

Quality and accountability in the Nargis response

Report on the deployment of the HAP Field Representative to Myanmar
7-25 July 2008

This report highlights some of the key observations, learning points and main recommendations based on the first phase of a deployment to Myanmar (7-25 July 2008) under the HAP New Emergencies Policy. A second phase is underway, with the HAP Complaints Handling Training Officer deployed in Myanmar alongside a Sphere resource person until the end of August 2008. A proposal for further HAP/Sphere support in the country is currently being consolidated.

Save the Children in Myanmar (SCiM) facilitated the visits of the HAP and Sphere resource staff, and memoranda to this effect have been agreed. Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan made financial contributions to the Sphere and HAP intervention, while the Local Resource Centre provided desk space. This visit would not have been possible without their support.

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More information on HAP, the New Emergencies Policy and support in Myanmar is available on our website at <http://www.hapinternational.org>.

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I. Background

On May 3rd, Cyclone Nargis struck the coast of Myanmar with winds of 190km per hour. The category four cyclone swept across the Irrawaddy delta, Yangon, and other areas of Myanmar, leaving behind more than 77,738 dead, 55,917 missing and more than 2.4 million people affected (as per May official OCHA figures).

By mid May 2008, twelve HAP members were responding or preparing to respond to the cyclone: ACTED, CAFOD, CARE, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, DanChurchAid, Muslim Aid, Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, Tearfund and World Vision. Of these, CARE, SCUK and World Vision were already operational with each having 500-600 existing staff in country; Christian Aid, DanChurchAid and Tearfund had been working in the country through partners.

As part of the commitment by HAP members to make a special collective effort to apply the HAP Principles of Accountability from the outset of all new humanitarian emergencies, a series of [NEP](#) teleconferences were coordinated through the HAP Secretariat in Geneva (May 14th and 30th and June 17th) in order to discuss members' strategies for promoting quality and accountability in the Myanmar context and explore specific action points for members and support from the HAP Team. By the end of June, several HAP members, including Tearfund, MERCY Malaysia, CARE, World Vision and Save the Children had deployed quality and accountability advisors from their respective Head Offices.

As part of the NEP discussions, it was agreed that HAP staff be deployed in collaboration with Sphere consultants to enhance understanding and improve practice of humanitarian accountability and quality management for HAP member agencies and other international and local NGOs in the Nargis Response.

II. HAP and Sphere Intervention in Myanmar as of July 2008

This section summarises activities undertaken in the first phase of the deployment, as per the objectives in the initial Terms of Reference available in Appendix 1.

Human resources

Sphere resource people overlapped with the HAP Field Representative during this deployment as follows: Kelly Wooster, independent consultant (7-15 July); Shabana Bhatti, Sphere Focal Person from CWS, 17-25 July; Anne Lloyd, independent consultant (20-25 July).

Activities

Most activities during this phase of the deployment fall under Objectives 1 and 3 in the initial Terms of Reference, as follows:

- Identifying and delivering any appropriate immediate and direct support activities to local and international NGOs to strengthen their quality management systems, meet existing standards and implement context-specific accountability mechanisms. This has taken place primarily
 - Through briefings and advice to a group of focal people representing local and international agencies in the Accountability and Learning Working Group, including HAP members and their partners
 - Through training of staff from the Local Resource Center and of the Capacity Building Initiative, for their potential in further strengthening the awareness and capacity of national and local organisations to become more accountable and deliver better quality work
 - For Save the Children in Myanmar through hands-on coaching, staff briefing and mini-workshops during field visits
 - For members and implementing partners of Action Churches Together, through training and briefings

- Promoting information sharing and lessons learnt
 - *With the ALWG and the LRC*: notes and minutes from such meetings are available in the appendix and have been shared through the Myanmar Information Management Unit
 - *With managers of participating agencies*: specific feedback on how to strengthen the quality and accountability of existing programs has been provided to agencies that have requested it
 - *With all relevant stakeholders*, an assessment of the priority needs – short and long term, including an exit strategy for HAP-Sphere support on strengthening humanitarian accountability and quality management.
 - Further HAP-Sphere engagement post September is now consolidated based on feedback from the respective resource staff and a funding proposal will be submitted to DFID. This integrated learning from this phase of the deployment and is available upon request
 - Lessons learnt during this first phase regarding the HAP-Sphere joint deployment will be communicated internally and integrated in a final report at the end of the next stage of the engagement in Myanmar.

Activities for Objective 2 had not taken place as of July 25th, although planning to this effect started in preparation for the deployment of the HAP Complaint Handling Training Officer who would lead on this. An integrated report for joint HAP-Sphere activities undertaken between 7 and 14 July is available in Appendix 2. These continued between 15 and 25 July and are briefly summarized in Appendix 3.

III. Main findings and recommendations

Based on the earlier NEP conference calls, it was envisaged that efforts to improve humanitarian accountability and quality would have to be easily adaptable to reflect the ever-changing challenges on the ground.

Agency-specific and inter-agency efforts have contributed to progress in this direction, particularly through work undertaken by the quality and accountability advisors deployed by HAP members, the NGO Liaison, the Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG) and community feedback pilots. Differing views and experiences abound, of what is and is not possible in terms of strengthening quality and accountability, of where affected communities will or will not open up and share their real needs and views. These are directly related to staff competencies, senior leadership and the relationship between the agency and local authorities.

III.1. Key priorities

The following **key priorities** emerged for international agencies

1. Focus on processes rather than specific mechanisms of ensuring accountability

The in-country visit reiterated the fact that, in the highly uncertain context of Myanmar, accountability and quality assurance need to be based on a flexible and easily adaptable framework. Focusing on specific and rigid mechanisms rather than the degree to which principles are integrated into existing working modalities will not be effective; i.e., setting up information boards rather than working with disaster-affected communities and other relevant national and local stakeholder to ensure that information is shared in languages, formats and media that are accessible and comprehensible to all; or setting up suggestion boxes rather than asking disaster-affected communities about appropriate ways to handle concerns and address more serious allegations they may raise.

A more flexible and process-oriented approach such as that in the HAP Standard will allow different agencies to explore appropriate ways for improving quality and accountability, depending on the location where they operate. The need for thorough stakeholder and context analyses was repeatedly mentioned as an important precursor to developing more accountable practices and implementing better quality programmes.

2. Decentralise decision-making and coordination to area levels

Decentralised decision making – including in relation to implementation of, and compliance with, organisational commitments such as standards and codes of conduct – would enable area managers to address some of the existing challenges in program management and strengthen the quality of their work based on local knowledge, understanding of community dynamics and the emerging relations with local authorities at area and even village levels. In the various meetings and conversations, field programme staff mentioned that they would benefit from receiving more support to make decisions locally.

3. Focus on providing quality assurance support from Yangon to area levels

The country offices of international agencies should focus their efforts on empowering and equip managers so they make decisions within a jointly negotiated (by country and area offices) humanitarian accountability framework¹. Field staff from international and national agencies alike have shown interest in receiving support to more systematically identify the linkages between different stakeholder groups, appropriate forms of engaging with them, and types of information that need to be disseminated to and collected from these groups to continuously improve the quality of programs delivered. To this end, the development of an accountability framework within which area managers can make decisions – complete with staff guidelines, including on risk assessment – can be facilitated from Yangon.

At area level, Managers will then be able to reflect emerging contextual constraints and challenges within this framework and provide a justification where certain aspects cannot be implemented. This will ensure that no commitments are overseen and no opportunities for improving programs missed and will act as a quality assurance mechanism for managers across the entire operation. In this context, the country office will also need to focus their concentrated efforts on improved communication with and between the area offices, providing quick response to requests for support or addressing gaps they can identify. More details on Humanitarian Accountability Frameworks are provided on pages 9 and 10.

III.2. Some Highlights

Towards compliance

In the Nargis response, INGOs have assumed a great responsibility. With this come the need for accountability and the duty to deliver. If INGOs fail in their commitments to local partners and affected populations, they will reinforce the in-country disillusionment in institutions. As one local staff mentioned, [if the international community does not succeed in delivering its promises,] *it will be taking away the little hope that the people of Myanmar have or that, in some cases, has been brought back to them through the simple fact that someone showed them they care.*

Agencies were clear that, in the Myanmar context, there is currently no systematic way of demonstrating compliance with commitments (that have been clearly defined)² or of addressing alleged failures of compliance. Not all members were aware of the details of the HAP certification process, but were interested to learn more.

¹ HAP defines a humanitarian accountability framework as ‘a set of definitions, procedures and standards that specify how an agency will ensure accountability to its stakeholders. It includes a statement of commitments, a baseline analysis of compliance, and an implementation policy, strategy or plan.’

² See Accountability Frameworks section on page 8

On monitoring of compliance: in the absence of a clearly defined statement of commitments in relation to humanitarian standards, codes of conduct, etc, agencies find it difficult to assess whether they are in compliance with these.

On the one hand, some agencies dismissed suggestions to undertake a baseline analysis against the HAP Standard based primarily on the perception that “it is too early in the response” or their assessment that “we know that we are doing very little and don’t need someone else to tell us that”. Misperception of what a baseline is also contributed to this, in particular for those agencies that are not comfortable with the concept of *compliance verification*. Staff have been reassured that baseline analyses can be undertaken internally or by external resource people and are designed to be a participatory process which encourages and motivates staff to identify gaps and seek solutions.

On the other hand, some members showed interest in the baseline analysis process and are undertaking self-assessments with a view to developing concrete accountability work plans and, on the basis of the findings, request specific support from their colleagues at the international head office and other countries.

On addressing alleged failures of compliance: Overall, there was very limited awareness of the confidential Complaints Advisory Service offered by the HAP Secretariat. The HAP Secretariat also offers a complaint handling function in relation to members, concerning allegations of failure to apply, enforce, or otherwise implement, HAP accountability principles and/or the concerned agency’s own accountability framework. This function was known to some of the HAP members, though this information is not consistently disseminated to staff, partners or wider audiences.³

The Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG) in Yangon, which has the mandate to promote humanitarian accountability and support rapid and accessible learning opportunities from field to allow evidence-based programming, could become an important catalyst in promoting and monitoring compliance with stated commitments and raising awareness about options to address allegations of non-compliance.

- The ALWG developed accountability indicators, which have been included in the Integrated Monitoring Matrix (IMM). Generating data against these indicators will need to be coordinated by ALWG, from relevant agency-specific monitoring processes and inter-agency evaluations such as the recent Real Time Evaluation.
- A group within the ALWG could take on the role of monitoring the degree to which community feedback (at all levels) receives a response; the ALWF should continue its information dissemination and coordination function, with support from the NGO Liaison Officer, to ensure that relevant stakeholders follow up and address in a timely fashion humanitarian accountability gaps.
- Stronger agency-specific compliance monitoring processes will render quicker results. However, in close collaboration with the cluster leads and facilitated by the NGO Liaison Officer, the ALWG can raise questions of who takes responsibility when gaps or failures cannot necessarily be addressed by one agency alone, but are a collective responsibility. Initial proposals to set up a committee that reports directly to the Tripartite Core Group with outstanding issues from this latter category should still be further explored, but may become a lengthy process such as the follow up to the document on Principles of Information Sharing, Participation and Feedback for the Nargis Relief and Recovery Assistance.

More on the Accountability and Learning Working Group

The ALWG is a useful channel for promoting humanitarian accountability and sharing lessons learnt by different agencies, though the fluid and diverse nature of the membership may not

³ More information on the complaints handling functions of HAP is available here <http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/complaints-handling.aspx>

necessarily render immediate results. The HAP-Sphere proposal to work with a core group of people from national and international agencies within the ALWG and focus more intensively on a guided process of change (agency-specific and inter-agency) was well received. However, the level of commitment from staff who can influence change management processes within their agencies had not necessarily materialized. Efforts to build the capacity of such group should continue, alongside more focused activities with agencies that have shown high level of interest and have dedicated resources to this effect. Their experience can be further shared through the ALWG particularly to those agencies that may be unclear or sceptical about the importance of better-articulated humanitarian accountability and quality management systems.

- The ALWG could make a real difference by focusing on humanitarian quality management systems as a special topic. Accountability debates in the group so far tended to focus on transparency, participation and feedback mechanisms in relation to affected populations, rather than the internal workings of agencies. Unless the issue of quality management is addressed, and how management systems support the implementation of transparent, participatory, etc approaches, humanitarian accountability efforts risk remaining piece-meal.
- The ALWG can become a model of accountability by creating a more conducive environment for national and local organizations to share their experiences. Brief discussions concluded that some national and local groups have made excellent progress in publicly sharing information about their programmes, including with disaster-affected communities, and are versatile at listening to and engaging with communities at grass-roots levels through less formal approaches. International agencies can learn from these and support such national organizations to better capture and track their experiences.
- One risk that the ALWG needs to manage is the possible misperception that quality and accountability are the responsibility of a specific group alone rather than the collective responsibility of management, operational and technical staff from different sectors alike. One option for starting to address such risk is by having a representative from each cluster acting as a liaison person, sharing information to and from the ALWG and the respective cluster. The cluster leads should receive regular updates and report on humanitarian accountability.

Discussions in one of the ALWG meeting concluded that the smaller the organization, the higher the potential that they are more accountable to disaster-affected communities, since 1) they know and interact with them more often, and 2) decision-making happens within a shorter time frame and in response to needs, through an approach that is embedded in the context. International agencies will need to learn from this and adapt their current management practices accordingly, with more decentralization to area levels and strengthening communication between the different levels.

Field Coordination

Duplication and gaps in the field are currently avoided through information sharing during coordination meetings at area level. These started as a very natural progression of agencies' work, through a recognized need to better share information, undertake joint needs assessment and coordinated planning; and in recognition that the cluster meetings in Yangon were neither sufficient in facilitating effective processes at area level nor were they necessarily successful in creating a conducive environment for national and local organizations to also participate.

Field staff and area managers alike find field coordination meetings useful, though scepticism has been voiced in several occasions over the proposed plan by OCHA to take on a coordination role at area level, due to concerns related to potential duplication. This risk will need to be mitigated by any further Yangon-led efforts to directly facilitate information sharing in the field.

Based on information collected from the field coordination meetings, the cluster meetings in

Yangon should continue sharing information and building a comprehensive picture of gaps, duplication and priorities across the Nargis Response. Such information needs to be fed back to the field coordination meetings and respective agencies in a timely fashion and several Area Managers suggested that it is perhaps here that the proposed OCHA intervention could make the most considerable contribution.

To further build on the strength of field coordination meetings, area officers can be encouraged and supported to capture issues of humanitarian accountability and quality management discussed in such meetings, and share these with the ALWG at Yangon level.

Local capacity

There is still a high risk of undermining or overwhelming existing national and local capacity through improperly managed or scaled up international interventions.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness, for example, had been identified early on as a priority with a view of ensuring that communities and organizations alike will be better prepared to prevent and address the effects of future possible natural disasters. DRR strategies need to be incorporated and be part and parcel of the early recovery phase. Separate, outside-driven and too large scale efforts to strengthen DRR work have been highlighted by several representatives of Myanmar NGOs as unrealistic, creating parallel processes and potentially taking human resources away from other priority areas. At the same time, to avoid the risk of undermining local capacities and coping mechanisms, any international DRR efforts will need to give due consideration and build on the ongoing work of national organizations.

In cases where large-scale projects are proposed to national organizations, international agencies need to think realistically about the absorption and assimilation capacity of local groups so as not to overwhelm them.

Local civil society organizations, from local NGOs to CBOs to religious networks to self-help groups to religious groups have expressed an interest in having their operational and technical capacity strengthened. Any capacity building efforts for partners should be based on thorough assessments and capability reviews of local and national groups and organizations, as well as a *coordinated prioritization* of areas where any large-scale capacity building projects should focus.

III.3. How accountable?

This is the first relief intervention in recent years where HAP members have deployed staff from the head office with a specific mandate to strengthen humanitarian accountability. These members had systematically briefed their senior staff on their organisational commitment to the Principles of Accountability and its implications to operations; sector specific proposals and work plans reviewed during this deployment had given due consideration to these aspects.

The section below covers the 6 benchmarks in the 2007 HAP Standard that enables HAP members to meet their membership commitment towards implementation of the Principles of Accountability. While other agencies may have not necessarily made a commitment to the Principles of Accountability, they may find this useful in order to further strengthen the quality and accountability of the response. The discussion is lengthier in relation to those aspects of the Standard that require immediate attention.

A note on partners

While the initial remote management of the international NGOs registered in Myanmar is increasingly replaced with a more hands-on approach, many agencies continue to rely heavily on working through local partners.

There were several requests from HAP members for the Sphere-HAP resource staff to focus

on building partner capacity, which is often the case when discussing the ways to address the accountability deficit with INGOs. While some local partners may have limited knowledge and experience of relief programmes, international agencies need to engage with them and negotiate appropriate approaches to build their capacity to become more accountable and implement better quality programmes.

The HAP Standard was developed within a consensus that places greater emphasis upon the ideas of complementarity and mutuality as key principles for defining 'quality' in humanitarian partnerships, based on an approach that emphasises common objectives, trust, mutual respect and negotiation over differences. However, there is also consensus about the need to establish a 'bottom-line' understanding about basic values that must exist for a partnership to improve, and the expectation (of HAP Certified agencies) is that they will, at a minimum, share their humanitarian accountability framework with partners and have in place a strategy for assisting partners to develop their own capacity to comply with the Principles of Accountability.

The following areas require further attention from international agencies working through partners in Myanmar:

- Share with each other the respective accountability frameworks (see section on page 9) and coordinate expectations and requirements, particularly when working through the same partners. The many partnership agreements held by local groups are difficult to follow, requiring local organizations to simultaneously comply with selected values and principles of several international agencies.
- Develop, align and disseminate the procedures for selecting partners, undertaking joint performance monitoring and providing capacity building to support partners to apply the Principles of Accountability.
- Establish a process through which partners are enabled to convey information to beneficiaries, in particular what the deliverables and beneficiary selection criteria are.
- Work alongside partners to develop and run an effective, safe and accessible complaints system for beneficiaries.

The effective implementation of the latter two points above is contingent on the former two. Discussions with partners of international agencies concluded that, for any capacity building efforts aimed at strengthening the accountability and quality of partners towards disaster-affected communities to be effective, there is a need for international agencies to practice accountability and strengthen the quality of the relationship with partners themselves. In effect, international agencies need to start modelling accountability in relation to their local partners by first better sharing information with them, more actively listening to partners, taking into account their needs, views and feedback, and engaging in joint decision making.

1. Humanitarian Quality Management Systems

This refers to agencies having in place a documented humanitarian accountability framework that ensures that their management system enables the implementation of this framework throughout the organization, including in the Nargis response.

- While discussions with representatives of different international agencies concluded that most have strong management and quality control systems in place, few representatives were able to confidently comment on the quality of their relief programmes and the degree to which ongoing work was implementing the Principles of Accountability. This has been identified as the result of a gap between commitments to standards and codes of conduct (in effect, their humanitarian accountability framework) and the way that the organization defines and manages quality. In short, management systems are not necessarily aligned to meet the expectation of specific stakeholders, first and foremost of disaster-affected communities.
- Limited awareness and capacity on how to integrate accountability to disaster-affected communities in the emergency response were acknowledged, as an effect of limited surge capacity, new staff and new programmes. This could have been addressed if quality assurance and beneficiary accountability had already been

integrated across the organization.

- HAP support, member discussions under the NEP umbrella and the interventions of quality and accountability advisors from Head Offices have played an important role in raising awareness in this regard, complementing efforts undertaken locally by the NGO Liaison, ALWG and others. As long as accountability is not part of the organizational culture and systematically integrated in management systems across all programmes – from relief to development to advocacy, etc – agencies that have already been operating in a certain context without due consideration to accountability prior to their relief efforts will find it more challenging to undergo a *change management process* in the middle of an emergency relief operation than peer agencies that have streamlined quality and accountability across the organization.⁴

Accountability Frameworks⁵

- Most agencies are unsure of which standards or principles to prioritise while field staff and the newly recruited in particular have limited knowledge of the internal and external commitments that their agencies have made and how these could affect their responsibilities and support them in better delivering their work. This issue relates more to a potential break in internal communication, particularly during the emergency relief phase when the focus is overwhelmingly on delivery. The responsibility to communicate to staff relevant commitments lies at that level in the organisation, which has the mandate to sign up to such commitments.
- From conversations, it emerged that many of the staff were aware of and using some of the values and principles behind such organisational commitments, in particular transparency and participation. However, given the existing constraints and the need to contextualise and find most appropriate ways in which transparent and participatory practices can be included into existing programs, Area Managers and field staff should be involved in a process of developing a humanitarian accountability framework within which they can make and implement relevant decisions accordingly. This framework could be facilitated from Yangon. At area level, managers will then be able to reflect contextual constraints and challenges within this framework and provide a justification where certain aspects cannot be implemented. This will ensure that no relevant commitments are overseen and no opportunities for improving programs missed (see Box 1).
- Agencies such as CARE and World Vision have developed an accountability framework, which they are currently contextualising and linking to an implementation plan in the Nargis response. It was apparent that their staff are finding this useful and are supportive of integrating the framework into other ongoing programs in Myanmar.
 - HAP Certified members such as Tearfund, DCA and MERCY Malaysia are working through implementing partners and should soon be in a position to share learning on how their accountability framework is adapted and implemented in relation to partners in this relief context and perhaps further extended to apply to other programmes in due course.
 - HAP members that do not have an accountability framework could translate this need into an opportunity and, with support from their head office, develop and test one in the Myanmar context. Alternatively, the in-country office could refer to the Accountability Work Plans that Head Offices submit to the HAP Secretariat as part of their membership obligations.

⁴ A humanitarian accountability framework in place prior to the emergency response enables the agency to clearly map the different commitments (codes of conduct, standards, policies tools, etc) to specific staff job descriptions at different levels. This way, it becomes easier to communicate crucial and relevant information on such commitments during a brief staff induction, without overwhelming staff with information that may not necessarily be relevant to their position.

⁵ HAP defines a humanitarian accountability framework as 'a set of definitions, procedures and standards that specify how an agency will ensure accountability to its stakeholders. It includes a statement of commitments, a baseline analysis of compliance, and an implementation policy, strategy or plan.'

Box 1: Guidance for the development of a Humanitarian Accountability Frameworks

Adapted from A Guide to the HAP Standard (Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, 2008)

In the first instance, a humanitarian accountability framework is concerned only with identifying and, where appropriate, clarifying the status of, existing commitments made by the agency.

In some cases, more so with small or new agencies, there may be very few formal commitments in place, either internally developed or adopted from external standard setting bodies. For larger and longer established agencies, the problem is more likely to be a multitude of commitments, several of which may overlap, some of which may be out of date, and others which may be irrelevant to humanitarian work.

The following may be considered when deciding what should be included or excluded:

- **Relevance:** it should include only those commitments which are demonstrably linked to the quality and accountability of the agency's programme.
- **Concreteness:** to be useful, it should include only commitments that can be verified or measured by tangible indicators. This does not exclude the use of qualitative concepts such as 'dignity' or 'well-being', but it does require the identification of an affordable and routinely employed means of monitoring these.
- **Realism:** the standards to which an agency subscribes should be achievable under 'normal' circumstances; that is, within the competencies and capacity that the agency is usually able to deploy, and which are appropriate to the context.
- **Attribution:** while agencies collectively seek to improve the well being of those affected by a disaster, a framework should focus upon verifying the application of established good practices by the agency itself and not upon factors over which it has no control and little influence. However, this does not mean that the framework should only cover internal management processes.
- **Coherence:** Overall, a humanitarian accountability framework should be internally consistent. A lack of coherence might result from the following sources:
 - **Ambiguous codes, standards or principles:** The framework should provide guidance on what can be expected of an agency, and what will be done if it fails to meet these expectations. However, some of the humanitarian community's codes, standards and principles were not developed for the purpose of accountability, and they sometimes therefore lack measurable indicators or were designed without consideration of their affordability. Some are written in a purely aspirational mood, with the required commitment defined by indefinite verbs such as; 'to strive', 'to endeavour' or 'to attempt'. When the commitment does not specify how hard the agency should strive, there is great scope for interpretation, negotiation and resulting incoherence.
 - **Overlap:** standards often cover similar ground but use different definitions, benchmarks or indicators. For example, the participation of beneficiaries is referred to in the *Compass Qualité*, the *NGO Red Cross Code of Conduct*, *Sphere* and *HAP*. Before making a commitment to any of these, the agency should itself assess whether different standards are complementary, and which can be included in their framework without creating incoherence.
 - **Lack of prioritisation:** The ability to meet commitments is invariably dependent upon a combination of leadership; a supply of required human and financial resources; and a supportive environment. Sometimes, even when the leadership and the context are favourable, a lack of resources may force a difficult choice between quality and quantity objectives, even though meeting both is considered vital for survival. In such circumstances, a simple list of commitments does not help in deciding between options. **In this sort of situation the humanitarian accountability framework should provide guidance either by ranking the commitments in order of importance or by setting out a process for dealing with such difficult choices.** A simple way to rank an agency's commitments is to identify which are obligatory, which are formal guidelines and which are simply aspirational. If the status of a commitment is unclear, the answers to the following three questions may help to ascertain its standing in the organisation.
 - At what level in the organisation was it adopted or endorsed? This should indicate its formal status.
 - Is it monitored and if so how is this done? This may demonstrate its observed status.
 - What are the repercussions for non-compliance? This may reveal its actual standing.

The humanitarian accountability framework should always be seen as work in progress. It is a document that should often be updated as an agency clarifies and improves its quality and accountability system.

2. Information dissemination

This refers to agencies providing timely and regular access to information about the cyclone response in order to enable communities to effectively engage in the recovery process:

- There is clarity on how, when and what type of information is shared with the disaster-affected communities and other stakeholders; in particular, information about the agency; commitments it has made; their plan and progress against this plan; how it will address concerns and complaints
- The information is presented in languages, formats, and media that are accessible and comprehensible for beneficiaries
- Disaster-affected communities know about beneficiary selection criteria and deliverables as agreed with their representatives
- Beneficiaries know how to identify and contact relevant agency staff

While in-country communications are proving problematic and have serious implications for needs assessments, monitoring, and demonstrating accountability, various agency-specific and inter-agency efforts are underway. Metta Development Foundation has produced and disseminated various relevant reports to a wide range of stakeholders including communities, World Vision and CARE are piloting information sharing at community level in written form, Save the Children in Myanmar uses distribution cards which clearly shows deliverables and dates, etc

Most agencies, however, still lack a *strategy* on communicating with different stakeholder groups and do not have a *systematic approach* to consistently disseminating information both internally and externally, with other stakeholders including disaster-affected communities. Without due attention to this aspect, there is a risk that the existing efforts at piloting various means for sharing information with communities will not be captured, lessons learnt will not be easily transferred across locations and tested approaches will remain piece-meal.

Interesting to note is that in several instances national and local staff themselves recommended using signs and publicly sharing information about approved activities so that the authorities can see what is being delivered. This has also been recognised as a way to enable beneficiaries to provide feedback to the right agency more easily.

One senior manager of a national NGO shared his views: *if you are open and transparent, clearly non-political, then there will be no interference from any authority [...] it is important to show that you clearly do not have any hidden agenda.*

3. Participation

This refers to ensuring that affected communities or their representatives are included in the design and implementation of relief programmes, to ensure greater ownership over the recovery process, in particular that:

- Different group vulnerabilities are acknowledged and respected
- Beneficiaries participate in the project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

This needs to be done in ways that are sensitive to the local context, and do not place beneficiaries or the local partners under undue risks, given the political contexts.

- More traditional participatory practices are not necessarily appropriate in this context. Authorities have explicitly asked that no *formal* focus group discussions and participatory response appraisals take place. This being said, participatory assessments, ongoing engagement with communities and collecting feedback are already taking place in a more informal and ad-hoc way, and the benefits of this could be maximised through a more structured process of tracking such information. Staff awareness and capacity building on key participatory practices with support from Yangon (and part of the accountability framework) would go a long way in ensuring that more informal opportunities of engagement with local communities are optimised, properly recorded, tracked and acted upon.

Box 2: Guidance for the development of a an information strategy

Adapted from A Guide to the HAP Standard (Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, 2008)

Agencies could use the following guidance in the process of developing information strategies at Country Office Level. Area offices can make their own decisions, particularly in relation to points 3-5 below, with the country office providing guidance and support. This could become part of the humanitarian accountability framework.

1. Guiding principles that underpin the information strategy

- ◆ Define agency standards of transparency, reliability, timeliness, etc.
- ◆ Clarify which information should be covered by a non-disclosure and restricted circulation policy. Make this policy publicly available.
- ◆ Confirm the commitment of senior management to support the strategy.
- ◆ Ensure that information is an integral part of all the activities undertaken by the agency e.g. if an operational objective is to supply water and sanitation activities, it will be necessary to consider the ways in which information about this will be provided to disaster-affected communities and other stakeholders.

2. Analysis of what information to share:

- ◆ Agency background, objectives, structure, and contact details;
- ◆ Humanitarian accountability framework;
- ◆ Humanitarian plans at each location;
- ◆ Progress reports against the humanitarian plans;
- ◆ Complaints handling mechanism.

3. Analysis of who the information should be shared with:

- ◆ Stakeholders could include – intended beneficiaries, disaster affected communities, host communities, agency staff and other specified stakeholders;
- ◆ Assess prevailing causes and practices of information discrimination;
- ◆ Assess the different needs of specific groups, such as women, children, elderly, people with disabilities or mobility restrictions.

4. Analysis of when to share this information:

- ◆ At all stages of the operation, during the design phase, start-up, implementation, evaluation and exit;
- ◆ At regular agreed reporting times throughout the life of the project;
- ◆ When there are any significant changes to the plans.

5. Analysis of how to share this information:

- ◆ Consider the different types of information (organisational background, humanitarian accountability framework, humanitarian plan, progress reports, complaint handling procedures).
- ◆ Decide on the best method for presenting each to different stakeholders; options could include annual report, leaflets, booklets, posters, website, organigram, community notice boards, billboards, photographs, workshops, role plays, meetings, verbal feedback, images etc.;
- ◆ Adapt information to make it available in different ways (print, audio-visual etc.) so that it will be accessible to all recipients taking into account diversity issues such as literacy levels, gender, age, ethnicity, race, disability;
- ◆ Ask beneficiaries what formats they would like to receive information in;
- ◆ When working with partners, consider what information needs to be passed to beneficiaries via the partner.

6. Risk analysis

- ◆ Consider potential impact of sharing information on the security of deliverer, receiver and other relevant third parties.
- ◆ Assess consequences of non-disclosure and restricted circulation policies

For more details, see the HAP Guide.

- Information collected from disaster-affected communities may not always be reliable. Staff highlighted the need to more systematically choose those who (claim to) speak on behalf of other groups, in particular to disaggregate “the community”, and to cross-reference information collected through different sources. Guidance and support from country office in this regard would be beneficial.
- The village committees, be they the Peace and Development Committees, newly formed relief committees or the Parent Teacher Associations had assumed the role of co-ordination relief activities since Nargis. Some stated that they also managed distributions. While the extent of the committees’ engagement with agencies varies from village to village and it was not clear to what extent these committees reflect or are aware of the different vulnerabilities in the community, their existence offers a potential means for community participation that should be further explored. The committees’ role as a channel of information dissemination had not been tested either, which limits somewhat the degree to which they participate and engage with the relief efforts, particularly in villages where more than one NGO operates.
- During discussions, managers and project staff alike mentioned that engaging with beneficiary groups is essential in order to adjust relief packages according to their changing needs. However, the process of adjustment is not always easily facilitated, due to cumbersome internal processes or restrictions from donors. It is here that the ALWG can play an important role.
- During the transition from relief to recovery, further needs assessments are carried out which should inform targeting criteria and, in turn, appropriate programme activities. Most staff recognised that beneficiary targeting was an area less explored and understood by them and by communities. This will require immediate attention and needs to be closely reflected in the communication strategies to avoid misunderstandings at community level.

4. Staff competencies

The ability to respond to humanitarian needs is very much based on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of staff; agencies need to determine the competencies, attitudes and development needs of staff required to implement its humanitarian quality management system.

- Overall, managers of HAP members and non-members mentioned that there was need for improvement on staff understanding of humanitarian accountability (rather than solely donor accountability), as well as their capacity to turn principles into action. There were some differentiations made between international, national and newly recruited local staff. It was said that the former needed to understand better the local context and receive both more incentives and pressure from their Head Office to be accountable, whilst the latter two required more support to understand and apply the Accountability Principles.
- Most staff showed interest to receive further briefings, guidance and on the job coaching, as many have been recently promoted or newly recruited and felt they would benefit both from a better understanding of the organisation, its commitments, standards and other operational procedures, as well as more specialised training to increase their capacity to do their programmatic jobs and build their confidence.
- With most business visas are being granted for a period of maximum 10 weeks, turnover of expatriate staff still has the potential to undermining continuity and trust with local stakeholders. This emphasizes the importance of further reliance on national and locally-recruited staff who have better access to affected areas, better experience and understanding of the local context, and increased ability to communicate with local authorities and the affected populations.
 - Staff uncertainty over their own contracts, the future of the different programs and what will be offered to them after September act as an impediment to more significant engagement with the community and forward planning. Some of the staff who have been deployed to the Delta from other locations were keen to go

- back to their initial jobs because those were providing more certainty.
- National staff redeployed from other locations to the Delta may not always enjoy the favourable treatment of local staff.
- The mix of new and existing staff, local and deployed from other locations offers a good opportunity to ensure that staff benefit from knowledge and skill transfer. It is important to ensure continuity at the end of short-term contracts (of staff deployed from other locations). A first and immediate step to undertake in order to capitalise on this is the development of a list of competencies of staff in each Area Office to be communicated to and integrated in Yangon. This will enable agencies to better manage future staff changes and movements.

Within this context, staff would overall benefit from simple guidelines on how to map different stakeholder groups, how to identify beneficiaries, types of information to consider providing to the different stakeholder groups, how to undertake a risk assessment in relation to dissemination or non-disclosure of information, and how to answer or address concerns or negative feedback they may receive.

To start with, transparency, participation and appropriate complaint handling processes need to be modelled internally. If field staff do not feel that they have access to key details about the organisation and programs, that they are empowered to contribute to and make program decisions, where appropriate, that their own concerns are addressed in a timely fashion, they will not be in a position to promote transparent and participatory practices in relation to the disaster-affected communities and other stakeholders. The country office could provide support by ensuring that field staff themselves:

- Better understand the key objectives and strategy, program plans as well as internal and external accountability and quality standards, codes, guidelines, and principles committed to by the agency.
- Know how to participate in program decisions, and are clear about how their opinions, learning and experience will feed into and influence program decisions.

5. Complaint and response processes

Complaint and response processes are a crucial though last resort of ensuring humanitarian accountability and rectifying irregularities within programmes. Agencies need to enable disaster-affected communities to raise concerns or more serious complaints in relation to the Nargis response efforts; in particular ensure that

- Beneficiaries are aware of their right to raise concerns and receive a response
 - Existing channels for beneficiaries to raise concerns are effective and procedures that guide them are consistently implemented.
- Through work undertaken by the ALWG, it was agreed that complaint and response mechanisms will be referred to as 'feedback processes' in the Myanmar context. While it is important that appropriate terminology be identified in the national language, it is imperative that agency-specific or inter-agency efforts to address this aspect of accountability clarify the difference between
 - feedback, which can take place at any stage in the programme implementation (any agency that engaged and enables community participation in all programme stages will receive such feedback) and may or may not necessarily require an immediate action from the agency, and
 - more serious or grave allegations which are raised in relation to consequences of agency action on the complainant or inaction, and which require a response and/or redress. This is what feedback refers to in the context of this discussion.
 - A culture of politeness and hospitality around gift giving prevails in Myanmar. Consistent feedback provided by communities during the field visits, for example, was that anything that INGOs provide was appreciated and good.
 - There is a high risk that any channel through which communities can raise concerns will be seen as subversive by authorities. This reinforces the importance of clarity about the scope of any feedback process (i.e. in relation to the Nargis response programmes) and of communicating this to all relevant stakeholders to secure their

endorsement where such processes become more formalised.

- Based on conversations in the ALWG and other groups, it is recommended that any attempt to set up formalised feedback processes needs to start internally and clearly differentiate between:
 - Feedback from staff which have been directly affected by the actions or inactions of other members of staff
 - Feedback from staff which have observed unwanted actions or inactions of other members of staff (whistle blowing)
 - Feedback from communities in relation to the actions or inactions of staff
- A staggered approach, in which staff feedback and grievance mechanisms are effectively implemented, alongside raising staff awareness about the importance of immediately communicating any (in)action that they may perceive as negatively affecting communities. For this to take place, all staff need to know and understand what is acceptable and unacceptable from staff or in relation to the way that the programme progresses and may affect communities.
- No progress will be made in this regard in the absence of improved information dissemination with the communities on what they could expect from agencies and their staff.
- **Several immediate steps could be undertaken by individual agencies**
 - Clearly communicate to communities the program and project plans, deliverables and ways to provide positive feedback, as a first step in a dialogue about encouraging concerns and potentially more serious allegations in relation to the relief efforts to be voiced.
 - Encourage positive feedback and community input into program decisions. Continuously providing proof that agencies acts upon input from the communities – in a first instance in relation to immediate needs – will start build the trust that is needed for communities to speak up in relation to more serious concerns.
 - Clarify with staff a simple procedure on how feedback can be provided, what constitutes a serious or grave allegation and, if they see an instance that would fall under that category, what to do next.
- Alternative means to collect feedback from the communities – such as the pilots coordinated by the Local Resource Center (LRC) and implemented by the KBC in Pyapon – are useful and have the potential to complement agency-specific feedback processes.
 - Clarify the scope and comparative advantage: The reasons for setting up such mechanism rather than relying on agency-specific efforts need to be clarified and the process continuously improved to address learning from field staff of agencies operating in the pilot areas. For example, the SCiM Area Programme Coordinator in Pyapon mentioned that, based on his conversations with KBC, the KBC may not want to be part of a second round of feedback collection from the same location due to their potential for over-exposure. SCiM staff too expressed concern over the risks posed to third parties (KBC in this instance).
 - Clearly communicate the steps in the process, management, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholder involved: key staff from the LRC, local CSO and the agencies operating in any area where the pilots take place need to have a shared understanding of how such exercise is managed and communicated to relevant stakeholders.
 - A process for providing a response to communities needs to be in place: Piloting the exercise at other levels in the absence of a clear process of communicating to communities what has happened with their feedback, may lead to disillusionment and prevent communities from taking part in such activities in the future.
- An appeals mechanisms to deal with outstanding issues that have not been addressed by the relevant agency needs to be developed both by specific agencies that are piloting feedback mechanisms as well as inter-agency, to address issues that

agencies have not properly solved or issues that fall outside the remit of a single agency (see note above on the role of ALWG and the functions that HAP Secretariat can play in relation to HAP members).

6. Continuous improvement

Agencies need to have in place a process of continual improvement for their humanitarian accountability frameworks and humanitarian quality management systems. They also need to demonstrate commitment to improve their partners within a realistic and viable way.

- In the highly uncertain context of Myanmar, it is important that accountability assurance is based on a flexible and easily adaptable framework. Monitoring should be an ongoing activity and is especially useful to capture programme progress in relation to the situational context and to adapt programme activities to changing needs of target populations and the changing context.
- Field staff have access to a wide variety of qualitative data, some of which is verbally shared. However, little is recorded, stored and actively shared with the Country Office and between different offices. Informally, learning is taking place, though the ad-hoc nature leaves room for missed opportunities. In the absence of a stated humanitarian accountability framework, meaningful monitoring and improvement will be difficult to achieve.
- Encouraging staff to capture and record qualitative information (alongside quantitative data tracking) at the end of each day spent at the project site is a simple way of capturing such data which staff seemed interested in exploring. The following was suggested during the field visits with Save the Children in Myanmar:

Information point	Action and/or learning point	If action: person responsible and deadline	Status
1.		If learning: who needs to know	

Box 3: Suggestions for good practice on learning and improvement

Adapted from A Guide to the HAP Standard (Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, 2008)

- Continual improvement is an essential part of quality assurance and should be a part of all activities, both strategic as well as day-to-day management.
- Continual improvement should start at the very beginning of the project cycle, continue through implementation, and be a feature at its end:
 - ◆ it should be built into the design of the project. Project developers should take into account the organisation's humanitarian accountability framework when writing their proposals and plan goals, objectives, and indicators accordingly;
 - ◆ regular internal and external monitoring and evaluation should take place during implementation to track lessons learnt, correct mistakes, and address weaknesses;
 - ◆ a final project evaluation should take place once the project is over, together with a review of the humanitarian accountability framework and quality management system.
- There are a number of measures that make continual improvement a success:
 - ◆ Senior management demonstrate commitment to continual improvement in the agency's strategic objectives and resource allocation.
 - ◆ The improvement process should be adapted to each level of management:
 - Country level: Review quarterly, with monthly monitoring.
 - Project level: Review monthly, with weekly monitoring.
 - Emergencies will require a much shorter review cycle e.g. weekly with daily monitoring.
 - Internal and external monitoring and evaluation of specific programmes/projects should be supplementary the review processes described in (a) to (e).
- Quality assurance of the system means that managers throughout the system are responsible for ensuring that each level is complying and reporting.
- Problems (current or potential) need to be captured, then discussed in designated management meetings at each level, and then acted on.
- Lessons learnt should become part of the knowledge management system, and shared throughout the agency.
- Beneficiaries and other stakeholders should be included in monitoring and evaluation.

V. APPENDICES

V.1. Terms of Reference

For Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Support Team in collaboration with Sphere Cyclone Nargis Response, Myanmar

The New Emergencies Policy (NEP) sets out a commitment by the HAP membership to make a special collective effort to apply the HAP Principles of Accountability from the outset of all new humanitarian emergencies. Two HAP staff will be deployed in collaboration with Sphere support staff to enhance understanding and improve practice of humanitarian accountability and quality management for HAP member agencies and other international and local NGOs in the Nargis Response. The proposed terms of reference have been developed based on feedback from agencies working in Myanmar and from NEP teleconferences on 14th and 30th of May and 17th of June.

I. Background

On May 3rd, Cyclone Nargis struck the coast of Myanmar with winds of 190km per hour. The category four cyclone swept across the Irrawaddy delta, Yangon, and other areas of Myanmar, leaving behind more than 77,738 dead, 55,917 missing and more than 2.4 million people affected (as per May official OCHA figures).

Twelve HAP members are currently responding or preparing to respond to the cyclone, through direct programs or implementing partners. Of these, CARE, Save the Children and World Vision were already operational with each having 500-600 staff in country. Several members, including Tearfund, MERCY Malaysia, CARE, World Vision and Save the Children have already deployed quality and accountability advisors.

II. Collaboration with Sphere support staff

There is a clear demand from NGO staff for integrated and coherent support to improve quality and accountability in the context of the Myanmar Cyclone Nargis Response. A deployment of HAP and Sphere support staff that goes beyond conducting inter-agency trainings side by side is proposed. This will explore new modalities to provide joint support in future interventions, to maximise the expertise and resources of the two initiatives.

While HAP and Sphere support staff will be jointly identifying and responding to the individual and collective needs of agencies working in Myanmar, this will not exclude the possibility of HAP or Sphere separately providing support (within a unified framework), should there be demand for this. The HAP Standard and Sphere Handbook will be presented as complementary tools that can be used separately or together.

III. Proposed aim, key objectives and activities

The aim of the deployment is to improve understanding and strengthening practice of humanitarian accountability and quality management of local and international NGOs in the response to Cyclone Nargis. The team will work collaboratively with Sphere support staff to provide human resources support to the NGO Liaison Officer and engage in activities that will enhance and complement two of the key priority functions of this position: Promotion of Humanitarian Principles and learning around the application of mechanisms to promote accountability.

To this end, the key objectives proposed are:

1. To identify and deliver any appropriate immediate and direct support activities to local and international NGOs to strengthen their quality management systems, meet existing standards and implement context-specific accountability mechanisms. Possible activities include but are not limited to:

- Support to individual agencies in developing quality and accountability work plans, (including a baseline assessment on humanitarian accountability principles which

takes into account the risks associated with the specific context) and feasibility studies based on agencies' existing program management practices with a view to improve existing systems and mechanisms

- Facilitation of continuous improvement processes on quality and accountability, through self-assessment tools and approaches that agencies can incorporate in their existing monitoring and evaluation activities
- Support in the development and implementation of a mechanism that allows civil society to play a direct role in monitoring and reporting against the levels of quality and accountability of the response
- On the job coaching or training for staff, including direct support on improving mechanisms for information sharing, participation and informed consent, and complaint handling mechanisms for local communities; and reviews of project and funding proposals through a quality and accountability lens
- Direct support and advice in setting up agency-specific and/or interagency information dissemination and complaint/feedback mechanisms

2. To support the Protection cluster and other relevant efforts *in building local capacity to prevent and investigate allegations of staff misconduct and abuse*. Proposed activities:

- Inter-agency training on prevention/investigation of allegations of exploitation and abuse
- Direct support and mentoring on developing agency-specific or an inter-agency system for receiving allegations of staff misconduct
- Hands-on assistance on developing systems to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse
- Designing new, or strengthening existing, codes of conduct and setting up process
- Raising awareness of disaster-affected communities, women and children in particular, on how to report cases of misconduct and abuse

3. To document and share outputs and lessons learnt during the deployment

- *With the ALWG, LRC and wider humanitarian community* with a view of mainstreaming quality and accountability in the work of local and international agencies, including
 - Notes on challenges being faced and efforts being made to address them, including reports on agency-specific measures being implemented
 - Options for strengthening quality and accountability in the existing context
 - Guidelines, tools and practitioner notes on good practice
- *With HAP members' humanitarian staff* (at head office and other field locations) and with other quality and accountability initiatives:
 - Report on activities undertaken, outputs, recommendations and follow up activities, including good practice examples and possible case studies where appropriate
 - Overall lessons learned on undertaking this type of deployment in collaboration with the Sphere Support Staff to strengthen Field Team deployment methodology;
- *With senior managers of participating agencies* (field level and at the HQ), feedback on how their internal quality and accountability strategies and guidelines are being applied and how effective they are
- *With all relevant stakeholders*, an assessment of the priority needs – short and long term, including an exit strategy – for support on strengthening humanitarian accountability and quality management, including the use of the HAP Standard and Sphere *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*, where appropriate.

Beyond the Sphere support team, the HAP team will work collaboratively with other quality and accountability efforts, national and international agencies responding to the cyclone and other organisations that may be working on complementary approaches, to improve practice, share learning and resources as appropriate.

V.2. Summary of Activities, 7-14 July 2008

I. Summary of activities, 7-14 July 2008⁶

Developing Sphere and HAP Support

The Sphere and HAP representatives worked closely with two groups to plan activities for the two-month intervention:

- The Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG), an initiative tasked with promoting organisational and institutional 'good practice' on Accountability and Learning across the Nargis response. The ALWG will primarily focus 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
- the Local Resource Centre (LRC), a joint initiative of the Capacity Building Initiative, Burnet Institute, The Alliance, World Concern, Oxfam and Save the Children. The Local Resource Centre works to assist MNGO's and CSO's with capacity building through training and technical advice. Three meetings took place with the LRC.
- In addition, Paung Ku, a coalition of MNGO's and INGO's was consulted to determine learning needs and explore contextually appropriate approaches in the Myanmar context.

Based on initial discussions, the Sphere and HAP team created a Plan of Engagement and list of potential support activities for the initial period of engagement, which was shared with relevant stakeholder in Myanmar. This informed the following weeks' plan.

Briefings and training sessions

- Accountability and Learning Working Group meetings co-facilitated by Sphere, HAP and the NGO Liaison Officer.
- Introduction and planning for further engagement with representatives of Action by Churches Together (ACT). The Sphere and HAP team briefly described joint and separate activities that could be offered to ACT partners in Myanmar.
- Meeting on the *Pyapone Pilot: Ways of Gathering Feedback from the Community*, attended by the Local Resource Centre, World Vision and Save the Children. The Sphere Handbook was introduced as a tool for strengthening the monitoring and feedback process. The group is currently planning activities to ensure that an appropriate response mechanism is in place to respond to feedback, which will be followed by further monitoring.
- Brief introduction of HAP and Sphere was provided at the Cluster Lead Meeting.
- Briefing with CARE representatives Clare Smith and U Khin.
- Meeting with representative of Internews/ICCD, funded by DFID to provide an information service for people living in the Delta.
- Meeting with DFID Team Leader, to provide a briefing on Sphere and HAP activities and explore possibilities for future funding

Sphere and HAP Joint Engagement with Save the Children in Myanmar

A short field trip to Save the Children's Office in Twantay Township, Yangon District, was arranged to assess potential Sphere and HAP support needs. Twantay Township was the most affected area within Yangon District. Save the Children was targeting 62,400 of the 156,000 population. The programme has been designed to fulfil children's needs for health, education and safety and for children to attain their rights. Projects included assistance with rebuilding schools, water/sanitation/hygiene promotion (WASH) and shelter.

Two Save the Children representatives and the HAP and Sphere team spent an afternoon with the branch staff members and had an informal discussion to assess any quality and accountability support needs. It was also the first opportunity for HAP and Sphere to approach together a specific agency.

⁶ This is an adaptation from the report prepared by Kelly Wooster, Sphere Consultant. The full report is available upon request.

V.3. Summary of activities, 15-25 July

Date	Activity
14 and 15 July	Day trips to Twantay, including visits to Thankyo Taing and Bo Kan Pay villages
16 July	Shabana Bhatti arrival, briefing and planning session
16 July	Weekly meeting of the Accountability and Learning Working Group (minutes available)
17-19 July	Field visit to Pypon and Kyaiklat with Save the Children in Myanmar (separate report has been submitted to SCiM)
20 July	Anne Lloyd arrival, briefing and planning session
21 July	Half day briefing on Quality and Accountability for the inter-agency core group
22 July	Meeting with the Local Resource Center regarding modalities of working with them, including logistics
22 July	Debrief with CARE regarding their recent field visit, the revision process of the Accountability Framework and steps in its implementation
23 July	Half day briefing on Quality and Accountability, including HAP and Sphere for members and partners of Action Churches Together
23 July	Discussion with Prof Aung Tum Thet regarding possible public awareness raising on quality & accountability for media, govt, private sector
24 July	Weekly meeting of the Accountability and Learning Working Group (minutes available)
24 July	Meeting with Save the Children in Myanmar regarding management and hosting arrangements
24 July	Meeting with Merlin regarding their current work and opportunities
25 July	Meeting DFID regarding their strategy for strengthening quality and accountability in Myanmar and possible support to initiatives such as the joint HAP-Sphere deployment
25 July	Briefing on Quality and Accountability for staff of the Capacity Building Institute and the Local Resource Center