

Role of Camp Committees in IDP settings

Camp committees can play a key role in the management of camps, and frequently act as the primary interface between NGOs and the wider camp population. Significant decision making power is often allocated to these committees, related, for example, to the type and distribution of aid, selection of beneficiaries, and assistance for more vulnerable groups.

However, the roles and responsibilities of the committees and the expected code of conduct are often undefined, and unknown to the wider camp population. The structure, function, effectiveness and credibility of these committees therefore impacts significantly upon the capacity of NGOs to meet their humanitarian commitments. The committees may also play a role in NGO accountability, and so the quality of programmes.

When working well, camp committees can help to ensure a high level of participation in camp management and that aid reaches those who are most in need. An effective camp committees system should ideally provide access to local knowledge, facilitate the collection of accurate data for the provision of aid, foster community ownership and empowerment, enable more efficient programme delivery, and ensure that programmes are tailored to local needs and circumstances.

Camp Committee Code of Conduct

What is a Code of Conduct for a Camp Committee?

It is a set of rules that guides committee members' behaviour and applies to all people in positions of decision-making and power. The rules outlined in a Code of Conduct should develop and communicate a sense of responsibility and should stimulate a spirit of cooperation among camp committee members.

An Example of a Code of Conduct for a Camp Committee

The following is an example of a Camp Committee Code of Conduct. It is recommended that all new and forming Camp Committees draft their own Codes of Conduct. All Codes of Conduct need to represent the realities of a given camp setting, the purpose of the Camp Committee and need to involve key stakeholders in the process.

Code of Conduct

Camp Leadership Committee: Baw du Pah Camp, Sittwe Township

Principles Guiding this Code of Conduct: to involve a diversity of IDPs in the management and leadership of Baw du Pah Camp.

Members of this Camp Committee will commit to the following:

1. Represent the community of Baw du Pah camp at general coordination meetings with the Camp Management Agency, Camp Administration and other service providers and partners.
2. Identify and support local youth leaders within the camps who will assist with recreation activities.
3. Hold regular camp meetings in order to give out information about activities and services in the camp.
4. Share information with members, camp residents, host communities, and other stakeholders/actors in the camp
5. Report to the Camp Management Agency and camp administration any subversive activities planned by camp residents to disrupt the smooth running of the camp including food distributions and other services.
6. Avoid favouritism and nepotism (the favouring of relatives/family members) within the camp committee and while conducting committee activities out in the camp
7. Assist the camp management agency in collecting information for humanitarian purposes and assistance
8. Sensitise camp residents about any issues that arise (through e.g. the use of megaphones).
9. Promote equal participation of women in camp committees' positions.
10. Inform the Camp Management Agency about any new arrivals in the camps.
11. Hold meetings in host communities and share/disseminate information and issues of concern.

As a Committee member, the following rules will be observed:

1. The committee will have a chair and one co-chair, elected by ballot. Chairs will hold their elected position for six months.
2. The committee will have a total membership of 15 members, with a minimum of 6 women, representing as many communities in the camps as possible. Members will be nominated by camp residents.
3. The committee will meet on a bi-weekly basis.
4. Meeting notes will be taken by the appointed Secretary. Notes from the previous meeting will be reviewed at the start of meetings. All new business is tabled before the next meeting and placed on the meeting agenda by the Secretary.
5. In any cases of committee member misconduct, (Co)-chairs will initiate disciplinary action after consulting with the committee members.
6. Committee members will listen when one person is speaking. The meetings will be managed by the Co-chair.
7. If any committee member has a grievance, s/he will go to the Secretary to note the complaint. Co-chairs will address grievances as a team.
8. The committee will register with the Camp Management Office and all members are eligible for capacity-building training offered by camp agencies.

9. Camp members are welcome to attend any meetings and committee members will demonstrate the utmost respect towards visitors (camp residents, host community members, government) as well as each other at all times.
10. The committee will update all activities on the Camp Notice Board at the Camp Management Office and will share all information received from any source on a weekly basis.
11. The committee will promote peace, and freedom of speech/ideas and respect diversity among camp residents at all times.
12. If a committee member misses three meetings in a row, their position on the committee will be up for review.