



Evaluation of DFID funded Inter-agency
Quality and Accountability initiatives
by HAP and Sphere in Myanmar

June 2008-June 2009

A report by
Silva Ferretti
June 2009

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- **BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE**
- **THE EVALUATION**
 - Methodology and challenges
 - Limitations of this evaluation
 - Evaluation focus
- **EVOLUTION OF THE INITIATIVE**
 - First phase of deployment of Sphere / HAP
 - Set up of the Q&A initiative.
- **SITUATING THE INITIATIVE AMONGST OTHER BROADER ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY ENGAGEMENTS**
 - Interagency work around quality and accountability
- **PROJECT OVERVIEW**
 - Participating Agencies
 - Project objectives
- **PRESSURE POINTS IN ORGANIZATIONS**
 - Engagement with management and accountability focal points
 - Linkages with HQ
 - Peer support
 - Diffusing accountability in the organization / with partners
 - Other pressure points
- **HAP, SPHERE AND THE BROADER PICTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY**
 - Understanding of Sphere
 - Understanding of HAP
 - The Q&A initiative: Pulling HAP and Sphere together
- **SYNERGIES AMONGST HAP AND SPHERE**
 - Country perspective
 - HQ perspective
- **CONSIDERATIONS ON THE TIMELINE FOR Q&A WORK**
- **CONCLUSIONS**
- **REFERENCES**
- **APPENDIX 1: TORS**
- **APPENDIX 2: EVALUATION DIARY**
- **APPENDIX 3: PROJECT TIMELINE**

Special thanks to the staff of the Quality and Accountability initiative for their support throughout the evaluation. And thanks to all the people I met in the course of the evaluation for sharing their insights and their learning.

*Silva Ferretti, June 2007
silva.ferretti@gmail.com*

Executive summary

This report looks at the Quality and Accountability Initiative in Myanmar, the first attempt of HAP and Sphere to work jointly in the context of a humanitarian emergency. It is based on interviews, by phone to HQ and in country, to a set of stakeholders involved in the initiative. Methodological challenges included lack of access to the field operations of the agencies involved, as well as timing (the evaluation happened as the Q&A initiative was still in the process of completing and rounding up its activities).

This report looks at the **evolution of the initiative** in its entirety. A first phase (July 2008–Nov 2008) was carried on by a number of consultants / staff by HAP and Sphere and financed by CWS Pakistan/Afghanistan and Save the Children. Overall it helped to put accountability on the agenda, through awareness raising. It also provided much demanded assistance on accountability and quality (mainly through trainings, especially on Sphere, but also with organization support / introductory sessions by HAP). The initial visits also assessed space and opportunities for further assistance. Joint deployments helped to build a sense of common purpose amongst the initiatives, even if – in practice – the overlapping amongst them remained minimal. The support was appreciated, but it was suggested the “revolving doors” approach – i.e. different support people visiting the country for short periods – should be discouraged in the future.

DFiD took interest in the initiative and financed a Quality and Accountability programme. There were some difficulties in negotiating the proposal amongst different actors, and the concept note was finally funded without being ever finalized into a full proposal: this improved flexibility but reduced clarity of commitments on different sides. The initiative was hosted by SCiM, and overall this arrangement worked: similar models for deployment should be considered for the future, possibly streamlining and tightening the setup based on the learning from Myanmar. Difficulties in finding the right staff for the initiative meant that it could start only in mid January. This seem to signal a capacity problem in the humanitarian sector for staff equipped to tackle accountability at a strategic, advisory level. Delays also hindered the recruitment of local staff (in post as secondments only in April). Save the Children funded the additional time required to avoid an early conclusion in March.

The report than **situates the initiative amongst other broader accountability and quality engagements**, looking in particular at its interplays with the Accountability Learning and Working Group (ALWG), the Local Resource Centre and the Liaison Function. The added value of a Q&A initiative is in complementing rather than substituting these functions, and in helping to create a dynamic space where accountability and quality can be tackled from different entry points: the creation of awareness and capacity, a coordination role (possibly also bringing in demands for compliance), the support to civil society in advocating and realizing accountability for improving response. Some of these functions can be potentially in conflict (such as advice and compliance on accountability), hence the importance of the interplay of different structures sharing the common concern for accountability. The place where these instances came together in Myanmar was the ALWG, which was a very dynamic forum, instrumental also in shaping the development of the Q&A initiative. The ALWG developed organically, and demonstrated that there is now a critical mass of organizations capable of deploying accountability and quality staff, and a desire to link up. But it also demonstrated the need for these staff to receive technical and mutual support, as well as the fact that it is still difficult for the humanitarian sector to provide a strategic steer on accountability. The review poses questions on how HAP and Sphere can build on ALWG-like groups in future, and how they can provide support to them. It also poses questions to organizations, acknowledging that they now bring to the field capacity to tackle accountability, but sometimes they lack buy-in and support for this work. There are now

questions about the future of the ALWG, due to a lack of leadership, and its dissolution would be certainly a loss for the civil society in Myanmar.

The report then offers a **project overview**, by proposing a different systematization of its objectives as a way to capture the roles of the Q&A initiative that emerged as it developed. A matrix was created, linking levels of engagement (individual, organizational, system) with three functional areas (i.e. 1) awareness and advocacy; 2) capacity in terms of knowledge, systems and practices; 3) sharing, facilitation and networking). Key activities of the initiatives are then analyzed vis-à-vis this matrix, to look at their strategic contribution. The activities examined included the preparation and dissemination of materials; reminding organization and institutions about their commitments and raise awareness of quality and accountability; trainings; linkages with the ALWG, getting the buy in for the initiative within organizations, the accompaniment process for 8 agencies and the creation of support networks amongst them. What seems to be missing is substantial capacity creation and networking at the system level. The extent to which HAP and Sphere could influence this is left as an open question, beyond the scope of this evaluation. Undoubtedly, however, there is a space for HAP and Sphere to advocate for accountability more broadly. Specific recommendations have been provided on all these sets of activities. What stands out is the need to clearly define what a Q&A project intends to achieve, and what it can offer to the organizations and individual working with it, to create a more solid understanding and buy in from the start. An effective Q&A initiative happens at the intersection of clarity of offer by HAP and Sphere and commitment and willingness to engage by organizations. Similar concerns also affected trainings: to what extent a large but scattered audience for training can really be efficient in disseminating knowledge about HAP and Sphere in the humanitarian system? Issues of targeting and more contextualized & tailored support should be given more attention.

The section on **pressure points in organizations** tries to unpack the organizational dynamics emerged in the course of the Q&A initiative that can influence and be influenced by an accompaniment process. What stands out is the importance of buy in from – and support to - management of the organizations for any accountability work to be effective. Accountability staff, when present in the organizations, tends to be relatively junior, hence limiting their capacity to strategically influence the organizational setup, systems and processes, as any real commitment to accountability would require. A lesson learned is that management might have simplistic perceptions of accountability as something that “we do already” and the depth and breadth of the engagement and action required might come as a surprise. The accountability strategies, developed as part of the accompaniment process, should guide the organizations in diffusing a culture and practice of accountability across them, transforming processes and systems and way of working. It is unclear at this stage if – now that the initiative ends – organizations will be still willing and capable to take them forward. And - as quality and accountability are metabolized within an organization - what is likely to be its commitment to really make them a cornerstone of their partnership with other local organizations? The dynamics amongst country / HQ (especially for these organizations who are HAP members), as well as some other external pressure points, could act as a stimulus for this work to be continued. Peer support amongst individuals and organizations involved in the initiative – which so far evolved relatively informally, but could have been more formalised - might also be a possibility. But overall the linkages between country and HQ in demanding and supporting accountability work seems still to be weak, even if there is some progress on this (e.g. roving staff on accountability by the largest organizations). There also not enough pressure from the system (e.g. the clusters, but more in general, the humanitarian system on the whole) in realizing accountability. The donors are possibly the best-placed group to truly influence accountability, as some now hold the belief that “upwards” accountability towards them is shallow if not accompanied by accountability to beneficiaries, and have a genuine desire to improve their practices to this end. Probably NGOs are not making full use of the space that donors make available to them to advance accountability. They still engage with

conventional projects proposals, output-oriented rather than negotiating mutual commitments based on a process of engagement with the beneficiaries.

The report then examines **HAP, Sphere and the broader picture of accountability**. The starting point is to characterize HAP and Sphere as seen by those who engaged with the Q&A initiative. At the risk of caricaturizing the two, Sphere is still largely seen as “the numbers, the technical indicators”. HAP is seen as the bureaucracy of the organization. In both cases the “process” part is what went missing. The advantage of the initiative is that - by tackling “quality and accountability” rather than using HAP or Sphere at the entry point - it could focus on the synergies amongst them, and on accountability as a process. It could work on the how quality and accountability are realized, and then borrow from HAP and Sphere in supporting practical work, building an understanding of the complementarities. What was still absent in the understanding of accountability held by most is the centrality of power issues. Some are also puzzled by the idea of “humanitarian accountability”, and wonder if the term does not create the risk that the deep form of accountability demanded with the initiative will be lost as organization move towards development and might “drop” what are perceived as humanitarian practices.

So what **synergies amongst HAP and Sphere** emerged with the initiative? The joint initiatives helped people in country to see them as “two sides of the same coin”. It also created a more compact and comprehensive package on accountability, welcomed by organizations. What is still missing are tools and processes that effectively merge HAP and Sphere from the start, and create a more organic ways to present them. But, to be worthwhile, the creation of common tools and shared vision needs to involve the two Secretariats. It will be not easy, as HAP and Sphere currently have quite different approaches: Sphere is based on short trainings on the subject delivered by consultants. HAP seeks a long-term accompaniment process facilitated by staff. The Q&A initiative achieved probably what it could: raising awareness of both HAP and Sphere at the same time, and providing complementing information. But it was also a missed opportunity in that the Secretariats did not use the common space created to really design and test joint modalities of engagement. The initiative allowed them to take a first step in this direction: it created opportunity for exposure by staff & consultants to the each others’ initiative, and resulted in better understanding and goodwill to seek a common direction, which will be very important assets for the future. The parallel revision processes of HAP and Sphere will be an opportunity to continue the process that started in Myanmar.

The report then reflects on the **timeline for quality and accountability work**. The sooner the better, is what many interviewees indicated. But the modalities possible for engagement change with time. At the very beginning of a sudden onset emergency, a “stick” approach – i.e. reminding organizations of their commitments and making sure that access points on HAP/Sphere are created, such as focal points or even a Q&A initiative – is key to putting accountability on the agenda. HAP and Sphere can then engage with providing training support at a later stage, as demanded and as time for that is available. In defining a timeline for work it is important to consider: the *timing* of providing support (trying to piggyback processes with ongoing organizational processes – such as revision of plans and strategies, herewith including the formulation of longer term rehabilitation strategies linking relief with development work); *targeting* (efficiently reaching those who could have the maximum impact in strategically hardwiring accountability and quality in the organization, e.g. proposal writers). The emphasis on disaster risk reduction work also creates an important space for making HAP and Sphere relevant in the long term, through preparedness work, but there have been no clear indications on how this can happen.

The capacity of organizations to deliver on quality and accountability from the very start of the emergencies –which is now on the increase – is a determining factor in creating awareness and a space for quality and accountability work, as the Myanmar experience demonstrates. Organizations must continue to invest in these roles, building them as more senior and influencing posts, and also strengthening the inter agency linkages amongst them, for quality and

accountability to permeate the humanitarian system. The preparedness work for future initiatives will also be key (and critical aspects will be the funding and logistical support to them – which should be negotiated in advance amongst HAP / Sphere / large NGOs / donors) and their staffing: there is still a lack of personnel who is equipped to work confidently both on the HAP and Sphere side.

In **conclusion** the Q&A initiative might not have created joint practices of collaboration amongst Sphere and HAP, but it did show that such possibilities exist. The Q&A initiative did not exhaust experimentation on the way of working that could put in place, but helped to test one approach – the accompaniment of agencies – which could then be more tangibly proposed as part of a future menu of options for engagement to humanitarian actors. The Secretariats should continue the work started with the Myanmar initiative in getting to know better each other to create more common understanding and strategic lines for collaboration.

The initiative planted some seeds for better accountability and quality work with several organizations and individuals, and it planted them also in Myanmar actors. The sustainability and impact of the work in Myanmar will now largely depend by the buy in of the organizations involved. In Myanmar there are open questions on the capacity of the current structures – in particular the ALWG - to continue the interagency work on accountability (in spite of the demand for it). Organizations who engaged in the accompaniment process now have the beginnings of a roadmap for accountability, but the willingness to continue the effort and the willingness to bring in capacities and resources for this might dwindle in the absence of an initiative prodding them. There are some opportunities for peer support and pressure, but the main pressure and support should really be coming from the HQs, especially of these organizations who are members of HAP.

Was it worth doing? All respondents said, strongly, yes. There are many barriers in the sector to quality and accountability work, but also lot of goodwill that this initiative had helped to support.

Key recommendations:

For HAP and Sphere

- Continue to engage in improving mutual knowledge and in creating opportunities for alignment, making use in particular of their current revision processes. Stronger synergies amongst HAP and Sphere have been perceived by all those exposed to the initiative as an asset for the sector.
- A Q&A-like deployment should be seen by HAP and Sphere as a valuable model for engagement, which could be put in place again in the future. But other options are of course possible. Whatever the modality of deployment chosen, the key will be to ensure more strategic and practical engagements of the Secretariats with designing, testing and piloting joint approaches to achieve really “joint deployments” rather than simply “deployments together”.
- HAP and Sphere should see their different approaches as an asset in creating new forms of support for organizations and individuals. An issue that needs to be addressed now by HAP and Sphere is how to present the initiatives to emphasize their deeper process aspects rather than a view of Sphere as “numbers” and HAP as “bureaucracy” (which sometimes had crept in).
- HAP and Sphere chose a good approach in supplementing rather than substituting existing actors. The ALWG, the LRC as well as the Sphere focal point are now key to ensure the sustainability of the issue, but there are questions about their capacity to sustain quality and accountability efforts. HAP and Sphere, in connection with organization supporting quality and accountability, should seek modalities to further support and engage with them.
- The sooner the better: Sphere and HAP have a role in hardwiring accountability in a response from the start, by advocating for quality and accountability and by reminding organizations about their commitment. Increased capacity to reach out these putting in place the modality of response (management, proposal writers) will be key. Sphere and HAP also

have a strong role in advocating for quality and accountability in the system, but there is then a need to find effective ways to help interagency initiatives, clusters, and donors to practically sustain their stated commitment to accountability.

- The success of a joint initiative as the one put in place in Myanmar largely depends on the capacity of the people put in charge to run it. However, delays in staff recruitment seem to indicate that this capacity is not readily available. Sphere and HAP should invest, aside organizations, in creating it and in supporting it.

For organization

- The deployment of accountability and quality focal points by many organizations shows a commitment to advance quality and accountability. The risk is that quality and accountability can then be seen as support functions that can operate autonomously. In addition, these posts tend to be given to relatively junior staff, which is not part of senior management.
- In addition to Quality and Accountability staff, organization might also deploy personnel such as cluster focal points, which have a very important role in ensuring that HAP and Sphere are really advanced in the response. More work should go in building the capacity of key personnel in quick response teams to enable them to put solidly these issues on the agenda and act on them.
- The experience of Myanmar demonstrated that large organizations are instrumental in bringing capacity for quality and accountability work on the ground. By deploying capable personnel, and by giving them a mandate to work in the interagency space, they can create hubs like the ALWG, that can really advance awareness, learning and joint work on accountability. The support and commitment of large organizations to promote, support, host initiatives on accountability is an asset for the system. The role of CWS and SCiM in creating a space where Sphere and HAP could do joint work was key. Organizations and committed personnel should think strategically how to also include other initiatives (e.g. INEE) to broaden the quality and accountability space.
- There is an increasing interest for accountability by donors and interagency initiatives that is not capitalized by NGOs. Innovation in writing proposals, for example, looking closely at the effective participation of the beneficiaries rather than ad hard outputs only, should be practiced.

For DFID (and other donors)

- Initiatives that support, practically, quality and accountability in the response bring in added value, especially when they help to bring together various organizations. Donors should continue to offer support to these
- Donors can leverage for improved accountability and quality. It is important that requirements for accountability in their format and call for proposals, focusing on the “process” through which accountability is achieved with beneficiaries. It is also important then to equip staff to better assess the practical enactment of accountability in proposals, reports, field visits.

In Myanmar

- In Myanmar a rich space that offered multiple entry points to accountability and quality engagements was created. However it is now at risk, as some of its key animators are gone. This space is an important asset and should not be lost. It needs to be strategically restructured and open up to local NGOs. Organization like LRC as well as informal setups like ALWG will have an important role in maintaining such spaces, but this cannot happen in absence of the commitment and support of individual organization.
- There is a strong interest for quality and accountability work by organization working in Myanmar, noticeably by local civil society organization. Large international organizations are probably the best placed actors to respond to this need, and they should model their work on partnership to respond to this need
- Some organization should consider how to work with government in presenting quality and accountability initiatives (some initial work was done with INEE and Sphere, which revealed interest by the government.

Background to the initiative

The Quality and Accountability Initiative is the first attempt of HAP and Sphere to work jointly in the context of a humanitarian emergency. The engagement of HAP and Sphere in the Nargis response followed a clear demand by their members for integrated support on quality and accountability.

In the initial phases of the Myanmar crisis both HAP and Sphere deployed staff independently, but operating in close connection with each other as well as with existing local initiatives for quality and accountability in Myanmar (e.g. the *Accountability and Learning Working Group* and the *Local Resource Center*). Church World Service Pakistan/ Afghanistan had a strong role in supporting such deployments. Starting from October 2009, funding was made available by DFID for a concerted six-month initiative for HAP/Sphere, hosted by Save the Children Myanmar. It was an opportunity to provide more continuous support to individuals and organizations working in Myanmar (and in particular to a group of 8 organization who committed to a programme of strengthening their accountability mechanisms). It was also intended to test new modalities - for Sphere and HAP - to build on their complementarities, and to provide joint support. Delays in recruitment meant that more focused efforts could only start in mid January 2009. The direct project support will finish at the end of June 2009.

About HAP

“The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership was founded in 2003 by a group of humanitarian agencies committed to improving the accountability and quality of their programmes through collective self-regulation. Members commit themselves to applying HAP’s Principles of Accountability, to reporting on their corporate accountability work plans, and to external monitoring of their accountability systems by the HAP International Secretariat. To undertake the latter task, HAP has developed its 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management, and a related certification scheme that provides assurance to all stakeholders that the agency’s humanitarian management system can be relied upon to deliver good quality programmes.

HAP now has 22 full members [now: 31] with a combined total annual expenditure in excess of \$4 billion. HAP also has 4 associate members [now: 6] (including DFID) and has enjoyed consistent core financial support from the governments of Australia, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. Substantial funding has also been received from the Ford Foundation and Oxfam GB. The US and Canadian governments and the Oak Foundation have given substantial grants for HAP’s “Building Safer Organisations” project, which specialises in developing capacity for investigating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Many of HAP’s members are committed to applying the Sphere Standards, and HAP is therefore keen to work with Sphere in Myanmar to strengthen compliance with both standards and to deliver verifiable improvements in programme quality on the ground.”

About Sphere

“The Sphere Project was created to improve the quality and accountability of disaster response. The Sphere Project was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. The Sphere Project has:

- argued for the universal right of all disaster-affected people to humanitarian assistance.
- achieved NGO agreement on core principles and actions.
- collected minimum programming standards for disasters from past lessons and experience.
- achieved consensus on key technical indicators.

(From the concept note of the Quality and Accountability Initiative)

The evaluation

As stated in the TORs (see annex 1) the purpose of the evaluation is:

1. To document the success, gaps and lessons learnt, the successes and the gaps from the deployments of both HAP and Sphere from the outset of the Nargis Response and inclusive of the longer term Inter-agency Quality and Accountability Coordinator against the project objectives above.
2. To make recommendations as to how to sustain the efforts towards increased quality and accountability work in Myanmar.
3. To make recommendations on how future joint HAP/Sphere support is provided to agencies at the onset and in the recovery period following a humanitarian crisis.

On a broader level, the evaluation should achieve appropriate analysis of whether or not any changes have been influenced by the joint deployments and joint role of HAP/Sphere, on wider organizational strategies and management systems, so that more accountable approaches are implemented in the future.

Methodology and challenges

This evaluation took place over 15 days from the 28th of May to the 14th of June. A detailed diary of the evaluation is provided in Appendix 2. Information had been gathered mostly through interviews and conversations with key stakeholders in the initiative, including:

- Quality and Accountability project coordinator and staff
- Save the Children in Myanmar (as one of the participating in receiving direct support from the initiative but also as hosting organization)
- Representatives from the 8 participating agencies (including management / accountability officers / field staff)
- Representatives from other International and Local NGOs organizations and networks operating in Myanmar (e.g. ActionAid, ACT members, Myanmar NGO network, Capacity Building Initiative...)
- Participants to the Accountability and Learning Working Group
- Local Resource Center staff
- DFiD representative
- HAP and Sphere HQ staff as well as staff / consultants deployed in Myanmar.
- IASC members (including OCHA)
- ASEAN (Tripartite Core Group member)

Respondents based in Geneva / UK had been interviewed by phone / Skype. Respondents based in Myanmar have been mostly interviewed face to face, but when this had not been possible, Skype text chats and phone conversation were used. I also facilitated a meeting of the Accountability and Learning Working Group in Yangon and presented my preliminary findings to representatives of the 8 agencies and other interested people.

I wish to thank all the interviewees for their time and insights. Special thanks to the staff of the Quality and Accountability Initiative for all their fantastic support in organizing and conducting the evaluation.

Limitations of this evaluation

Lack of access to the field: Due to the limited time available from recruitment to deployment I could not secure a suitable visa and a travel permit for the Delta region. This limited my capacity to see programmes that benefited from improved accountability and quality management support from the initiative first hand and to gain a more in depth understanding of the impact of the Quality and

Accountability work in the areas hit by disaster. This strongly limited the depth of my evaluation.

Limited discussion with field staff: From Yangon I had only very limited contact with field staff. I managed to interview some staff operating at the field level, either through phone / Skype chats or by meeting them in their national office as they were transiting in the capital. Of course this was a very limited sample and skewed to the upper management level. The perceptions I gathered re: the extent to which Sphere and HAP reached the people operating on the frontline are therefore impressions that could (and should) be further questioned by the agencies involved. It is difficult therefore to judge the impact that accountability initiatives had on the national staff and on their practice. Committed agencies should look at this aspect in their future evaluations and reflections.

No discussion with beneficiaries. I also had no access to the beneficiaries of the agencies' projects, and this of course is a major limitation of this evaluation. This evaluation does not capture perceptions held by the recipients of aid about the system put in place by the organizations to advance accountability and quality.

Timing. This evaluation happens at a slightly awkward time, in the 5th month of a 6 months project, at a time when many activities are still ongoing. It is a bit too early to judge how things came together, and it was a bit too late for the evaluation to offer actionable suggestions for the initiative. To make the best of the timing I had a strong focus on questions of sustainability and way forward, with a view to also stimulate the interviewees to think ahead about the future of accountability initiatives in their organizations.

Evaluation focus

Learning: Through my evaluation I made it clear that I did not want to "judge" the initiative, but rather to offer an opportunity to understand what areas had worked and what areas need to be improved with a "looking forward" focus, seeking to learn and to offer options from the future. Lack of time in the Delta meant that the learning is mostly focused on organizational dynamics rather than on significant field practices, which ideally I wished I could have also captured in this evaluation.

Structuring Critical reflection: I hope that this evaluation can be a good starting point to reflect on the impact of the initiative, but probably a better understanding of its impact on the organization involved and on the quality of aid will only be possible in the months to come. So, rather than offering conclusive remarks about impact, I tried to distil some of the critical questions on which impact can be judged. I tried to unpack the dynamics and structures on which to focus when asking such questions. I hope that this can assist the participants to the initiative to reflect on their progress on accountability in the months to come.

The report

This report is a long one. The challenge has been to write for a potentially large audience, with very specific interests and different entry points in the initiative. A further challenge was of course also the little time I had to really distil the findings of an initiative that had really a broad outlook. At the risk of making some repetitions I therefore wrote each section so that it can go in depth on a specific aspect, and also be read independently from others.

An overview is given in the executive summary. The interested readers will then find details and fine points in the individual sections. Pulling together recommendations has also been challenging. In the end I decided not to focus only on top-line recommendations, but to record the very practical suggestions and learning that I captured in the evaluation. I hope that this report will help readers to gain a broad perspective about the initiative without losing the texture.

The findings of this report will be presented in London on the 30th June 2009, in a debrief and review meeting held at Save the Children offices in London.

Evolution of the initiative

The Quality and Accountability financed through DFID is the latest of a string of interventions of HAP/Sphere. They started in July with the deployment of consultants for Sphere (Annie Lloyd and Kelly Wooster), HAP staff (Monica Blagescu and Ester Dross) and of Shabana Bhatti (Sphere Focal Point in Pakistan, working for Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan).

It would be difficult to evaluate the DFID funded initiative in isolation from previous deployments, hence the decision to look at the broader timeframe. It will also be important to refer to other initiatives on Quality and Accountability that preceded and accompanied the HAP/Sphere deployments, such as the ALWG.

A timeline of the project is provided in Appendix 3

First phase of deployment of Sphere / HAP

The deployment of the HAP / SHPERE initiative was coordinated and defined in teleconferences happening soon after Nargis hit Myanmar, on the 2nd and 3rd May 2008. Some signatories of Sphere / HAP had already a presence in country. A number of agencies had also deployed Accountability Focal points, a significant progress - compared with previous emergencies – in supporting quality and accountability work. Interagency Accountability and quality initiatives had also already begun in country. An Accountability and Learning Working Group was established as soon as the 21st of May. In addition to promote coordination and sharing, it quickly set to translate relevant documents, such as the Code of Conduct. Despite the existence of Accountability capacity in country, there was pressure to provide further support on HAP and Sphere. It was felt that many of the staff responding to the emergency were relatively inexperienced in humanitarian response and that awareness of the tools and frameworks - as well as of the modus operandi used by the international agencies - was low.

In July personnel were deployed by HAP and Sphere in Myanmar. HAP had some reservations on engaging at this juncture: in a context where agencies had already deployed personnel, would a HAP presence in country add value? Personnel constraints (and lack of staff that could be deployed long term) were also a challenge. It was the opportunity of a joint deployment with Sphere – a first ever - that underpinned the decision to engage. The deployment was supported with financial contributions by Church World Service Pakistan/ Afghanistan: the organization was instrumental in making the initiative possible. The Local Resource Centre provided office space and limited administrative support.

The focus of the initial deployment work was to: understand the needs and potential for HAP and Sphere support; advocacy on accountability standards with key stakeholders; direct training and support. Other personnel, from HAP and Sphere, followed, as illustrated in the timeline.

- Monica Blagescu (HAP field representative) and Kelly Wooster (Sphere consultant) worked jointly at an assessment of needs in consultation with key stakeholders, held briefings (including briefings for clusters), facilitated discussions around identified issues and held short training sessions. Monica Blagescu also engaged in a field visit with SCUK, which resulted in specific recommendations and work plans. Their deployment was prepared with a planning meeting in London, which helped building common understanding and a joint agenda.
- Ester Dross (HAP's Complaints Handling Training Officer) was deployed in August with three training priorities: focus on the 6 benchmarks included in the HAP 2007 Standard / Complaints and Response Mechanism / investigations on allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Anne Lloyd (Sphere consultant) travelled twice to Myanmar, for a total of three months prior to the set up of the Q&A initiative. She then went then back in country in April-May 2009. In addition to provide Sphere training and

representing Sphere at coordinating meetings, she also assisted in the preparation of the DFID proposal for the Q&A initiative.

The implications of joint work in country for HAP and Sphere will be examined further down in this report. From the point of view of the people on the ground, the large number of consultant deployed for short term was confusing. The early presence in country was important to put accountability on the agenda –which was one of the main focus of the initial engagement - but staff came and went too quickly, and did not ensure the necessary continuity. The longer deployment of Anne Lloyd was appreciated, but it was mainly oriented to Sphere training: it was not sufficient to build a sense of a joint HAP+Sphere initiative.

There were mixed receptions of about the focus on the initial deployment: some indicated that there should have been better coordination prior to it with the ALWG group, so that the consultants could really hit the ground running rather than engage in further assessments. Some felt that there should have been even closer coordination before deployment to establish of a common agenda and shared ways of work: a perception of “competing agenda” still crept in and was felt by some members of the ALWG. One interviewee pointed out that it was a “deployment together” rather than a “joint deployment”.

The latest months of the first phase were mostly devoted to training, and mostly on Sphere. HAP had also engaged in some introductory sessions about the initiative. They were well received, but some accountability officers who attended them pointed out that they were a bit too abstract and did not always really match the expectations of people on the ground. The trainings on investigations on Sexual Exploitation and on Complaints mechanisms, for example, were well received, but the challenge was how to apply them: “when it was time to contextualize them/ discuss practicalities, the training was finished and the support was gone” (it should however be noted that the training presented were much shorter versions of what is usually provided by HAP on the topic). The topics of these training, in particular the complaints mechanisms, were then debated at length in the ALWG. This indicated the importance of linking training with the support of a group of peers.

Overall the early presence was appreciated, as it helped to put Sphere and HAP more solidly on the agenda. The fact that HAP and Sphere entered Myanmar in tandem was universally felt as a bold statement, which made both initiatives stronger, more credible and compelling to the actors in country. However fragmentation of the initiative (and delays in bringing in a long term staff) meant that its value in creating a coherent space for HAP and Sphere was reduced.

It was expected that a Q&A coordinator could be deployed as funding were made available, in October. However the post holder was not in place until mid-January 2009 and this caused loss of momentum for the initiative.

Finding staff that could work on both Sphere and HAP was a challenge. This seems to signal a worrying lack of capacity - within the humanitarian sector - to practically breed and deploy personnel in support of initiatives, which are at the core of humanitarian response. Individual agencies are starting to work on the issue, but overall there is still limited buy in for quality and accountability roles as a core area of expertise for humanitarian response.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere, HAP

- People in country universally appreciated joint deployment. HAP and Sphere should consider joint engagement in the future. It should be explicitly factored as a possibility in the New Emergency Policy and other response mechanisms. Some degree of preparedness work should go in identifying possible hosting agencies / donors / deployable staff and to create more surge capacity, particularly within HAP.
- HAP and Sphere deployments were perceived as “demand driven”, genuinely seeking to provide required technical support and not to impose. This attitude was also welcomed and should be continued.

- Most of people consulted suggested that Sphere/HAP should avoid the “revolving doors” approach when deploying staff. They should try to build a more permanent presence from the start.
- An early deployment of staff capable in jointly representing Sphere and HAP would have been an asset, but this experienced showed that such resources are not easy to find on the job market. It is recommended that Sphere and HAP build up contacts to this end and also invest in creating personnel that can represent both organizations.
- Sphere and HAP presented shorter version of their trainings in introductory sessions, but without really merging them into a shared product. Some investment should go in revision of trainings / presentations to achieve more integration. Such presentations should capture both initiatives, and do so focusing on the nuts and bolts, in a way that resonate with operational staff in country.
- HAP in particular should demystify their approaches, to improve the buy in by people under pressure. There was for example resistance to the idea of baseline assessments of accountability. They were perceived, understandably, as “something else to do along with other priorities”. The basics necessary to put accountability early on in the agenda, to entrench it in the systems should be presented in a simplified, practical way. It should be suggested how to piggyback accountability tasks on other work, as a way to enrich them rather than adding on them.

For DFID

- HAP and SPERE staff expressed satisfaction about the willingness of DFID to take on advice on accountability and to enact it (DIFD, for example, mentioned specifically accountability some of their calls for proposal). DFID might want to consider, in future emergencies, to engage in early consultation with HAP and Sphere to sharpen its demand on accountability.

Set up of the Q&A initiative.

The Q&A initiative was supported through a DFID grant, and was initially planned to take place from October 2008 to end of March 2009. The initiative was hosted by Save the Children Myanmar (CWS could not take on the engagement, as it was not registered in country) with a clear division of labour with HAP and Sphere: HAP/Sphere would set the objectives, approve reports and provide technical support, and they also agreed responsibility for recruiting the coordinator; SCiM would provide a line management function, logistic support and of course commit to internal advocacy about the initiative. The proposal negotiation, however, could have been smoother. The Sphere consultant did much groundwork on the preparation for the proposal, but she was of course not in an optimal position to negotiate with all parties. SCiM initially had expressed reservations in taking on the role of the lead agency, and this meant that the proposal did not have an organizational hook from the very start. There were also some gaps in negotiating the role with institutions that were already supporting accountability initiatives on the ground (e.g. ICVA) that resulted in some misunderstandings.

The Q&A initiative was operated by 3 staff members: one international coordinator and 2 two officers (local staff seconded by international agencies). All post recruitment took longer than expected, and this considerably delayed the initiative. The Q&A was in place only in mid January, and some observed that this resulted in loss of momentum. As DFID could not extend its funding, SCiM committed to finance the initiative until the end of June. The funding was granted based on a concept note rather than a full proposal. The flexibility of this set up was useful to ensure that the initiative could find its way, but it also implied a relationship of trust and continuous dialogues with the coordination of the initiative.

The international coordinator was recruited with a Job Description prepared in consultation by HAP/Sphere HQs and with some input from the ICVA liaison officer (which had advocated for a stronger coordinating role of the Q&A initiative). The set up of the criteria for selection of candidates were defined solely

by HAP / Sphere. SCiM input was limited to providing the management support to the recruitment (and reserved the right to comment on the Job Description and give final approval on the position).

The Sphere consultant commented on the job description of the coordinator and produced the job descriptions of the Q&A officers. The newly appointed Q&A coordinator also had some input in them prior to her deployment. It was hoped that the recruitment process of the local officers could be finalized with interview of shortlisted candidates immediately upon arrival of the coordinator in country. However administrative delays meant that officers could only be in place beginning of April.

It was decided to set Q&A initiative officers as secondments to ensure that some continued support for quality and accountability work could be retained in the seconding organization. The officers had chosen to join the initiative out of interest for accountability and with the desire to learn more about it. They both had relatively junior posts in their organization (one was administrative staff, the other one worked on information centres). Both felt that they had strong support from their managers when applying for the initiative. Both said that - through the engagement - their confidence in supporting quality and accountability processes in their organization had increased and that they had acquired skills needed to foster quality and accountability work. They are both returning to their organization with job titles and job description that explicitly include work on quality and accountability.

The Q&A coordinator received inductions from HAP and Sphere, but the induction time should have probably been longer, to equip her with more detailed knowledge and understanding of the initiatives, of their linkages and also of their potential conflicts; and to reduce the support that had then to be given on the job.

A mechanism of conference call was put in place to update HAP / Sphere HQ on the initiative, which ensured communication amongst all parties. Managing the initiative was challenging (and it was challenging to be managed by different initiatives with differing agendas and approaches that were coming together for the first time). Neither Sphere nor HAP were really geared to manage the remote deployment of a focal point acting to represent them. HAP usually would deploy its own staff: so, remote management of someone who did not have depth of organizational knowledge was a challenge for the organization. Sphere would tend to deploy consultants doing training, hence with a very clear brief. Follow up on the initiative was a demanding task, above their normal operations.

It was also suggested that there should be two visits from each Sphere and HAP in Myanmar. There was some discussion about the timing and whether Sphere and HAP should go together, and it was then decided that logistically this could be difficult. Smruti Patel, training coordinator from HAP visited the country twice and coached the Q&A coordinator. She briefed managers and assisted in the piloting of the accountability self-assessment – which was the option of choice for the support to Merlin. A second visit checked progress made on the self-assessment process, and provided senior management briefings and training on complaints and response mechanism that was requested by agencies. Discussion with DFID and EU representatives on accountability and on what could be done to help take accountability forward also took place. Anne Lloyd – consultant from Sphere – offered some further training sessions on Sphere but no other staff from the secretariat was deployed.

The initiative had a slow start, and information about it did not reach immediately to all interested participants. Some interested parties came to know about it too late for engagement. There is of course the question on how to better communicate this kind of initiatives. The ALWG has been the entry point, but probably other networks (e.g. INGO forum, clusters...) should have advertised more broadly the initiative.

Overall those engaging with it appreciated the initiative, and many mentioned as a key factor of success the qualities of the coordinator: an individual who had a strong understanding of accountability, bridging theory and practice. Her expertise on running programmes was a powerful asset in getting the buy in of

management, which could connect with a competent and senior colleague with a demonstrated record of “implementing accountability”. Soft skills on facilitation, coaching... were also essential. The competencies, the professionalism of the coordinator and the trust she managed to create with organizations were amongst the reason of the success of the initiative.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere and HAP

- As HAP and Sphere do not have the capacity to support the deployment of a Q&A coordinator, they should negotiate - as part of their preparedness to emergency / early response - the commitment of NGOs with adequate capacity to host Q&A initiatives, and establish a focal point attached to such organizations. This would help to smooth negotiations and ensure clear coordination amongst all the parties that need to be involved in designing a country based initiative.
- The choice of the “right” person is essential for the success of the initiative. The profile of the right person includes strong knowledge around quality and accountability issues and personal drive for it; demonstrated practical experience in realizing quality accountability; knowledge of the humanitarian system and strategic capacity to navigate through it to advocate for quality and accountability; soft skills for facilitation, training, coaching, information sharing and capability to build trust. Seniority also matters, as much of the work requires negotiations with management and with high rank officers that need to be conducted on an equal basis.
- Sphere and HAP should invest more time in building the capacity of deployed personnel to confidently represent them both. This is likely to require longer induction time, as well as continuous coaching on the job.
- Sphere and HAP should also jointly revise the job description of the coordinator if they chose to deploy one in future emergencies, to ensure that there is full clarity about roles and responsibilities.
- Having one person deployed on behalf of HAP+Sphere did not exclude the possibility to deploy other resources. Both Sphere and HAP had deployed people, but at different times and on different topics. It was a missed opportunity of this Q&A initiative not to have used it as a platform for joint engagements of HAP and Sphere personnel on joint work.
- Sphere secretariat personnel was not directly exposed to the initiative in the field, as the support on Sphere was done through a consultant. Sphere might consider if there could be added value in bringing in personnel that could represent directly the organization, and “give a face to it”.
- The local staff employed in the initiative was capable and committed, but not in senior posts within their own organization: would have been worth pitching the accountability role as a more senior one to also pass on the message to agencies about the strategic importance of accountability?
- The project was approved through a concept note. On the plus side this ensured flexibility. However there was not really enough clarity on the TORs, on what was expected by different people, and especially by the Q&A coordinator.

For SCiM (the hosting agency):

- The role of SCiM in hosting the initiative had been appreciated. There were initial concerns by SC that hosting the initiative by one organization might weaken its interagency character, but this was not the case. SC could consider hosting this initiative again in the future.
- It would be useful for SC, in coordination with HAP / Sphere, to streamline the deployment and hosting mechanism, so that it can be made ready available - if needed - in future emergencies. In particular availability of job description already approved and graded by HR might allow faster deployments.
- The coordinator position should be graded as a management role and presented as a post for senior staff, as a way to underline the fact that this position is of a strategic value. It would also be worth considering employing more senior local staff.
- The location of the initiative at the LRC rather than in SCiM offices was good to preserve the “neutrality” of the initiative.

- The initiative was based on a concept note. Probably more work should have been done in having clearer terms of reference on what was expected by different people, and especially on the Q&A coordinator. Of course there should also be the necessary flexibility to adapt the initiative in consultation with key stakeholders (and space for adaptation was important in this case as it was the first time that a joint initiative was done).

For agencies seconding staff:

- Agencies seconding staff had gained important assets that will potentially help them to build Quality and Accountability with their agencies, but also more broadly. Management should engage in discussion on their handover with the Q&A coordinator, and define how to best employ them within the organization but also in the interagency space.

For DFID:

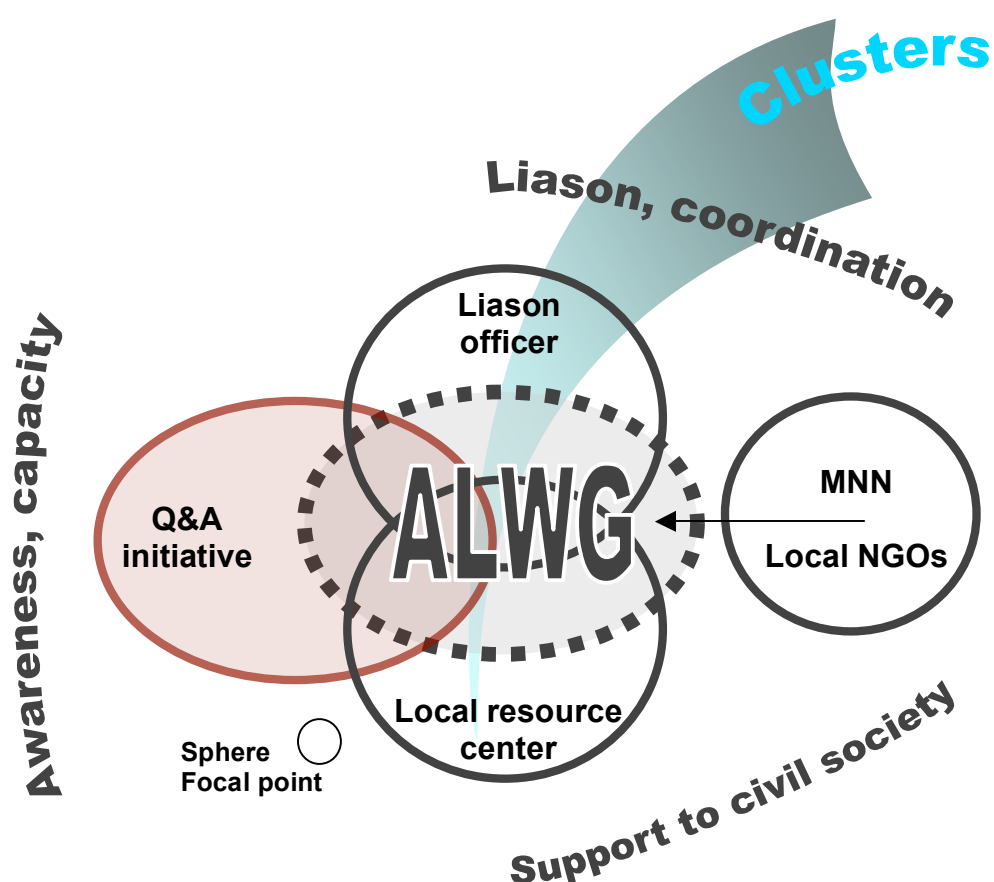
- Availability of funds was instrumental in making this initiative happen. DFID might want to consider how in future engagements it wants/can promote actively the creation of a presence in country on accountability.

Situating the initiative amongst other broader accountability and quality engagements

It is important to see the Q&A initiative as complementing other efforts to advance quality and accountability, happening both at an organizational level, and at the interagency level.

Interagency work around quality and accountability

As exemplified in the diagram, the Q&A initiative worked aside other initiatives on quality and accountability, which had complementing roles. The strength of the initiative - and of the way in which it was managed - was to situate itself amongst other organizations and networks without substituting them. It sought to strengthen and complementing them rather than undermining them.



Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG)

The Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG) is an initiative looking at promoting Accountability and Learning across the Nargis response. The ALWG “will primarily focuses on strengthening systems of downward accountability (i.e. to the target group) and supporting rapid and accessible learning opportunities from field realities to allow evidence-based programming”.

As shown in the diagram, the ALWG had a central role on Accountability and Quality work in Myanmar, and it sits at the interface of different initiatives. The ALWG is a relatively unstructured network that nevertheless ensured continuity of work and linkages across different initiatives.

It was set up soon after Nargis struck Myanmar as an informal coordination mechanism and became a “quasi-cluster” where participants could find a space

to discuss and learn about quality and accountability. To some extent, the ALWG also tried to coordinate and monitor the state of accountability across organization. The group relied on the interest of participants and on their energy and there have been high and lows in its life. Definitely the group was very active at the beginning of the response. It provided and circulated materials and put accountability on the agenda. And it asked for further technical support to HAP and Sphere.

Engagement with the ALWG was key in the early stage of the response. It provided an entry point to HAP and Sphere. When the Q&A initiative was established, it continued to have a strong link with it. The ALWG was the platform through which the Q&A initiative could reach out and engage with other organizations. At the same time, the initiatives maintained independency, and the Q&A group never hijacked the group, even if some participants looked to the initiative for leadership (in particular, as the original lead facilitator and creator of the group left the country in May 2009).

What did it take to create an accountability and learning working group? Essentially capacity and drive at the individual level, and organizational commitment (by Oxfam first and ICVA later) in making available a facilitator tasked with shaping the interagency space. A facilitator – the liaison officer - was in place most of the whole year after the emergency and this of course was an important support for the group. On the minus side, availability of a facilitator meant that the group did not develop its own sustainable leadership mechanisms. This is a critical issue now that the facilitator is gone and also the Q&A initiative coordinator (who had a pushing role but tried to build the leadership of the group rather than substituting it) will leave the country. In addition, there was a critical mass of people interested in accountability. HAP noticed that the Nargis response was the first emergency where a sizable number of member agencies had deployed accountability focal points. For future emergencies there will be a question of who can set a group like this: probably it can happen again organically, but other international interagency bodies might have a role in sustaining or promoting it in the long term (e.g. OCHA / ICVA)

The genesis of the ALWG shows the potential large NGOs have in pushing the accountability discourse in the humanitarian space by making available resources. Having a person in place committed to accountability and willing to create a network of likeminded people made the difference for quality and accountability work in Myanmar. This of course brings the question of how much of this capacity exists and is readily deployable in emergencies.

There have been early attempts to structure the group, and some initial discussions took place on the degree to which the group would be about “compliance” or “learning”. The latter prevailed, and this was a good choice in driving in people to the group. An initial attempt (suggested in an early HAP/Sphere visit), to create a structured group of core members, with clear commitments in terms of time and work to offer to the ALWG was not sustained, and this was probably due to a mixture of limited buy in the initiative by organizations and by lack of time and workload of members.

The ALWG was a relatively unstructured group, with erratic attendance levels and different levels of expertise. The varied membership of the ALWG is a reflection of the fact that there are different levels of accountability capacity in different organizations. As a sweeping generalization, there are large organizations that could provide capacity and expertise to the group; help to build a strategic perspective around accountability; give direction to the group. There is then a layer of smaller international NGOs / large local NGOs that are now aware about the importance of accountability and keen to learn more about it. The awareness raising and learning dimension is very relevant for them. The ALWG has not been and is probably not relevant for the larger number of smaller NGOs / CBOS operating in country, and this limited the reach out of the group. Such NGOs are more likely to get support and awareness when engaging in partnership with larger organizations, or in support projects launched by them, as it had happened during the response, with initiatives sometimes stirred by the membership of the ALWG.

The fact that the ALWG operated in Yangon – and that ALWG initiatives were not set up in the field – limited the reach to agencies with a strong presence in the field. Use of English as a medium was also an issue. Now that networks of local NGOs are strengthening, there might be a possibility to call again for their involvement and participation.

Shared learning from practice is a strong asset to improve the quality of emergency response. Even when accountability is understood as a concept, it is not clear to many how it can be operationalised in practice, and there is a sense that the sector is at the early learning stages on how to “do” accountability. The challenge is of course that the practice of accountability is not simply about adding a few frills on a programme (a few mailboxes to receive feedback, a few transparency boards), but fundamentally lies in transforming relationship that an organization chose to have with its beneficiaries. Transforming practices requires the buy in of management. Often, those attending the ALWG could discover new practices, and maybe they could even find the space to try some of them. But they were not in a position to transform accountability in their organization without the support of the management. The challenge for the ALWG is that participation is driven by individual interest/commitment to the topic, but this does not necessarily mean that the participants’ managers will commit to or buy in to what is discussed in the group. With a few exceptions – the ALWG is off the management radar. This is where the Q&A initiative added leverage: by proposing its accompaniment work to some organization, it managed to bring in the management as well as the accountability people.

The challenge remains, for the ALWG, on how to feed the learning and the debates happening in the group towards their management to stir change. One way of doing so, which is currently being tested, is the systematization of the research and learning on areas that have been identified as key by participants (i.e.: the proliferation of committees in disaster response). Another challenge is that the group now is quite informal. More buy in for engagement in its activities might possibly be obtained, and more advocacy around its role could be made if the group clarified its role and purpose.

The quasi-cluster nature of the group seems to suggest that in the current architecture of the humanitarian sector there is a need for a more tangible hook for accountability issues. The ALWG demonstrated that there are benefits in creating such a space. However the challenge then becomes how to avoid that accountability becomes a compartmentalized experience: how to mainstream it? The extent to which accountability and learning have been brought into the clusters have been quite limited in Myanmar. Future emergencies will require more focus and work on mainstreaming accountability. There is also an issue with the perception of accountability in the system: when an accountability working group is perceived mainly as the “police” - judging agencies or forcing compliance – there might be resistances to it. Getting the right balance of push to compliance and advisory support might be a challenge for future initiatives. This is why having an ALWG at the intersection of different groups with different purposes (e.g. advisory vs. compliance) might be an added value.

Potentially the ALWG group could also have had a role in strategically thinking how to advance quality and accountability in Myanmar. However its loose nature and fluctuating membership did not allow it to take this role so far. There was also an issue of capability: many members engaged in the group to learn about accountability, and were not equipped with thinking about country-wide strategies for accountability. Another limiting factor was the relatively poor connection with local NGOs, which would have limited the relevance of such strategy for the local context.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP/Sphere:

- The strategic linkages with the ALWG were really at the hearth of the deployment in Myanmar. The ALWG gave an entry point and a network that

would not have been available otherwise. It is important to continue to identify and partner with such initiatives in future emergencies.

- Some respondents pointed out that the initial missions of HAP and Sphere should have consulted more extensively with the ALWG in their preparation phase.
- The engagement of the Q&A aside the ALWG was mutually beneficial. Members of ALWG could build on the expertise available at the Q&A initiative. The Q&A initiative could promote its initiatives through the group. The ALWG did also provide a broad platform for engagement and shared learning with organizations that the Q&A would not have had if it limited itself from the start to serve only member organization of HAP/Sphere on individual basis.
- The Q&A rightly attempted at complementing rather than hijacking the ALWG. A model of work based on complementarities should also be sought in future initiatives by HAP / Sphere

For the ALWG:

- The ALWG relied too much on the presence of its facilitator. Strong leadership meant that things could be pushed, but now the lack of leadership within the group is a risk for its survival.
- The ALWG is at a critical juncture. It should question its focus and purpose and develop clear TORs for the group. I feel that there is still an important role for the ALWG, but the group lacks a common vision and sense of direction.
- Clarity of TORs could also be used to “sell” the group amongst other actors, enticing them to participate (e.g. to bring in local NGOs) or to ensure that they acknowledge the ALWG and buy in (e.g. with management from participant organization). The LRC group could play a strong role in this aspect.
- Discuss mechanisms to ensure effective leadership. Different models have been proposed by the members (co-chairing by LRC and rotating facilitation by members; creation of a core group...). This is an appropriate time to revise modalities of coordination as the whole response is restructuring. The ALWG should look at what mechanisms are put in place by other coordination groups and seek to adapt them.
- Acknowledge that there are different levels of expertise and expectations in the group, and examine possibilities for different levels of engagement (e.g. promoting more facilitative / sharing role by stronger participants)
- Emphasize the learning aspects of the group, and develop stronger mechanism to incentivise the information exchange about practice and the capturing and systematization of such practices so that they can circulate more broadly and become more influential. This so far had happened only to a limited extent.
- Strategic role: discuss to what extent the group wants and is capable to think more strategically to promote quality and accountability initiatives in the country.
- To what extent could ALWG initiative be replicated in the field? In the past year some attempts were made to create an ALWG in local hubs with not much success. The possibility of work at the field level should be considered by ALWG members when thinking about future strategies of engagement on accountability.

FOR LRC (co-chairing the ALWG)

- Continue to support the ALWG, by guaranteeing at a minimum the secretarial support: circulation of information on meetings, updates on activities, maintenance of a mailing list will be vital in ensuring the survival of the group.
- Promote the ALWG amongst local NGOs, and ensure that they can participate in the debate. Use Myanmar language as the working language.
- Consider linking some research funding to investigate issues emerging from the debate within the group. Strategically support the ALWG in systematizing its learning so that it can be disseminated amongst decision makers.

For individual organizations/ INGO group /IASC members:

- The experience of Nargis indicates that the presence of focal points on accountability can have a dramatic impact in putting accountability and quality on the agenda, and even more so when they act in conjunction. There is no reason why an ALWG should not happen again in the future. Organizations

should take this as a lesson learnt and ensure that this critical mass and willingness to network is also available in future emergencies.

- Large organization can be instrumental in the creation and fostering of ALWG like groups in future emergencies. They should consider how they could advance accountability in the earlier stages of an emergency by contributing capacities and resources. As they are willing and capable to deploy and seek funding for other key skills, they should include accountability people in their rosters, and they should be willing to add to their responsibilities the creation of interagency linkages and action.
- Organizations should see the ALWG as a precious resource for them and incentive their staff to contribute to it. There should be a more explicit commitment and support for the accountability and learning working group. This organizational buy in is so far limited by the fact that participants to the group tend to be lower management staff.

Local Resource Center

The Local Resource Centre (LRC) is an initiative lead by the Burnet Institute in collaboration with a partnership of organization including the HIV/AIDS Alliance, World Concern, Oxfam and Save the Children and the Capacity Building Initiative. It focuses on Myanmar NGOs and seeks to: enable coordination between national / international NGOs; advocate on behalf of local groups in cluster and hub meetings; provide access to capacity development, financial resources, information; promote collaborative response to Nargis.

The LCR hosted the Accountability and Learning Working Group and co-chaired it. In addition, it provided resources to support research initiatives that were identified by the group (e.g. research on “committee mechanism”). The LRC also engaged with the Q&A initiative through its recently appointed Monitoring and Accountability officer. She has participated in the trainings and is now, with the support of the LRC senior management, in a position to promote and engage LRC staff in accountability practices as well as to support accountability with local NGOs.

It was a very suitable choice by SCiM to also locate the Q&A initiative in the LRC premises. It helped it to stress its collaborative and interagency approach. And because the LRC shares the same building with SCiM, the Q&A was still close to its hosting agency.

The LRC will have a key role in maintaining momentum on the accountability initiatives. The ALWG working group is at a critical juncture, and it is looking for leadership. The LRC reiterated its commitment to host it and co-facilitate it, and also to continue to provide support for research initiatives around accountability as they emerge from the dialogue of the ALWG members. However stirring the debate might need more engagement that the LRC can realistically provide.

Liaison officer

The creator of the ALWG was brought in country by Oxfam and subsequently appointed as liaison officer for the NGOs in Myanmar. The post, after some debate, had been financed by ICVA and hosted by Save the Children.

Core areas of work for the Liaison Officer

- Facilitating discussion amongst stakeholders (including: feedback from /participation of local civil society groups in decision making forums including clusters, support NGO representation in Tripartite Group)
- Facilitation of communication and information exchange (linkages with the Myanmar Information management Unit / focal point for information on government issues)
- Humanitarian principles (promotion of use of Code of Conduct)
- Quality and accountability (availability of documentation on Sphere, HAP, INEE, Good Enough Guide, facilitation of ALWG, cross agency mechanism of learning and accountability, including working with MIMU on monitoring quality and targeting of humanitarian assistance, support civil society in monitoring their accountability measures (e.g. transparency, complaints, feedback.); working closely with LRC which is developing tools and training material)

As the Q&A initiative was negotiated there was some discussion on the extent to which the initiative should also include coordination and monitoring role on accountability. Certainly the roles are complementary in building better accountability and quality, and it is important that they are perceived as such. But to what extent can the role of a Quality and Accountability coordinator of a Sphere /HPA initiative overlap with the broader role of a liaison officer? A close linkage with a coordination function can sit more conformably with Sphere – which is structurally fit to operate in the interagency space: for example, in the clusters. But it is more problematic for the work aimed at building awareness, capacity and processes for quality and accountability within agencies, especially at an early stage when accountability work is still seen as a hard challenge and potentially threatening for engrained practices in organizations. Can coordination, representation of NGOs and collective monitoring of their performance be collapsed with a function that is inherently more geared to capacity building on accountability, seeks to create mutual trust from individual organizations and to go under their skin to challenge their practices?

The experience of the Q&A initiative seems to indicate that having complementary and linked functions around accountability rather than one entry point in charge of a variety of tasks can create dynamic spaces for accountability work that can accommodate different approaches. Actors that can provide support around accountability initiatives (e.g. HAP, Sphere, ICVA, large NGOs, UNOCHA...) need to negotiate a space that includes the key functions of coordination, monitoring, capacity building, advocacy of accountability without necessarily collapsing them, but rather seeking to diffuse them in the system.

There are important complementarities amongst a Q&A initiative and a liaison officer function: the Liaison officer can play an important role to ensure that the work done by an ALWG or similar initiatives around accountability is then mainstreamed into the clusters. It is important to have a quasi cluster mechanism for debating accountability, but it would be a mistake to be limited by it: accountability needs to be mainstreamed across the board.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP/Sphere:

- It should be recognized that HAP / Sphere do sit differently in relation with a Liaison Function. Sphere is by its own nature closer to it, and should probably consider how to enhance its linkages with a liaison officer function in future deployments.
- Negotiation of other actors capable to create a space for accountability (such as ICVA) needs to happen at a higher strategic higher level amongst Secretariats, to define mutual roles and complementarities.
- Close connection with a Liaison function can help a Q&A initiative in reaching the clusters with continuous and sustained efforts, rather than with simple awareness raising presentations and training.

Local NGOs Networks

The Q&A initiative did not link strongly with local organizations. This was also a limitation of the ALWG, which mainly engaged with international NGOs. The concept note for the Q&A initiative had mentioned Paung Ku (a coalition of Myanmar NGOs and CBOS and International NGOs) as a potential partner for the organization and consulted it to explore appropriate approaches in the set up phase. But in the lifetime of the project only limited linkages had been forged. Networks of Myanmar NGOs are now being formed/strengthened and they are getting closer to existing initiatives. They have a strong interest in capacity building and training on quality and accountability.

The Q&A coordinator had envisaged to involve local NGOs in the project, and to choose at least one in the accompaniment process. But this did not happen. To what extent can a short-term initiative engage with local NGOs on issues that have structural implications on the asset of the NGOs and should be sustained in the long term? It is fine to start and leave when international organizations are involved, as they can then more easily find the capacity to move things forward.

The role of building capacity for Accountability and Quality is perhaps better left to organizations that believe in accountability and have the capacity of assist other NGOs as part of their partnership commitments. The LRC is looking at ways in which to do this. (See above)

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP and Sphere:

- When considering who to engage in quality and accountability work, targeting local NGOs might be too far fetched. Q&A initiatives should rather seek to prioritize these organizations capable to engage in effective partnership with local NGOs. HAP has principles for working with partners, however it could be difficult for an organization starting an accompaniment process to take this fully on board and “demonstrate that it meets the requirements itself”. (Benchmark 6)

For International NGOs:

- To advance the work on accountability, NGOs should commit to model their partnership work on a solid understanding and practice of accountability.

Sphere focal point

A Sphere focal point was recently created with the support of the Q&A initiative. The appointment of this focal point should have ideally have happened much earlier in the life of the project, but it was hard to find organization willing and able to identify suitable people who could play the role and to host it. Recently the CBI – a local capacity building organization – had offered to take up the role.

- A reference group like AWLG or a supporting platform such as the Q&A are not in a position to ensure the necessary structuring around Sphere. The Q&A initiative rightly did not present itself as the “focal point”, and worked towards creating and supporting the creation of a local focal point. It is important to pass on the message that a Sphere focal point should be embedded in a permanent, sustainable structure and not be part of a temporary engagement.
- Ideally if the selection happened at an earlier stage (possibly at the initial stages of the emergency), the Q&A initiative / Sphere consultant could have given more support to this structure (in terms of establish clarity of roles and operating mechanism, linking up the Focal Point with similar structures in other countries for exchanging learning and lessons; support to the creation of strong communication/networking capacity – which is essential to maintain momentum; on the job coaching; support to the creation of a database of Sphere capacity and to a Sphere network in country). Support to the structure could also have included some accompaniment in organizing a reflection on Sphere in Myanmar, leading to a future plan of action and also feeding into the current review of Sphere.
- It will be essential that the Sphere focal point in the months to come will establish itself as the point of contact amongst Myanmar organization. The set up of the focal point was only announced in mid May to the ALWG. ALWG / CBI / Q&A should clearly advertise this in the weeks to come, and CBI/Sphere should also set up an outreach strategy to make stakeholders (individual organizations, but also other interagency stakeholders) aware of its role.

Project overview

Participating Agencies

The Sphere and HAP initiative had reached a large number of organizations by running training and awareness rising and by participating in various networks.

The Q&A initiative also explored a complementary approach to this widespread outreach, by focusing work on 8 organizations that signed up for an accompaniment process. The agencies are: Cafod/KMSS, Mercy Corps, Mercy Malaysia, Merlin, Oxfam, Save the Children in Myanmar, Welt Hunger Hilfe (GAA), World Concern.

These organizations volunteered for the initiative and the selection was done based on a loose set of criteria (including interest in participating, buy in of the management, existing capacity, potential outreach). Membership of Sphere / HAP was not a requirement; it was interest and commitment that mattered. The 8 organizations signed a MOU with the Q&A initiative, detailing their commitments and the support they would receive.

Project objectives

It is a bit challenging to evaluate the initiative based on the stated objectives. The initiative was financed through a concept note that was never developed into a full-fledged proposal, so the objectives are not fully clarified. In addition, the job profile of the quality and accountability coordinator offers a slightly different version of the key accountabilities of the post, with objectives somehow overlapping.

Project objectives (as per concept note)

- Building on the existing Core Support Team of the Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG) to reinforce and institutionalise a quality and accountability resource team with good knowledge of HAP, Sphere and key facilitation and training skills available to support humanitarian actors.
- To develop a joint operational approach for quality and accountability to streamline Sphere and HAP initiatives and approaches promoting common reporting for aggregate analysis of accountability indicators included in the Integrated Monitoring Matrix (IMM).
- To identify a limited number of committed local and international humanitarian organizations as participating organizations for sole agency accompaniment, coaching and standards compliance self-assessment.
- To support participating organizations through a range of tailor-made solutions in developing their quality and accountability practices.
- Building on the existing ALWG, to support an interagency network on quality and accountability, sharing tools and best practice as appropriate.
- To provide a range of key, locally appropriate resources to support agencies to increase awareness and implementation of quality, accountable programmes

Additional expected outcomes for Sphere and HAP:

- Ways will be identified in which the Sphere and HAP Standards can be presented and more effectively communicated to the respective constituencies of the two initiatives and other relevant stakeholders.
- The impact of improved compliance with the HAP and Sphere standards will be assessed and documented.
- New joint Sphere-HAP working modalities will have been explored, reviewed and documented to inform how the two initiatives can offer integrated services in future new emergencies.

Key accountabilities (as per job profile)

- **Provide agency-specific support:** To support participating organizations to improve their quality and accountability practices through the provision of tailor-made solutions, including agency-specific accompaniments
- **Promote complementary approaches:** To support and build on current inter-agency operational approach to quality and accountability in Myanmar, which enables agencies to integrate HAP and Sphere across all programmes, as appropriate.
- **Facilitate, document and share learning:** To facilitate sharing of good practice, tools and lessons learnt and prepare relevant documentation.
- **Advocacy and collaboration:** to advocate and facilitate collaboration and integration between complementary initiatives (particularly the INEE Minimum Standards) with a view of improving the quality and accountability of humanitarian action in Myanmar:

I attempted to reorganize the objectives of the Q&A and the ambits of operations as I saw them emerging in the course of the evaluation, as a way to offer a more structured analysis, but also a more compact way to look at the initiative. I created a matrix intersecting key functions and levels of engagement.

	Awareness Advocacy	Capacity (knowledge, systems, practices)	Sharing Facilitation Networking
Individual			
Organization			
System			

The initiative had different levels of engagement:

- **Individual:** It recognized that “many field staff had little or no previous exposure to humanitarian work”. It acknowledged that lessons from comparable emergencies highlighted the need to build individual and organizational awareness and capacity to implement rights-based humanitarian programmes including beneficiary population as a key participant in design, planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes.
- **Organizational:** It acknowledged that realizing accountability and quality requires skills and commitment within organizations.
- **System-wide:** It acknowledged that organizations operate in an interconnected humanitarian system, which is also in need of improving its accountability and quality practices. In the case of Myanmar, the work done within the system by Sphere and HAP included mainly international organization, and only marginally government representatives (a choice that was also done in response to the perceived contextual sensitivities).

Whilst operating at the above levels, the initiative also sought to improve the linkages between Sphere and HAP and to enrich them with integrated modalities of work and action.

Key functions are identified as:


- **Awareness raising and advocacy:** this area responds to the need to put Accountability and Quality firmly in the agenda; to sensitize humanitarian actors about existing commitments on Q&A and on standards (Sphere / HAP); to inform actors of opportunity to improve their systems and practices.
- **Capacity building (around knowledge, systems, practices):** this area looks at building the practical capacity of individuals, organization and of the humanitarian system as a whole to improve quality in response. It includes advice, training, coaching, mentoring, accompaniment to raise skills and knowledge and to set stronger systems. As such it is not limited to the individual training, but it also has important components of organizational development support.
- **Facilitation, networking and sharing:** this area seeks to establish linkages across different actors, to support joint actions, sharing and learning on quality and accountability.

The following boxes give a more detailed overview of how the Q&A operated across the matrix, looking at some practical activities.

It is interesting to note that despite the decision of not giving a coordinating role to the post, the first concept note indicated as an objective “*Promoting common reporting for aggregate analysis of accountability indicators in the Integrated Monitoring Matrix*”. This objective was deprioritized by the initiative. The IMM, managed by the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) was a donor promoted initiative for gathering broad indicators about the response (with data

on population affected, operational capacity, accountability, agriculture, early recovery, education, food and Health). Information was to be provided by the MIMU itself, through its “who does what where” information and by the cluster lead. The ALWG had introduced some indicators on accountability in the matrix, of a qualitative nature. However interest in the IMM was soon lost, and the initiative never really took off. MIMU did not manage to obtain data, and this was not only an issue with the accountability section, but also for the more established and recognized clusters. Whilst putting accountability on the matrix was an interesting attempt to ask for commitment around it, there are questions on the suitability of indicators (how to capture for example the “degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries with assistance” or the “degree of involvement in decision-making” across the board?). The Q&A initiative certainly was not a representative body with the legitimacy to provide such data. But also, would the ALWG – with its “quasi-cluster nature - have the authority, capacity and representativeness of a cluster in providing this data? And finally, to what extent could the Q&A engage in pushing interagency mechanisms of monitoring? The question is to what extent this objective was really in line with the Q&A role, and to what extent instead it should be rather be seen as a task for a liaison/coordinating function.

Box1.
Preparation and dissemination of materials

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			

At the start of the emergency, the ALWG promptly set to distribute and translate materials on accountability. In particular, the “Good Enough Guide” was rapidly translated and made available by CARE. It was felt it was as a useful tool that somehow provided an easier entry point into accountability. (I was told: “I said to my staff that they should have the Good Enough Guide in their right pocket and Sphere in the left and they would be fine”). Other translated material included Sphere handbill in Myanmar language, some training materials in Myanmar language for HAP and Sphere, HAP Principles, Standard, Guide (this is still being finalised), HAP briefing and HAP brochure.

Many respondents pointed out the need to have a version of the Sphere Standards in Burmese, but at the time of writing the translation of the Sphere Manual is not yet complete. The printing of INEE standards has just recently been completed by the Q&A initiative (a soft copy translated by UNICEF was already available). The translation work for Sphere was initially undertaken by the IFRC and supported by the LRC and others. Delays in translation meant duplication of efforts: some parts of Sphere had actually been translated by individual organizations in the previous months of the response, but the quality and coherence of the existing translation was not good enough to merge them as the official translation. Challenges delaying translation were:


- Scarcity of translators with the high skills required to provide a quality job. The scarcity of these translators had been further compounded by the emergency and by the increased demand for highly proficient translators in country.
- Complexity of the translation: the Sphere manual is a text that is extremely dense with jargon, which cannot be directly translated in Burmese. The translation of words like “accountability” requires unpacking the set of concepts behind it. This is further complicated by the fact that some concepts often are not even unequivocally defined in the humanitarian sector. So, translation also implies being true the philosophy behind Sphere.
- Need for coherence: it was chosen to have Sphere translated by one individual only: the rationale was that splitting the translation work across several translators would have resulted in an incoherent product

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere:

- Consider preparing a glossary for translators, which explain and unpack key terms used in the standards (this was attempted but not entirely successful in the first few months). This might speed up translations and help in ensuring that translations properly reflect the intended concepts. Availability of such a glossary and agreement on the translation of key terms from the inception would also be an asset for trainings and presentations, ensuring consistency in the use of key terms from the start and clarity on them.
- Would it be possible to stage out translation so that essential parts of Sphere are translated and distributed first? (e.g. the humanitarian charter and the common standards)
- Consider disseminating materials in a variety of forms: some field staff indicated that they would find more useful simple, jargon-free leaflets and posters that they could use and disseminate rather than a translation of the whole book (a summary version in handbill was made available in Myanmar and English several months ago)

Box 2
Reminding organizations and institutions about their commitments

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			

Awareness about Sphere and HAP was promoted with presentations and trainings for various organizations as well as in clusters and interagency groups. Joining forces by HAP and Sphere was a welcomed initiative, and it helped to create a sense that there are commonalities amongst standards and interoperability. In the later phases of the Q&A initiative, some support was also provided to staff interested to promote the INEE standards.

It was acknowledged that in the Myanmar response there was more space than usually available to Sphere / HAP to introduce accountability. However, respondents have then questioned the extent to which awareness is really translated in capacity in the system.

The Q&A coordinator - as also Sphere and HAP staff before - had been asked to give input into interagency reviews and other initiatives (e.g. TORs of the RTE, monitoring mechanisms) so that accountability could be factored in. To what extent introducing accountability was a “cosmetic” factor or it lead to the creation on meaningful engagement on substance is debatable, but it is important that at least accountability is now solidly part of the humanitarian discourse, and that Sphere/HAP deployment and a Q&A initiative are consulted to this regard.

HAP and Sphere has not been vigorously promoted with the government. Some respondents indicated that more engagement with the government could be sought. The favourable reception of the few Sphere trainings for government officials as well as the interests demonstrated by government representatives on the INEE standards seem to confirm that this space exists. Exploring the space for individual agencies – rather than interagency initiatives - to engage with the Government in providing support on Sphere might also have been a possibility to consider in the context of Myanmar.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere and HAP:

- The Q&A initiative has also advised SCiM staff working on INEE standard. On the practical side, it was possible to share learning on trainings (as trainings on INEE started later)
- There are obvious linkages with other initiatives such as INEE that should be fostered in the awareness phase, to broaden knowledge about standards. Future initiatives might want to further involve INEE more solidly from the planning stages of deployment. (And in terms of the revision process, there may be a way for Sphere to have more up front involvement in INEE)
- Sensitivities in the Nargis response meant that the engagement with government was limited. However several respondents indicated that several government departments are interested in this kind of initiative, and there could have been more strategic space for engagement. In future response Sphere and HAP might want to develop strategies to better reach governmental actors, even in sensitive environments. (but in the Myanmar case it might be better left to individual agencies to engage more directly or bring in government involvement into the processes e.g. like SCiM is doing with INEE)
- Sphere and HAP and Q&A initiative (possibly in connection with liaison functions) also have a role in negotiating space for accountability in interagency initiatives such as Real Time Evaluations. It is important that Q&A have the capacity not only to give input bus also to follow up, when needed, on these initiatives. However it is important that the role of Q&A initiatives is confined to the advisory role, and is not seen as a legitimate representative of organizations.

Box 3
Trainings
(Sphere, Sphere TOT,
introductory trainings by HAP,
accountability training)

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual	●		●
Organization	●		
System	●	?	

I will look here at the training provided outside the accompaniment process to the 8 agencies. Most of this training was provided around **Sphere** through the engagement through an experienced Sphere training consultant (Annie Lloyd). Also when the Q&A coordinator was in place, training on Sphere continued to be delivered by Anne. Consistency in deploying always the same person created a sense of continuity that was appreciated by respondents. Sphere trainings have been well received and the quality of facilitation often praised by the people I interviewed. Training on Sphere took different forms: training for individuals, opened to all agencies; advanced trainings (level two trainings to deepen technical aspects for those who participated to introductory ones), trainings for cluster participants, trainings of trainers.

Interviewees indicated the need for better selection of training participants. Management should be prioritized and – especially in the early days of the emergency - it would have been important to also target those writing proposals. But participation to Sphere training is skewed by the perception that “Sphere is for technical staff”, and it is useful at the implementation level only. There should be more investment on giving visibility to the common standards, and in bringing in staff from the generalists and the support functions.

HAP personnel also provided training, and topics included an introduction to HAP, complaints mechanism, investigations on sexual exploitation. Participants found it useful and interesting, but some commented that it was conceptually difficult, not very active, and that would have wanted more case study practice sessions, stories and more participatory activities to engage participants.

A module on accountability training- which incorporated some elements of Sphere and HAP – was developed mainly with the engagement of an **ASEAN** representative. It had good feedback from participants.

Overall, throughout the duration of the process, the various breeds of training remained quite separated. Sphere training had included some reference to HAP, but in general the deployment was a bit of a missed opportunity to use the common space created and to have training experts from HAP / Sphere (and other initiatives) working together to produce some integrated modules. The Q&A coordinator had knowledge of accountability, but she was not an expert trainer either in HAP or Sphere. So whilst she prepared and ran introductory presentations on accountability, these could not be presented under the Sphere or HAP brand.

To what extent can scattered training have an impact on the humanitarian system? The Sphere training of trainers (TOT) was an attempt at building the needed resources to disseminate further Sphere in country. Some training happened as a consequence, but overall it did not snowball and result in highly increased additional capacity. Many of those trained in the TOT never applied their skills. Some of them had the chance of co-facilitating and help translating trainings held by the Sphere consultant (and this helped them in building their skills and confidence) but they rarely run trainings on their own. The reasons behind this are workload and contrasting priorities; lack of budget for training (some pointed out that if the need for Sphere training was factored from the start within an organization, it would have been easy to add budget on this); wrong choice of participants, lacking presence, training and facilitation skills.

Overall there seems to be the need to take a more strategic approach to training – particularly to the TOT – and define better from the start the commitments of these who engage. In the case of the TOT, there should also be clearer commitments from the start by participants and by the organizations. The lack of a focal point for Sphere further aggravated the situation, as the capacity building initiative around Sphere lacked their natural hub. The Sphere focal point would also help to connect these who received training. However it was noted by some participants, that even in the absence of a formal network, participation to trainings helped them to connect with colleagues from other organizations, and they remained in touch with some colleagues met at trainings.

There is then a question on how the training is used and adapted in the work, which had not been yet resolved by the HAP/Sphere initiative. The question that Johanson asked in

his article on the Humanitarian Practice journal still stands: “how can we support actors’ responses through capacity-building that is directly related to the task at hand, rather than providing stand-alone ‘training’ that is likely to be a brief pause from the actual response work? A related challenges lies in trying to move from a training-focused approach to one that promotes the implementation of Sphere and accountability methodologies throughout the project cycle”

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP

- Feedback from respondents indicates the need to simplify the introductory trainings, and make them more interactive and practical.
- More time should be spent in adapting training- especially the short introductory sessions - to contextualize them and to adapt to the audience, to make them applicable to the local context.

For Sphere

- Training had been well received. Some people suggested that it would be useful to have more visuals and multimedia.
- The early engagement of Sphere should probably have been a more strategic one, prioritizing the creation of a Focal Point rather than emphasizing the training side. The Sphere Focal Point of Pakistan (Shabana Bhatti, from Church World Service) visited Myanmar at the early stages of the emergency, and ideally it is at this time that a focal point should have been created and brought up to speed. The identification of a Sphere Focal point in the earlier stages of the response would have helped to create the space for giving more continuity to Sphere and to also create a hub for trainees. TOT and creation of supporting networks could have then been delivered more organically in connection with the focal point.
- TOTs require more work beforehand towards: appropriate selection of participants; obtaining formal commitments by participants and their agencies on their availability to train. And they require more work afterwards: creation of a plan of action, practical support to trainees as they develop their skills and start practicing training – e.g. accompaniment, co-training; creation of a peer support network. A MOU with trainees and their managers specifying the outcomes of the training and the commitment required to participants could be a way forward to clarify engagement.
- Some participants to the TOT said that it was really useful to them to co-facilitate training with Anne, as this increased their confidence and also helped them how to adapt training to different settings. Ideally TOT should happen at an early stage and make use of some key trainees in subsequent training.
- There should be more consideration in the selection of trainees for TOT. Optimal selection is dependent on the criteria given by Sphere/Q&A (which should help to clarify the profile and the capacities and skills required from perspective trainees). But this is also dependent on the willingness of senior management of organizations to respect these criteria. Capacities of trainees must include soft skills and attributes such as presence, confidence, capacity to facilitate; availability of time.


For HAP and Sphere

- In some cases trainings had been organized last minute, and this made it impossible to interested people to participate. More advance notice would help organizations to select and send to training the most suited personnel.
- Some interviewees pointed out that the Sphere + HAP training speaks to these who are part of the humanitarian organizations. However these who then want to discuss the issues implied by them at the CBO / community level might find it hard to do it as the training does not equip them adequately with tools to communicate the core of HAP and Sphere to a broader audience. The importance of the “storytelling” around of Sphere and HAP, examples case studies (possibly coming from neighbouring countries so that people could relate closely) was emphasized.
- Some also pointed out how – at the local level – standards should really best be introduced by “local champions”, which have the credibility with the communities and with the local workers, but also have the capacity, skills, tools to engage with them at the level of the principles first (and not necessarily at the level of the “framework” which is the construct over them).
- Introductory training on accountability can put off participants. Some confessed that they have been “confused by the whole idea”. They found it inapplicable in the practice of a humanitarian system that is pushed by expertise (“we are experts and we know what should be delivered to be efficient”) rather than consultation.
- Many staff, also locals mentioned that they used the Internet to seek for support and information following their training. HAP and Sphere should continue to invest in their Internet presence also as a way to provide support to staff seeking for practical information.

For organizations


- In some cases organization sent the wrong people to the trainings. This had a negative impact in particular on the TOT.

Box 4
Building on ALWG
To institutionalize Q&A

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			

The role and evolution of the ALWG was already extensively discussed. I just wish to stress again that the Q&A initiative had efficiently built on it and also enriched the exchange happening in the group, contributing lessons learnt and case studies, and also facilitation. However, the level of sharing remained mainly confined to the individual level. Participants had expressed their worries about the lack of entry points for the debate happening in the ALWG to really influence the work of agencies.

Box 5
Getting the buy in for Q&A
Initiative with organizations

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			

I am giving emphasis to this task because, even if apparently easy, in retrospect it proved quite challenging for the Q&A initiative. For a start, at the beginning, it was not really clear what the organization were buying in with the programme. The initiative was a pilot, a first attempt to accompany organizations on improving their capacity to deliver on accountability through HAP and Sphere. There was no a clear set of options to sell to organizations. The support was appreciated, but what the support meant and implied for participants become clear only towards the end of the engagement.

The SMT of the organisations were not necessarily aware of the meaning / consequences / implications of quality accountability work and of signing up commitment to accountability. Many staff interviewed mentioned that the HAP frameworks is also “dense and not really accessible” and takes time to understand.

This is why work of the HAP support person was really useful: so sensitize the SMT. Ideally the meeting with SMT should really have happened earlier (in many cases the SMTs were too busy in April when meetings with programme people had started). If there is no buy in from SMTs and implications are not clear, is more difficult to advance quality accountability work.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere and HAP:

- If the accompaniment of individual agencies is seen as an option for the future, Sphere and HAP should jointly evaluate the MOU and programme of engagement offered to agencies in Myanmar, and clearly define what is on offer.

Box 6
Accompaniment process
for “8 agencies”

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual		●	
Organization		●	
System			

The Q&A initiative offered support to 8 agencies through an accompaniment process looking at: providing accountability staff and management with introductory trainings (accountability, HAP principles, other specific issues identified by them); build the capacity for a self-assessment process of accountability, and assist them in running them; assist organizations in developing a strategy and work plan on accountability.

The choice of organizations were based on loose criteria that included willingness of the organization to engage, existing capacity, potential impact of the engagement. They were formalised in a MOU. A formal engagement added value, and it was pointed out that the importance of the MOU is not so much in the details of it, but in commitment underlying it.

The accompaniment process was first tested with Merlin – with the support of HAP personnel, Smruti Patel - and then adapted for other organizations.

The accompaniment process for most organizations really took off only in April and this meant that there was then only limited time to revise and provide input on the self-assessment initiative, which are still ongoing. Is 6 month an adequate time to ensure that the process can start? Some delays in the process meant that time was short. Ideally the selection of the participants should have happened more quickly, but it is also evident that establishing a presence in the country, and informing about the initiative is a process that takes time. But it is also useful that the timeframe of the initiative is not too stretched, to push a sense of urgency when engaging with management. Further delays were also due to the difficulties to find a time in the busy agenda of country directors and managers and senior staff for engagement and trainings. And as a result these trainings happened towards the end of the initiative. Often managers acknowledged that they were important assets for them, and - had they realized this - they probably would have made more efforts to attend them before.

The Q&A initiative will end at a critical time, when organizations are just completing their self-assessments and are developing their strategies and follow up action plans. Clearly some more assistance will be needed to guide and support them. Staff are quite confident that they have enough to move forward, but at the same time would appreciate some more support and expertise. Some of these can be probably found in country. Large organization should also be able to find the expertise within them, or know how to procure these (as they now have a clearer idea of what to ask and look for!). But many would still want to have some Q&A initiative type support. They recommended that - in a few months time - some resources should be brought in to check progress and support way forward.

To what extent organizations have the resources and are prepares to spend their resources to support quality works now that it is not provided free by the Q&A? Plans are at the early stages and it is difficult to see if organizations are already clear of the cost of future quality and accountability related work and if they would be happy to commit to it.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP/Sphere


- A Q&A initiative would need more clarity of engagement with managers from the start, and more immediate commitment by managers (e.g. in joining promptly at least the initial training). The experience of Myanmar might help to better design the modalities of approaching management.
- Consideration should be given to the timing of the self-assessment. The self-assessment processes were seen as an added value where they could run side by side with other organizational process (e.g. a revision of the strategy of engagement). Good timing of the process might reduce pressure on the organization and the impression that accountability is an “add on”, as synergies might be found with other processes.

- Without the direct Q&A support in country, there will not be a “stick” in Myanmar to remind organizations about their commitment. How to put pressure for compliance is a tricky issue. HAP + Sphere might consider how to link up with their HQs .
- Consider how to sustain these organizations who engaged in the self-assessment / strategy process. Some of the assessment focal points indicated that ideally they would want to receive some additional support and assistance in 6 months time, also as a way to have a deadline on which to deliver.
- Consider how to establish linkages with organizations that can incentive them to capture and disseminate their learning.

For organizations:

- Buy in from management has sometimes been quite superficial at the start, and this had delayed the engagement of the organization.
- The process of engagement so far indicated that there are gaps in the capacity of management to deliver on quality and accountability, and this should be vigorously addressed and prioritized by organizations.
- Organization should commit to a roadmap on quality and accountability with clear milestones, in defining how they will follow up on their strategic plans and they will monitor progress. However, how can compliance on it be enforced in the absence of the incentive of a Q&A initiative?
- Organizations should promptly identify their expertise gaps, and seek support on these. The strengthening of quality accountability is not likely to be a merely endogenous process.
- Organization should commit to learn from their quality accountability work and to exchange this learning in the existing forums in countries, within themselves, and with HAP/Sphere - especially as they are now engaging with their review processes.
- Organizations need to be aware of the budget implications of their work on accountability, and commit the necessary financial resources for it. (I do not want actually to suggest with this than accountability and quality work is an additional expense for organization: management should also consider how better accountability and quality might help them to become more efficient in using their financial resources)

Box 7
Support networks for
the “8 agencies”

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			


Some common training sessions for the 8 agencies created also linkages amongst them. Such linkages are quite informal at this stage, also due to the limited timeframe to build it up (maybe a bit more effort should have gone into further strengthening this mechanism?), and it will be interesting to see to what extent agencies can maximize peer support.

Whilst accountability staff can count on this peer support as well as on the broader ALWG, linkages for mutual support have not yet been created across management. How to ensure that management of the 8 agencies can exchange mutual support? Would it be worth suggesting mechanisms of peer reviews, exchange of resources and capacities to streamline accountability? An to what extent broader forums there management participate (e.g. IASC) can create spaces for networking on the practice of quality and accountability?

There were also some challenges around more formalised ‘peer’ support in Myanmar due to some agencies concerned with being linked with other agencies in the field – especially around international staff presence.

Box 8
What is missing?

	Awareness	Capacity	Sharing
Individual			
Organization			
System			



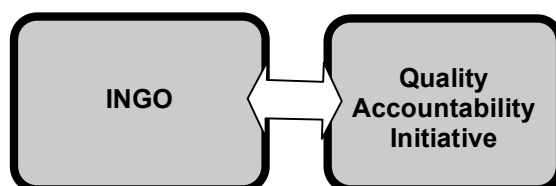
When looking at the matrix, which areas were left out from the Q&A initiative? It appears that the Q&A initiative was not geared and could not really reach up to the system level. Of course it has been already pointed out that also “individual” and “organization” are broad categories and only partial needs could be met within these.

To what extent HAP and Sphere can influence this key level is an open question. Its implications reach far behind the scope of this evaluation. The Q&A initiative reached where it could, in the awareness area. On the positive side, it is evident that accountability is now in the agenda for the humanitarian sector, and - as discussed in the awareness section - there is a space for a Q&A initiative to remind the sector of its commitments. But to what extent Sphere is really endorsed within the clusters? And where do accountability and quality sit within the humanitarian system? (as the discussion around the ALWG exposed, it is not yet clear where the entry points for accountability and quality issues are). To what extent interagency initiatives are really able to mainstream accountability, without having to refer to the local resources deployed by HAP/Sphere for input and advice? What is the real buy in on accountability and quality in the humanitarian system?

The consultation on the response to the controversial review “after the storm” lead some of these I met to question the extent to which the humanitarian enterprise can safely declare that its systems guarantee that there is really a full understanding on the situation on the ground, and full accountability. To what extent the humanitarian sector as a whole can claim that its systems capture effectively the reality and the achievement on the ground? There are possible entry points where it would be possible to start checking if the accountability systems that humanitarians holds dear are working. The UN (i.e. MIMU) for example, produce detailed maps of “who does what where?”, based on the (often patchy) data that they receive from agencies (and which had attempted to include accountability indicators). To what extent the interagency initiatives and organizations are capable to transparently share and check the information on which they base their decisions and judgements for validation by the beneficiaries?

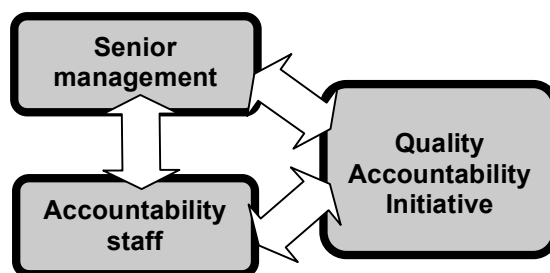
Pressure points in organizations

At what level does the engagement of the Q&A with an organization need to happen to be effective? Organizations are not black boxes, and it is important to open them up to identify the best pressure points. Meaningful changes on accountability practices will not be stirred by lone accountability officers, but will be determined by the buy in of a variety of actors within and outside organisations, pushing each other towards meaningful changes in the organizational set up. In the following I tried to unpack the range of actors and pressure points that might contribute (or resist) to improving the practice of quality and accountability. I hope that this mapping can be useful to organizations as they evaluate their strategies and efforts towards more solid accountability.



Engagement with management and accountability focal points

Based on lessons learned from previous experience by HAP in other countries, the Q&A initiative recognized that engagement and buy in from the management is essential to the success of the initiative. It therefore operated mainly at two levels: 1) work with senior management (training on accountability and reminder of commitments) and 2) work with accountability focal point and other key staff in the organization towards self-assessment of accountability. What the Q&A seemed to have learnt, however, is that management do not seem to have necessarily entered the initiative with a clear idea about the implications of signing up for it.



The engagement with managers was sometimes hard to obtain. In some cases the initial interest for the initiative came for the Q&A initiative from an accountability related officer. Even when managers were supportive, they then really needed pushing for commitment and understanding. An accountability officer said that had the management been approached first (rather than being brought in by her), “the buy-in could have come earlier, and therefore [they could have] played a more consistent role in the project, instead of having me as the go-between” The trainings with management were essential in making them aware of the challenges of accountability. It appears that the implications of deeper quality and accountability in the practice were not fully clear, and the training revealed new dimensions of accountability work to them. It started to dispel the belief that “we do accountability already”.

Quality and accountability should be a core area of responsibility to senior management, but it is not always acknowledged as a function. When it is resourced - it has mostly tended to be situated further down in the organization charts. A manager pointed out that there are different “bits” of accountability that

are visible to management (and they often then to be linked to the “upward” accountability, e.g. financial accountability, norms and procedures, donor requirements). What lacks is a systematization of these elements in creating a broad understanding of accountability as a structured function. Managers of HAP member organizations might also need to understand what the commitment of the framework mean in terms of resources, knowledge, capacity: i.e., that standards are not just about ticking boxes for bureaucratic fulfilment in the office, but need to be implemented.

“Accountability focal points” do not always exist as such in organization. Accountability staff can also be situated in various part of the organization and therefore have different profiles, capacities, influence. So identifying accountability focal points or entry points for accountability is sometimes a challenge.

One might wonder if accountability could really be tasked to individuals rather than be diffused in an organization. The reality is that - in the current compartmentalized set ups - unless accountability focal points are set up, it is difficult to find entry points in the organization for accountability work, and make the function visible. But the moment they are created they give a particular flavour to accountability, depending on where they are placed. In the organizations engaging with the Q&A initiative, accountability focal point tended to be located around M&E / quality / information departments. Very rarely accountability focal points were part of senior management or had direct access to it, which of course is a challenge for accountability work.

The Q&A initiative helped to create more awareness and buy in by the management on the accountability work. It added weight and authority to the debate. It remain to be seen to what extent the accountability officers will be in a position to influence strategic choices around accountability in the months to come. There is also a question about the legacy that accountability and quality staff will leave in the organization as they move away: the transition from “humanitarian accountability” to “accountability” might requires attention as organizations start to strategizing for their long term programmes.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP and Sphere:

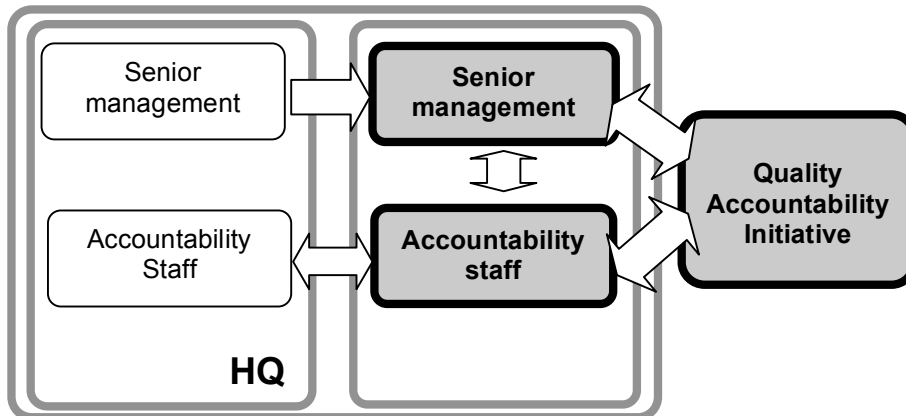
- Previous lessons learnt exercises pointed out that engagement of management is essential for Q&A accountability, and the Myanmar work confirmed these findings.
- Support for technical advice by accountability staff is in high demand in countries, but need to be accompanied by management buy in to be effective.
- HAP & Sphere could develop a joint paper on what could be the implications for management in taking fully inboard accountability issues, with practical options for support on the process.

For organization:

- To what extent accountability is given for granted by management? Organizations do benefit from initiatives that hold a mirror in front of them and ask them hard questions about accountability.
- Increasingly organizations are appointing accountability focal points. The Nargis experience shows that there is an added value in having them, as they can give an entry point to accountability within the organization and also create linkages for learning and sharing with other organizations. It is important however, that the accountability focal point is not seen as a way to “squash” accountability within a post, but it is seen as an enabling function that have the legitimacy to interact and influence other functions.
- There is a perceived scarcity of people with the “right skills” to work on accountability. Hence the need to foster and create such capacity. This requires fresh thinking about accountability and quality roles, a discussion on the job profiles needed, and investment in building the complex skills that are needed to advance quality and accountability.
- Adequate thinking should also go to the seniority for accountability posts. Because the accountability person would tend not to be in charge of management, it is often graded as a relatively low support post. To be really

effective (and to attract staff of the right calibre) the accountability function needs to be seen as a senior one, capable of interacting on an equal basis with senior management. It needs the experience to bring in expertise in organizational practices as well as experience in response, and to influence decision-making processes.

Linkages with HQ



HAP carries with it a certification mechanism, which implies obligations for its members and it is signed at HQ level. The commitment for accountability should then filter down to country offices, and should also be accompanied by the capacity to foster accountability. This brings in the question: to what extent the HQ can apply pressure for bringing accountability forward? Do HQ really apply such pressure? And to what extent the pressure is also accompanied with the deployment of resources and support on accountability?

In general managers of organizations that are part of HAP knew about HAP, but what was not clear to them (and what the training helped them to understand) was the engagement level that is required for accountability. There is an inherent risk in the HAP framework that it can be understood at a relatively shallow level, and this then translates in seeing accountability as a set of procedures relatively easy to keep under check by management.

Some organizations are now investing in the creation of roving staff on accountability that can guarantee that the initial support at the inception of emergencies is available and can be promptly deployed. In some cases accountability staff in country could receive technical support from Accountability people at the HQ level. However, not all accountability staff in country were clear if they had counterparts in HQ, and more in general, where they could obtain assistance from their main offices. There is still an issue of how accountability and quality work is linked throughout organizations.

Some of the largest organizations had started to invest in this capacity, but this posed further questions on where this capacity is located and how easy is to find it: for example, accountability officers in HQ might relatively easily establish linkages with accountability focal points in country, but they are unlikely to forge linkages with staff in other key positions (e.g. staff that might act as cluster focal point) that are under different management lines.

The pressure on accountability does not necessarily always come from the HQ level, and the Q&A initiative actually opened interesting spaces when reversing this pressure. Some organizations who were in the early stages of their work with HAP or had not yet signed up to it, saw the Q&A as a stimulus to engage with their HQ to align procedures, systematize and strategize accountability together.

Points for consideration and recommendations

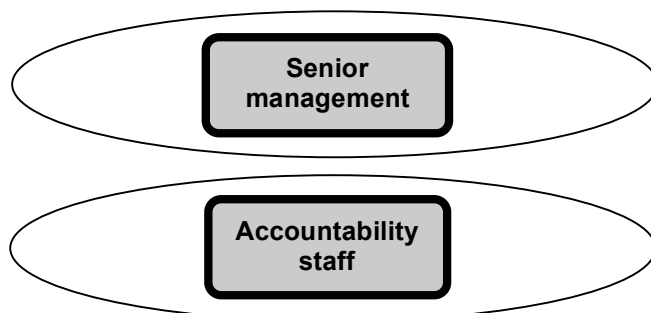
For HAP:

- How to send the message more clearly that commitment to the Standard should not translate in the bureaucratic requirements only, so that management at the country level can truly deliver on it?

For organizations:

- To what extent the commitment on accountability, when HAP is signed, translated in clear engagements with the country level by HQ?
- To what extent country level can make demands to HQ to align procedures on accountability?
- Where is support on accountability made available in organization? Who is reached / influenced by it?

Peer support



Organizations should not be seen as isolated entities, and important leverage can come from peer pressure and support. Probably one of the most relevant aspects of the Q&A initiative was that the work at the organizational level was not done agency by agency, but happened through engaging many organizations at the same time. This created informal linkages amongst them and opened up possibility for peer support. Sphere and HAP might consider how these peer support mechanisms could be strengthened in future engagements.

The interagency component of the support is developing informally: as organizations are participating together in training, both accountability focal points and management have an opportunity to know each other and forge linkages. When I asked to accountability focal points where they will find support in the months to come, they often referred to colleagues who had also engaged in the Q&A initiative. This possibility of peer support is then amplified by the existence of the ALWG. This peer support network was not actively pushed by the Q&A, and emerged organically. Probably more work could have gone in explicitly mapping capacity across agencies and in leading organizations to consider practical ways of working together to exchange expertise, to provide mutual support and also the necessary pressure to push each other to compliance. However this is a process that also needs time to develop, and time was against this.

Networks amongst management seem to be weaker. They have no forum at this stage that also put accountability strongly in the agenda and put pressure for delivering on it (and this is an issue where it would be important joining forces with liaison officers, for example). How to create peer support networks for management, how to have them formalizing cooperation programmes of mutual support and peer review with other agencies might be a consideration for future engagements. The INGO forum, LNGO forum and IASC might provide a possibility for this at the country director level – but the buy in might be a challenge.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP/Sphere:

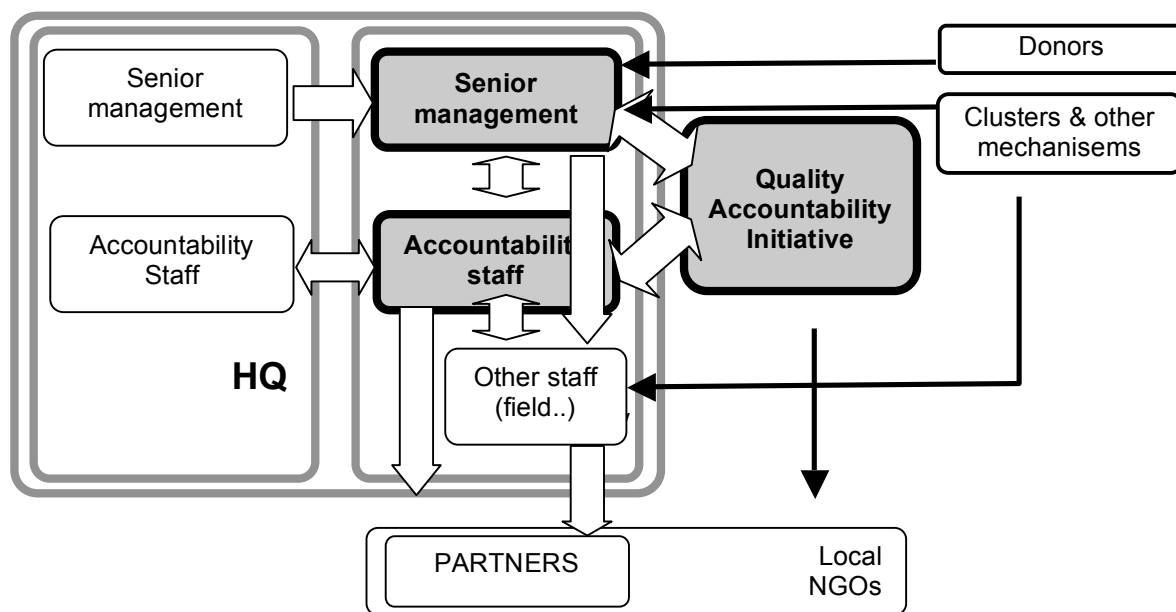
- A Q&A initiative should strengthen networks for peer support amongst management / accountability focal points as an integral component of the agency support.

- Work on creating support networks could be lead in a more strategic ways in future initiatives. A Q&A initiative might help organizations to map where specific capacity and expertise exist and can be tapped in on (e.g. for creating complaints mechanisms, working through information centres, innovative modalities for community engagement...). It might help to identify capacity gaps in the system and to indicate how they could be tackled with external expertise. It could support organizations in coupling them or in creating peer review mechanisms. This was also a task that was squashed at the end of the engagement and suffered for lack of time.

For organizations:

- Organization should commit more formally to joint collaboration, in addition to participating in the existing groups. Managers engaging in the quality accountability issue should consider modalities for coming together to reflect on progress (e.g. with periodic seminars, maybe every three months)
- Organizations should consider engaging in peer review work and to exchange expertise on quality and accountability (e.g. through secondments, joint work...)
- When expertise gaps on accountability are identified system-wide, the largest organization might consider not only how to bring in resources to tackle them internally, but also how to share them with their peers (something that for example was done by SCiM when engaging with INEE work).

Diffusing accountability in the organization / with partners



Diffusing Accountability in the organization

The accompaniment work is equipping organizations with accountability strategies to realize accountability in organizations. This included considering how the various functions can support accountability work, and how the work can reach to the field level, by creating more decentralized processes. The extent to which this needs to happen / had already happened could not be measured by this evaluation because the work on self-assessments and strategies was still ongoing in many organizations. Key questions for organizations in looking back at their work will be to understand the extent to which accountability had been diffused in the organization, and to what extent this had changed the nature of decision making processes, giving prominence to the beneficiaries.

For organizations:

- Impact of the initiative will be measured by the depth and level of achievement of their accountability strategies. In the absence of a Q&A initiative, how can the organization make itself accountable to realize it and to measure progress on it?

Work with Partners and local NGOs

I did not have the chance of interviewing partner organizations in the field to appreciate the level of quality accountability that already exists amongst the organizations. Of course the ripple effect of the Q&A initiative will be achieved when quality accountability becomes a central focus of their partnership agreements (i.e.: in modelling the relationship amongst them; in influencing chances in the decision making processes of the partner organization).

What the Q&A initiative indicated is that it can have an influence in relating with partners. One amongst the 8 organizations was working predominantly with partners through an accompaniment process. The Q&A initiative is helping to equip it to revise the strategies through which accountability is then communicated to the partner, and on how it is possible to work on different leverage points within the organization to achieve it. This indicates that work with partners has the potential of being transformed into something broader than presenting HAP and Sphere to them. It is about engaging in organizational development processes that help them to situate the process aspects of both Sphere and HAP in their way of working.

For HAP / Sphere:

- The Q&A initiative, even without engaging directly with local NGOs, demonstrated that local organizations are willing to be influenced by organizational change processes that are informed by Sphere and HAP

For organizations:

- There are spaces for bringing in HAP and Sphere in work with partners. The quality of relationship that international organizations should have with partners suggests that the engagement should not just be about training on the standards. It should rather be translated in broader work on organizational effectiveness and in decentralized decision making.

Other pressure points

Clusters

Clusters could in principle influence the way of working of organizations, if they put more emphasis on the process aspects of Sphere. But in Myanmar it appeared that the cluster way of working was not influenced by Sphere. Sphere, at the best, was looked at when indicators were needed. It also appears that organizations did not manage to influence the way of working of the clusters, in bringing in a deeper understanding of Sphere. The dynamic amongst clusters and organizations and the commitment and capacity of the clusters to operationalise the Sphere standards should be tackled more vigorously in future emergencies.

For HAP / Sphere:

- According to the people I met, the philosophy of Sphere was not seen in action in the clusters. There should be a more strategic engagement with clusters in future emergencies to tackle this problem. Sphere might consider how to help raising the awareness of Sphere amongst leading roles in the clusters (e.g. with preparedness work in building the capacity of cluster coordinators)

For organizations:

- The organizations that commit to Sphere must recognize that their capacity to operationalize the standards and to influence the work of clusters around these is still insufficient. It is important that the capacity of the staff engaging within the clusters is brought up.

Donors

In all conversations it emerged that some of the most influential actors in fostering or discouraging quality and accountability are donors. At the end of the day, management must respond first and foremost to accountability to donors (or

perceive that this is the priority). Some donors are starting to give more attention to accountability, and to feature explicitly requirements on accountability to beneficiaries in their call for proposals. HAP and Sphere had engagement with donors at the early stages, and found for example that DFID was very receptive to accountability (to the point that they committed to improve their own accountability by integrating questions on accountability in their internal monitoring framework). As donors learn how to put accountability amongst their demands, they might also acquire the capacity to read proposals and reporting from an accountability perspective.

But aside donors which are pushing accountability there are also some that “just came with bags of money” with limited strings attached to them when it comes to accountability, and this of course reduced pressure on management.

Of course there is also the other side of the coin, i.e. to what extent agencies committed to accountability are really ready to proactively negotiate accountability practices and processes as part of their commitment with donors. It is key that people writing proposals are exposed to quality and accountability in the earliest phases of an emergency, to ensure that they give the needed attention to it in their proposals and, in doing so, they also advocate for accountability to beneficiaries and they establish a space for it. Some shared perceptions that NGOs are not really capitalizing on the room for manoeuvre that is made available by donors, and pointed out that donors are receptive to changes in projects when they trust that an organization is accountable to its beneficiaries. Some donors, for example, would be willing to populate a logframe after a couple of months on condition that this is done based on accountable processes and that mechanisms for this are clearly built into the proposal from the start.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere and HAP

- There is space for engagement with donors at the field level that might result in structured demands for accountability in their call for proposal.
- There is a need for donors to learn how to assess accountability once a proposal is submitted or reports are presented. HAP and Sphere might support donors in acquiring the needed skills.

For organizations:

- It is key that organizations learn to put proactively accountability on the agenda when negotiating with donors, and to do so they need to adequately build the capacity and the awareness of these who engage in proposal writing around accountability.

FOR DFID

- Further advice / support / training could be sought by DFID to ensure that once demands on accountability are made, their staff is then better prepared to effectively judge on how they are delivered.
- Given its interests on the accountability issue, DFID could bring together organizations and HAP and Sphere representatives, to negotiate how to best add requirements on accountability into the programmes they fund, at HQ level and specifically in the field. This discussion should be broadened, if possible, to include like-minded donors.

HAP, Sphere and the broader picture of accountability

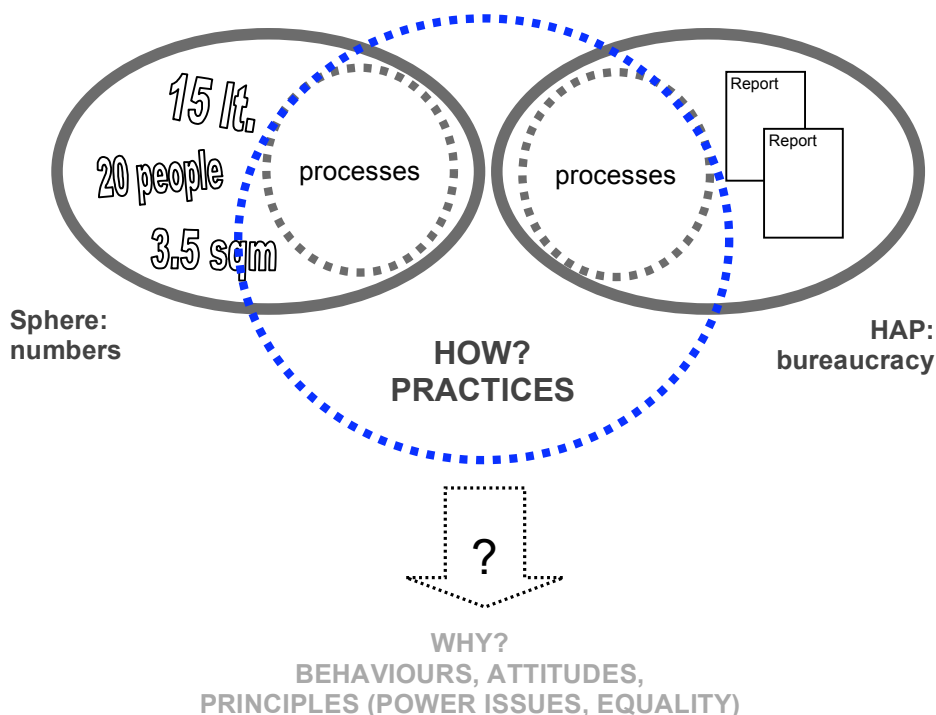
In the course of the evaluation I tried to get a sense of what understanding of accountability the staff and management gained as they engaged with the initiative – and in particular on how it links with quality -and about where HAP and Sphere fit in the picture.

The concept of accountability is in general a difficult one to pin down, even more so because it has no direct translation in Myanmar language (the closest terms used is “responsibility”). In the course of evaluation I asked to different sets of interviewees what accountability meant to them (and I was particularly keen to ask this question to field and local staff to see what understanding of accountability had filtered through to them). In general accountability is quite a blurred concept, which tends to encompass whatever is felt as “good practice” for response, with emphasis on participation. Broadly:

- Accountability is generally seen as added value, related to practices that ultimately enhance quality (participation, transparency, awareness raising...). Most responded agreed that accountability to the “beneficiaries” ultimately improves the quality of the project. However this was not necessarily a universal perception and some actors maintained that accountability is good in theory, but in practice it is not doable in humanitarian work. Some also questioned the justification for efforts and money to be spent on accountability: “is investment in accountability commensurable with what we do not do right?”
- Accountability is seen as another layer of work, something that happens *on top* of other activities rather than a *different* way of working.

HAP and Sphere are clearly seen as part of the “accountability package”, and as two complementary entry points (HAP more relevant for organizations, Sphere for clusters). In general Sphere is seen as the “technical accountability” (the what, how much, how, and, in short “the numbers”) and HAP the organizational process side (the reports, the bureaucracy, the complaints).

The diagram represents the understanding of accountability, and the contribution to Sphere and HAP to it as it emerged from the evaluation.



Understanding of Sphere

Sphere was predominantly seen as the “technical side of the accountability”, and mainly as the “what” and the “how much”. It is mostly misunderstood as a set of quantifiable indicators rather than as the process of negotiating assistance that stems from the humanitarian charter. This perception is held not only by the local staff, who have been only recently exposed to it, but also by international staff, at various levels of the organizations and also appeared from those working within clusters. The following is an overview of false myths about Sphere that I have encountered in this evaluation.

- **We know Sphere!** Because Sphere has been around for a long time, many people, especially long term humanitarians, will say that they know Sphere. However to what extent this is true, and to what extent Sphere is understood is still a challenge. Some respondents indicated that even expert people in key position (e.g. cluster focal points) had sometime an erroneous understanding of Sphere, and this meant that rather than creating the possibility to have discussions about equity and contextualization of humanitarian response, some debates had focused on standards as unachievable numbers.
- **Standards are “numbers”** Sphere is mostly seen as a technical tool. The danger of seeing Sphere as a technical tool is further compounded by the collapsing of “standards” and “indicators”. The bottom line for many is that Sphere is “20 people per toilet” or “15 litres of water per person”.
- **Standards are for technical staff.** Whilst Sphere should first of all a process of negotiating and monitoring appropriate and equitable response through a clear understanding of the context (as described in the common standards), the “process” aspects are lost. Sphere is not owned by management, it is passed on to the technical staff, which tend to focus to the “compliance” aspects of the indicators
- **“We cannot achieve the “standards” in Myanmar!** The understanding of Sphere mainly as indicators lead to think that it is a tool that at the end of the day was not really relevant for the response: Sphere gives the wrong “standards” (usually far too high when it comes to water delivery, insufficient when it comes to excreta disposal). However some acknowledged that striving to high “standards” (i.e. indicators) was useful in thinking how to link the emergency work with the long term intervention: “we cannot achieve them now, but we should achieve them in the long term”.
- **Sphere is a shortcut for writing proposals.** There is actually a risk that the erroneous use of Sphere might reduce the space for proper needs assessment and contextualization of standards. Sphere is seen as a handy tool to put in the “right” number of deliverables when writing project proposals. Inexperienced staff said that Sphere was really useful in helping them to compile budgets and put in project proposals using the number in Sphere as guidance.
- **We cannot change the “standards”.** What is the space for contextualizing staff is also a question. Cluster at field levels are probably the best place where Sphere can be contextualized. But some pointed out that staff at the field level might not have the necessary authority to stir a negotiation process on standard, and to challenge for example ratios of service delivery that have been established in proposals written in office. (i.e. “we should change things based on the knowledge in the field, but we have to ask to headquarters”)

These false myths are quite widespread, and strongly limit the potential of Sphere to lead to contextualized quality processes. Of course a careful reading of the handbook would dispel these myths, but, as one staff member said, “after the training, we do not have the time to look back at books and handouts. We remember what sticks. We remember the pictures with simple messages which are relevant to us”. And to him, for example, what stuck were the numbers.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For Sphere

- There is a presentation issue with Sphere, which mislead people to think that the value of it are the numbers and the hard indicators. The standards are lost. This is probably an issue that shall be dealt with in the current revision, carefully looking at the format of the standards and at the emphasis that is given to them vis-à-vis the indicators. A linked question is how to ensure more immediacy to the common standards, so that the *process* suggested by them can “click” with the audience.
- There might also be a need to revise training and check more carefully what “sticks” after the sessions. Some participants said that they remembered the numbers and the indicators, because they stand out, they appear immediately relevant and it was simple to cling to them.
- There is widespread misunderstanding of Sphere in the humanitarian system, also by experience practitioners. The “we know Sphere” perception, coupled with lack of time and conflicting priorities to learning means that current misunderstanding of Sphere are

not challenged and encroach the humanitarian system. The current revision of Sphere standards might be an opportunity to instigate in seasoned humanitarian practitioners the need to update and refresh their knowledge. Sphere must look “different enough” from the past version to create a desire to look at it... but not so different to put off people and make them think: “why do these people keep on changing things?”

- To what extent can Sphere become the entry point for those seeking technical information? There is of course a value in presenting numbers and hard data aside with the standards. It makes Sphere a practical tool, a usable one. Field staff and less experienced humanitarian workers were really keen to get this type of information and this was the aspect they liked most about Sphere. To what extent Sphere can help conveying this needed technical information without being perceived as a simplified technical manual is also a question for the current revision.
- There is an opportunity to promote Sphere as part of Disaster Risk Reduction or preparedness work ongoing in-country. However there would be a need for pointers and ideas on how to best link Sphere to these initiatives. (Some attempt to do this through the recent follow up training of trainers was made but perhaps need further follow up)

For Sphere focal point and **organizations working in Myanmar**

- A view of standards of Sphere as a dynamic process that can eventually help to reach also the higher indicators (which seems unachievable at the initial stage) could be an asset in linking relief to developmental work. Some local staff expressed the idea that “we need to reach Sphere indicators one day, not now”), so it would be worthwhile building on this idea to create an understanding of Sphere as a process of engagement to ensure quality
- Mainstream Sphere into other broader trainings aimed at building skills for humanitarian personnel and management, so that they are seen as part of a broader picture. There are already existing examples of these practices (CBI trainings, Disaster Preparedness Programme)
- The existing focus on Disaster Risk Reduction should be seen as an opportunity to promote Sphere standards. Some Sphere training had a component of DRR work, but participants are not yet clear on how to achieve better integration.

Understanding of HAP

HAP was predominantly seen as “organizational processes”, something that was not really relevant at the individual level. Amongst the practices it promoted, what stands out were the “complaints mechanisms”.

Interestingly the “certification side” did not take prominence in Myanmar, in that it was not a requirement to get access to the initiative. It was a push for the management of the organization already certified, but overall the benchmarks were morally compelling even when not explicitly linked to the certification process. The fact that introductions, presentations, support about HAP was available to everyone committed - regardless of their registration with the initiative – was perceived very positively.

I have already described in the previous section many implications of the work on HAP at the organizational level. I just want to stress here that the fact that HAP was presented alongside with Sphere in the Q&A initiative broadened its audience. It helped to give a sense that HAP is not just the bureaucracy of the organization (frameworks, documents, regulations, reports and papers). It rather helped to infuse a sense that there are broader principles behind these structures, and that they principles ultimately impact on the practices and on the engagement of each staff members with its organization and with the people they serve.

Some pointed out that the framework is very useful, but it should be a bit less dogmatic and respond more to the challenges encountered in the field. Some felt for example that HAP staff was a bit “evangelical” about complaints. Whilst it was understood that it could be a problem to say that it is fine to only fulfil partially some standards, there would still be the need for more space on adaptations and gradual implementation. Another possibility indicated was to stage standards, especially the more complex ones, so that agencies do not need to jump from zero to all, and could have more a sense of where they are, of their progress.

At the level of practice, HAP was strongly identified with “complaints mechanism”. Complaints mechanisms are still alien practices in humanitarian response, so they definitely grabbed attention. There were also specific requests on trainings focusing on these, followed also by discussions within the ALWG groups. It is of course an important achievement that HAP managed to create awareness on these, but the focus on complaints mechanisms come with the risk that they can monopolize the discourse and create the false impression that they can be stand-alone practices.

If complaints are suitable for Myanmar is a matter of debate, and local respondents were divided on the issue. The experience of some organizations, including the UN, is that people actually do complain. They spoke from experiences, having received complaints in their Yangon and coordination offices from village committees. Early attempts at putting mechanisms in place pitched complaints as “feedback”, and were mostly done to “post box” mechanisms. These who used this mechanism tended to report that at the beginning the post-box would contain suggestions and further requests for aid (which seem to indicate the need for more inclusive consultation mechanisms of consultation), and then with time they started to get proper feedback. Some organization invested resources in creating information centres, which are a very important starting point for accountability, but still reflect a perspective that links accountability with information management rather than with joint decision making.

There are probably some risks in emphasizing the complaints mechanisms as the entry point for the practice of accountability. Some respondents communicated the impression that putting emphasis on feedback mechanisms suggested that accountability work could be tackled at the end of the chain without giving enough attention to the stages that should precede it: creating dialogue, involvement, but also creating the space and the trust so that people can confidently give feedback. In some cases post-boxes and information centers could become a fig leaf hiding the need for other accountability practices.

Some staff also claimed that the predominant focus on frameworks and compliance emphasizes the disheartening side of accountability. There is a need to focus on the principles behind it that make individuals passionately willing to commit to it. Accountability needs to be seen and portrayed as a positive and fulfilling process rather than as a bureaucratic endeavour only, and focusing on complaints. One staff wisely proclaimed that “with accountability we can reduce our stress”, when we are really making decisions together with people rather than be judged on what we had decided on their behalf.

It remains to be seen how agencies that undergo the self-assessment process and establish their plans of actions will modify their perceptions on HAP and on quality and accountability. The process was still ongoing and it would worth following up on this (as an opportunity to also provide further support)

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP

- The focus of HAP is understandably on organization management, however there is a need for a broader sharing of its benchmarks amongst humanitarian actors. Those exposed to them through introductory training had found them useful for their practice. The question is how to communicate them simply so that they could be more broadly disseminated across organizations.
- The emphasis on complaints mechanisms is a powerful push that can also help organizations to do something tangible about accountability. However there is a risk that the complaints mechanisms gets all the attention and hide the other systems and procedure that need to be put in place.
- There is a need to simplify the language of HAP, which can be off putting for many, and far too bureaucratic.

The Q&A initiative: Pulling HAP and Sphere together

What was the added value that the Q&A initiative offered in pulling HAP and Sphere together? The Q&A offered a terrain in which it was possible to put “accountability” and “quality” as the starting point, rather than individual initiatives. As such, it helped those more closely involved with the initiatives to focus on the synergies amongst HAP and Sphere and, more importantly, it helped people to perceive the deeper nature of these initiatives. At the risk of oversimplifying it: Sphere and HAP can be perceived, when seen in isolation, as respectively “the numbers” and “the bureaucracy”. But when they are looked at from the viewpoint of a quality and accountability platform, it is easier to perceive them as complementary sets of processes and practices that help to realize accountability and quality.

So, the Q&A initiative created a space where it was possible to look at the practice of accountability: “how” accountability is shaped. It provided the chance to look into questions like: How can beneficiaries be truly involved? At the same time, this space was attractive because it was not about discussing abstract understandings of Q&A. It linked them to solid and established standards that people wanted to be seen to know and master. It is a bit of a chicken and egg issue: if Sphere and HAP are the entry points, they (and particularly their hard aspects, rather than the process ones) tend to dominate the discourse. The risk is losing the broader picture of accountability and quality, and in particular its deeper aspects, those linked to effective participation and power sharing. But if HAP and Sphere are not put in the picture, then accountability alone would have not have fangs, and would not be seen as a real priority. The Q&A initiative was a way to create a space where to mediate these aspects.

The Q&A initiative also offered a space where people could think of how to merge the initiatives, how to reconceptualize them so that they can more efficiently communicated to their constituencies. A local NGO worker said that his constituency - the elder members of the local church - would not be interested in “HAP” / “Sphere” per se, but that they would need to understand what accountability is. He was in the process of thinking how to best readapt the training so it could be relevant for them. This is where the work done within the Q&A initiative had been effective: it helped organization and individuals to get under the skin of Sphere and HAP and focus on the practice: how do we do accountability? How do we communicate it?

The responsible use of power

Some pointed out that it is not enough to tackle quality and accountability by pointing out some practical tools. “Accountability is more than mailboxes”. There is a need for a space for an “intellectual discourse”, to get a common and richer understanding / consensus about what quality and accountability involve. This need to be done at different level: at the community level, but also at the level of policy work. It is a sector wide discourse that should take place in the humanitarian system as a whole.

Accountability is strongly linked to power. As HAP put it, is “the responsible use of power”. But the linkage of accountability and power was nearly absent in the understanding of accountability offered by most respondents. When I asked respondents what accountability was for them, they usually started talking about practices and tangible aspects (the post-boxes, the indicators). They would then, in discussion, point out the importance of attitudes of people and of good relationship with community. But only a few eventually linked it also with considerations about the power held by the humanitarian organization.

The reason for this is probably that the understanding of accountability practices is still at the early stage, where people seems to think that accountability is about “doing more things” rather than “doing things differently”. At this stage accountability is still seen as “informing people of our choices “(e.g. the standards organizations have, the criteria organizations have established) rather than decentralizing the capacity to make such choices. The organizations - in the early stages of their self-assessment - are only starting to perceive that accountability has deep implications for the way they are managed, leading them towards true power sharing rather than top-down arrangements. It is probably in the long term that the relations of accountability with power might become more evident to those involved in the process.

Some respondents also mentioned that the “imposition” of HAP/Sphere on the local civil society might also ultimately be an act of power by the international organizations. Care should be taken - especially when working with local organisations and when thinking forward on how to promote HAP and Sphere broadly in Myanmar - not to impose foreign principles without first understanding how these match and are linked to the principles and values held by the communities and by the civil society. Some pointed out that the absence of the word “accountability” in Myanmar does not translate to an absence of accountability processes. Care should be taken in identifying them first, and to build on them rather than telling people “what are the right principles” beforehand. Some also pointed out that many organizations initially operated as if local capacity was low. It was pointed out that the civil society in Myanmar is very resilient and has its own mechanisms. What was lacking, was the knowledge of the jargon and the knowledge of what the humanitarian system consider the “right way” to respond. Some pointed that it is only the honest and open dialogue amongst the principles held by the civil society in Myanmar and these promoted by the international community that can create new contextualized spaces for accountability and quality in the humanitarian intervention in the country.

“Humanitarian” accountability?

The Myanmar experience offers an interesting twist on accountability. Usually the idea of accountability – and related concepts of ownership of the response, participation, empowerment – is more rooted in development circles. But in Myanmar the label of “accountability” – or more precisely, a particular breed of it, i.e. “humanitarian accountability” - really become part of the organization’s jargon after Nargis. The work of the ALWG, HAP, Sphere certainly contributed to give kudos to it, and the Q&A initiative, in particular, also added some depth (and some challenge!) to the concept.

Interestingly, several of the people I interviewed pointed out that this concept of “humanitarian accountability” would actually also be useful in development (!). This indicates that:

- For organizations operating with a developmental mandate before Nargis - which would take for granted with the fact that accountability was part of “what they usually do” – it was worth having a reality check through the Q&A initiative. They were suddenly confronted with higher demands on accountability than what they had previously practiced. There is therefore a need for the work done on humanitarian accountability to permeate the development discourse. Preparedness programme might be a possible entry point.
- The “humanitarian” label can be problematic and puzzled some respondents. They felt that the practices and models of accountability they are testing have value in the long term and are applicable more broadly to civil society action.

They did not understand why accountability had to be referred to as “humanitarian”. To them the addition of “humanitarian” might potentially limit the buy in of civil society to the concept. There was a worry that the demand on accountability would cease as the programme exits the relief phase.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP

- Some suggested “drop the H!”. There is a need to acknowledge that the idea of “humanitarian accountability” might limit the buy into the idea of these actors that do not identify themselves as “humanitarian”. At the same time the reference to “humanitarian accountability” is the selling point for the concept within the humanitarian sector. There is of course no clear way forward. The revision of HAP might look at how to suggest that “humanitarian accountability” systems and practices can adapt and mature in the “continuum relief-development”.

Synergies amongst HAP and Sphere

For HAP and Sphere engaging together in a country was a significant achievement per se. There is a lot of historical baggage in the relationship amongst the agencies. The joint deployment was a brave move to overcome this, and to work on the overlappings rather than focusing on the differences.

Country perspective

The joint initiative of HAP and Sphere has been well received. It was perceived as an “organic fit” of “complementing initiatives” that go “hand in glove”. Introducing HAPs and Sphere helped even seasoned staff to finally realize that they are “two sides of the same coin”.

On the practical side, lumping HAP and Sphere together as an accountability package helped to relieve the exasperation of humanitarian workers complaining “there is a new thing all the time...” as it reduced the number of the competing cross cutting streams and are “added up” to the core humanitarian work. Some, however, also pointed out that apparent simplicity of this package hid challenges: those giving more than a cursory look to it still would perceive important differences and could be confused by them.

Others also stressed that Q&A initiative was perceived as a platform to practically support Quality and Accountability rather than a “HAP” or Sphere initiative and this made it more approachable and less intimidating for staff.

Most respondent stressed the importance to maintain this link in future emergencies. It was felt that Sphere and HAP are both part of the equation, and bringing them together helped people to focus on seeking the whole formula for quality and accountability rather focusing on isolated variables. Some pointed up that there are even more variables (e.g. INEE) that could be brought in.

But did this joint deployment helped HAP and Sphere to really find the magic formula that can bring them together? I would say that the initiative did not really provide a way to integrate HAP and Sphere *as they are presented*. But it probably prompted to look at how they work together and can be interoperable *as they received*, and as they contextualized in an organization.

As pointed out in the previous section, when they are presented separately it is likely that what sticks to mind will be the differences. I was given a telling example of an organization where one staff was trained in Sphere, one in HAP and they ended up clashing because of their different understanding of accountability while writing proposals together! An additional challenge to effectively merge HAP and Sphere together that they are seen as belonging to different people: HAP is for the management (forgetting the fact that the practice of accountability has implications for all organizations functions and for its modus operandi). Sphere is for technical staff (forgetting the fact that Sphere has important consequences on how programmes are defined, selected, managed). The way in which Sphere and HAP were presented in the initiative started to challenge this view, and created environments where the interoperability of the standards could potentially be explored. To what extent this worked and created new practices and understanding could not be understood at this early stage. Learning on this was not yet captured. This is probably an important learning question that the Q&A initiative, as well as Sphere and HAP should pose to the organizations that engaged in the initiative in the months to come.

HQ perspective

Getting together for the Myanmar initiative had created also important linkages at the HQ level. Goodwill was created, as well as a perception that it is possible to work somehow together. The decision of aligning the global processes of revision of Sphere and HAP to strengthen commonalities and interoperability has been seen as an outcome of this renewed goodwill.

Sphere and HAP staff confessed that they knew very little about each other prior to the deployment, and that their reciprocal understanding was quite a superficial one. Simply by sitting at each other trainings and presentation in the field, and by

discussing issues together they had acquired new understanding and fresh perspectives about the initiatives and about how they work together. One challenge in this is that whilst HAP deployed staff members in Myanmar, HQ staff members of Sphere never visited the country (a planned visit of the QAP focal point in Sphere was cancelled) and therefore never had a direct exposure to HAP in action. Sphere had a different modality of engagement in country, as it deploys consultants. This limited the space for negotiation about common ways to work in country amongst the two agencies, and it is an issue that should be looked at if deployment is repeated. Consultants cannot have the same strategic engagement of permanent staff, and cannot really commit on systematic changes outside their area of specialization (in this case, training) on behalf of the organization.

By bringing in country a person that did not belong neither to HAP nor to Sphere, the initiative might have reduced the space for common engagement and direct exposure of HAP and Sphere HQs. As one HAP staff put it, a one staff initiative is probably more effective, but “you lose the exchange” There were some coordination mechanisms in place, but overall HAP and Sphere staff could have used more strategically the deployment in Myanmar to engage jointly, for example, in testing the support process or in producing introductory training. This leads one to ask to what extent Sphere and HAP are really interested in challenging and cross fertilizing their own way of working in the field, or to what extent they are rather seeking for an alignment that is primarily to be found in and pushed from the HQ.

Sphere and HAP have quite different approaches when disseminating and promoting their own initiatives. Sphere tends to go for training of individuals, looking at covering large numbers. It works through tried and tested relatively standardized training packages delivered by consultants. The training tends to be “on the subject” (i.e. awareness of standards) rather than on the job. HAP focuses on the organizations; it requires commitment to them prior to defining the accompaniment processes. The trainings used in the process are “on the job” rather than “on the subject”, and they are focused on the specific needs of the trainees. They are delivered on specific case studies by HAP staff. The difference of these approaches should not be seen as a barrier. It might reduce the space for collaboration when the focus is on aligning existing approaches. But if the issue of outreach and support of HAP and Sphere are tackled strategically, these differences could be an asset in identifying new modalities to advance accountability in the system, beside the tested methods.

In Myanmar the Sphere approach and focus characterized the first stage of intervention. As the Q&A Coordinator was deployed, the initiative started to work more on HAP and with longer-term engagements (a Sphere consultant was brought in but this did not really lead to an integrated approaches). The Q&A coordinator illustrated the linkages of Sphere and HAP in the broader accountability discourse and practice, but she did not succeed in merging Sphere and HAP in a coherent, unified package and in joint tools. She was probably not in a position to do so, as Sphere and HAP are very structured and strongly owned by the organizations. Achieving this would have required more buy in and investment in joint work by HAP and Sphere.

Points for consideration and recommendations

For HAP and Sphere

- It is key that staff of HAP and Sphere continue to increase exposure to each other, both with HQ initiatives but also with joint opportunities for work in country. The experience of Myanmar showed that there is still little buy in for joint work in country.
- Sphere and HAP task should strategically commit to joint work together (e.g. in establishing a short introduction on HAP/Sphere). To be worthwhile in establishing synergies, this would require strategic commitment, engagement and direction. The getting together on concrete pieces of work cannot be left only to external consultants or short-term resources, but would need core coordination and engagement from HQ.

Considerations on the timeline for Q&A work

Immediate aftermath / initial relief phase

Reminding commitments

Basic awareness raising

The immediate aftermath of an emergency is a critical time to place HAP / Sphere and, more in general, accountability and quality on the agenda. A group of committed individuals recognized the need to do so and managed to set up a very active ALWG within a couple of weeks. HAP and Sphere built on this and rapidly deployed in Myanmar. Respondents indicated that engagement from HAP / Sphere should have started even earlier, but also pointed out that an engagement for “capacity building” would not have been realistic in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

Early engagement was seen as crucial because it is at these initial stages that the response shapes up and structures are created that will hardwire the future response: proposals are presented, staff are recruited and organizational set up defined, budgets are prepared, broad priorities defined. The way in which this happens has important consequences for the space that can be created on quality and accountability, and for obtaining adequate funding, resources and systems for it. If a response programme becomes aware too late of accountability and quality, then these are seen as an “add on”, another thing to do on top of the existent, rather than an integral part of the programme and of the way of working.

This seems to indicate, for HAP and Sphere:

- Need for early engagement with management (at the field level but also at the HQ) for putting Sphere and HAP on the agenda, and for reminding agencies of their commitments.
- Need for early engagement with other key stakeholders (e.g. Donors, Humanitarian coordination functions, Clusters) so that they can be made aware of their role in promoting accountability, but also be supported with practical suggestions on how to do structure in practice demands and requirements for accountability.
- Realistically the initial engagement should not be directed to build capacity, however it should scope opportunity and interest for future training/support and should negotiate spaces and funding.
- Early investment on capacity might be targeted to those who will hard wire the emergency response (management, proposal writers)
- Need for short and to the point materials on HAP and Sphere and linked initiatives (e.g. Code of Conduct), possibly translated in the local language.
- Basic structures on which to anchor Sphere and HAP work (e.g. a Q&A initiative, a Sphere focal point) should be set up in this phase to provide clear and lasting entry points. Alliances with established organizations and network in country need also to be built from the early days.

For organizations:

- Organizations need to recognize that accountability is a non-negotiable. Capacities for it should be provided at the beginning of the response. Capacity should be strategic enough to structure the response and the proposal presented (and budget lines!) to build in accountability from the start.
- Organizations need to put accountability in practice from the start: in their inductions, in their practice of needs assessment, by establishing early transparency and consultation mechanisms with beneficiaries. The Myanmar experience indicated that not all organizations are capable to do so in the early stages of response. Dedicated support from HQ (e.g. the roving teams being established by some organizations) can be instrumental in forging this capacity.
- Large organizations are better placed to create an interagency space on accountability, which can create momentum and knowledge for accountability and quality. They should recognize this as part of their mandate and as an essential component of their early response.
- Organizations should be more active in advocating for and negotiating accountability and quality driven response to their donors: to what extent NGOs really exploit the flexibility that donors could offer in designing programmes? To what extent the *process of engagement* rather than *deliverables only* are discussed as the basis of the commitment and accountability of the organization to the donors?

Relief phase

Supporting capacity building

Link solidly awareness to practices

The Myanmar experience showed that in the later stages of response there was a high demand for inductions and trainings on HAP and Sphere and already some space to provide it. At this junction Sphere and HAP should seek to provide the support required.

It was also pointed out that after 2-3 months, the emergency response starts to change pace, and agencies continue to do relief but often engage in revising their plans and strategies. This was seen as an appropriate time for reflection and a good opportunity for donors / external bodies (including HAP and Sphere) to push these engaged in response to carefully think “what to do next”. Sphere and, particularly, HAP need to recognize that even agencies committed to HAP at the HQ level might not be able to support their field operations, or they might not yet be equipped with the capacity to identify their gaps and shortcomings. This is where a sustained presence in the field can add value.

Rehabilitation

Disaster Risk Reduction work

The experience of Myanmar exposed a preparedness problem with the existing organization in country, which were not ready to move from developmental to emergency response. The current emphasis in linking rehabilitation / development work with Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives can create an important space to further consolidate Sphere and HAP. Some Sphere training started to discuss DRR issues, but participants were still unclear on how to engage in this phase.

It is also important to guarantee that HAP and Sphere are not lost in the transition from rehabilitation to development. Many staff already indicated that Sphere indicators could be aspirational goals for long-term engagements. Other pointed out that HAP is meaningful also in a development context.

- HAP/Sphere should provide more indications and support on how to link with DRR work
- Organizations should ensure that Sphere and HAP inform and are promoted in the DRR work. This might include discussion on best way forward that should involve accountability focal points, programme staff and management
- Organizations should ensure that Sphere and HAP feed seamlessly in their long term response

Before the next crisis

Preparation

Preparedness work is absolutely critical to ensure that HAP / Sphere can be put on the agenda at the early stages of an emergency.

HAP and Sphere

- Should consider the possibility of joint deployment in future emergencies.
- Can negotiate joint modalities for deployment and seek engagement from potential donors. Alternatively, they can also negotiate for the deployment of focal points in connection with large agencies.
- Should create a roster of suitable candidates for deployment capable to support accountability work on day one and with deep understanding of both HAP and Sphere
- HAP and Sphere should invest in Lessons learnt, case studies, examples of practices as there is a very high demands for these in the field, and scarce resources.
- Should continue to create common engagement seeking to build resources and tools that can be co-branded and deployed in the initial stages of a response.

For organizations

- Contingency plans should streamline accountability work
- Only a limited number of agencies are ready to deploy the personnel with the necessary skills and experiences to work on accountability in the early phase of response. Such capacity needs to be created and fostered in house. Organization rosters should also add expertise on accountability an area of specialization.
- Organization committed on accountability and quality should have the capacity to deploy accountability staff that could be shared as an interagency resources. Coordinating bodies (e.g. UNOCHA, ICVA) might also be brought in to support such initiatives.
- Organizations should also invest in creating more capacity on HAP/Sphere on these individuals in their registers and rosters that will have key roles in the coordination and shaping of the overall humanitarian response (e.g. technical staff participating in clusters, proposal writers..)
- CWS, SCiM and other likeminded organization in a position to host accountability initiatives (and to make them happen!) should put this commitment as part of their contingency plans for early response.

For DFID

- The support to early mechanism for deployment of capacity to work on accountability should be negotiated with HAP/Sphere and other agencies as an option they are willing to support.

Conclusions

It is hard to lump together a few recommendations, and I tried to diffuse points for consideration and recommendations along the way. But few final considerations might be offered.

The first is that Accountability and Quality are on the agenda and this is important progress for the humanitarian sector. To what extent they are really realised, to what extent the humanitarian sector is really capable to “do” accountability and truly engage with the beneficiaries is questionable... but there is now a space to make demands on this. Many organizations are also starting to deploy staff that can support accountability work. Some go a long way ahead in sustaining interagency support (as CWS and SCiM did in Myanmar). The challenge is actually how to avoid building accountability as yet another compartmentalized expertise of the sector. It is key to mainstream it so that it does not remain the expertise of few people and it is really embraced by the organizations in their entirety, and – critically – by their management.

The Q&A initiative created a welcome point of support for quality and accountability, in tandem with other initiatives on the ground (e.g. ALWG, LRC...). The message that was given by putting HAP and Sphere together is probably that there is not one way to do accountability. It is the combination of many efforts that ultimately will help to realize better quality and accountability in the sector. And increased synergies amongst different initiatives do help.

It would be premature at this stage to seek the impact of this initiative. The Q&A initiative planted seeds, and, according to the feeling of these involved, it planted them efficiently. The biggest challenge for the initiative at this stage is its sustainability and way forward. Some organizations committed considerable energies to participation to this initiative. Probably they would have wanted more engagement and guidance, and their planning on accountability was squashed too much towards the end of the initiative. The good news is that there are institutions and networks left in countries that can also support them, now that the strategic lines of their engagement are clearer.

In the months to come organizations will be in a better position to judge the impact of the work and to provide valuable learning, and it would be important that they commit to reflect on this. But probably meaningful change will take time to happen. Will action be sustained? A MOU pushed organizations to engage in the lifetime of the initiative, but it is not clear what “sticks” will force organizations and their management afterwards to bring their plan forward and reflect on it, if drive and personal commitment wane and /or interested individuals leave the organisation or country programme.

Some individuals, exposed in different ways to the initiative, will bring their learning with them, and it will be much harder to judge what impact this will make. But this is the nature of the humanitarian system, where individuals came and go, and sometime, as modern troubadours, they find the right space to herald new ways of working in unexpected ways and places.

Some seeds have also been planted in the civil society of Myanmar, probably less than the initiative wanted to achieve. In general, it is apparent that civil society in Myanmar is resilient and dynamic, and there is possibly more space for accountability work than what it was believed possible in the beginning of the emergency. The Q&A initiative had operated alongside some groups which will be instrumental in shaping the positioning of accountability and quality in future interventions, but there are some questions as to the capacity and willingness of such organizations and groups to bring forward accountability. The long-term impact in Myanmar of the initiative will depend on:

- The buy in and capacity of large organizations, in particular of these involved more closely in the Q&A initiative (including SCiM that had a strong role in supporting the accountability initiative so far) to take the accountability baton

forward for themselves and with their partners. The capacity and willingness of informal networks across organizations to offer peer support and to share learning on accountability will also be a crucial element.

- The capacity of initiatives such as the ALWG to reinvigorate themselves and create a space for exchange and common engagement for many agencies, and their capacity to engage with the new mechanism of coordination in country (PONREPP).
- The extent to which networks or Myanmar NGOs will take part in the engagement on quality and accountability.

It is important that HAP and Sphere continue to be seen as possible contact points for technical support on improving accountability, but at the end of the day, the space for accountability will be created and negotiated in country. Sphere and HAP should continue to monitor how the accountability and quality landscape evolves in Myanmar (through their own member agencies or through the ALWG), and possibly consider how to provide further (joint) support at a later stage. An engagement of HAP/Sphere should also be strongly focused to advance learning, to capture, consolidate, share new practices and lessons as they emerge in the future months.

But what is the bottom line? Was it worth doing?

“Absolutely, unequivocally yes!”. This is what most respondents said when I asked if the joint initiative of HAP and Sphere was useful and if there was added value in bringing HAP and Sphere together.

But did the initiative really clarify how HAP and Sphere can be made more interoperable or produced joint practices? Probably not. At the end of the day neither a common way of working nor common tools were forged with this initiative. However, the Quality and Accountability initiative in Myanmar showed that there is a space and an interest for this to happen. It indicated that it is possible to achieve more synergies. It proved that this was seen as added value for the sector. It helped to create relationships and understanding at the Secretariat levels of HAP and Sphere for this to happen. The alignment of HAP and Sphere revisions are a first, important step to move this forward. But more push from HQs on joint initiatives will be required to push this still forward.

The interest that the initiative generated, the energies and the goodwill that it attracted also indicated that there is a true desire and commitment to improve accountability and quality of the humanitarian enterprise by many individuals and organizations. But it also indicated that there are many barriers. By coming together Sphere and HAP supported these people and moved them to a higher point towards thinking about accountability and quality: the message understood by many was that the challenge lies not in compliance to the individual standards, but in rethinking the current practices and modus operandi of the sector. The enthusiasm and passion that I encountered for this challenge in the people I met in the course of this evaluation convinced me that this is an objective worth working for. And the Q&A initiative contributed to it.

References

- Shabana Bhatti, JUL 2008, Report for 16-29 July 2008, <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/Sphere-support-for-cyclone-nargis-response-report,-myanmar,-16-29-july-2008.pdf>
- Deborah Bickler, Monthly Reports- Held at the Q&A initiative office
- Monica Blagescu's, 29 July 2008, Report on the deployment of HAP Field Representative to Myanmar (PHASE 1 REPORT). <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/humanitarian-accountability-and-quality-management-in-the-nargis-response,-myanmar,-2008.pdf>
- Ester Dross, 29 August 2008, Quality and Accountability in the Nargis Response by (PHASE 2 REPORT), <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/final-quality-and-accountability-in-the-nargis-response-ed-august-2008.pdf>
- HAP, Quality and Accountability in New Emergencies, Quick Reference for Staff. <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/quality-and-accountability-in-new-emergencies,-quick-reference-for-staff.pdf>
- Erik Johnson, Humanitarian Coordinator, Humanitarian Exchange Magazine, issue number 41, December 2008, HAP and Sphere focal points in Myanmar: early lessons. <http://www.odihpn.org/report.asp?id=2969>
- Annie Lloyd, SEPT 2008, Annie Lloyd's Report for 20 July - 28 September 2008. <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/Sphere-and-hap-joint-response-in-nargis-october-2008.pdf> (and other reports from Annie Lloyd on Training / subsequent visits held at the Q&A office)
- Tripartite core group, November 2008, Post-Nargis Social Impact Monitoring.
- Tripartite core group, December 2008, Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP)..
- Robert Turner, Jock Baker, Dr. Zaw Myo Oo, Naing Soe Aye, 17 December 2008, Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis, <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/ia-rte-nargis-response-final-report-no-pics.pdf>
- Kelly Wooster, JUL 2008, Report for 5-15 July 2008, <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/Sphere-and-hap-joint-response-in-nargis-july-2008.pdf>

Appendix 1: TORs

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 HAP/Sphere

HAP International is a partnership of humanitarian agencies dedicated to building a system of self-regulation based upon quality management and accountability principles, with a specific commitment to making humanitarian action accountable to its intended beneficiaries. The Sphere Project was created to improve the quality and accountability of disaster response. The Sphere Project was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. The Sphere Project has:

- argued for the universal right of all disaster-affected people to humanitarian assistance.
- achieved NGO agreement on core principles and actions.
- collected minimum programming standards for disasters from past lessons and experience.
- achieved consensus on key technical indicators.

Following the Cyclone Nargis on May 3 2008, there was a large humanitarian crisis in the Delta area of Myanmar, with many INGOs and local NGOs and UN agencies mounting a large scale response, with many international agencies entering and operating in Myanmar for the first time. The national civil society was weak and not experienced in humanitarian responses, though many were heavily involved in mounting the initial response to the disaster. The interagency response to Cyclone Nargis has seen huge responsibility placed on organizations and their staff with an existing presence in cyclone affected areas. The vast majority of response teams have been from Myanmar and whilst capacity has often been strong at the national level, many field staff have had little or no previous exposure to humanitarian work.

Lessons from comparable emergencies, particularly the tsunami, have highlighted the need to build individual and organizational awareness and capacity to implement rights-based humanitarian programmes that include the disaster affected, beneficiary population as a key participant in design, planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. In Myanmar, the need for a beneficiary-centred approach to programming will continue to increase and it is essential that humanitarian actors are supported with the right tools to adopt this approach.

Between July and September 2008, following a series of NEP calls, HAP members and others requested support, which led to HAP and Sphere providing a total of four consultants to the Nargis response to work with the Accountability and Learning Working Group, local and international NGOs and UN agencies. It is this initial exposure to Myanmar and collaboration with operational agencies that led to the development of a longer term (6 month) deployment of the Inter-Agency Quality and Accountability Coordinator.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND Save the Children agreed to host an interagency initiative to strengthen the quality and accountability of local and international humanitarian actors operations in Myanmar. The intent of this role was to work directly with the technical expertise and advisory capacity of a joint HAP and Sphere mission to reach a wide range of organizations. The project aimed to support agencies to develop skills, capacity, commitment and knowledge to deliver improved quality programming that considers beneficiary accountability throughout all stages of work. A range of support, from work-planning and the provision of locally relevant supporting tools, to class-room based and onsite support was to be used to achieve the project objectives. Through the accountability and learning working group it would work to promote accountability principles and quality standards; making the direct link between the Guiding Principles of the Nargis Response as stated in the PONJA and agency-specific initiatives. The project was also seen as an opportunity to strengthen the field level coordination between two key quality and accountability initiatives (HAP and Sphere), to develop joint tools and raise awareness amongst participating agencies of how the two initiatives complement each other. This was to build on efforts from May – December 2008 of a series of deployments from HAP and Sphere to Myanmar. In addition, other activities such as: awareness raising and training on quality and accountability has been undertaken in collaboration with members of the Accountability and Learning Working Group. Agencies have appreciated the training, but have expressed the need for significant follow up and support to implement the standards and benchmarks. This DFID funded project was initially intended to run from October 2008 to March 2009 but due to various delays, the QAP coordinator arrived in Myanmar and took up her position only in mid-January 2009. While DFID was unable to extend the grant beyond March, Save the Children in Myanmar agreed to continue to support this work until June 2009, in agreement with HAP, Sphere and other stakeholders.

Goal: Disaster affected populations benefit from quality humanitarian response that is accountable to them.

Aim: Humanitarian actors have the knowledge and capacity to implement quality programmes that are accountable to affected populations.

Objectives:

- Building on the existing Core Support Team of the Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG) to reinforce and institutionalise a quality and accountability resource team with good knowledge of HAP, Sphere and key facilitation and training skills available to support humanitarian actors.
- To develop a joint operational approach for quality and accountability to streamline Sphere and HAP initiatives and approaches promoting common reporting for aggregate analysis of accountability indicators included in the Integrated Monitoring Matrix (IMM).
- To identify a limited number of committed local and international humanitarian organizations as participating organizations for sole agency accompaniment, coaching and standards

compliance self-assessment.

- To support participating organizations through a range of tailor-made solutions in developing their quality and accountability practices.
- Building on the existing ALWG, to support an interagency network on quality and accountability, sharing tools and best practice as appropriate.
- To provide a range of key, locally appropriate resources to support agencies to increase awareness and implementation of quality, accountable programmes

Additional expected outcomes for Sphere and HAP:

- Ways will be identified in which the Sphere and HAP Standards can be presented and more effectively communicated to the respective constituencies of the two initiatives and other relevant stakeholders.
- The impact of improved compliance with the HAP and Sphere standards will be assessed and documented.
- New joint Sphere-HAP working modalities will have been explored, reviewed and documented to inform how the two initiatives can offer integrated services in future new emergencies.

2. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 Purpose of the EVALUATION:

- I. To document the success, gaps and lessons learnt, the successes and the gaps from the deployments of both HAP and Sphere from the outset of the Nargis Response and inclusive of the longer term Inter-agency Quality and Accountability Coordinator against the project objectives above.
- II. To make recommendations as to how to sustain the efforts towards increased quality and accountability work in Myanmar.
- III. To make recommendations on how future joint HAP/Sphere support is provided to agencies at the onset and in the recovery period following a humanitarian crisis.

On a broader level, the evaluation should achieve appropriate analysis of whether or not any changes have been influenced by the joint deployments and joint role of HAP/Sphere, on wider organizational strategies and management systems, so that more accountable approaches are implemented in the future.

2.2 Evaluation questions:

Achievements to date:

- **What have been the negative and positive outcomes in relation to the deployments by Sphere and HAP for the entities involved (organizations and staff (local and international), projects, and beneficiaries)?**

Recommendations / next steps

- In Myanmar
- For future deployments in emergency contexts
- For Hap / Sphere separately and jointly
- For Save the Children – particularly around the management of such deployments / projects
- For DFID and other donors
- What improvements should be made in the short run?
- What improvements could be made in the long-term?

2.3 Evaluation criteria:

Effectiveness:

- Did we identify the most relevant needs of the stakeholders in terms of addressing their capacity building needs in terms of quality and accountability?
- Was what we did enough to address these needs, given the context and the environment (regarding funding, capacity etc)

Coherence

- Was the design of the individual deployments and the 6 month project clear to the stakeholders and did they build on each other?

Sustainability

- Do the 8 agencies that received specific support have a clear idea of how to continue to move forward on improving their quality and accountability mechanism beyond June?
- Is there a commitment from interested agencies to continue to move towards improving quality and accountability within their organizations in the future in Myanmar? Are they equipped to do so? What other support do they need?

Relevance

- Were the project design and the activities undertaken relevant to the to meet the needs of the stakeholders?

Appropriateness

- How appropriate were HAP and Sphere approaches and activities in terms of serving the needs of the stakeholders?

Managing and implementing joint deployments, focusing on two phases of deployments (2008) joint deployments, and 2009 joint role.

- What were the benefits, challenges and lessons learned from joint deployments?
- How well were the joint deployments planned, implemented and used?
- Has reporting against accountability indicators in IMM improved practice and in what ways?

Effectiveness of the joint deployments:

- o What are the outcomes of joint deployments in terms of building capacity of the local organizations on HAP and Sphere standards?
- o Did the joint deployments have any (positive or negative) impact on the projects and accountability to beneficiaries and in what ways? What was the impact? What are some fostering factors? What were the barriers?

2.4 Suggested Methodology

- 1) Review reports from consultants; proposal and other documents including lessons learnt documentations (from agencies as well as inter-agency eg. Periodic Review, SMM, IASC Real Time Evaluation etc.)
- 2) Interviews HAP, Sphere consultants, staff at Secretariats in Geneva & SC UK and other agencies involved
- 3) Field work in Myanmar – interviews and FGD with key stakeholders:
 - o 8 agencies, ALWG members, HAP members, participants in trainings, TOT from Sphere
 - o IASC members (including OCHA, Cluster members, UN Agencies, ASEAN)
 - o Local Resource Centre
 - o SCiM
 - o DFID
 - o QAP coordinator & project staff
- 4) Interviews with field staff, beneficiaries / communities to cross reference (use of SCiM's and other agencies' evaluations process)

3. EVALUATION TEAM

There will be one evaluator with a translator / support person (likely to be from the QAP team) to assist as necessary in Myanmar. *(If the budget allows, include a national evaluator?)*

3.1 Expertise required

- Experience with humanitarian contexts
- Experience with organizational development, capacity building and learning
- Experience with monitoring and evaluation techniques, preferably in the area of humanitarian relief
- Knowledge of Sphere, HAP and other quality and accountability initiatives
- Knowledge of Myanmar / Cyclone Nargis response desirable
- Interview/FGD/Questionnaire design skills as appropriate – desirable

3.2 Management

The evaluator will formally report to Dan Collison, Director of Emergencies for Save the Children in Myanmar. Day to day support, facilitation and coordination will be provided by Save the Children in Myanmar. The Inter-Agency Quality and Accountability Coordinator and her team will provide support in terms of setting up interviews, getting travel permission and informing relevant stakeholders of the evaluation. They will also provide documentation related to the project and previous deployments.

In the event of any major disagreement over the content of the evaluation, Save the Children in Myanmar. will endeavour to find a consensus, and if necessary, ensure that any strategically critical dissenting perspectives are acknowledged in the final report.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUT AND TIMEFRAME

It is estimated that the consultancy will be completed in 15 working days, including preparation and report writing. The final report will be disseminated in English and later translated into Myanmar language. This will be disseminated to stakeholders in Myanmar in written form as well as through the final lessons-learnt workshop at the end of June in Yangon and final workshop with HAP, Sphere and other participating agencies likely to be held in London (or Geneva) at the end of June/ early July.

The consultant will produce the following by the stated deadlines:

1. Evaluation framework, including methodology and a draft outline of the report (by mid May?)
2. Preparation
3. Field work
4. Draft report
5. Final report – mid June 2009

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Daily consultancy fee is negotiable, although it must be commensurate with Save the Children and DFID's consultancy terms and standards
- The consultant will be contracted on a standard Save the Children in Myanmar consultancy contract
- SCiM will cover all reasonable accommodation and subsistence costs while the consultant is out of her/his home base and will reimburse any direct administrative costs agreed in advance (eg. Visa, flight costs etc).
- SCiM will pay the consultancy fee and other costs at the end of the consultancy period and on production of invoice and receipts

6. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Applications are invited from suitably qualified consultants. Interested individuals should submit a draft evaluation framework (max 2 pages) and a current CV.

Deadline: 20 April 2009

Shortlisted candidates only will be contacted by: 27 April 2009

Field Work: By the end of May

Final Report : by 15th June

Appendix 2: Evaluation diary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk review and preparation work (1 day)
28 th May <i>Thu</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Phone interviews with key stakeholders outside Myanmar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meri Ghorkmazyan, Emergency Monitoring and Evaluation advisor – Save the Children UK ○ Jamie Munn, publications support – HAP international ○ Alyson Joyner, previous Project manager for Sphere ○ Ester Dross, XXX - Hap international ○ Michelle Brown, Emergency Advisor with responsibility for Myanmar – Save the Children UK ○ Kelly Wooster, Sphere Consultant
29 th May <i>Fri</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Phone interviews with key stakeholders outside Myanmar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nick Stockton, Director – HAP International ○ Helen Banos Smith, Consultant ○ Monica Blegesu, XXX Hap international ○ Hani Eskander, on going support to QAP coordinator ○ John Damerell, current project manager for Sphere ○ Kerren Hedlund, NGO Liaison officer based in Myanmar until April 2009 ○ Anne Lloyd, Sphere consultant
31 st May <i>Sun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Travel to Myanmar
1 st June <i>Mon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrival in Yangon ■ Induction ■ Briefing from Deborah Bickler
2 nd June <i>Tue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desk review and setting up of meetings ■ Participation into UN-NGO coordination meeting at XXX ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hrusikesh Harichandan, Field Delegate - IFRC ○ Fay Mahdi, Accountability advisor - Save the Children
3 rd June <i>Wed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Margaret Mar Mar Oo, Capacity Building Department Manager –World Vision (also participated in TOT and co-facilitated Trainings) ○ Kyaw Ko Thet, Accountability coordinator – Save the Children ○ Dan Collison, Director of Emergencies – Save the Children ○ Shwe Shwe Sein Latt, Trainer and Focal Point for Sphere; Swe Sin Mya, Trainer; Okk Gar, Trainer – Capacity Building Initiative ○ K.G. Mathaikutty, Project Coordinator; U Aye Than, Technical Officer – ACT International ○ Sok Phoeuk, ASEAN Hub Coordinator ○ Zaw Wann, Area Manager (emergency response); Mg Mg Swe Area Manager (emergency response) – Save the Children
4 th June <i>Thu</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facilitation of a feedback session with ALWG Meeting ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Susanne Kempel, , Danish Church Aid ○ Hew Cheong Yew, Senior Programme officer; Phyu Phyu - Mercy Malaysia ○ Janette Macleod, OPSCO; Paul Sender, Country Director – Merlin ■ Skype text chat with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isabelle Isabelle Risso Gill - Merlin
5 th June <i>Fri</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Antonio Massella, Deputy Head of Office; Matthew Serventy, Humanitarian Affairs Officer – UNOCHA ○ Matt Maguire, Cyclone Recovery Coordinator – DFID ○ Myo Thant Tyn; Aung Min, Vice Director – Myanmar NGO Network ○ Elizabeth Webber, accompanier – CAFOD ○ Su Phyo Lwin, Ass programme Officer; Aye My San, Admin Assistant – Loka Ahlim (Local NGO)
6-7 th June <i>Sat/Sun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review of documents ■ Drafting report
8 th June <i>Mon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regina Feindt, Country Director and Thandhar Win, Coordinator Nargis Recovery Programme – Welt Hunger Hilfe (GAA) ○ Khin Khin Mra, Program officer; Shihab Uddin Ahamad, Country Manager – ActionAid Myanmar ○ Karl Dorning – head of Burnet institute and advisor to Local Resource Center; Thu Thu, Monitoring & Accountability officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tin Ko Oo – Monitoring Officer, Nargis Recovery Program, Bagale Office – Welt Hunger Hilfe (GAA)
--	--

9th June <i>Tue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rocky Sein DWE, Programme Director – Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC) ○ Tamas Wells, Advisor, Paung Ku ○ Francis Crowley, Accountability and Grant Coordinator; Saw Martan Guji, HAP coordinator; Zin Way Myint, Accountability Programme Officer – World Concern ○ Roz Keating, Emergencies Education Advisor – Save the Children Malaysia ○ Naomi Anatol – Disaster Preparedness Program – Save the Children Myanmar ○ Joe Crowley, Manager – Myanmar Information Management Unit
-------------------------------	--

10th June <i>Wed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Syma Jamil, Cyclone Response programme manager – Oxfam ○ Jasmine Ei Ei Khine, Quality and accountability officer (seconded from Save the Children); Su Mon, Quality and accountability officer (seconded from Mercy Corps) – Quality and Accountability Initiative ○ Patrick McCormick, Consultant – LRC ○ Edmore Tondhlana, Field Coordinator Officer, UNOCHA ○ Rosie Mai Khin Nyunt, Admin Assistant - USAID/OFDA ■ Phone interview with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manisha Thomas, Policy Officer - ICVA ○ Matt Wingate, emergency advisor – Save the Children ○ Smruti Patel, training coordinator - HAP
--------------------------------	--

11th June <i>Thu</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deborah Bickler, Coordinator- Quality and Accountability Initiative ○ Ben Ford, Consultant on committees research for LRC ■ Participation to ALWG
--------------------------------	---

12th June <i>Fri</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluation debriefing
--------------------------------	---

13-14th June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report writing
--	--

Appendix 3: project timeline

