

“Quality and Accountability Initiatives”

Meeting hosted by Sphere
at the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Geneva

20 October 2005

Draft Minutes

Present

Nathalie Herlemont-Zoritchak, Coordination Sud - Member of the Steering Committee of Synergy Quality (from Handicap International)
Maurice Herson, ALNAP
Alison Joyner, Sphere – Chair
Jonathan Potter, People In Aid
Sylvie Robert, Reach Out Project Manager
Nicholas Stockton, HAP-International – Minutes
Cécile Zieglé, Coordination Sud

(NB. Minutes of previous meeting pre-approved by email exchange)

1. Welcome & Introductions

- a. Cécile and Nathalie welcomed to their first meeting with the group
- b. Sylvie noted that this would be the final appearance for Reach-Out as it is being wound-up as planned in November

2. Expectations of who attends meetings

Discussion deferred to item 5

3. Translations of minutes

Sphere is obliged to publish all documents on the website in English, Spanish and French. Alison asked if participants would be willing to share translation costs. (Discussion deferred)

4. Updates

a. Coordination Sud – Synergie Quality

- Coordination Sud is an association of about 120 French NGOs (solidarity, emergency and development agencies) “rather like BOND in the UK”. It has a Board 12 members. Its purpose is (a) capacity building/learning and (b) advocacy.
- Coordination Sud initiated Synergy Quality “to promote a different vision from Sphere”, although this initiative should not be seen today as competing with Sphere. It is promoting a comprehensive approach to quality. It is based on a philosophy of asking the right questions because “quality is contextual”. The guide is designed to help achieve quality, not how to define it in normative terms.
- Coordination Sud believes the guidebook is complementary to Sphere.
- Synergy Quality incorporates the Qualité Compas of Groupe URD. URD is not a member of Coordination Sud, and it is independently developing and promoting the Qualité Compas.
- Synergy Quality has a steering committee composed of French Red Cross, ACF, Handicap International, MDM and Solidarité.
- The book covers 5 themes; governance, human resources, ethics, participation and the project cycle. (The guide can be downloaded on http://www.coordinationsud.org/article.php3?id_article=2075)

- 400 copies have distributed so far
- English version will be made produced if funding for translation can be found. (The Qualité Compas is already translated into English, and is available on: <http://www.projetqualite.org/compas/outil/>)
- Coordination Sud wants to see how the guide is used and examine what impact it has before deciding what to do in the longer term. Field experience could be assessed, but no formal evaluation is planned at this stage. “It is a long process to test the utility of the product”
- Coordination Sud is committed to long-term staffing for Quality Synergie

Discussion points:

- Could the other Q & A initiatives contribute to translation costs?
- Would it be possible to examine the complementarities with and differences from Sphere?

b. Reach-Out

Reach-Out is phasing out as planned at the end of November.

- ICVA will be the repository for Reach Out archives and training modules.
- A copyright has been attached to the training materials, but the training materials can be used free of charge, in part, in whole or in modified form, in all “not for profit” applications.
- Reach Out requests that all relevant agencies put a link on their websites to the ICVA Reach Out page, or upload the training materials onto their websites. (Sphere, ALNAP and HAP-I promised to add link)
- A list of trainers who have done the Reach Out ToT course is available.
- Reach Out binders containing hard copies of the training materials will be available in mid-November. **Just fill in the contact details form distributed in the meeting!**
- Self-evaluation to identify “lessons learned” is being conducted, and will be available by the end of November.

c. HAP-International

- Research Officer and Standards Development Manager now recruited.
- Standards development workshop postponed until issue of beneficiary participation has been resolved.
- Staff deployed to respond to the Kashmir earthquake under the HAP-International New Emergencies Protocol

d. People In Aid

- Now has 85 members, and is increasingly “international” in complexion
- DFID 5 year CHF grant approved
- International expansion continuing. Visits to Kenya and Sri Lanka planned
- Concerned to better understand impact, especially on beneficiaries
- Want to strengthen the sector’s stakeholder engagement.
- Examining “lighter touch” approach to social audit, to make qualification for the People in Aid kitemark less burdensome while maintaining standard.
- Looking at involvement in second phase of emergency response.

e. Sphere

- Two Board meetings held since last Q & A meeting
- New Board member appointed: CCD (Comisión Cristiana de Desarrollo, the Honduran Catholic Development Agency which will represent the Sphere NGO network in Honduras)

- 3 seats on the board still available. Suitable applicants welcome. Selection criteria and application forms available on the website:
<http://www.sphereproject.org/about/newboard.htm>
- Training and Materials Support Officer and Knowledge and Information Management position now recruited.
- Sphere ToT to be run during 2005, and at least 4 ToTs planned for 2006, including in French, Spanish and Arabic.
- Board decided to deploy Sphere capacity builder/trainer in Pakistan. Recruitment under way.
- Sphere participating in the UN humanitarian review/reform process in all relevant sector/cluster groups, developing plans for better response and coordination.
- Sphere now represented by the Project manager on the Advisory Committee to DFID's humanitarian benchmarking project.

f. ALNAP

- Ceiling on full membership raised from 52 to 60
- Protection Guide published in English. Translations to follow.
- ALNAP's annual Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004 is now available. (see <http://www.alnap.org/>)
- Evaluation and Participation guidebooks nearing completion
- ALNAP biannual meeting in December to focus on Darfur
- ALNAP revising its workplan
- ALNAP hosting the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
- ALNAP preparing a summary of "lessons learned in earthquakes", along similar lines to the Tsunami/flooding "lessons learned" paper.
- ALNAP working more closely with HPG, HAP-I and IAWG/ECB
- Andrew Bonwick (Oxfam GB) is new chair of ALNAP

5. Working together:

- a. Cooperation Protocol:** The effort to promote cooperation through the Quality Management Project was unsuccessful. However, at field level there has been extensive collaboration between the Oxfam-recruited HAP-I and Sphere focal points in Aceh, for example. HAP-I distributed copies of the Inter-Action Field Cooperation Protocol (1996) and the draft HAP-I New Emergencies Protocol (2005) for information and as possible models for a cooperation protocol for Q & A initiatives in future emergencies. However, HAP-I stated that since its efforts to promote greater cooperation had been both unsuccessful and very time consuming, it was no longer willing to take a leadership role in developing a New Emergencies Protocol for use outside its own membership. However, HAP-I would support such an initiative coming from others.
- b. Meeting of the Chairs:**
- Chairs of the four Q & A initiatives have not yet met together as previously proposed. There was no agreement to push for this 4-way meeting.
 - The Sphere Board Chair will propose a bilateral chairs and managers meeting with HAP-I, following discussions at the last Sphere Board meeting.
- c. Sphere and Qualité Compas Piloting:**
- Sphere and Qualité Compas have agreed to look at possibilities for examining their complementarity at the field level.
 - Synergy Quality would like to be kept informed of developments.
- d. Potential new members.**
- The Chair proposed that the express purpose of the Q & A meetings should be: ***"To find practical ways of working together to improve the quality and accountability"***

of humanitarian action". There would be no 'membership' of the group, just participation, and therefore no firm criteria for joining. Participation should be **demand driven**, as already set out in the FAQ, so invitations would not be pro-actively issued. As stated on the FAQ, those bodies that wish to attend should notify any one of the existing participants, and if none of the current participants object, the Chair designate can issue an invitation for the next meeting.

- This proposal was agreed (in ALNAP's case, through subsequent communication to the minute taker).
- While "tradition" suggests that the heads of Q & A initiatives should attend, participants agreed that alternates are welcome. Experience of this arrangement should be reviewed at some future date.
- People In Aid offered to produce a pro-forma agenda.

6. Technical Matters:

HAP-I expressed the view that the group should also consider meeting using video-conferencing (e.g. through the use of MSN Messenger) technology, especially if there was ever the need for an urgent meeting. (There was no time for further discussion)

7. Global Hand & Global Scale:

People in Aid provided information about Global Hand (a Hong Kong based initiative for a more rational mechanism for allocating donations in kind), and Global Scale, a new "quality recognition" initiative set up by ex relief workers.

8. Next Meeting:

- Date: week beginning 20 March 2006
- Host: Coordination Sud (if confirmed) or ALNAP
- Location: Paris (or London if ALNAP hosts)

The meeting was adjourned at 17.30