

## DanChurchAid & Tearfund achieve Certification



*making humanitarian action  
accountable to beneficiaries*

### Welcome to the **HAP Newsletter**

As you can see our newsletter has undergone a makeover. We hope that the new format and frequency will make it not only easier for us to keep in touch with you but also to allow for you to feedback to the Secretariat and contribute by sharing experiences of good practice of humanitarian accountability. We welcome your comments and suggestions not only on the content of what you would like to see us reporting on but also on the new format.

Please pass the newsletter on to any of your contacts who might be interested or download the interactive PDF version.

In this issue you will find coverage of HAP activities and events as well as information about and from some of our Members.

Best wishes,

Jamie Munn (jmun@hapinternational.org)

Research & Communications Manager

Newsletter

1

October 2008

## Contents

- Newly Certified members | 1
- Announcing New HAP Members | 1
- Myanmar: Accountable Partnerships? | 2
- Bangladesh: finding appropriate ways to address community concerns | 3
- Addressing the Complaint Deficit | 4
- HAP Pakistan: Moving Forward | 4
- Accountability to Disaster Survivors Assured?: the London launch of the Guide to the HAP Standard | 6
- Annual Accountability Report | 7
- In Lebanon with Christian Aid Partners: working together on Guided Self-assessments | 7
- Humanitarian Accountability in Good Practice: The Right to Complain: Putting Principles into Practice | 9
- Updates and Announcements | 10

## New Members since our last Newsletter

- ACT International (Full member)
- Lutheran World Federation, Department for World Service (Full member)
- Naba'a, Lebanon (Full member)
- Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, Pakistan (Associate member)
- People In AID (Associate member)
- Church World Service Pakistan/Afgahanistan (Full member)
- Muslim Aid (Full member)
- COAST (Full member)
- Sungi Development Foundation (Full member)

*In the Nargis response, INGOs assumed a great responsibility. With this comes the need for accountability and the duty to deliver.*

## HAP Roving Team in New Emergencies

The New Emergencies Policy (NEP) is a commitment by HAP member agencies to make a special collective effort to apply the HAP Principles of Accountability from the beginning of all new humanitarian emergencies. The Protocol for the Implementation of the New Emergencies Policy sets out a simple mechanism for putting this commitment into practice, and exploring the case for collective action. In 2008, two main activities have taken place under the NEP agenda: a new NEP deployment to Myanmar in response to Cyclone Nargis and, as part of the NEP initiative started earlier in the year in response to Cyclone Sidr, a follow up visit to Bangladesh.

### Myanmar: Accountable partnerships?

By mid May, twelve HAP members were operational or responding through partners to category four Cyclone Nargis, which struck the coast of Myanmar on 3 May 2008. After a series of teleconferences coordinated by the HAP Secretariat in Geneva and in response to growing in-country requests for technical support, two HAP staff were deployed to Myanmar (between 7-25 July and 13-29 August) alongside Sphere consultants, in a first such joint deployment.

Latest news from HAP members responding to Nargis highlight that building local capacity and working through partners remain two of the key challenges.

#### ***Recognise and support local capacity***

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

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness, for example, had been identified as a priority in the early stages of the relief operation, with a view of ensuring that communities and organizations alike will be better prepared to prevent and address the effects of future natural disasters. DRR strategies need to be incorporated into the early recovery phase and any international DRR efforts will have to give due consideration to the ongoing local initiatives. Some representatives of Myanmar NGOs highlighted that proposed large-scale international DRR initiatives (some with a very short proposed life-span) are likely to undermine local capacities and existing coping mechanisms.

Where local groups are approached as potential implementing partners of large-scale projects, international agencies need to consider the absorption capacity of these local partners so as not to overwhelm them.

Local civil society organizations, from NGOs to CBOs to religious networks to self-help groups have expressed an interest in working in partnership and having their operational and technical capacity strengthened as part of this process. Any capacity building efforts for local partners should address needs that have been identified through capability reviews. International agencies ought to coordinate and prioritise between the various options of large-scale capacity building projects.

#### ***Accountability in partnerships***

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. This is based on an approach that emphasises common objectives, trust, 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. HAP Certified agencies are expected, at a minimum, to 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.

For international agencies working through partners in Myanmar, the following areas deserve immediate attention:

- 1) Coordinate expectations and requirements for partners, particularly when partners overlap. 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.

2) Develop, align and disseminate the procedures for selecting partners; undertake joint performance monitoring and provide tailored capacity building activities to support partners to apply the Principles of Accountability.

3) Support partners in their efforts to convey information to beneficiaries and listen to how they have mitigated the risks of sharing information to communities in this context.

Visit our webpages on **HAP in Myanmar** for an extensive report on our deployment to Myanmar, which contains key learning points and recommendations.

Thanks to Save the Children in Myanmar for hosting the HAP and Sphere resource staff. Also to Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan for financial contributions made towards the deployment, and the Local Resource Centre in Yangon for providing desk space.

by Monica Blagescu  
*Field Representative*

---

## Bangladesh: finding appropriate ways to address community concerns

During the January-March 2008 HAP deployment to Bangladesh, our Roving Team visited the areas most severely affected by Cyclone Sidr and guided six agencies through accountability self-assessments. Since then, the HAP team has been providing remote assistance and support to the six agencies and others that have now formed a national *Peer Support Group* on quality and accountability.

In response to requests for more specific support to develop and further strengthen complaints handling processes, a HAP team returned to Bangladesh in August and conducted a three-day workshop in Dhaka, attended by 20 participants from 12 NGOs.

Over the three days, participants explored the

## Future activities

On the 14-15th October, Monica Blagescu is facilitating a workshop for the Nairobi Office of **World Vision, Food Programme Management Group's** pilot scheme of community heldesks. This is a part of their ongoing work in preparation for a thematic certification to the HAP Standard.



barriers that may prevent affected communities from complaining, the importance of community engagement in designing the complaint and response mechanisms, steps to be taken by the agency after it received a complaint, and issues surrounding dealing with more sensitive complaints such as those related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

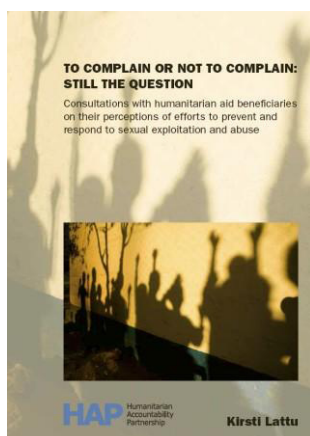
The workshop was also an opportunity for participants to share experiences in setting up complaints handling mechanisms and identify appropriate solutions for some of the challenges they encountered. For example, where complaint boxes were set up as the main channel for raising issues, and in the absence of proper information dissemination on their purpose, communities used the boxes to submit job applications, requests for more aid, and for donations. This highlighted the interdependence between complaints handling processes and information dissemination.

For more details on the Bangladesh initiative, including a report from the March Lessons Learnt Workshop, visit our updates on **HAP in Bangladesh**.



Children inviting us to play during a visit to a Muslim Aid centre, March 2008

# Addressing the Complaint Deficit



In June, HAP released a study into refugees' perceptions of the severity and prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers. *To complain or not to complain: still the question* is the result of seven months participatory-based research with nearly 300 disaster survivors taking part in Kenya,

Namibia and Thailand. Participants aired their perceptions on whether or not the magnitude of sexual exploitation and abuse is changing and were asked for their suggestions on how best to improve prevention and response mechanisms. One of the conclusions coming out of the report indicates that global expectations on how long meaningful change would take, how much it would cost and what would be involved were unmistakably unrealistic.

The report highlights just how rare complaints are and points to why investigations end up being even rarer. Even in locations where intensive prevention and response programs are in place, most participants stated that they would rarely complain to humanitarian organizations about basic day-to-day issues let alone sexual misconduct by an aid worker.

Addressing the 'complaints deficit' on sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be sustainable unless addressed as part of a broader accountability and quality management framework. The HAP report has produced four immediate recommendations for aid agencies: (1) a prevention and response mechanism must be embedded in the agency's accountability framework; (2) the creation of an environment of trust and meaningful partnership between agency staff and beneficiaries is essential; (3) agencies should conduct an awareness campaign; and (4) agencies ought to mitigate the risk factors for sexual exploitation and abuse as soon as they undertake a mission.

In summary, organizations need to set aside sufficient resources and develop systematic monitoring systems in partnership with beneficiaries, while also making information on complaints and investigations accessible and involving beneficiaries to participate in the development and refining of the processes. This framework would empower beneficiaries to give improvement feedback or to complain when service is inadequate or harmful.

The full report is available on [Publication page of the HAP website](#).

by Jamie Munn  
*Research & Communications Manager*

## HAP Pakistan Moving Forward

Confused with the various concepts of downward-upward-horizontal-vertical accountability? HAP makes it simple: focus on the disaster survivors/ beneficiaries and accountability to them.

*Working with the disaster affected Communities*

The HAP Pakistan programme has been actively working with member agencies and the disaster affected communities to improve accountability practices in the earthquake affected areas of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and NWFP.

HAP Programme Officer, Shaukat Iqbal's field support to member agencies like ACTED and World Vision Pakistan has included activities such as; awareness raising on humanitarian accountability and quality through the Principles of Accountability; capacity building of staff in respect to integrating and implementing accountability into programmes; and assessment and monitoring of complaints.

The feedback gathered during focus group meetings with the communities suggests that members and their partners have been able to improve the extent and means by which their organisation and programmes liaise and communicate with disaster survivors. Establishing stronger relationships with the

communities has not always been easy in the volatile political and security context of Pakistan. However, by applying the HAP Standard guidelines staff say they have the tools to assess their progress and stay focused on their target of accountable and quality services.

A critical and non-negotiable right of disaster survivors is the right to complain. Unfortunately, accepting complaints from disaster survivors is often not a top priority, some agencies even deem it to be too challenging or not a viable 'option'. However, HAP Pakistan has made encouraging progress through capacity building training and field support in addressing these concerns. After completing a training seminar Staff have said they feel they have confidence in providing complaints handling mechanisms and are taking steps at implementing them as part of on-going programmes.

*Ensuring humanitarian Quality and Accountability is centre stage*

Despite being a disaster prone country, national humanitarian organisations can arguably be said to be at a nascent stage of service delivery and institutional development. The HAP Pakistan programme has worked hard in bringing issues of humanitarian accountability and quality to centre stage in the humanitarian sector.

Via advocacy and capacity building activities change is taking place. Today an increasing number of organisations are beginning to recognise the importance of these issues. At the time of writing, there are ten HAP members working in Pakistan, out of which three are national NGOs (Sungi Development Foundation, Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, CWS Pakistan-Afghanistan. All joined in 2008).

With feedback and support from HAP members and other motivated organisations, HAP Pakistan has translated the Principles of Accountability and HAP 2007 Standard into Urdu. National staff and local NGOs have already begun to take advantage of these tools providing greater understanding and action on humanitarian accountability issues. In the coming months we hope to also translate both of these resources into regional languages.



Meeting with earthquake survivors in Siren Valley, Manshera District Pakistan, July 2008

In addition we have been working in collaboration with the Sphere Project, Pakistan Humanitarian Forum and will soon be involved in the Pakistan Project initiated Emergency Capacity Building (ECB).

*Five Day Training Course on the HAP 2007 Standard*

In July, a five day training course on the HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management took place in Islamabad. We received an overwhelming response to participate (nearly 3 times the number of places available). Participants came from a wide range of agencies, including; ACTED,

Islamic Relief, IFRC, Diakonie, Emergency Aid Germany, Canadian Red Cross, CWS Pakistan-Afghanistan, Pirbhat Women's Development Society, RAHBAR Organization, ActionAid Pakistan, Swabi CDO and Sungi Development Foundation.

The training provided staff with an understanding of the HAP 2007 Standard along with tools and examples of good practice in accountability. They were introduced to other Quality and Accountability Initiatives and also to broader policy and practices related to humanitarianism.

Some participants have gone on to conduct orientation session on humanitarian accountability and the HAP 2007 Standard in their own organisations.

For example, Pamela Davie (Manager,

*As a result of this workshop I am committed to take accountability as responsibility: to ensure to share activity implementation plans with community*

*Ensure accountability throughout the planning phase rather than just the assessment phase*

*The workshop on Humanitarian Accountability and Quality management was excellent and unique*

*Participants' feedback from the training*

Coordination, Quality and Accountability of the Canadian Red Cross) is currently preparing to integrate and implement the HAP 2007 Standard benchmarks into the CRC Sri Lanka operations by early next year. Najwa Khan, the HAP focal person at CWS is preparing the Humanitarian Accountability Framework which takes CWS forward on route to HAP certification.

Just before going to press we have also heard from Sir Mir Khan, (Chief Executive of Rahbar Organization) to say that he has initiated steps to implement the HAP 2007 Standard across the Rahbar Organisation. Furthermore, he reports that he has also discussed his (positive) experiences of the Standard to the UN Interagency Disaster Management workshop that was held at the end of July in Peshawar. Rahbar has also translated the HAP Principles of Accountability into Pashto,



Meeting with earthquake survivors in Siren Valley, Manshera District, Pakistan, July 2008

the majority language spoken in NWFP, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. (The final translated version will be made available in the coming months.)

Updates on the related activities and events are available on the **HAP in Pakistan** pages of our website.

by Maria Kiani  
Programme Officer, Islamabad

Now available:

- ✓ HAP 2007 Standard in Urdu

And coming soon:

- ✓ HAP Principles of Accountability in Pashto

## Accountability to Disaster Survivors Assured?: Launch of the Guide to the HAP Standard



On the 28th May, hosted in London by Save the Children UK, the Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard was launched, along with the Good Practice Guide that provides aid agencies with what they need to improve their accountability to disaster survivors. The open forum marking the launch of the Guide was hosted by

Save the Children UK.

During his keynote address, Gareth Thomas, MP (Parliamentary Under-secretary of State, Department of International Development (DfID)) stated "I welcome HAP's own efforts to ensure continuous improvements and lesson learning by

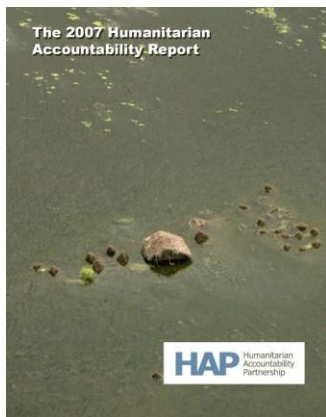
launching a review of the Standard later this year. In my view, with minor tweaks, it could become the basis for improving the management practices of development, rehabilitation, environmental and human rights agencies too."

The keynote address was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Jasmine Whitbread, CEO – Save the Children UK and joined by:

Matthew Frost, CEO – Tearfund UK  
Esther Mujawayo, Co-founder Avega – Rwanda  
Mary Kayatesi-Blewitt, Director – SURF – Rwanda  
Nicholas Stockton, Executive Director - HAP International

You can order your copy by clicking on the Guide here or by visiting the **Oxfam Publishing** or the **HAP websites**.

# Annual Humanitarian Accountability Report



As is now customary, the Humanitarian Accountability Report opens with an independent researcher's assessment of progress made towards HAP's founding vision of a "humanitarian sector with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, which is

transparent and accessible to all relevant parties". While there is clearly a long way to go before this is realised, the publication of the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management may eventually be seen as the key achievement of 2007. The launch of the HAP certification scheme was a second crucial step towards this goal.

The second chapter sets out the results of HAP's annual perceptions survey, which identified increasing optimism about levels of accountability within the system. However, chapter three provides a salutary reminder that of all stakeholders, disaster survivors usually have the least say in the way that humanitarian agencies do their work, although there is a growing body of evidence, some of which is set out in Chapters five and six, that HAP members and HAP certified agencies are beginning to break this mould.

The HAP Secretariat's annual report, presented in Chapter four, sets out the main achievements and challenges encountered in 2007. The transfer of the Building Safer Organisations project from ICVA enabled HAP to acquire the expertise in complaints handling and investigation capacity building that it's mandate demands. However, long delays in funding decisions by some donors required the postponement or cancellation of almost one third of HAP's 2007 workplan.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Report please visit the **Publication pages** on the HAP website and complete the order form or simply download the PDF version. Earlier Annual Reports are also available in PDF.

## In Lebanon with Christian Aid Partners: working together on guided self-assessments

In July, a HAP Team visited Lebanon to work with Christian Aid and three of their partners (Association Najdeh, Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU), and Mouvement Social) through a process of guided accountability self-assessments with a view to:

- Developing an understanding among these partners on humanitarian accountability and quality management.
- Reviewing current activities to identify strengths and gaps in accountability and quality management and generate action points to address these.

The team worked with Christian Aid and their partners over six days; first in an introductory workshop focused on the HAP Standard and self-assessment techniques; then supporting partners with self-assessments activities at headquarters and project sites; followed by a one-day joint workshop to share findings and discuss action points. The diagram to the right summarises the process followed.

### *A need to strengthen accountability in Lebanon*

During discussions in Lebanon a number of reasons were highlighted by Lebanese NGOs why, from their perspective, there is a need to strengthen accountability in particular during humanitarian responses in Lebanon. They raised issues of:

- NGOs prioritising public image and quantity rather than the quality of work.
- Shifting values and standards of both NGOs and donors during emergency times, with NGOs being money led and donors making demands that NGOs are forced to accept.
- The need to re-address the power imbalance through empowerment of both communities and partner NGOs.
- Pre-determined pre-packaged projects that are designed outside Lebanon without consultation.

Through the self-assessment process much good practice was recognised, and a number

of action points were identified to strengthen gaps. Overwhelmingly the three Christian Aid partners identified the need to formalise existing informal mechanisms related to information sharing, participation, staff induction and review processes. In addition there was interest from the partners to exploring how complaints and response mechanisms could be trailed.

by Emily Rogers  
*Field Support Officer*

### Preparation – partner led

- Identify staff to lead on the process.
- Identify location for field visit as part of the self-assessment
- Communicate process to other staff



### Introductory workshop – HAP led

Day 1 – What is accountability and quality management: an introduction to the HAP Standard and the six benchmarks.

Day 2 – Thinking about self-assessments: techniques, and approaches. Planning for self-assessment stage



### Self-assessment – partner led

Each partner decided what activities they would conduct as part of the self-assessment. HAP and Christian Aid staff supported throughout.

Day 3 – Planning and identification of current practice with staff including drafting self-assessment questions, focus group discussions, staff self-assessment scoring.

Day 4 – beneficiary and community consultations through focus group discussions using open-ended questions, voting, and brainstorming.

Day 5 – reflection on findings (strengths and weaknesses), and identification of action points that the NGO wants to take forward.



### Joint Findings workshop – HAP led

Day 6 – participating NGOs to shared the process they followed as part of the self-assessment, main findings and action points.



### Taking actions forward – partner led

As a result of this process, and based on the findings, NGOs involved have chosen to take a number of action points forward.

## The right to complain putting principles into practice

In mid-July 2007 the HAP roving field team travelled to Nairobi to run a three-day workshop on Complaint and Response Mechanisms (CRMs) for staff from World Vision's Food Programme Management Group (FPMG). The workshop offered an introduction to HAP, quality assurance and accountability, but more importantly provided participants with practical tools to translate principles of accountability into practice at field level.

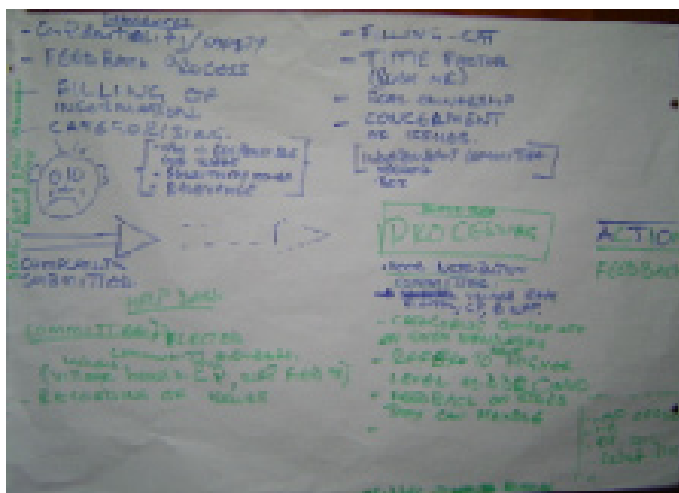


The Kenya country team discuss what steps are needed to set up a Complaint and Response Mechanism for their food programme.

The 24 participants from Cambodia, Kenya, North and South Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia and Zimbabwe were able to share lessons learnt from their programmes and discuss common challenges they felt they would encounter when working with disaster survivors, staff, and authorities to set up context-relevant CRMs. The participants left the workshop with an action plan for starting a CRM-development process which will ensure their CRM respects confidentiality, independence and non-retaliation, and is designed in consultation with disaster survivors so that it is suited to their needs and cultural norms. The HAP team will offer continued support with this process and will follow-up with participants through the CRM implementation phase.

According to the Principles of Accountability, all HAP member agencies will enable beneficiaries and staff to report complaints and seek redress safely. Establishing and implementing complaint-handling procedures is also one of the requirements for agencies that wish to be certified in compliance with the HAP 2007 Standard. CRMs provide an opportunity for stakeholders (in particular disaster survivors) to raise concerns over an agency's decisions and actions, and ensure the agency reviews and acts upon these accordingly. An effective CRM will not only build trust between the agency and community members but will also alert agencies to problems, allow minor mistakes to be rectified, protect staff for false allegations, and above all offer a means for disaster survivors to raise concerns and voice their views in a respectful and dignified way. The World Vision Food Programme Management Group (FPMG) is preparing for a baseline analysis, prior to a planned independent audit for thematic HAP certification. The baseline analysis will assess the quality and accountability of FPMG against the HAP benchmarks by identifying existing gaps and highlighting opportunities for strengthening the quality and accountability of FPMG's work.

The Zimbabwe country team mapped the components of their Complaint and Response Mechanism before coming up with an action plan.



## Updates and Announcements

- Our website has recently been revamped with the aim of making it more user-friendly and accessible. Please take the time to visit the website and feedback your comments.

- In September the Secretariat completed work on revising the HAP Building Safer Organisations Guidelines, which will be utilised for SEA and Complaints Handling Investigations.

- Training Events & Activities scheduled

Oct. 8 Sheryl Haw will be at BOND providing a workshop on Humanitarian Accountability Frameworks

Oct. 9 - 10 HAP Board Meeting in Geneva

Oct. 9 Sheryl Haw will be at DEC providing a workshop on Humanitarian Accountability Frameworks

Oct. 14 - 15 Monica Blagescu will be in Nairobi for a Lessons Learnt Workshop with World Vision Food Programme Management Group

Oct. 14 Sheryl Haw will be in London for a Master Class on Accountability for Global Connections

Oct. 16 – 17 Nicholas Stockton & Coleen Heemskerk will be presenting a two-day workshop on Accountability to Beneficiaries for ATHA CORE Training in Sweden

Oct. 28 - 30 Coleen Heemskerk will be in Kuala Lumpur for a follow up workshop on Building Safer Organisations and Complaints Handling

Oct 30 Nicholas Stockton will be attending the INGO Conference in London.

Nov. 18 – 20 Ester Dross will be in Addis for a follow up workshop on Building Safer Organisations and Complaints Handling

Dec. 3 – 5 HAP Building Safer Organisations ToT in Geneva



HAP International  
Maison Internationale de l'Environnement 2  
Chemin Balexert 7 (first floor, room 1-08)  
CH - 1219 Châtelaine  
Geneva, Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 227881641  
Fax: +41 (0) 227973861

<http://www.hapinternational.org/>