

Quality and Accountability Initiatives
HAP International, ALNAP, People In Aid, Sphere

Meeting 5 October 2004
Hosted by HAP-I, Geneva

Present

Nicholas Stockton, HAP International (chaired)

John Mitchell, ALNAP

Jonathan Potter, People In Aid

Alison Joyner, Sphere (took minutes)

Items discussed

1. 'QUAINT'

It was decided that this acronym should no longer be used. The group should refer to itself as 'quality and accountability initiatives'.

2. Updates

Sphere

Alison presented the latest update on the future of Sphere, following the Management Committee meeting in September. The Management Committee has decided that the Sphere Project will continue from 2005, with a slightly different focus and structure. While some existing activities, such as training, will continue, there will be a greater emphasis on facilitating the work of people already using and promoting Sphere at national and regional levels. All relevant documents on the future are available on the website.

People In Aid

- A consultant has recently completed an assessment of how People In Aid can better respond to demands from outside the UK
- The Board has made a new strategic statement, which includes that People In Aid should be a 'thought leading' organisation (at the cutting edge, bringing in academics and the corporate sector), that the Code will no longer be a strategic objective in itself, and that rather than having offices overseas, People In Aid will seek out 'allies' in other countries (eg the Sphere group in Honduras). This is being described as 'internationalisation'.
- There was a suggestion from the consultant that the quality and accountability initiatives group should hold a one-day conference annually, in addition to the 6-monthly meetings.

ALNAP

- The Review of Humanitarian Action 2003 is out. The 2004 edition will focus on Darfur.
- There will be a meeting in Washington on 29 October to 'stock-take on protection'. International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), International Rescue Committee, Danish Refugee Council and ALNAP are involved. There will be presentations on piloting of the Protection booklet
- One of the key decisions of the Steering Group meeting held recently in Bern was to set up a sub-working group on how to manage an expanding membership: intimacy vs inclusiveness

- The Evaluation of ALNAP for the Department for International Development (DFID, British government) is being written up.

HAP International

- **‘Franchising’:** HAP-I needs to ‘join up’ what it is doing with its strategic vision of ‘accountable humanitarian sector’. Currently the membership tends towards northern/large agencies, reinforcing their comparative advantage. By comparison, there is an idea, currently at its early stages, to link up with national and regional NGO networks. These networks could be given the mandate to certify organisations within their networks as compliant with HAP principles. Thus the HAP-I ‘brand’ could be ‘franchised’ out to the member networks, as a realistic way to expand beyond the existing capacity of HAP-I.
- The main implication of this would be that full membership of HAP-I would need to be open to non-operational bodies. Substantive but informal and inconclusive discussions have so far been held with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), InterAction and the Australian Council for International Development.
- It was noted that People In Aid is having similar discussions about ‘internationalisation’ with some of the same people. It’s important that the different initiatives keep in touch with each other, and identify links that emerge.

3. ‘Accountability supremos’

It was noted that a number of organisations now have positions responsible for ‘accountability’. Examples are:

- World Vision International: Ton van Zupthen, Geneva
- Tear Fund: Tony Eastwood, Operations Support Manager
- Oxfam GB: new policy position being advertised including ‘accountability and learning’ in TOR
- Danish Refugee Council: Peter Klanso
- CARE International: Jock Baker

It was agreed that the minutes of these meetings could be sent to these people, but that it was probably not appropriate to ‘push’ the idea of an ‘accountability supremo’. Rather, each organisation deals with the question in its own way, and it’s up to the initiatives to work with what emerges.

We should all keep in mind copying each other when we are in communication with others about relevant issues, so that the identification of links is ongoing rather than confined to these meetings.

4. Websites

Each of the initiatives is in the process of updating and/or upgrading their website within the next year.

It was agreed that:

- Each of the initiatives would have a ‘quality and accountability initiatives’ (aim for this as a heading in full if possible) which would go to a page including the minutes of these meetings, the finalised questions and answers paper, and links to the other sites of the other initiatives.

- A discussion board was discussed, but it was agreed that for the moment it would be simpler to give the info@ email addresses for each of the initiatives, and see what response is received.

5. Meeting of the Chairs

So far this has been unsuccessful, despite efforts of the Chairs of HAP-I and Sphere. It was agreed:

- to send the Minutes of this meeting to the Chairs, encouraging them to consider the possibility of using the ALNAP Biannual as an opportunity to meet.
- Suggested agenda items discussed at the last meeting were: managing the plethora of initiatives in the sector, and looking at the impact of convergence or overlapping mandates

6. Questions and Answers /Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)document

Many thanks to John for drafting this. Changes were discussed. It was agreed:

- to aim for all further comments to be with John by 15 October, so that it could be on the websites by the end of October. The info@ email addresses of each of the initiatives should be given at the end of the document for receiving feedback.
- That it would be important to keep the questions and answers up to date, and make sure that new ones are based on the feedback. Any responses should be shared with the others
- The document would need to be translated for Sphere, HAP-I and People In Aid. Sphere is willing to organise this, and split the costs 3 ways with the other two initiatives.

7. Items for the next agenda

- Criteria for responses to the FAQ document
- An expanded group? Eg Coordination Sud/Quality Compas, Reach Out

8. Next meeting

- People In Aid will host in London, in March (date to be confirmed). Alison's replacement while she is on maternity leave (January to June 2005) will represent Sphere.
- The following meeting will be hosted at the International Federation by Sphere, in about October.
- It was agreed that the person who hosts chairs the meeting, and the other person from that location (Geneva or London) takes minutes.

Alison Joyner
2 November 2004