



GOOD PRACTICES: MAINSTREAMING QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Challenges and Issues

Main challenges in the process of institutionalization and mainstreaming of Q&A include the lack of funding and dedicated and competent staff to oversee the process. Although CWS-P/A has been using focal persons within each program to oversee Q&A, challenges remain as this is not the focal person's primary role. Although many staff members were trained on Q&A during the earthquake operations, the downscaling of the operations in recent years led to staff turnover. New staff members are not altogether familiar with Sphere and HAP initiatives.

Due to pressure to deliver activities within constrained funding and timing, documentation or knowledge management is often compromised. Finally, funding agencies are usually more interested to fund and support Q&A initiatives during emergencies but not beyond. The lack of visible and tangible 'before and after' effects of the Q&A interventions is yet another reason for minimal support in this area.

What worked well?

Having a long-term strategy to promote and apply Q&A internally and externally worked well. This strategy was complemented by an interim short-term strategy in view of the emergency response. The strategy provided a framework to work in a systematic way using the appropriate approaches required within the operating environment. An action plan for mainstreaming steps with indicators is being used as a guiding document for the mainstreaming process.

Placement of a Q&A officer within the Disaster Management Program allowed quicker integration of Q&A within the disaster program. Ownership toward Q&A increased. DMP partners were the primary target of Q&A initiatives. Internal strengthening of Q&A was done in a parallel process. DMP monitoring and evaluation tools were reviewed for compliance of Sphere Standards. Effectiveness of the revised tools is being tested through monitoring and field visits.

Lessons Learned

- Leadership commitment is critical to promote and apply Q&A measures.
- Measure the before and after effects with clear quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- Continuously engage and sensitize program departments using creative methods.
- Communicate regularly and in a transparent manner with funding agencies on successes and gaps of Q&A initiatives.
- Include Q&A as a cross-cutting component in all proposals; short-term or long-term.
- Review and revise all program related M&E tools to incorporate Q&A components.
- Conduct Q&A orientation specifically for leadership and senior management.
- HAP certification process is a step forward toward mainstreaming at organizational level.
- Incorporate Q&A in job descriptions and appraisal system for gradual shift in mindsets toward centralization of Q&A.