

Minutes of meeting of Quality and Accountability Initiatives (QUAINT), May 27th 2004, London.

Present: Alison Joyner (SPHERE), John Mitchell (ALNAP), Jonathan Potter (People In Aid), Nicholas Stockton (HAP-I).

ALNAP was thanked for arranging, and funding, the meeting. It was decided not to take detailed notes but record, primarily, the action points.

Initial points raised:

- that the issues from previous meetings around the 'Joint Statement' (which were explained to Alison and Nick) were no longer so relevant, and that it was not worth revisiting the idea of a 'joint statement'. The 're-visioning' of HAP-I and ALNAP had helped clarify matters.
- that there was an increasing need for each initiative to look at its added value. The imminent evaluation by DFID of ALNAP and People In Aid would go some way to seeing whether one major donor is convinced of our value.
- that the value of a mapping exercise (ie what each initiative is doing, including those beyond the group) was secondary to discussing areas of complementarity and competition.
- each initiative sketched out its current position and future plans. Given that Sphere is ending in its current form at the end of the year, Alison could offer less commitment to future activity.

Overlaps between the initiatives were identified and then discussed. These were:

1. Participation: a key plank in HAP-I's work and the subject of ALNAP's Global Study.

Suggested Action: that HAP-I and Sphere (potentially, but depending on decisions on its future to be taken by September 2004) join the steering committee of the ALNAP working group for the Global Study.

Suggested Action: that HAP-I's proposed 'manual' draw on this working group's findings and/or use the group as a consultative group to come up with its required indicators.

2. Impact Assessment: a) ALNAP, from their upcoming meeting in Copenhagen, is offering debating space on this issue which all can benefit from.
b) Impact assessment is also the impact our individual initiatives are having.

Suggested Action: As each initiative looks at creating its business case (eg People In Aid with its current 'HR Effectiveness' study) that the models or results be shared.

3. Communications: a) It was agreed that various stakeholders (field staff particularly, donors too) needed to be told how we were different and how we were working together.

Suggested Action: revisiting the joint statement was not worthwhile. Each agency should find its preferred way of responding to this issue or being proactive in addressing it.

Suggested Action: that this be part of the Chairs' agenda (see below)

Suggested Action: that the members/participants in the initiatives be encouraged to take action (eg World Vision International's plastified cards explaining the differences)

b) It was agreed that these meetings would continue, twice a year. It was agreed that we would address expanding the participation to other comparable initiatives (such as Reach Out, Synergie Qualité) at a subsequent meeting.

c) It was agreed that we would each check/set up links from our websites to the others'.

d) It was agreed that we would suggest the Chairs of the initiatives met (as proposed by Lola Gostelow) without the 'executives'. The Chairs' meeting could usefully cover: managing the issue of the plethora of initiatives in the sector, and looking at any impact of convergence or overlapping mandates.

4. Human Resources: this appears in each initiative.
Suggested Action: that John brief Jonathan on the findings of this year's meta-evaluation in regard to human resources so that some work can perhaps be done on particular issues and reported on by Jonathan at ALNAP's Milton Keynes bi-ennial.

5. Training: It was agreed that all would keep each other informed of training to be carried out, with a view to possible linking of trainings when this is geographically and thematically appropriate. ALNAP, while they have a training course on their website, do not actively undertake training. People In Aid is being asked to look at training in HR fundamentals to be delivered around the world, while HAP-I had proposed courses on accountability. Sphere has four training modules on its website, now also available in published form, and at least to the end of 2004 continues to run 8-day Training of Trainers courses which support the use of these modules. RedR were seen as essential participants in a discussion on training.

6. Dialogue with French NGOs: Is the history (particularly between French NGOs and Sphere) over? Sphere has met with the French equivalent, Synergie Qualité, while People In Aid is due to meet Coordination Sud's HR Directors' committee. ALNAP is giving Groupe URD's Quality Compas an airing at the December meeting.

Suggested Action: that dialogue continue to happen. The focus of such a dialogue, at least initially, should be ensuring an understanding of where we all were so the toolbox was all the bigger for the users in the field, rather than seeking a common approach.

Suggested Action: that ALNAP arrange simultaneous translation for relevant session at the December meeting.

7. Localisation/'regionalisation': (the appropriate term was not identified). HANET is a Cambodian group undertaking HAP-I initiatives; there are various groups of agencies 'running' Sphere in their country or region. The Sphere Management Committee will need to address this as it discusses the consultation and decides the future. People In Aid is commissioning someone to work up an international strategy which is likely to consider such groups.

Suggested Action: that, particularly, Sphere and People In Aid keep in contact on this as decisions will be taken almost simultaneously which will suggest how local groups might become involved.

8. Websites: it was agreed this would be an agenda for the next meeting. ALNAP is branding itself more strongly in part by upgrading its site; HAP-I is looking at a complete revision; People In Aid will be revising its site early next year.

Next meeting: September 27th 2pm-5pm at HAP-I's offices in Geneva.