual consultations may be useful. There should also be a dialogue with the different stakeholders about their perception of the "representatives" over time.

During - Implementation

Once the planning phase is completed, all voices have been heard in designing the project, the project was properly communicated, and the "spoilers" and "sceptics" have been mitigated as described, we move to the implementation phase, where we work closely with the previously identified "representatives" of the interest groups.

Be approachable

Again, drawing from lessons learned from crowd control in law enforcement, we propose that in the implementation phase it is important to provide the option for a dialogue between the humanitarian actor and the beneficiaries and communities. In projects where humanitarian actors deal with large crowds, for instance, bringing clearly identifiable "dialogue staff" could be considered. The community and beneficiaries can address "dialogue staff" to ensure that no discontent is provoked by interest groups who feel like they are not heard. Similarly, it is important that the "representatives" of the stakeholders can be easily identified and that there is a constant dialogue with them to understand how the community is feeling.

Example:

During a distribution of Non-Food Items (NFI), a household of ethnic group A may feel like they have received less items than members of ethnic group B. The person is looking for someone to talk to, but it is not clear who is responsible. He approaches a driver of the humanitarian organization who says that he is not responsible but that he was sure everyone received the same amount. The person gets angry, starts shouting, and is soon joined by other members of ethnic group A who start to threaten the driver.
This situation might have been avoided if this person could have been able to easily identify the representative of his group to address the issue, or if he had been able to identify a designated dialogue person from the humanitarian organization.

Remove barriers

The experts in crowd control also recommended to – whenever possible – remove physical barriers between the humanitarian actors and the communities and to rely on the "representatives" of the different stakeholders to "control" their groups. This removes the distance between the two actors and allows for dialogue and trust building. Throughout the implementation, it is recommended to stay in constant communication with the "representatives" and to monitor social media to measure the temperature in the community.

After – Evaluation

The evaluation phase of the project also helps the humanitarian organization to evaluate the quality of its actor mapping and the success of engaging with the different stakeholders and

their representatives. In this phase, it is recommended to return to the identified interested groups and their representatives for feedback on the collaboration and consult with community members as to how they experienced the project and the collaboration with their representatives.

Communities block humanitarian actors: Negotiable and non-negotiable situations

Despite all efforts to negotiate humanitarian access with beneficiaries and communities and to reduce the power imbalance, directly and indirectly affected communities may still prevent humanitarian actors from implementing their activities from the outset, before, or during the implementation of a project. The reasons may lie in a general rejection of humanitarian action in a region or discontent with the humanitarian organization in general or with a specific project. The opposition can arise spontaneously or develop over time. In some contexts, for instance, it may be the result of a host communities' fatigue within an ongoing refugee crisis and slowly develops into an opposition against humanitarian actors. In other contexts, opposition may arise over a disagreement about beneficiary registrations and suddenly escalate. Mis- and dis-information can also lead to opposition.

Mis-/disinformation

Inaccurate information flow in a community can pose serious problems for humanitarian action.

Example:

> During the Ebola response in Congo (DRC) in 2018, for instance, there was a belief in some communities that humanitarian organisations would kill patients in isolation centres, steal and trade organs from the dead, and try to read people's minds when taking their temperature. This, coupled with frustrations about movement restrictions, economic hardship, checkpoints, etc., led to violent attacks against humanitarian actors.

We define mis- and disinformation as follows:

> Mis- and disinformation refer to false information circulated among a targeted group. Misinformation is false information shared without malicious intent, whereas disinformation is false information shared maliciously to disrupt communities. For the purposes of humanitarian negotiation, mis- and disinformation simply refer to information, or divergent facts, that the negotiator must consider to fully understand the counterpart and reach the object of the negotiation.

Current debate on mis-/disinformation

Mis- and disinformation are not new topics of study (Center for Information and Technology and Society, University of California, Santa Barbara, n.d.). Following the 2016 US presidential election, political scientists, security analysists, and psychologists examined the spread of false (or fake) information (or news) and social media (Wendling, 2018). In addition, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, officials and technologists are exploring the effects of mis- and disinformation on public health campaigns and the public's confidence in scientific and government interventions (Virality Project, 2021). The current debate centres on countering and interrupting disinformation campaigns, but studies show flooding media with "right" or "true" information often has little to no effect on perceptions. "Even after people receive clear and credible corrections, misinformation continues to influence their reasoning: in cognitive psychology, this is known as the *continued influence effect of misinformation"* (Southwell et al., 2018). While researchers continue to explore mis- and disinformation, including why and how it effects populations, the Think Tank has been reflecting how we could use existing CCHN tools and the previous reflection on mapping the stakeholders among communities and beneficiaries to support frontline negotiators to plan their communication strategy and information campaigns.

Information monitoring

Before implementing any humanitarian action, it is key to get a sense of the current beliefs, rumours, and types ofongoing information campaigns within the community.

*An **information campaign** is the movement of data that creates value*. Understanding what is circulating within the community about the general humanitarian and political situation, humanitarian action, organization, our project etc. will elucidate the motives and values of the community. Knowing what value the existing information campaign(s) brings to beneficiaries will inform your actions to amplify existing narratives or create an alternative information campaign.

Addressing mis-/disinformation in a community

To understand what kind of information is circulating among communities and beneficiaries, we propose using the CCHN Island of Agreement (CCHN Field Manual, 2019: 64-85).

- Step 1 – Gather information and organize it in the island of agreement
  - Identify the agreed and contested facts
  - Identify the convergent and divergent norms
  - Build an island of agreement

Example:

Returning to the example about the Ebola response, for instance, there was a big challenge with contested facts between humanitarian actors and communities. However, there was also an island of agreement that humanitarian organisations could build on to work with the communities by, for instance, employing more local youth or trying to allow traditional rites during the burials for Ebola victims with the necessary protective measures.

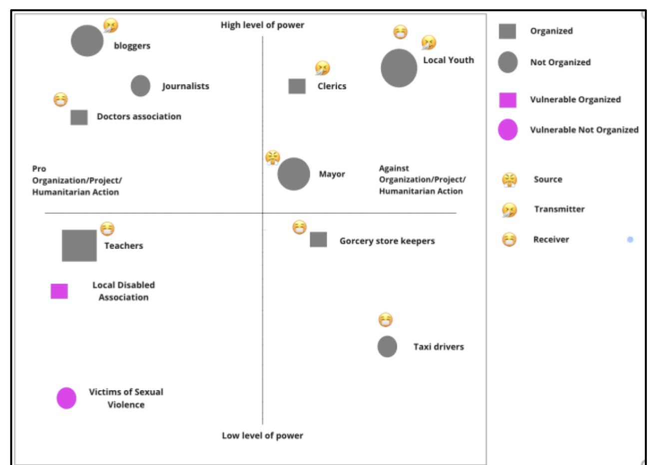
	ISLAND OF AGREEMENTS		
CONTESTED FACTS	AGREED FACTS	CONVERGENT NORMS	DIVERGENT NORMS
*Points to be **clarified** with factual evidence*	*Points of agreement to **start the dialogue***	*Points to be underlined as **convergent values***	*Points of divergence on norms to be **negotiated***
Ebola does not exist; Humanitarian workers steal organs	Local population does not benefit from employment; Humanitarian actors cooperate with the Ministry of Health	Everyone has the right to a dignified burial; Everyone should receive health care	a deceased cannot rest in peace if the rites are not performed
Humanitarian workers read the mind when taking temperature; People are killed in isolation centers	Youth are unemployed; Checkpoints delay moto taxies	No one should be excluded from elections; The Ebola response should not be politicized	
Traditional healers can treat Ebola; Humanitarian workers brought Ebola			
Factual Negotiation: Expanding factual understanding of the parties based on evidence.		**Normative negotiation :** Expanding normative understanding of the parties based on a new consensus on applicable norms.	

Identifying sources, transmitters and receivers

To understand the information that is circulating in a community we propose to go back to the above-described community actor mapping tool.

- Step 2 – Identify whether the actors are:
  - Sources: Individual or group with authority disseminating information with the intent to disturb and disrupt
  - Transmitters: Individual or group amplifying messages from the source(s) and receiving recognition from and fidelity (is trusted) by receivers
  - Receivers: Members of the community who receive value and ingroup benefits from the information campaign

Example:

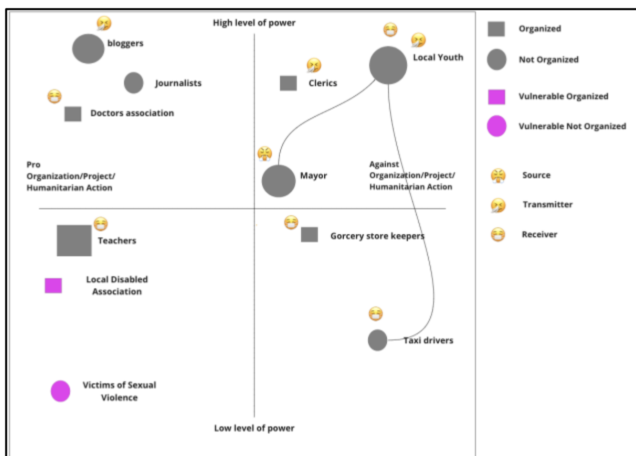


Some actors may, of course – consciously or unconsciously – take several roles: a receiver can also be a transmitter, for instance.

- Step 3 – Analyse the information flow by drawing arrow between the source, transmitter and receivers

Example:

As illustrated in the table below, the mayor (source) might say during his election campaign that he "will make sure that refugees will no longer steal jobs from the local youth, as they have done for many years," when he takes office. This information is received by local youth (receiver): The youth (transmitter) usually gather at the taxi parking and voice their anger about unemployment due to the refugees to the taxi drivers (receiver).



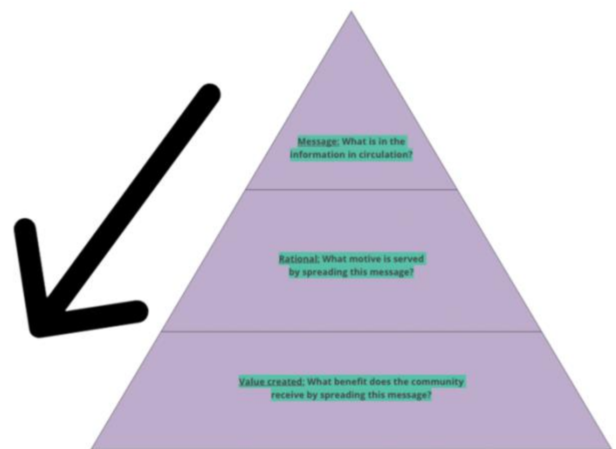
Understanding the motivation

Once we know who is passing messages to whom and who is receiving messages from whom, we analyse the information that has been spread, why it has spread, and what value this spreading of the information gives to the source or transmitter. We use the CCHN Iceberg tool in this process to understand the position of the counterpart (CCHN Field Manual, 2019: 199-208).

- Step 4 – Understand the actor by identifying:
  - The message that is spread
  - The reason for spreading the message
  - The value that is created by spreading the message or what frustration is addressed by spreading the message

Example:

Looking at the previous example, we see that the youth transmit the message that refugees steal jobs, which is the reason for their own unemployment. The reason for spreading this message could be that they hope the refugees would leave if there were enough hostility against them in the town. Or they are embarrassed by the fact that they are unemployed, and they want to save face by blaming someone else. Spreading this message addressed their own frustrations and gives voice to their anger. Possibly, they gain recognition from other youth who share their frustrations.

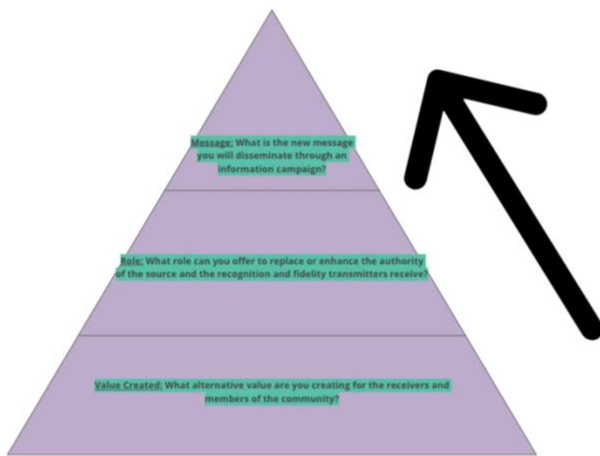


Then, we take another Iceberg and look at it from the bottom up to understand what alternative values we can create and what role we attribute to the transmitter in order to provide a new message.

- Step 5 – Reflect how the message of the actor can be changed by:
  - Creating an alternative value
  - Giving the actor a new role in the project or community
  - Providing a new message

Example:

In this scenario, we could create an alternative value for the youth by offering them a source of income as daily workers or capacity building opportunities. We could also consider including them in the planning of the project to give them the recognition for which they are looking. The roles we attribute depend on the value we want to create. Either they become part of the project, or we could make them ambassadors of the project, etc. This may change their narrative and their message or simply cut the chain of transmission of the wrong information.



Conclusion on mis-/disinformation

Rather than responding directly to the information that is circulating within the community, mapping the actors and understanding what values and motives underpin the information that is circulating, allow you to craft a counter-campaign that may not directly address the initial mis- and disinformation. By crafting a community-driven message that creates roles for transmitters and receivers, you support an alternative vision and value to rally the community around that also supports the object of the negotiation. Understanding the purpose information campaigns serve in the community before crafting a counter-message will ensure you only focus on where you/your organization can create value and increase your impact within the community.

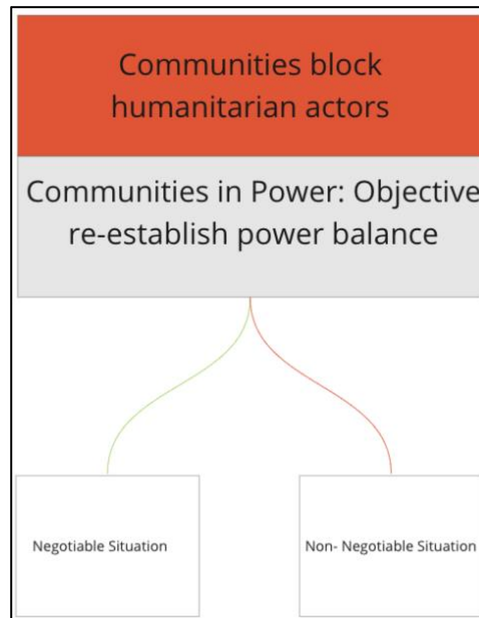
Negotiable and non-negotiable situations

Despite our efforts in engaging with communities and negotiating our projects with them in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases, we may face situations where communities and beneficiaries block our access up to the extent that they threaten the teams in the field. In such situations, we may have to negotiate with hostile crowds.

We define a hostile crowd as a group of people who are emotionally charged, probably with a common purpose and with little to no constraints, particularly where the rule of law is weak/non-existent, and who see you as the agent of their anger. They are not yet violent.

Drawing on recommendations from a military trainer who has worked extensively on the topic of negotiating with hostile crowds, in such situations we have to evaluate if the situation is:

- Negotiable
- Non-negotiable but might become negotiable
- Non-negotiable



Non-Negotiable Situation

Indicators that a situation is non-negotiable are that the crowd:

- Does not listen to you

- Repeats the same thing over and over again
- People quickly lose their temper
- They threaten you with the use of force

Example:

A non-negotiable situation may be when an Ebola response team arrives at a funeral to bury the body of the victim. Out of nowhere, a group of people arrives, shouting: "There is no Ebola! Leave" More people join in and chant, "Leave, leave, leave!" and the crowd draws in on the response team. There does not seem to be leader, and no one is listening to the humanitarian workers. The first person lifts a stone and starts throwing it towards the car.

In such situations, the evacuation of the team is usually the only option. Until evacuation is possible, it is recommended to:

- Remain calm
- Tell the crowd that you will comply
- Follow their orders
- Do exactly what they tell you to, no more and no less
- Ask if there is any other solution to the problem
- Avoid unexpected moves

Negotiable situation or a situation that can be turned into a negotiable situation

Indicators that a situation is negotiable are that the crowd:

- Is ready to communicate
- Is not emotional
- Does not threaten the use of force
- Demonstrates goal-oriented, purposeful behaviour
- Still has a sense of humour

Example:

A negotiable situation may be when a humanitarian response team is carrying out a beneficiary registration and members of the host community suddenly arrive at the registration site. They seem agitated and demand that they are registered as well. They all speak at the same time, and more and more of them arrive. They threaten to prevent refugees from coming to the registration site if they are not registered themselves. However, they seem to be willing to discuss their concerns with the humanitarian team.

In this situation, the most important recommendation is not to negotiate with the crowd but to try to identify their leader, separate him or her, and negotiate with him/her while keeping the crowd out of the negotiation.

In such situations, we try to de-escalate the tenson the negotiation and to build trust. Listen to what they want, tell them what you want, separate the person from the problem and identify the source of the problem. Tension can also lowered by culturally appropriate behaviour, smiles, props and jokes. Just be nice! Be emphatic and non-judgmental, respect the person space, focus on feelings, allow time for silence and reflection, avoid overreacting … In terms of communication apply focused listening, paraphrasing, reframing, and communicate non-verbally as well.

Duncan Spinner, former military trainer

Often the crowd calms down when they see that talks are ongoing.

The leader of a crowd can be identified as the one:

- Who answers your questions and does not just repeat his concerns over and over again
- Whose body language shows power and authority

- Who seems respected by others
- The crowd can also be asked who the leader is

Conclusion

After in-depth discussions around the topic of negotiating with beneficiaries and communities, we came to the conclusion that humanitarian frontline negotiators have to recognize that, in many contexts, negotiating humanitarian access does not only mean interactions with civilian and military authorities, local leaders and town elders, but also beneficiaries and communities; and that only by acknowledging them as legitimate negotiation partners during all stages of humanitarian action can we guarantee their buy-in into a project and guarantee safe and continuous access for humanitarian field teams. In this chapter, we proposed some simple tools to map relevant actors among communities and beneficiaries and proposed different engagement tactics during all stages of humanitarian intervention.

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Annex: Identifying Refugee Networks

Speaking with humanitarian practitioners, it became apparent that negotiating with beneficiaries and communities is a particular concern in migration contexts, where the outlined actor mapping is even more challenging due to the movement of the people of concern. We are sharing here some reflections from Josep Zapater, who has worked extensively on this topic.

Josep is a member of the Think Tank sub-group Negotiating with Beneficiaries and Communities and has several years of experience working in migration contexts with UNHCR. His last mission was in Zahle, Lebanon, and he is currently based in Venezuela. The reflections presented in this annex are made in his personal capacity and do not reflect the opinion of his organization.

For the purpose of this note, we define refugee networks as:

Collections of refugees, with varying degrees of organization, capable of collective action to pursue specific interests. As per classical definitions of civil society, refugee networks are of a non-state nature and are bigger than one family. However, they may have close links with States. They may have also a structure based on kinship or tribes. In this reflection, refugee networks also include powerful individuals who have a well-defined following over which they exercise informal power – including, for instance, shawishes and religious sheikhs, or persons who used to occupy a position of authority prior to displacement which continues during asylum.

Identifying refugee networks

- The most important method is snowballing (i.e., speaking with well-informed individuals and then following the threads). Do not use complicated methodologies. Avoid tunnel vision.
- The most important attitude is forgetting humanitarian work and protection as the "glasses" through which we look at refugee networks – because we will miss anything that does not fit pre-defined categories or sectors within the humanitarian and protection profession and because refugees do not necessarily have that mindset – rather one of needs, justice, rights, collective action.
- Never look at a refugee network through a specific project. (Refugee mobilisation is not a means for a project, e.g., participation in running community centres.) This is just good programming, rather than a priority in itself in refugee mobilisation.
- Do not look at refugee networks as refugee networks. Rather, look at grassroots organisations, social structures, civil society within a refugee community – or outside of the refugee community and with an ability to absorb refugees – for instance, tribal structures in Bekaa existing prior to the refugee crises but with important links to Syrian society and an ability to influence the refugee community.
- The most relevant factor for humanitarian organisations in identifying refugee networks is, put simply, power (i.e., their ability or potential to mobilize collective action (positive or negative, within or without protection principles) within the refugee community, and to mobilize external spheres (humanitarians, government, international organisations).
- Look simply at what exists, with a prejudice-free eye.
- Liaise with researchers, anthropologists. On some aspects, they may have much better information on refugee networks than humanitarian organisations.
- Use local knowledge within the humanitarian organisations' national personnel, including those with no professional responsibilities on community mobilisation. Look for knowledge where it exists.

Types of refugee networks

Without aiming at providing a categorization of refugee networks, the following is a collection of parameters that may help humanitarian actors to class them into groups and understand how they function. It is also a way to provide examples from field work and tips on "where to look" to identify refugee groups. Many refugee groups will combine two or more parameters in differing degrees.

Specificity to the refugee experience

Some refugee networks respond specifically to challenges posed by displacement. Examples may be community groups on promotion of hygiene in informal settlements or outreach volunteers. In some cases, they are created by humanitarian organisations. Other cases are mixed: for instance, we identified a women's group in Baalbek that was already engaging in mobilisation on early marriage and decided to train and reinforce the group.

Timing of formation: Before or after asylum

Many traditional social organization forms pre-date but survive displacement, often mutating their structures and objectives. These social

organization forms may also have a long transnational history.

Such networks may be ***tribal structures***. In Syria, for instance, tribal structures are extremely complex and have mutated for centuries, according to shifting alliances with whomever was in power in Syria. Armed conflict has split some tribes down the middle and reshuffled leadership. Powers in conflict in Syria are paying increasing attention to tribal networks (not only Arab but also Druze and Kurdish) as one more tool in conflict endgame.

Other networks may be Sufi brotherhoods or other religious networks.

There may also be networks who pre-date asylum but then adopt a refugee-specific approach, as can be observed with governance structures that have been implemented by opposition forces before displacement but continue to exist in exile.

Specificity to one particular protection issue – Often linked to social conditions that pre-date displacement, and often pointing to a particular age, gender or diversity group

Women groups, youth groups, and groups of persons with disabilities, for example, belong to this typology. Given that in good measure their social condition exists before displacement (although it may be aggravated), they themselves may exist prior to displacement – although we have not identified cases. These structures are interesting because their social condition may exist also in the host country, leading to the potential of working with mixed groups, therefore creating protection dividends in peaceful coexistence. The fact that their social/protection condition is less refugee specific, and affects host communities, may also make advocacy more acceptable.

Closeness to modern civil society

In some contexts, refugees or IDPs may have established NGOs under the legislation of the host country.

Some Syrians have established NGOs (often under Lebanese law) in Beirut for a mix of advocacy and assistance purposes. Similar trends can be observed in Gaziantep, Turkey.

Contact and alliances with these NGOs are interesting because they enable humanitarian organisations to better understand civil society of the refugees, advocacy strategies, and their own view of protection/ human rights issues linked to return and reintegration. Humanitarian organisations may develop a double relationship with them (i.e., liaising and even alignment on advocacy strategies, and working with them as implementing partners. These networks may not identify themselves as "refugee networks" or even "refugees". However, this is irrelevant for protection purposes of humanitarian organisations.

Dimensions of work

Refugee networks may combine several dimensions of work (i.e., the social and institutional spheres with which they work):

- Internal. These are refugee groups working for change inside the refugee community (e.g., women groups working on prevention of early marriage). These can also be small self-support groups sharing resources or helping very vulnerable individuals.
- Humanitarian. These are refugee groups liaising and working on advocacy within the humanitarian community (e.g., outreach volunteers).
- Authorities. Refugee groups working on advocacy with authorities.
- International. Refugee networks working on advocacy at the international level (e.g. women's rights NGOs working on the agenda of women, peace, and security).

What to do with refugee networks

According to the values of the parameters above, humanitarian organisations can establish a range of activities with refugee networks:

- Information. Refugee networks can work with us to channel information about protection trends and needs. We can work with them to channel information about availability, modalities and decisions on protection and assistance, organisations' work, etc.
- Liaising. Exchange of information on protection trends, refugee realities, refugee rights, advocacy activities. For instance, we may be interested in the views of Syrian civil society regarding the issue of return.
- Advocacy. We can advocate within refugee networks for change (e.g., enlisting the help of sheikhs influential with refugees on early marriage). We can also be open to advocacy by refugee networks on certain issues. Advocacy can work with refugee networks that are both aligned and not aligned with protection principles.
- Training and reinforcement of structures. When a refugee network works for protection outcomes, a humanitarian organization can do a range of training and reinforcement of structures activities:
  - Training on leadership, governance of grassroots organisations, law and protection principles (those who negotiate with authorities, for instance), return principles, public policy (e.g., on women's equality, or persons with disabilities).
  - Material assistance: Meeting space, office materials.
  - Assistance in developing long-term plans and strategies.
  - Legitimacy with authorities.
- Alliances. With enough trust-building, humanitarian organisations may build alliances with, for example, Syrian NGOs on advocacy initiatives on return principles and security guarantees as part of peace negotiations.

Do's, don'ts, traps, and minefields

- Develop a clear, well thought-through strategy on work with refugee networks. Take the time to do it properly. It will pay off.
- Spend time identifying the refugee networks with which we want to engage and once an informed decision has been taken, engage in the long run – more than one year. Be clear with the refugee networks as to what the humanitarian organization can do and cannot do and for how long.
- Assume that punctual, short-term activities will not have an impact on behavioural change.
- Treat refugee networks as partners – the same as we treat NGOs and authorities. For example, if they write to us with a request, it is simply common courtesy to write back.
- Develop trust. Don't lie.
- Identify leaders. A refugee network may grow out of a particularly motivated, capable individual.
- Exploit particular projects to identify leaders or prospective networks (e.g., DAFI students, ECLs).
- Give positive feedback. Motivate leaders and networks.
- Be transparent with authorities – i.e., within reason, tell them what we do with refugee networks. Tell refugees that we have to tell authorities.
- Be aware of power. By engaging with a particular individual or network, we are already empowering the individual or person and perhaps creating the impression of an existence of an alliance. This may create:
  - False impressions and expectations
  - Jealousy with other refugee networks (e.g. OVs with communities in Arsal)
  - More power to the individual or network to act negatively within the community
  - Suspicions with authorities.
- Diversify actors. Be aware, for instance, that volunteers paid by humanitarian organisations may be less vocal than grassroots organisations.
- Be aware that the "white saviour syndrome", or something similar, also occurs within the refugee community – e.g., educated, urban Syrian women may not be seen as having legitimacy to change the behaviour of rural Syrian women.

- Do not forget masculinity when working with women groups especially the presence of Sexual Gender Based Violence.
- Do not engage in social engineering. Do not mediate (unless under exceptional circumstances) between refugee networks, leaders, or groups, or between them and authorities. Certain humanitarian organisations only work on changing society in the following cases for instance:
  - When working for behavioural change linked to protection outcomes: early marriage, SGBV, etc. Even then, we have to be culturally sensitive.
  - When developing the capacity of grassroots-type groups working for protection outcomes: persons with disabilities, etc.
- See the linkages between peaceful coexistence and refugee networks. There is potential to work on mixed Syrian-Lebanese groups on social issues that affect both (e.g., persons with disabilities). The mere fact of having Syrian and Lebanese working together can have a peaceful coexistence effect.
- Typically, and using the parameters/ typologies above, humanitarian organisations may engage in longer-term “projectized” reinforcement of refugee groups with smaller, grassroots-type groups dedicated to protection outcomes. Humanitarian organisations can engage in liaising, advocacy, and alliances with bigger refugee networks that are not necessarily dedicated to protection outcomes, may pre-exist displacement, and represent traditional or social structures. However, some may fall in the middle:
  - Establish a protection alliance
  - Providing them with knowledge of the organization’s positions and protection parameters, so that they can use in their own advocacy
  - Reinforce their efforts
  - Align advocacy themes and strategies
  - Work with them as implementing partners in reinforcing smaller, grassroots-type refugee networks.