

HAP After Action Review Workshop: Summary of main discussion points

3rd-4th December 2008, Dhaka



This document is a summary of the points discussed in different sessions during the After Action Review workshop focused on HAP's engagement in response to Cyclone Sidr. The participants included over 24 staff from across 13 agencies as well as 6 community representatives all of whom had first hand experience of the Sidr relief and rehabilitation work.

A final report reflecting on HAP's work in Bangladesh will be available for wider circulation in early 2009. In addition it is hoped that a number of the agencies involved will document good practice and lessons learnt case studies, with the support of HAP as needed, again for wider circulation.

1. Introduction to the HAP After Action Review

After Cyclone Sidr in November 2007, and as part of the New Emergencies Policy, HAP worked with Members and their partners to strengthen accountability and quality management as part of the emergency response and rehabilitation phases. Over the last 12 months HAP staff have been providing direct and remote support to over 12 agencies¹ responding to the Sidr Cyclone (see [HAP in Bangladesh](#) for more details about this initiative)².

The After Action Review (AAR) set out to examine the *appropriateness* and *impact* of HAP's engagement in terms of influencing project-level and organisational-level practice. As part of this the AAR workshop aimed to:

- Reflect on the experience over the last 12 months.
- Review the steps and action taken.
- Explore what worked and what could have been done differently.

A note on translation during the AAR workshop:

During the AAR workshop the majority of agency presentations and plenary discussions took place in English, with translation support for the community representatives. On occasions very lively discussions took place between different groups in Bangla, and while we were able to glean a number of points from these, other points may be missing from this summary. Workshop participants are urged to let us know if there are salient points missing from this document.

2. The objectives and activities of the HAP initiative in Bangladesh

As specified in the [Terms of Reference](#) HAP's engagement in Bangladesh aimed to promote good practice in humanitarian accountability and quality management, in particular as part of the relief and rehabilitation response to Cyclone Sidr. Specifically the initiative aimed to:

- Build staff capacity to assess and continue to monitor accountability and quality.
- Identify and share good practice, challenges, lessons learnt and gaps.
- Explore options for immediate action to address findings.

To achieve this HAP staff visited Bangladesh four times over the course of 12 months to conduct support activities. In between visits distance support was offered. The timeline below summarised the main activities.

¹ The following 12 agencies participated throughout this initiative: CARE, Caritas Bangladesh, COAST Trust, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, DanChurchAid, DSK, GUP, HEED Bangladesh, Muslim Aid, Save the Children UK, and World Vision. Of these HAP worked with CARE, Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, GUP, HEED Bangladesh, Muslim Aid, Save the Children UK to conduct a guided self-assessment at a selected project site. In addition five other agencies participated at certain times: Oxfam GB, NIRAPAD, SPEED Trust, Uttaran and World Concern.

² The HAP initiative in Bangladesh would not have been possible without the financial contributions from: CAFOD, CARE Bangladesh, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, DanChurchAid, Muslim Aid, Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, Tearfund UK, and World Vision Bangladesh. Our special thanks go to Concern Worldwide in Bangladesh for hosting us and providing logistical support while in Bangladesh.

A summary of HAP activities in response to Cyclone Sidr, Bangladesh (Blue represents a HAP team was in-country)

2007					2008							
Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
Cyclone Sidr												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAP member meetings Participation in cluster meetings Identification of HAP support and MoUs signed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment against the HAP Standard workshop (2 days) 	Guided self-assessments at project sites with CARE, Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, GUP, HEED Bangladesh, Muslim Aid, and Save the Children UK (app. 4 days each). These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing current practice with field staff Talking with affected-community members and beneficiaries Observing current practice Identifying recommendations and action planning with staff Report summarising findings and recommendations Meeting with SMTs at Dhaka and HQ level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons Learnt workshop (1 day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance support as requested Bangladesh Peer Support Group meetings initiated. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint & Response Mechanism workshop (3 days) Individual agency meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance support as requested Bangladesh Peer Support Group meetings continue. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After Action Review including project visits, cross agency visits and final workshop (2 days).

3. Agency presentations on activities and progress to strengthen accountability and quality management

The agency presentations focused on the progress made in strengthening accountability and quality management as part of the Sidr response, and wider programmes. Much interesting information and updates were shared by: CARE Bangladesh, COAST Trust, Concern, DSK, GUP, HEED Bangladesh, Muslim Aid, Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, and World Vision, and the presentations showed clear understanding of the HAP Standard. Over the page are a few highlights from these presentations that show the depth and breath of activities undertaken by participating member agencies and their partners to strengthen their accountability, and remaining gaps as identified by the presenters. Copies of these presentations were shared with workshop participants.

CARE Bangladesh

Monitoring framework for Sidr response included questions on beneficiary accountability (such as participation and complaints handling).

Established complaint and response mechanism that received 3000 complaints.

Gaps remaining:

Turning policy into practice especially when working via partner NGOs.

COAST Trust

Orientated all staff on the Principles of Accountability.

Documented the informal complaint and response mechanism as the first step to formalising this, and as part of the process to systemise informal guidelines and policies.

Undertook a Baseline analysis to review status against the HAP Standard.

Gaps remaining:

Guidelines on communication with beneficiaries and other stakeholders to guide staff on what information should be shared when and how.

Complaints handling procedure.

Other gaps as identified in the baseline (these will be incorporated into COAST's existing accountability work plan).

Concern Worldwide

Oriented 200 agency and partner staff on the HAP Standard

Incorporated accountability into discussions during meetings, including it as part of the agenda and meeting minutes.

Revised all staff job descriptions and included an objective on accountability.

Specific objective on establishing and promoting accountability to affected-communities incorporated into Programme Quality unit.

Chit card revised to include type, quantity and quality of deliverables, alongside agency address and important mobile numbers.

Participatory beneficiary selection guidelines and tools jointly developed by Concern and Partners.

Community Monitoring Committees formed to monitor service quality, and receive complaints.

Staff and partners sensitised on importance and benefits of complaint handling mechanisms for communities, and different channels for receiving complaints established by each implementing partner.

Gaps remaining:

Updated Emergency Response Operating Procedures that is aligned with the HAP Standard.

Organisational level policy guidelines and tools on the HAP Standard, for example develop a checklist for reviewing if project proposals have incorporated the HAP Standard.

Levels of awareness at community level about the complaint and response mechanism.

Levels of community participation in project design.

Involvement of context-level M&E staff in strengthening accountability and quality management.

Recruitment of partner staff with the appropriate skills needed for strengthening accountability.

DSK

Used community meetings to conduct budget analysis / participatory budgeting.

Worked with community representatives to review and revise beneficiary list.

Gaps remaining (not shared)

GUP

Started the process of developing a code of conduct outlining the principles that will guide staff conduct.

Taken steps to recruit female staff and volunteers at Dhaka and project level.

Worked with the community to develop beneficiary selection criteria.

Gaps remaining:

Insufficient resource identification and allocation for taking this forward.

Staff development to address these issues.

Levels of awareness among staff and affected-communities.

HEED Bangladesh

Initiated general meetings with beneficiaries and community members as part of the needs assessment and to finalise action plans and implementation strategies.

Piloted complaint/suggestion boxes in three locations, and signboards as a means to share information in five locations.

Conducted regular focus group discussions to continue the accountability self-assessment process.

Gaps remaining:

Participatory system/mechanisms are still informal, and focus needs to be given to ensure community participation in project monitoring and supervision.

Insufficient levels of understanding at community level on complaints handling, and lack of expertise within HEED on how to handle complaints related to sexual abuse.

Information and communication system between HEED central office and the field offices needs to be developed.

Oxfam GB

Conducted a Real Time Evaluation 6 weeks into the Sidr response to review the project with respect to: quantity vs quality, cultural acceptability and context specific, quality management, coordinated response, sustainability and effective support functions.

Undertook in-depth interviews and focus group discussions during rapid needs assessment to seek input from communities.

Shared information through leaflets, billboards, signboards, wall paintings, banners, pot sings, village dramas and distribution cards.

Gaps remaining (not shared)

Save the Children UK

Integrated Principles of Accountability into partner MoUs.

Encouraged social monitoring at community level by providing clear information about level of cash support and intended usage.

As a result of lessons learnt workshop revised approach to selecting community representatives to participate in implementation of child Safe Spaces.

Gaps remaining:

Child-friendly version of the HAP Standard and guidelines for staff.

Dissemination of key information to whole community, rather than only to direct beneficiaries.

Muslim Aid

Finalised the country-level HR Manual including formalising staff evaluation process.

Developed different mediums for sharing information with key stakeholders including beneficiaries and affected-communities (methods used include signboards, leaflets, meetings).

Identified beneficiary groups and committees to input into decision-making, participate in beneficiary selection process, and implement the project.

Introduced a complaints receiving and feedback system.

Gaps remaining:

Seeking feedback from community on different mediums used to share information, and adapt accordingly.

Levels of beneficiary participation in project planning, monitoring and evaluation

Numbers of female staff at field-level.

Limited analysis and use of complaints received to feed into process of continual improvement.

World Vision Bangladesh

Independently conducted an accountability self-assessment to identify strengths and gaps, developed a plan to pilot the roll out of the HAP Standard in three areas, and formed a three-person to lead on this.

Documented complaints received in a complaints register enabling trend analysis of the types/frequency/number of complaints.

Beneficiary selection criteria, as well as name, address and contact information now publicly displayed.

Gaps remaining:

Accountability Framework (currently being finalised), and strategic / methodical way for monitoring compliance.

Written guidelines on information dissemination (development under process)

Child participation (this is lower than expected).

Staff development plan needs reviewing to ensure it considers the skills and competences needed to meet quality commitments.

Documented complaints handling process.

4. Group work: Learning on specific issues from the presentations

During the agency presentations participants noted down current practice related to partners, staff, organisational preparedness, and monitoring and continuous learning. Participants then discussed new ideas that could be tried in respect to these areas. Below is a summary of the points raised with suggestions from HAP (shown under each heading in *blue italics*). For more information on implementing the HAP Standard see The Guide to the HAP Standard (available to buy and download from [Oxfam Publishing](#)). In particular pages 42 to 93 outline good practice with regards to each of the six benchmarks when working as an implementing agency or through partners. Pages 39 to 41 outline in more detail the obligations for HAP Member agencies that work through partners.

This session finished with the community representatives giving feedback to agencies on some of the areas discussed.

A) PARTNERS - *what different approaches have been used for strengthening accountability when working through partners?*

Current Practice

- Tools developed on HAP
- Planned resource allocation
- Disaster Management Committees - formed by NGOs at community level and working before and after the disaster to implement the response
- Focused on an empowering approach when working through partners
- Conducted a Real Time Evaluation of the response 6 weeks after Sidr
- Organised orientation for partner staff
- Focused on recruiting partners with skilled staff

New ideas for strengthening accountability when working through partners

Clarifying commitments and expectations

- Incorporate compliance with HAP Principles of Accountability into partner MoUs, and clarify expectations with regard to these (expectations may form part of the MoU or be a separate agreement). *This will include clarifying expectation with regard to the following relationships:*
 - *Donor agency - Partner*
 - *Partner – affected communities*
 - *Donor agency – affected communities*
- Partner staff to sign Programme Participant Protection Policy (staff code of conduct), and clarify how this will be monitored.
- *Identify ways to get partner senior staff buy-in and commitment to ensure the process of improvement is also driven forward from within the partner agency.*

Incorporating into ways of working with partners

- Develop (or integrate into existing) operational manuals for partners that give guidance on accountable ways of working (provide training to support with understanding as needed).
- Jointly develop indicators related to accountability and other commitments (e.g. staff code of conduct) that will be used as part of partner evaluation, and project monitoring.
- *Integrate accountability and quality management into partner project proposals and reporting formats to ensure it is considered from project inception and reported on regularly.*

Building an accountable partner relationship

- Create an accountable environment between the donor and partner including:
 - Ensuring partner participation in decision making
 - *Sharing information with the partner about agency background, commitments (as outlined in the Accountability Framework), plans, progress and complaints handling procedures, and keep partners informed about updates to these.*
 - *Establishing an effective, accessible and safe complaints handling mechanism that allows the partner staff to raise complaints about the nature of the partnership, and the donor agency.*
- *Periodically assess the quality of the partnership with respect to the Principles of Accountability and Principles of Humanitarian Action, and based on this develop a partnership improvement strategy to build the partner relationship.*
- Allow freedom – for ensuring and promoting accountability

Assessing and building partner capacity

- Assess partners' skills and capacity to respond to emergency work before selection.
- Consider understanding and commitment to accountability as part of partner assessment and selection process.
- Incorporate aspects of the HAP Standard into partner assessment tools and guidelines.
- Facilitate orientation/training for partner staff on HAP Standard.
- *Work with partners to review existing practice related to the Principles of Accountability and Principles of Humanitarian Action in order to identify not only the gaps but also good practice that can be recognised as such and built on.* Gap highlighted during the workshop included community participation during partner intervention.
- *Based on this work with partners to develop an improvement plan to support and build partner capacity to comply with the Principles of Accountability, and Principles of Humanitarian Action.*
- *Make arrangements to provide technical support to partners as and when required, and ensure monitoring and evaluation are key parts of programmes implemented by partners to enable continuous improvement.*
- With partners review specific risks and adapt organisational policy/guidelines accordingly—for example review if providing incentives for members of Community Monitoring Committees / Programme Implementation Committee would decrease risk of fraud, and so increase NGO accountability.

Agency accountability to affected-communities when working through partner NGOs.

- *Identify key information about the agency that should be passed on to beneficiaries via the partner, and make arrangements with implementing partners to ensure this happens.*
- *Ensure beneficiary participation and informed consent as part of agency field visits, evaluations and other times of contact with affected-communities.*
- *Consider the skills, competences and knowledge required by agency staff to implement the Principles of Accountability when working through partners (including to implement many of the points highlighted here), and ensure these are considered as part of recruitment, performance review and staff development processes.*
- *Ensure the agency complaints handling mechanism allows affected communities to raise complaints directly with the agency.*

Joint action

- *Identify how HAP Members working through the same partners can take complementary approaches to strengthening accountability. For example joint trainings; standardising reporting requirements with regard to accountability and quality management; complementary approaches to piloting of new initiatives (for example complaints handling mechanisms) etc*
- *Consider how partners could also participate in the Bangladesh Peer Support Group.*

B) STAFF: What different approaches have been used for building staff capacity to strengthen accountability?

Current Practice

- Objectives set for enhancing staff capacity
- HAP compliance is included in staff job descriptions
- Orientation was organised for staff
- All staff sign the organisational Programme Participant Protection Policy (staff code of conduct)
- HAP issues are incorporated into staff annual performance appraisal

New ideas for strengthening staff capacity

Recruiting staff with right competencies

- Integrate competencies related to complying with the HAP Standard into HR guidelines on staff recruitment. Including ensuring the HAP Principles are reflected and incorporated into:
 - Job descriptions
 - Job advert
 - Contract letter

Orientation / training

- Ensure orientation on the HAP Standard for all involved directly with programme implementation (including partner NGOs, volunteers, community and group leaders)
- Exposure to other programmes that are working towards compliance with the HAP Principles
- *Review with staff how the Principles of Accountability complement existing value statements your agency has made (for example your mission and vision, organisational guiding principles or working values) to help staff understand how the Principles of Accountability (as measured using the HAP Standard) complement existing organisational ways of working.*
- *Support staff to identify existing good practice that can be developed further.*

Reviewing performance

- *Include competencies needed to comply with the HAP Standard in the staff performance review mechanism, so that these skills are recognised.*

Creating a conducive work environment

- Create a gender friendly environment to encourage more female staff to address the gender balance.
- Improve job security for skilled staff (linked to increasing staff motivation to accountable programming).
- Give greater time allocation to respective staff to ensure the HAP Standard incorporated into programme intervention.
- Identify agency-wise working team to internalise HAP Standard within the agency.

Supportive policies and systems

- Organisational operational manual for staff on accountability and quality management
- Introduce whistle-blowing and grievance-handling policy, and employee code of conduct

Joint action:

- *Use PSG as a forum for:*

- *Sharing staff orientation and training materials*
- *Exploring different NGO approaches for achieving a more balanced gender ratio at field level.*

C) PREPAREDNESS: What has been put in place to take the learning forward for the next emergency response?

Current Practice

Community/project - level

- Identification of committees and volunteers to strengthen agencies ways of working with communities, these include:
 - Ward level Disaster Management Committees (DMCs), linked to Union DMCs (with initiative to make these active)
 - Community Monitoring Committees (CMCs)
 - Community Health Volunteers (selected from 20 HHs)

Staff / Partner - level

- Experienced local partners identified.
- M&E personnel trained.
- Capacity building for staff and partners to ensure common understanding and commitment to accountability and quality management by everybody – from top to bottom including partner NGOs.
- HAP compliance included in staff orientations.

Organisational – level

- Revised and updated guidelines on emergency response, reflecting the HAP Standard.
- Standard chit card format revised.
- System for dealing with complaints in place – e.g. complaint box and book for recording.
- Systematic approach for reviewing all guidelines – to identify achievements, gaps and learning.

New ideas for strengthening preparedness

Community/project - level

- Assess local community capacity.
- Raise awareness among communities (in particular those in higher risk areas) on their rights related to NGO accountability in any programme intervention. Thus enabling communities themselves to demand accountability and ensure greater participation from the beginning.
- Identify a standby or active coordination mechanism at grassroots level.

Staff / Partner – level (see also A and B)

- HAP orientation for staff of partners and donors to raise their awareness/capacity in advance.

Organisational – level

- Use HAP Standard as a crosscutting issue during preparedness and contingency planning.
- Incorporate and mainstream HAP Standards into organisational policies and guidelines. Implementing agency should be equipped with quality guidelines/policies staff, tools etc to enable the implementation of it's commitments.
- Prepare for a Real Time Evaluation 6 weeks after emergency response (Oxfam GB will share tools they has developed for this).

- Captured learning to date on complying with the HAP Standard, and programme approaches, so that this can be incorporated into future programme design (example learning highlighted: adolescent (15-19 years) much more effective compared to adult at implementing project activities).
- Identify how new technology, such as mobile communication, can be better utilised to communicate with and involve affected-populations.
- Develop generic communication materials that can be utilised from the response onset, until the most appropriate means of sharing information are identified with affected-communities. For example develop a leaflet with general information related to the agency, it's services, and it's complaint and response mechanism.
- *Integrate key questions related to accountability into needs assessment format to identify preferred channels for receiving information, participating in project decision making, and complaint handling.*

Joint action

- *Use the Peer Support Group to learn from other agency approaches. For example areas highlighted during the workshop include:*
 - *Complaint handling mechanisms already tried and tested*
 - *Effectiveness and number of different Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) established by NGOs – discussion on overlap and sustainability?*
- *How soon is participation as part of the needs assessment possible? What tools, techniques and approaches do different NGOs use?*

D) MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING: *What approaches have been used to monitor and continually improve accountability and other quality commitments?*

Current Practice

- FGDs, regular meetings with DMC
- Real Time Evaluation 6 weeks after onset of emergency response

New ideas for strengthening monitoring and continuous learning related to accountability and quality commitments

On-going monitoring

- Prepare monitoring checklist, with beneficiary consultation.
- Community based monitoring – for example targeted beneficiaries can be included in monitoring committee.
- Formalise the role of existing committees (e.g. DMC and CMC) in terms of monitoring (including identifying how learning is passed from these committees to agencies).
- *Clearly communicate quality commitments to communities to enable social monitoring, and build capacity of community monitors so they have a greater understanding of the quality commitments made.*

Strengthening existing M&E to include accountability and quality

- Programme quality team can also take on HAP Standard.
- Budget allocation to M&E.
- Include quality and accountability as part of partner monitoring.
- Develop monitoring indicators and methodology for reviewing functionality of community committees (e.g. DMCs).

- *Develop monitoring indicators and methodology to review the effectiveness of information sharing approaches employed; satisfaction with levels of community participation; awareness and opinions of complaint handling mechanism.*

Linking monitoring with complaint mechanisms

- Incorporate Complaint and Response Mechanism (CRM) into organisational central M&E system so that: a) data from CRM feeds back into the programme design and organisational ways of working; b) CRM effectiveness is continually monitored.
- Community based CRM, with CMC established at union and upazilla levels.

Continuous learning – using and reviewing the data captured

- Incorporate HAP into monthly reporting formats.
- Establish a mechanism for continuous feedback, and ensure a degree of flexibility so learning can be incorporated.
- Participatory learning and sharing workshops at community level.

Interagency learning

- Peer group monitoring system / cross monitoring
- Real time evaluation (Oxfam tools and techniques can be shared with all)

Putting quality and accountability on the agenda

- Include accountability and quality in the ToRs and agendas of After Action Reviews, Lesson Learnt workshops, and evaluations. In addition ensure external consultants hired for such reviews have the appropriate skills and knowledge so that accountability and quality is a key element.

E) Community representative feedback

Following on from the agency presentations the community representatives gave a number of comments and recommendations. These are summarised below.

Information dissemination

- *Modes of communication* - It was felt in populated areas (for example bazaars) signboards are “ok” for sharing certain types of information but that it is better if NGOs also discuss information orally with communities (an example given was by holding a public meeting to accompany the banner or leaflet).
- *Sharing what with who* - The community representatives highlighted that certain types of information tended not to be shared with communities, for example details about costs and budgets - “Some signboards include quality and quantity but no price – if put all then accountable”. In addition in their experience NGOs tended to share information with communities they are directly working rather than with the wider area. They expressed an interest to know about NGOs working in surrounding communities - “We want to know the NGOs that are working in the wider area [beyond our immediate community]”.
- *Information sharing for empowerment* – There was a clear desire to know more about the standards NGOs have committed to so that communities are in a position to hold NGOs to account - “If the people know the standards NGOs need to follow then the NGOs will be bound by that”; “HAP standard should not be known only to the NGOs but the beneficiaries need to learn about the HAP Standards”.

Beneficiary identification and participation

- *Terms of participation* – it was mentioned that NGOs often use community volunteers but as these volunteers are also vulnerable if NGOs do not provide food / something in return

for their work there is more chance of corruption (as these volunteers then have less time for other means of income generation).

- *NGO presence at project level* - it is important for officials from the NGOs (including the donor NGO as well as the partner NGO) to be present at project level and to take part in “discussing all about the project” with community members (this could be done via a courtyard meeting) - “NGOs who are working with partners they should also be present in the field with their partners.”
- *Identification of beneficiary list* - the community representatives shared risks they had observed related to the beneficiary list. In their experience NGOs often got the beneficiary list from members/chairman, but people often needed to pay something to the chairman/members to be included on this list.
- *Participation at different stages* – it was felt that when a project is developed in the community then cross monitoring should be done at both NGO and community level.
- *Needs assessments* – in relation to how soon participation is feasible the community representatives felt immediately after the emergency their first need was food, but then NGOs should measure their problems and needs.
- *Recommendation* – it was recommended that in order to make distribution points NGOs should work with the government committee.

Complaints handling

- *Imputing into the project: complaints vs suggestions* – it was felt that NGOs were focused more on complaints boxes with no option for suggestions boxes, and the community representatives felt they would like an option for giving their suggestions as well. This suggests that the participatory processes used by NGOs to seek input and feedback from community members are not well known at community level.
- *Need to know information about the complaints procedure* – in particular they raised a need to know about how long it will take for a response to a complaint. It was felt this was especially important if the complaint is related to selection, as it is important to know if there will be a response before or after the distribution.
- *Recommendations* - in order to deal with complaints in a timely manner each complaint should be allocated to someone who will take care of them (from reviewing to responding). In addition someone from the NGO could go to communities once per month to receive complaints orally.

Treating people with dignity

- A few points were raised related to treating people with dignity. In different queues for women, men and old people, as well as shade for waiting, was seen as good practice at distribution points. In addition those NGOs who not only provided material but also helped people to bury the dead were highly praised.

5) Enablers and disablers to bringing about field and organisational-level change to strengthen accountability and quality management – thinking from AAR workshop participants

ENABLERS to change

Organisational

- Organisational and top management support and commitment (including: global support, and follow-up on progress from country office).
- Organisational skill and experience, and existing policies (including participation, protection and anti-fraud policy).
- Resource provision / staff assigned (e.g. responsibilities highlighted in staff job descriptions in addition to assigning a specific person to lead).
- Staff motivation and commitment, and recruitment of skilled staff.

Project

- Sidr teams understanding and commitment.
- Priority given to women and disabled for relief and case for work.

Community

- Acceptance from stakeholders, including community and local administration.
- Community support, cooperation and participation (including through focus group discussions).

External drivers

- HAP follow-up and support activities, and the HAP Peer Support Group.
- Donor demands (for example DEC proposal).
- Development partners.
- Close supervision by joint forces.
- Less overlapping by agencies.

DISABLERS to change

Organisational

- Lack of agency preparedness including lack of organisational guidelines on the HAP Standard such as child-friendly manual; lack of agreement with partners on the HAP Standard.
- Rigidity of organisational practice and policy, and bureaucratic systems.
- Resource limitation, including: man power; local resources and technical skills; absence of benefits package for community volunteers/facilitators.
- Lack of proper staff orientation on the HAP Standard.
- Prevailing attitudes including due to short duration & emergency community participation cannot be ensured.

Project

- Short duration of project-proposal writing.
- Limited length of project resulting in short-term project staff who are uncertain of job/service duration.

Community

- Non-cooperation of local administration.

External

- Partners attitude and capacity.
- Increased market price of deliverables.

- Nature of disaster (scale of loss/damage), and subsequent monsoon/rainy season, flooding.

Enablers and disablers to community participation – feedback from community representatives at AAR workshop

ENABLERS to community participation

- Focus Group Discussions and general meetings.
- Mobile phone communication made participation possible.
- Committee formed
- Because of the HAP Standard

The community representatives also noted that work was done correctly when through participation of the community: “Progress of NGO activities became good after they started to talk to community to find out their need and incorporated it into activities.”

DISABLERS to community participation

- Obstruction from chairman/members and other influential people.
- Number of people affected compared the relief.
- All people in the community want to receive relief whether they need it or not.
- Religious sensitivities
- Rain in September/October caused roads problems – making it harder to carry things
- Increases in market prices caused challenges with the housing projects.

6) Improving HAP's support in new emergencies – ideas from AAR workshop participants on what worked well and what could be improved

Positives aspects of the HAP initiative

- The tools, tips and guidelines given by HAP on the self-assessment were useful
- Self-assessment helped to understand organisation's status in terms of the HAP Standard
- HAP engagement inspired Bangladesh Peer Support Group meetings, and cross-learning visits.
- Changes identified:
 - Increased organisational and staff level commitment on humanitarian accountability, and changes in staff knowledge, attitudes and practice.
 - Budget allocation for capacity building on HAP Standard
 - Helped to extend organisation intervention for the community besides child focused programme
 - Promotion of existing transparency and accountability measures
 - Increased cooperation and coordination, sharing and reduced overlap
 - Increased community involvement and ownership, and through increased raising of community voice
 - Development of policy/procedure
- *From community representatives:* it was felt this initiative will help NGOs to get better and better through competition. Concern was raised about the NGOs that had not participated in the Bangladesh HAP initiative. The community representatives also felt the AAR workshop had raised their awareness about NGO accountability, as beforehand they had not known about this.

Other ideas for support during a new emergency

- Work with donors at national level to improve their awareness of accountability, and influence the donors' ways of working so as to enable NGOs to be more accountable.
- Link into clusters to ensure the different clusters are considering accountability to affected-communities.
- Hold a workshop with chief executives.
- Work with Member agencies to influence Government level. For example HAP could support a Member agency willing to take this forward.
- Support for Members working through partner NGOs (e.g. support with partner training)
- Identify means to raise awareness among affected-communities about the HAP Standard to increase the demand for accountability.
- Support for agencies who feel overwhelmed by the number of different standards and commitments (internal and external) they are expected to comply with – for example support with developing a Humanitarian Accountability Framework for the emergency and rehabilitation response.
- Produce a diagram of where elements of the HAP Standard relate to different levels of an agency (to help with measuring compliance and identifying where means of verification should be found)

- Assist in developing a checklist on the HAP Standard in project proposals, and for partner monitoring.
- Additional support for cross learning visits (within country and to different countries).

General reflections on the process/methodology

- The representative from agencies participating in this initiative, including attending the workshops, should not change.
- It would be beneficial to have regular meetings for agencies to share progress (*NB: this is already being done via the Bangladesh PSG but raises questions of how others find out about this group*).
- It would have been more beneficial if agencies had been able to reflect before AAR (e.g. HAP to spend time with each agency on this). (*NB: all agencies were asked for input on the AAR methodology in advance and few responded; perhaps in future HAP could support agencies identify methods for reviewing their progress*).

7) The HAP team's reflections on.....

....Core staff engagement with HAP initiative

- Much enthusiasm – Staff engaged throughout this initiative have showed much personal enthusiasm for strengthening accountability, and workshops often generated lively discussions. The fruits this enthusiasm has depended much on the organisational commitment and support offered to the core staff (see below). Some have been able to instigate change at both field and organisational level, whereas others have been frustrated as they battle alone.
- Transformation in understanding - For the majority over the last 12 months there has been a transformation in their understanding on many aspects of accountability (in particular that related to accountability at project level). These staff are also starting to understand the importance and key elements of a quality management system for ensuring consistent quality.

....Bringing about change

- Different pace of change - Different agencies have made progress at vastly different speeds – for some there has been a huge amount of activity and for others much less.
- Benefits – those agencies who have made progress are starting to see the benefits at community, project staff and country level.
- Senior management buy-in to accountability and the process of improvement has been observed as key for agencies to take this forward – most progress has been made by those agencies with active senior management and HQ-level support.
- Work plans / regional priority – while participating staff (both senior managers and project staff) felt it was a priority to strengthening accountability and quality management a number fed back that it was not being portrayed as a priority by their regional teams (although some noted it was a priority for the HQ but had not trickled down). It's absence from regional and country work plans (in addition to job profiles and individual work plans) is reflected in the time and emphasis staff feel able to give this, with other activities taking priority.
- Responsible staff/persons to drive the process of change – while accountability is everyone's responsibility and should be incorporated into ways of working, those agencies who identified staff to take forward the process of change made more progress. Agencies

who did not identify anyone, or who frequently changed the focal person, tended to make less progress.

- Involving the community in bringing about change – while many agencies had tried different ways to share information, involve affected-people in decision-making and handle complaints, few had consulted with the community on preferred approaches to these areas. Consulting with the end users will help agencies to identify not only preferred methods but community priorities related to approach. For example we have seen an increasing pressure among NGOs for ‘glossy’ products – e.g. colour stickers, expensive signboards etc). Involving communities as part of the process will help identify their priorities in terms of approach and thinking on cost vs benefit.

....The messages being communicated to staff

- Not a “HAP thing” – we often heard agencies talk about “doing HAP” (identifying a “community HAP representative” or setting up “HAP notice boards”), rather than referring to strengthening existing accountability and quality mechanisms, or in relation to their existing organisational values. Referring to accountability as a “HAP thing” risks it being seen as another add-on with distinct activities, and fails to recognise the existing good practice within agencies.
- Important to communicate the purpose – it is important the purpose and process of strengthening accountability is communicated to staff at all level so there is common understanding of the importance/relevance of certain activities. Where this is lacking there is tendency to give more emphasis on hardware (including notice boards, complaint boxes set up without thought for the end users, or if they achieve the purpose), rather than the software (for example community and face to face meetings, open dialogue etc).

....Continuing to take this process forward

- Great core group: utilising the knowledge – the participants of the HAP initiative in Bangladesh now form a strong core group who should be able to take many of the learnings forward. It is now a question of how agencies channel this experience and knowledge (making key linkages between the HQ and country office), so that these staff are in a position to influence ways of working.
- Keeping the momentum going – among participating agencies there is currently significant momentum for taking this forward and this will be key for further improvements. One forum that could support with this is the Bangladesh Peer Support Group, who have already started to meet bi-monthly and are in the process for translating the HAP Standard into Bangla.
- Verification of status – agencies need to identify how they will continue to review their status against the HAP Standard, and other commitments. Some are starting to integrate aspects of accountability into their existing monitoring system, but this must be coupled with a mechanism to ensure information gathered is fed back into the agency and used to improve practice. Many agencies identified a need to improve how they review activities aimed at strengthening accountability, for example how successful notice boards are at communicating basic messages.
- Policy change to influence future practice – while much good practice and progress has been made within the Sidr response this has yet to be incorporated into organisational policy, guidelines etc. For this progress to influence future emergency responses, and to ensure overall levels of accountability are stronger from the beginning of future responses, agencies need to ensure this progress is integrated into the core documents that guide practice. A number of agencies are already starting to focus on this._

8) What next?

At the end of the AAR workshop participants committed to continuing the process of strengthening accountability. In particular participants committed to:

- Continuing the Bangladesh Peer Support Group as a forum through which good practice can be shared, support offered, and enthusiasm generated.
- Moving forward with the translation of the HAP Standard into Bangla.

A report will be produced reflecting on the learning from HAP's engagement in Bangladesh and will be available early 2009. HAP will also work with interested agencies to develop case studies documenting tried and tested approaches to strengthening accountability during the Cyclone Sidr response.

Annex 1 – After Action Review Workshop Participants List (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 3rd-4th December 2008)

Name	Position	Union / NGO	Telephone	Email
Liton Kham	Community Representative (Sangram/Concern CMC)	Union: XX	01721608241	
Enamul Haque Shakan	Community Representative (Sangram/Concern CMC)	Union: XX	01716682720	
Iqbal Mahmud	Community Representative (HEED DMC Chairman)	Union: Kuakata	01730189153	
Alaya Basam	Community Representative (Muslim Aid beneficiary)	Union: Sarankhola		
Asia Begum	Community Representative (Muslim Aid beneficiary)	Union: Sarankhola		
Md Shameen Hasen	Community Representative (Muslim Aid beneficiary)	Union: Sarankhola		
Kazi Eliza Islam	Impact and Evaluation Coordinator	CARE Bangladesh		eliza@carebangladesh.org
M.A. Wahed	Emergency Response and Preparedness Coordinator	CARE Bangladesh	01711119117	wahed@carebangladesh.org
Rama Saha	Emergency Response Manager	CARE Bangladesh	01712230990	rama@carebangladesh.org
Md. Sirajul Islam	M&D Manager	CARE Bangladesh	01712039417	sirajul@carebangladesh.org
Showkat Ali Tutul	Head – Social Justice	COAST Trust	01713367444	tutul@coastbd.org
Zillur Rahman	Field Coordinator	Concern	01913092794	
Abu Hanif	M&E Expert	Concern	01713330985	Abu.hanif@concern.net
Golam M Billah	Emergency Programme Officer	Christian Aid	01711467191	gmbillah@christian-aidbd.org
Nurun Nahar Lovely	Senior Officer	DSK	01819445052	nurunnahar@dskbangladesh.org
Kazi Azam	Coordinator – DM Programme	GUP	01819131217	azam_knmn64@hotmail.com
Farjana Mazunder	Coordinator Officer	GUP	01711905331	fmrinku_urp@yahoo.com
Pius Seroa	Programme Manager Team Leader - Sidr Team	HEED Bangladesh	01715158102	piusserao@yahoo.com
Binhwanath Roy	Programme Head SD	HEED Bangladesh	01712584081	
Sujan Biswas	Sidr Rehabilitation Officer	HEED Bangladesh	01717716409	
George Mithu	Central Coordinator, Disaster Management Programme	HEED Bangladesh	01711235275	georgemithu@yahoo.com
Iqbal Ahmed	Program Executive	Muslim Aid	01841246384	Iqbal@muslimaidbd.org
Obaidur Rahman	Head of Emergency Response	Muslim Aid		obaid@muslimaidbd.org
Kamnu Zamau	Programme Development Officer	Muslim Aid	01841246337	kzaman@muslimaidbd.org
Abdus Sobhan	Public Health Engineer	Oxfam GB	01730024683	asobhan@oxfam.org.uk
Bashir Ahmed	Project Coordinator	Sangram	01711229714	
Kajal Ahmed	Programme Officer, Compliance and Monitoring	Save the Children UK		kajal@savethechildren-bd.org

Joseph Dulon Gomes	Program Manager- Disaster Program	World Concern	01715132109	dulon_gomes@yahoo.com
Stephen Halder	Director Partnership Services Group	World Vision	01713037687	stephen_halder@wvi.org
Anjoli Jacinta Costa	DME Coordinator	World Vision	01713444290	anjoli_costa@wvi.org

From HAP:

1. Smruti Patel, Training Coordinator, spatel@hapinternational.org
2. Emily Rogers, Field Support Officer, erogers@hapinternational.org
3. Supported by Md. Rahmar Sagor, Translator