

SUMMARY REPORT - Deployment of an initial Quality and Accountability (Q&A) Support Team in response to the Haiti earthquake (February 10th – 27th 2010)

Original report by: Coleen Heemskerck (HAP Complaints and Investigations Officer), and Anne Lloyd (Consultant, Sphere resource person) - 16 March 2010

Summarised by: Emily Rogers (HAP)

Contents:

1. Background.....	1
2. Summary of main activities undertaken	2
3. Learning from the deployment.....	3
4. Recommendations for future HAP and Sphere programming in Haiti.....	5
5. Further information and resources	6

1. Background

On 12 January 2010, an earthquake measuring 7.0 magnitude on the Richter scale struck Haiti, 17 Km south-west of Port-au-Prince. Three million people have been affected, of whom the Government estimates 1.9 million have lost their homes.

The emergency phase of humanitarian relief operations will last for many months to come, and challenges to the international humanitarian response remain significant, which include logistics, communication and coordination among the large number of humanitarian organizations (around 1,000) now on the ground.

Following the earthquake DanChurchAid (DCA) in consultation with the ACT Alliance initiated a deployment of Sphere and HAP personnel to¹:

- a) Support ACT Alliance staff in Haiti in their efforts to strengthen humanitarian accountability and quality of their response.
- b) Assess the current issues and challenges related to quality and accountability as part of the overall humanitarian response in order to lay the groundwork for a longer deployment, including explore issues related to prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers.
- c) Coordinate and identify ways of collaborating with RedR/Bioforce assessment mission, the proposed InterAction/ICVA NGO Coordination Support Office (NCSO) and other stakeholders focused on strengthening accountability and quality programming.

The team consisted of as Coleen Heemskerck, a HAP Complaints and Investigations Officer and Anne Lloyd, a consultant Sphere resource person, and was supported by ECHO, ACT Alliance/DanChurchAid and the Lutheran World Federation who hosted the team in country.

¹ The full Terms of Reference for this deployment can be found [here](#).

2. Summary of main activities undertaken

2.1 Support to the ACT Alliance

Support and capacity building was given to ACT Alliance staff and partners on the understanding and practice of humanitarian standards and principles, in the form of discussions, accompanied site visits and trainings.

Field visits and consultation with affected-communities

Short field visits were undertaken with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and their partner Viva Rio to three project sites, and with Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to one project site. Through a combination of observation, talking with the displaced people and discussing with staff, recommendations were made on how the agencies could strengthen the quality and accountability of their programmes, using the HAP 2007 Standard and the Sphere Handbook as frameworks. Although time was limited, efforts were made as part of the field visits to talk to a cross-section of the community including leaders, men, women (of varying ages) and children, and visits to key facilities such as water points, latrines, and health service provided opportunities for this. The children did drawings of their camps while talking to help focus the discussion and make it more fun. After the field visits a short report was written for each agency and the findings were discussed with staff.

The main issues as identified by the displaced people during the field visits were overcrowding, lack of space, poor state of hygiene facilities, need for more and better quality of food, lack of coordination among NGOs, insufficient information from NGOs, schools for the children and the lack of work opportunities.

Training workshops

Two one-day training workshops on quality and accountability were conducted for ACT Alliance members and their partners. The first targeting programme managers (with more information on HAP) and the second was for field-level implementing staff. The training days included exploring definitions of quality and accountability, an overview of HAP, explaining the HAP 2007 standard and the benchmarks, the content and the use of the Sphere handbook and *the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief*.

Efforts were made to further support staff in taking forward learning. For example following the training, two LWF staff members started to plan short training sessions for camp committees on humanitarian principles, and the team was able to provide guidance on planning these trainings.

2.2 Linking with external actors, preparing for a longer term deployment and other activities

To understand the context, and needs of the wider humanitarian community concerning quality and accountability (including current issues related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse) the team:

- Attended a number of cluster meetings (WASH, Shelter, Protection and the sub-cluster on Gender-based violence).
- Met with other Quality and Accountability initiatives and support services in Haiti including: RedR/Bioforce, People in Aid, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), ICVA and InterAction, and Transparency International's National Chapter in Haiti. At the same time discussions with other initiatives were underway at the headquarters level, including Keeping Children Safe, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP), Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC), and Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA).
- Discussed with the Department of Civil Protection how they are working with the affected community and what they see as priorities. The Director of Civil Protection is keen for her Department to promote Sphere and for it to become institutionalised in the humanitarian response.
- Met with HAP members through a combination of bilateral and joint meetings.

Identification of existing Sphere expertise

Over recent years, five Haitians have attended Sphere ToTs, and it was possible to meet with three of these, each of who helped with one of the training days to help refresher their knowledge. While they are all willing to help support promoting Sphere, they have limited time due to other work commitments.

One of the trainers, who works as an adviser for the Department of Civil Protection, has agreed to be a Sphere focal point for Haiti. The aim of this role is to help facilitate networking, coordinate training and act as a link with the Sphere Project Office in Geneva and other Sphere activities around the world.

Sphere training

An additional one-day 'Introduction to Sphere' was held, with 17 participants from international and national NGOs, and the Department of Civil Protection. This generated much discussion on the application of Sphere in the current context, and a need was expressed for more short trainings and discussions on the use of Sphere, as well as more practical support such as coaching on-site.

Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA)

During a Gender Based Violence (GBV) sub-cluster meeting, the issue of PSEA was brought up by HAP. Subsequently the GenCap organised a meeting to discuss what agencies were doing to address PSEA and how to jointly move forward with PSEA in Haiti. It was decided to develop a background letter with a proposed strategy for the humanitarian community on how to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in Haiti. The letter was sent to the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator and presented at an inter-cluster meeting. The proposed strategy included a call for the development of the joint complaints and response mechanism, development of investigation capacities and a reminder to senior managers about their obligation to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse.

3. Learning from the deployment

3.1 Learning on quality and accountability

Based on meetings and consultations held in-country (as summarised above) the following accountability learnings were identified. The grey boxes summarise current approaches by HAP members to ensuring accountability, as shared during a meeting with seven HAP members.

It should be noted that due to the length of time in-country the team met with a limited number of different stakeholders, and it was recognised that applying the HAP Standard and Sphere Standards given the context is extremely challenging.

Quality management system

Agencies with a management system that integrated quality and accountability into their programming were most often able to implement accountable and quality practices at an earlier stage in the response. In addition, such a management system allowed agencies to make informed decisions as to whether or not they would be involved in certain humanitarian activities that may compromise a principle for humanitarian action in order to uphold another, for example compromising informed consent as the humanitarian imperative still justified the intervention.

Giving focus to accountability – approaches being used by HAP members

- Accountability officers working in the camps to support community development, receive complaints, share information about the organisation and its programmes and discuss protection issues.

Information sharing

During the consultations with affected-communities one of the main issues mentioned by the displaced people was insufficient information from NGOs. The benefits of agencies sharing information during the early response phase were notable. For example during the first weeks of the response a partner agency was able to share information with the community, decide on the beneficiary criteria together and involved members of the community in the distribution. As a result, the partner did not need armed security during the distribution while other agencies delivering in the same location did.

Information sharing – approaches being used by HAP members

- Posting notice boards in camps and hospitals with information about the organisation, its programme, its code of conduct and protection issues, in Creole and French.
- Providing information to beneficiaries verbally (in person and using megaphones).
- Disseminating leaflets and A4 posters to all beneficiaries during distributions with information about the organisation, the humanitarian plan and protection information in Creole.
- Involving beneficiaries in identifying ways to share information and have them develop the materials (i.e. through songs, pictures, etc).
- Meeting with camp committees to provide information about the organisation and its humanitarian plan and to seek the camp committees suggestions and comments on how to resolve problems as they arise.

Participation

Although, it may not always be possible for the affected community to participate in all aspects of the humanitarian program during the first few days of a relief effort, measures can be taken for affected populations to participate at minimal levels. Several agencies provided examples which include conducting monitoring visits after aid was distributed and consulting with affected population during distributions. As the humanitarian programme progressed, agencies were taking steps to increase participation and are encouraged to do so.

Participation – approaches being used by HAP members

- Identifying together with the camp committee who will receive aid based on the selection criteria (i.e. pregnant women, child headed households, elderly, injured, people with disabilities, etc.)
- Conducting monitoring surveys with beneficiaries to gain their perspectives on the quality of services delivered.

Staff competencies

When asked what type of support they would like from the longer term deployment teams, most managers stated they wanted support in further strengthening the capacity of their staff to deliver quality, accountable humanitarian assistance. The managers identified HAP and Sphere trainings, such as introductions to quality and accountability and developing complaints mechanisms, and one on one coaching as possible methods for the longer term deployment teams to employ.

Staff competences – approaches being used by HAP members

- Distributing the organisation's code of conduct included in every staff contract.
- Providing WASH staff with a checklist on the organisation, in Creole.
- Distributing the ten principles of the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* to staff in Creole and English.

Complaints and response mechanisms

In the first days of the response, it may not always be possible for an agency to set up an official **complaints and response mechanism**. One strategy that agencies can take as a minimum is to inform their staff that 1) it is beneficial to receive complaints, 2) all stakeholders have a right to complaint, including beneficiaries, 3) how to appropriately respond to a complaint, and 4) who is responsible for managing complaints in the organisation.

Complaint handling – approaches being used by HAP members

- Setting-up a free telephone number for beneficiaries to call with feedback and complaints.
- Providing beneficiaries with a tape recorder to complain.
- Holding community meetings with beneficiaries to gain their opinions and suggestions as well as take complaints.

Using the Sphere handbook

Applying Sphere standards is enormously challenging in this context, where there is limited space in the urban areas. While some humanitarian workers were saying 'Sphere is irrelevant here at the moment', it should be remembered that **Sphere is more than just numbers!**

The Sphere indicators and standards are often confused, with indicators such as "15 litre of water per person per day" and "covered floor area of 3.5 metres² per person" taken to be the standards. For example the Sphere standard for water quantity is "All people have safe and equitable access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking, cooking, and personal and domestic hygiene...". The indicators show that the standards are being achieved and should be taken into context linking with the guidance notes. As is noted on page 14 of the Sphere handbook (page 16 in the French edition) it is not always possible to meet the standards and indicators, particularly in the early stages of an emergency, but it is important to strive to meet them as soon as possible. It should be remembered that Sphere is about people having a right to assistance; the consequences of not meeting the standards and indicators should be considered; for example if people are in overcrowded camps, (i.e. not meeting the Sphere indicators of 3.5² covered space per person), there may be health implications, there may be protection issues – so measures to should be taken to prevent and mitigate against these risks.

In addition, the Sphere handbook has 8 common standards which are often forgotten; such as the standard on participation; agencies need to think of ways of enabling the affected population to actively participate in all aspect of the assistance programme, including monitoring. The two common standards on personnel are very relevant in the Haiti context too; there are many new agencies and agencies which have rapidly

expanded, so issues such as management and support of personnel are important; e.g. ensuring there are capacity-building systems for staff.

3.2 Recommendations for future short-term quality and accountability deployments in the first weeks of an emergency response

Below is a summary of learnings based on what worked well and what could be improved for future short-term deployments during the initial stages of an emergency response.

Activities:

- Conduct field visits together with agencies in a variety of locations, providing feedback in a constructive manner. The team felt the field visits had the greatest impact, and observed that they resulted in immediate action against many of the recommendations.
- Work closely with the hosting agency to develop a longer-term quality and accountability work plan.
- Identify an in-country focal point to work with the deployment team prior to arrival in country, who the team can work with to build capacity on quality and accountability in a humanitarian setting.
- Work with the hosting agency by participating in joint activities such as reporting back on cluster meetings when hosting agency is unable to attend and vice versa.

Preparation and logistics:

- Pre-book training facilities and set dates for trainings before deployment team arrives in country.
- Ensure sufficient numbers of Sphere Handbooks and HAP Standards are available for distribution in relevant language(s).
- Ensure clear management lines including who the team should report to in-country and at headquarters. The role of the team and objectives of the deployment should be clearly communicated to relevant agencies in-country, and a terms of reference with a realistic number of objectives for the timeframe should be developed.

4. Recommendations for future HAP and Sphere programming in Haiti

Length and location of a longer deployment –

- HAP and Sphere specialists should be in country for 6 months, with a possible 6 month extension to be considered 3 months into the deployment. If an extension is planned, recruitment of Haitian national(s) should be considered. Work should focus throughout the earthquake affected region and not only in Port au Prince.
- HAP – should aim for a centralised presence in Haiti with both team members hosted by and working from the same office.
- Sphere - There should be two Sphere specialists, both hosted by RedR/Bioforce with one seconded to the Department of Civil Protection (details still to be agreed).

Recommended activities –

- Field visits and guided self assessments in rural and urban settings, followed by in person and written feedback highlighting strengths, gaps and suggested immediate steps for improvement.
- One-on-one coaching for staff, for sustainability, locally based quality and accountability resource persons should be identified and coached.
- Introduction to quality and accountability trainings (HAP and Sphere teams to conduct joint trainings when relevant and possible).
- Assist in establishing accountability and learning group (working with the NGO Coordination Support Office); enabling agencies to share ideas and lessons learnt and supporting learning opportunities based on field realities.
- Promotion of quality and accountability, and the use of the Sphere handbook and HAP Standard as part of the humanitarian response.

HAP specific activities:

- Support HAP members, their partners and other interested agencies as per the members' requests, and through awareness raising, trainings and capacity building. In particular, provide advice and support on information sharing, beneficiary participation, complaints handling and working with partners.
- Hold regular meetings with HAP members providing an opportunity to share accountability learnings and experiences.
- Promote and support agencies in the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers.

Sphere specific activities:

- Support should be provided to the overall Sphere focal point for Haiti (likely to be the Sphere trained adviser in the Department of Civil Protection), alongside additional capacity building for the Department of Civil Protection staff and other relevant departments.
- Training and coaching on Sphere should be provided as requested and appropriate, potentially including: one-day Introduction to Sphere, a short Sphere TOT (minimum 5 days), sector specific (e.g. WASH, Health, Shelter) field based coaching/training/advice, agency specific coaching/training, or longer workshops on the practical implementation of Sphere.

Advocacy, collaborating with others, and documenting learning:

- Advocate for and raise awareness of quality and accountability in the wider humanitarian sector, including the UN system.
- Work with RedR/Bioforce and other organisations to integrate and mainstream aspects of quality and accountability into planned trainings.
- Support the government in understanding quality and accountability in the humanitarian context.
- Continue to share information with and seek opportunities for collaboration with other initiatives focused on Q&A in Haiti.
- Document good practices and learning, and monitor the impact of support provided.

Ways of working

- Clearly communicate in advance the aims of the longer-term deployment, and the purpose of agency-specific work (in particular that involving field visits).
- Ensure a supply of Sphere handbooks & HAP 2007 Standards in French (and English).
- Organise and manage the translation of key HAP and Sphere documents into French and/or Creole.
- Write regular reports and a final report including lessons learnt and recommendations for the future. A final joint report from the HAP and Sphere teams is recommended.
- As required the Secretariats of both HAP and Sphere should provide management and technical support, resources and training materials, and keep respective staff up-to-date with the Sphere handbook and HAP Standard revision process.

5. Further information and resources

During and after the deployment key resources were shared and added to the following sites which contain information, tools, learning and reference materials related to quality and accountability in Haiti:

- OneResponse Quality and Accountability in Haiti response (under cross-cutting issues) <http://onerresponse.info/Disasters/Haiti/Quality%20and%20Accountability/Pages/default.aspx>
Aimed at field staff for sharing real time knowledge and practical resources (such as tools, translations, operational material).
- ALNAP Haiti Learning and Accountability Portal (<http://www.alnap.org/current/Haitilearningportal.aspx>)
A platform for sharing material with longer shelf life (including policy, overview material, analysis and recommendations, evaluations etc), aimed at providing a shared platform for a structured strategic overview of ongoing and planned learning and accountability efforts by agencies operating in Haiti. The site aims to encourage complementarity amongst agencies undertaking such work, through sharing of approaches, contacts, key resources and evaluation plans.

Additional information about HAP and Sphere and the work in Haiti can be found on their websites:

www.hapinternational.org

www.sphereproject.org