

Quality and Accountability Initiatives

Meeting held on 17th March 2005 at People In Aid office, London

Approved Minutes

Present:

Jonathan Potter, People in Aid (Chair)

John Mitchell, ALNAP (Minutes)

Jean McCluskey, SPHERE

Nick Stockton, HAP-I

Christine Mallinson, People in Aid (Attended for part of the meeting)

Sylvie Robert, Reach Out. (Attended for part of the meeting)

Agenda Item 1: Minutes from last meeting

The minutes from the 5th October meeting were approved without revision.

Agenda Item 2a: Updates from each initiative

i) ALNAP

ALNAP is expecting to publish 4 books in 2005-06. They are:

- i) Guidance Booklet on Evaluating Humanitarian Action (1st edition);
- ii) Guidance Booklet on Humanitarian Protection (1st edition);
- iii) Practitioners' Handbook for Consultation of and Participation by of Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action (1st edition);
- iv) *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004.*

ALNAP is also facilitating an inter-agency initiative aimed at creating a coalition of agencies who will work together to improve the quality of evaluations of the tsunami emergency.

ALNAP have just started a process to recruit a Senior Researcher for the Secretariat.

ii) HAP-I

HAP-I has 2 new members; CAFOD and Medical Aid for Palestinians.

HAPI-I is currently recruiting for 2 new posts. One of these will focus on developing accountability indicators and the other on researching the 'business case' for accountability to beneficiaries.

The Board and General Assembly meetings held in December 2004 approved the accreditation/certification policy presented by the Secretariat. HAP-I's next Board meeting and General Assembly will take place on 26th-27th April.

MFA Netherlands, SDC and Ford Foundation have recently confirmed pledges to HAP-I.

iii) SPHERE

The last Management Committee Meeting of SPHERE took place in February.

SPHERE is looking to recruit 2 new staff with new job descriptions to reflect the new phase and feedback from Sphere users during the consultation process in 2004.

The SPHERE handbook has recently been translated into Russian and Arabic. A paper on Lessons Learned from Training of Trainers courses (a guide for facilitators) is soon to be published in hardcopy, and available free on the website. A report on the Evaluation of Training of Trainers is now available on the website.

Sphere moves into a new phase from 1st April with new activities focus for the Project and with changes in governance. Board members will cost-share for core Sphere activities and donors will be sought for additional activities. Two new NGOs have joined the board – CRDA (from Ethiopia) and World Vision. Two applications are outstanding and if both are accepted, one further place on the board is still vacant. The first new Board meeting is scheduled for 7th-8th June.

iv) People In Aid

Staffing levels have now increased from 3 to 3.5.

The DfID evaluation of People in Aid is now complete and contains 16 recommendations.

Pilot countries for training of trainers are being identified.

New work on strategy will be discussed by the board in April.

All those agencies who have implemented the code are poised to re-implement this year.

A study on what field managers need to know on their first day in the field, funded by CAFOD, is due to begin soon.

People in Aid will be running a joint conference with AHRMIO in April.

v) Reach Out Initiative

Reach Out is to be phased out by end of November 2005 and is now involved in a variety of phasing-out activities.

Three training initiatives are being carried out in 2005 in East Africa, in Latin America and in an Arabic speaking country.

Reach Out is looking to 'anchor' its materials in appropriate institutions so that they can be utilised in the future. This may include a mix of organisations including academic, UN and NGO network.

The University of Geneva was brought up as a topic of discussion; specifically to explore ways of engaging with its training centre. This issue may be followed up at the next meeting.

Action Point. ALNAP and HAP-I to consider whether their respective organisations could act as a ‘repository’ for Reach Out training materials.

Agenda item 2b: Additional items from last meeting

- **Expanded Group.** Due to a focus on quality and accountability, it was agreed to invite Coordination SUD to the next meeting.

Action Point. SPHERE to invite the above to next meeting hosted by SPHERE in Geneva.

- **‘Accountability Supremos’:** in future this will be known as accountability focal points. Additional names were suggested and it was agreed that the minutes of this meeting be sent to them.
- **Slides to illustrate FAQ document.** It was acknowledged that this may be a useful aid to presentation but it was decided that generic slides were not essential.

Agenda item 2c: CARE Australia’s work

Not everyone had been informed as to this issue and it was decided to address it at a future meeting.

Action point. JP to send out relevant documentation pertaining to this issue.

Agenda item 2d: Quality Management proposal

Oral feedback (written comments had not yet been received) from the Sphere Management Committee (MC) had been given by the Sphere Project Manager during a teleconference between the Q&A initiatives the week before the Q&A meeting. Feedback from the Sphere MC had suggested that agencies in the field (Aceh) should be the originators and managers of the QM project rather than the Q&A initiatives themselves. It had been agreed during the teleconference that all parties would try to get feedback from agencies working in Aceh (including relevant Boards and MC members of the Q&A initiatives) on the ownership suggestion of the Sphere MC, in order to verify its support with the field. However, not enough conclusive feedback was available, and since the local ownership proposed by the Sphere MC was beyond the control of the Q&A initiatives it was felt that further progress was not possible in a timely manner.

It was proposed that the experience of attempting to work jointly had some positive consequences of bringing the group closer together and that there would possibly be some bilateral work as a result. It was proposed that a *protocol for joint decision making* should be developed in future as an aid to streamlining consultation and decision-making processes in situations requiring a speedy response.

It was agreed that the theme of finding other ways of working together should be brought up at the next meeting.

Action Point. All heads of initiatives to table the protocol idea as a discussion item at respective committee and board meetings.

Agenda item 3: Running a central information centre.

This item arose with reference to the Red Cross/Crescent Code of Conduct. This idea was discussed but no concrete proposals were made to take it forward.

Agenda item 4: Additional items

a) Coordination of web sites

The purpose is to ensure that links between each initiative have been made on respective web-sites.

Action Point. ALNAP to coordinate this process.

b) Meeting of Chairs of ALNAP, HAP-I, SPHERE and People In Aid

The purpose of a meeting is to encourage the chairs to discuss the value of strategic links between each initiative. It was suggested that week beginning June 6th may present an opportunity given ALNAP and SPHERE meetings in the Netherlands.

Action Point. Heads of each initiative to take this suggestion to the chairs of their organisations.