The Sphere Project

Taking the initiative

Exploring **quality** and **accountability** in the humanitarian sector:
an introduction to eight initiatives

July 2009

Acknowledgements

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Web links correct at 06.05.09

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, international NGOs have initiated a number of inter-agency projects on quality and/or accountability in humanitarian action. Representatives of the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), People In Aid and the Sphere Project have met on a regular basis since 2000 in order to discuss common issues and harmonise activities where possible.

Since 2006 these four have been joined by Coordination SUD, Groupe URD, the Emergency Capacity Building Project and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) published a set of Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies in 2004. It is hoped that the group will continue to expand in the future.

Most of these initiatives have developed their own training materials. However, there remains a dearth of materials that introduce the initiatives in an integrated manner, describing how they differ from one another, how they can be used together, and/or how they overlap. This has contributed, particularly at field level, to some confusion about when, how and what to use, and the perception of duplication.

As part of its commitment to collaborate with other initiatives, and to respond in practical terms to demands for coherence and synergy, the Sphere Project wanted to develop materials that could be used in Sphere training workshops to demonstrate how to use the products and tools of the different initiatives to enhance humanitarian assistance. Such materials might also be used in training programmes run by other initiatives or as an introduction to the range of quality and accountability initiatives for humanitarian response.

The materials should enable participants to

o   Understand the approach to quality and accountability of each of the initiatives.
o   Understand the main messages of each initiative and how they complement one another/overlap.
o   Identify how each initiative can be used and in which context, by whom, when and towards which objectives.

This paper is intended as a background paper for a training module. Successive consultants were tasked with conveying the theoretical and conceptual basis of eight of the nine different initiatives and their tools and linkages, both verbally and in diagrammatic form, in a short paper that would also serve as a stand-alone document, of use to two distinct audiences: policy makers and field staff.

Clearly, such a document can only ever provide the most cursory of introductions. A paper whose terms of reference emphasise tools, main messages and diagrams rather than the rich picture of history, governance and structure will inevitably understate for some the scope and mandate of their respective initiatives. Thus, while the paper focuses on the most visible of their products and processes, it acknowledges that each initiative offers much more and urges the reader to explore the sources of further information about them listed in the annexes.

Finally, we emphasise that this document offers introduction not analysis. It is intended neither as critique nor commendation of the individual initiatives. It is not an endorsement of approaches to quality and/or accountability in the humanitarian sector as a whole. Rather, it is intended as a first aid to understanding the work of the diverse institutions and groups that have collectively termed themselves the 'Quality and Accountability Initiatives.'

EIGHT QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVES

The eight initiatives introduced in this document are:

Initiative	Began
The Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)	2005
Synergie Qualité	2003
Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)	2003
The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)	2000
Quality COMPAS	1999
The Sphere Project	1997
The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)	1997
People In Aid	1995

These are not the only quality or accountability initiatives in the humanitarian sector. Some agencies have developed their own systems or adopted national or generic ones (see Annex 2).

Most of the initiatives introduced here were developed by groups of humanitarian agencies that wanted to pool knowledge and resources and to agree common standards or tools. Each of the eight discussed offers a 'toolbox' of resources to help tackle quality and/or accountability. In some cases, this toolbox includes principles, standards and management frameworks, in others, training, lessons learned or guides for field use. Some provide formal accreditation of agencies' achievements. Most offer resources in a number of different languages (see Annex 1).

This document can give only a brief introduction to each initiative and its philosophy, key resources and what it offers humanitarian agencies. However, those who wish to learn more will find additional sources of information in the annexes.

Finally, each of the initiatives has its own definition of quality and accountability. For the purposes of this paper, however, they are defined as follows.

> 'Quality is … about learning what you are doing well and doing it better. It also means finding out what you may need to change to make sure you meet the needs of your service users.' [1]

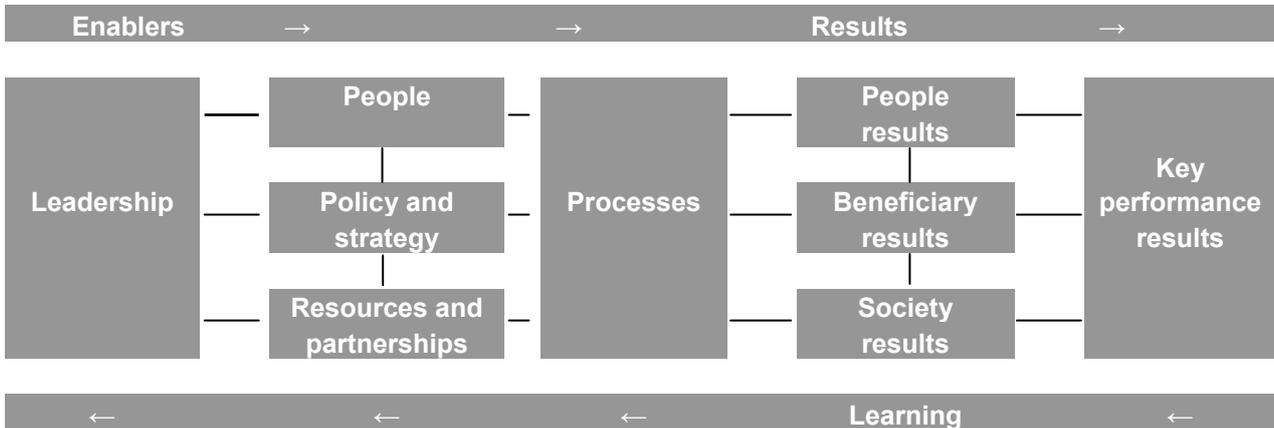> 'Accountability describes the ways in which organisations and projects involve different groups in making decisions, managing activities, and judging and challenging results.' [2]

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[1] Charities Evaluation Services, http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=41 www.ces-vol.org

[2] Emergency Capacity Building Project, (2007), Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: the Good Enough Guide, Oxfam Publishing

ELEMENTS OF QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Like any diagram or model, the one below offers a simplified representation of reality. Its aim is to highlight important elements of quality and accountability, just as the individual quality and accountability initiatives do. The diagram below is adapted from the EFQM Excellence Model.[3] However, it is not necessary to understand the background and application of the Excellence Model in order to understand the diagram.

Enablers	→		→	Results	→
Leadership	**People** — **Policy and strategy** — **Resources and partnerships**	**Processes**	**People results** — **Beneficiary results** — **Society results**	**Key performance results**
←	←	←	Learning	←

In the diagram, the grey-shaded elements are linked. Ideally, the 'enablers' – the elements on the left - work together to drive the 'results' - the elements on the right - in an organisation or project.

Leadership

This refers to how agency leaders, including trustees, directors, managers and team leaders, set direction and enable staff to achieve and deliver results; how leaders make sure an organisation is continually learning and improving.

People

How staff and volunteers are motivated, supported and rewarded, and their potential developed and released. 'People' includes field staff and/or volunteers, including national, international and temporary staff.

Policies, plans and strategies

How an organisation turns its mandate, mission and values into strategy based on the needs of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. [4] How it puts strategy into practice through policies, plans, target and processes, including through use of sectoral standards and principles.

Resources and partnerships

How an organisation or project works with partners and resources in order to achieve results. Partners can be any external group, organisation or individuals. Resources include money, equipment, technology, goods, information or knowledge.

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[3] The EFQM Excellence Model © 1999 -2003 EFQM This paper draws on *Excellence in View: a Guide to the EFQM Excellence Model for the voluntary sector* by Richard Allen for the NCVO Quality Standards Task Group, NCVO, May 2000.

[4] Stakeholders are any persons or groups who affect or are affected by an agency's activities

Processes

How an organisation designs and manages organisational and project processes. How it converts 'enablers' to ensure that goods and services are delivered effectively, efficiently, in ways that meet the needs and expectations of beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

People results

How the organisation or project and its management and support of staff or volunteers are seen by the people working in it.

Beneficiary results

In this paper, beneficiary results refers to how the organisation or project understands and measures what it is achieving for intended beneficiaries, its main stakeholder group.

Society results

In this paper, society results refer to a project's wider community and other stakeholders. Other stakeholders can include donors, host community, other government and non-governmental organisations and their view of project impact.

Key performance results

How well the organisation or project achieved what it planned to achieve.

Learning

How the organisation or project learns from results in order to improve the way it works.

In the next sections, the document turns briefly to each of the quality and accountability initiatives. Using the model, it looks at which elements are highlighted by the initiatives. Short cases from different agencies illustrate the use of individual initiatives in the field. The longer case from CARE Peru on page 21 shows how different initiatives can complement one another.

People In Aid

People In Aid is a global membership network of NGOs. Its key resources include the People In Aid Code of Good Practice. The Code's basic premise is that the people who work for an agency are central to the achievement of agency mission and aims. People In Aid members can be audited and certified using the Code's principles. Seven principles emphasise the importance of:

o Human resources strategy
o Staff policies and practices
o Managing people
o Recruitment and selection
o Learning, training and development
o Health, safety and security

The People In Aid Code

The People In Aid Code's overall focus is **people** – field staff and volunteers – in all kinds of agencies and projects, and on the accountability of agencies towards their staff.

The Code emphasises that good support, management and **leadership** are key to field team effectiveness. The Code can be the basis for an agency's own **policies and strategies** on people management. People In Aid offers members and non-members research, **resources** and tools that contribute to organisational **learning** on people management and how to improve it.

Do agencies listen to their field staff? Do they draw on local staff experience and potential when making major decisions? Do staff and volunteers have opportunities for training, or feel their work is valued? The Code underlines the importance of listening to staff and monitoring **people results.** People In Aid provides tools to help agencies do this.

People in Aid Code

Enablers	→		→		Results		→
		People			**People results**		
Leadership		**Policies, plans strategies**	**Processes**		**Beneficiary results**		**Key performance results**
		Resources and partnerships			**Society results**		
←		←	←		**Learning**		←
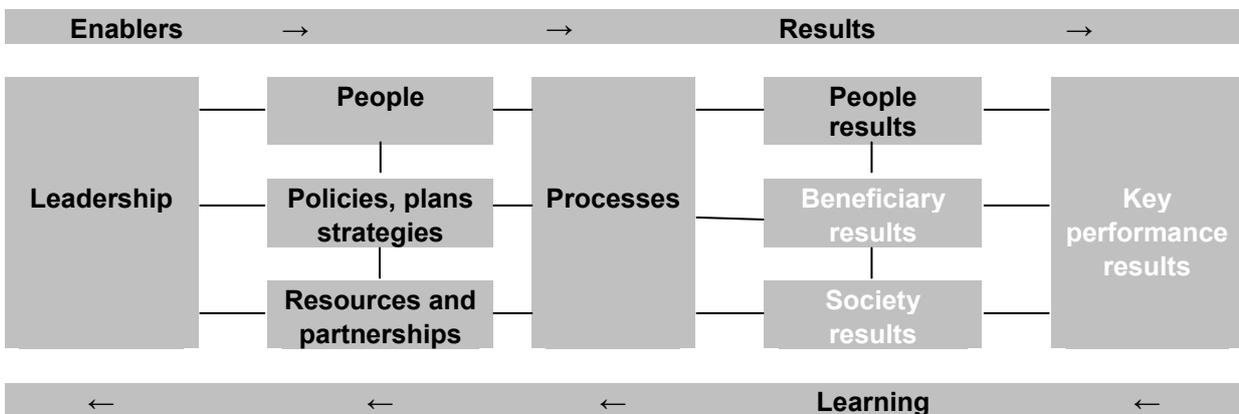
Two key messages

'People are central to the achievement of our mission.' (Guiding Principle, People In Aid Code)

'Effective development, implementation and monitoring of human resources policies and practices rely on appropriate consultation and communication with the people who work for us. (People In Aid Code Principle 4)

Further information at Annex 1

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
John Mitchel, ALNAP

ALNAP was established in 1997 following the multi-agency evaluation of the Rwanda genocide. It is a collective response by the humanitarian sector, dedicated to improving humanitarian performance though shared process of learning and collaborative research.

The ALNAP network comprises of 61 Full Members who collectively make up the key actors involved in humanitarian funding, research, planning, operations and evaluations. This unique system-wide composition provides an inclusive platform fo collective learning, innovations and positive change.

ALNAP focuses on three key areas of work: research and development; providing fora for shared learning and improvement and providing a knowledge library based on evaluative reports.
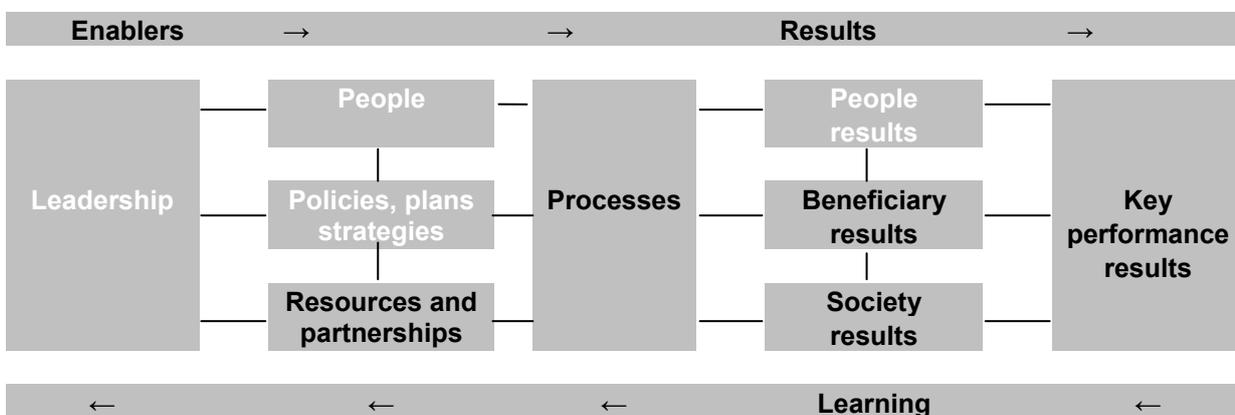
ALNAPs longer term research includes the Review of Humanitarian Action (RHA) which has provided chapters on knowledge management, capacity building, evaluation utilisation, field level learning, organisational change, innovations and performance measurement. Evaluation reports provide much of the source material for these studies and ALNAP is committed to improving the quality and utilisation of evaluations.

 Shorter term research studies aim to promote real time learning and include lessons papers in response to new emergencies and strengthening real time evaluations and after action reviews. Lessons papers on different kinds of emergencies, including earthquakes, floods, food security and urban crises are all available.

As a system wide network ALNAP has a unique convening power and brings together representatives from across the humanitarian system and also from other sectors. ALNAP biannual meetings are now an established and important part of the humanitarian calendar.

ALNAP provides an evaluative reports data base with over 1000 evaluative reports. Most of these are fully searchable on-line. Several guide books are also available including publications on protection, participation and evaluation.

ALNAP

Enablers	→	→	Results	→		

Leadership	People	Processes	People results	Key performance results
	Policies, plans strategies		Beneficiary results	
	Resources and partnerships		Society results	

←	←	←	Learning	←

Two key messages

'We have become increasingly interested in evaluating our performance, but are we using what we find?' (ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2005)

'Sector-wide learning is a key theme for ALNAP. Many failings experienced by the humanitarian sector when responding to natural disasters and complex emergencies are not unique: they have been experienced before, during previous emergencies and by other organisations.' (www.alnap.org)

Further information at Annex 1

The Sphere Project

Sphere was started by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Its best known quality and accountability resource is the Sphere Handbook. This includes a Humanitarian Charter on the rights of people affected by emergencies, and minimum standards for use in four sectors of humanitarian assistance:

o   Water/sanitation and hygiene promotion
o   Food security, nutrition and food aid
o   Shelter, settlement and non-food items
o   Health services

Sphere also sets eight common standards on participation; initial assessment, response; targeting; monitoring; evaluation; aid worker competences and supervision; management and support of personnel.
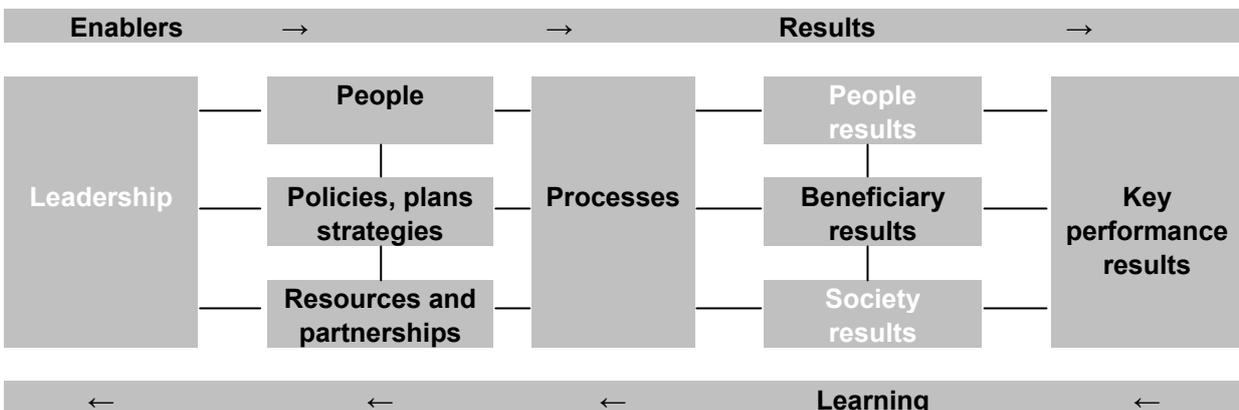
The Sphere Standards

Sphere Standards address the technical aspects listed above as well as core management in all kinds of humanitarian project. Many agencies make Sphere standards part of their own organisational and project **policies, plans and strategies**. Sphere emphasises the need for competent **people** and people management and organises training of trainers courses for participants to then conduct training on the standards and how to implement them.

The role of those affected by an emergency is central to all Sphere Standards. Sphere emphasises their participation in project design and delivery and in monitoring **beneficiary results**. Sphere and its partner agencies have developed a number of **resources** to assist in this process.

Sphere standards are frequently quoted in project plans hence are frequently used in evaluation of **key performance results.**

Sphere Standards

Enablers	→	→	Results	→
Leadership	**People** / **Policies, plans strategies** / **Resources and partnerships**	**Processes**	**People results** / **Beneficiary results** / **Society results**	**Key performance results**
←	←	←	Learning	←

Two key messages

'By adhering to the standards … we commit ourselves to make every effort to ensure that people affected by disasters have access to at least the minimum requirements … to satisfy their basic right to life with dignity.' (Sphere Humanitarian Charter)

'The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assistance programme. (Sphere Common Standard 1)

Further information at Annex 1

The Sphere Project

Church World Service - Pakistan/Afghanistan: the Sphere Standards in food aid

Church World Service - Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) complies with ISO 9001 and is a member of HAP. The agency also applies the Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in its work.

After the floods in the Sindh and Balochistan Provinces of Pakistan during June-July 2007, CWS-P/A deployed a response team to Kech District to address the humanitarian needs of 1000 families affected by the disaster.

The government challenged the agency's decision to target food aid distribution and prioritise the most vulnerable families. It suggested that the army instead distribute all humanitarian food packages and divide them into smaller portions so that more people could benefit in the short term.

However, the response team used Sphere to raise awareness in the government and the community about food aid management goals and standards and the need to target vulnerable groups. After the response, CWS-P/A was recognized by the district government for the quality of humanitarian assistance it had provided to flood victims.

Kelly Wooster

- See page 21 for another case which shows how the use of Sphere and HAP standards and ECB resources can be combined.

Quality COMPAS

The Quality COMPAS is a Quality Assurance method developed by Groupe URD. One of its key resources, the COMPAS Rose, is a comprehensive framework of 12 quality criteria for use in project management and evaluation. The four main criteria focus on the affected population:

- o Any humanitarian project should respond to demonstrated need
- o The project should achieve its objectives
- o It should reduce risk and negative impact
- o It should aim for positive effects in the long term as well as the short term

Eight additional criteria focus on agency and project structures and processes. These criteria cover agency mandate and principles; respect for local population; flexibility; integration; resources; management capacity; efficiency; and learning.
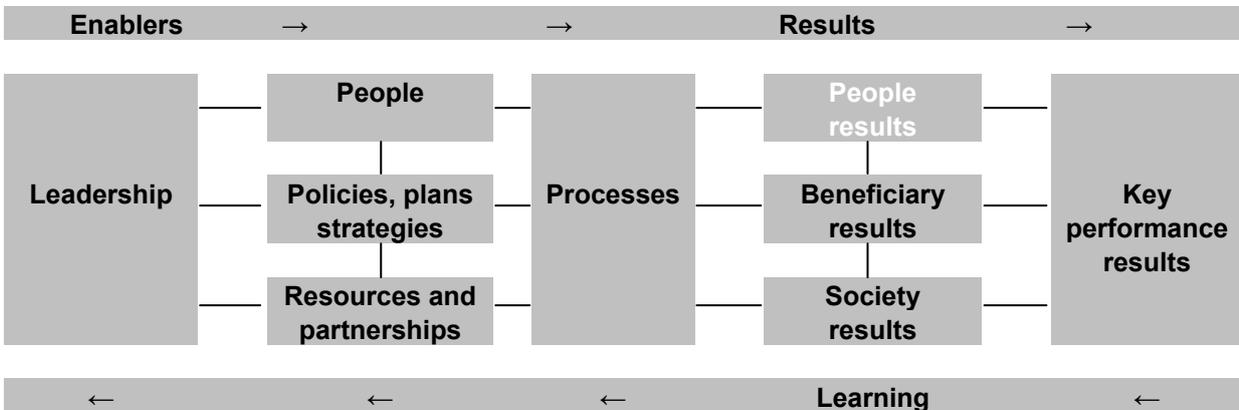
COMPAS Rose

The COMPAS Rose criteria underline the importance of agency mandate, **policies, plans and strategies** in projects of all kinds. Mandate and policy should translate into project processes and **beneficiary results.**

Additional criteria stress the role of senior management and **leadership** capacity and of **people working** in a project. **Resources and partnerships** include opportunities to collaborate with other organisations, helping a project to integrate and coordinate its work with others.

Quality COMPAS emphasises project impacts that avoid damage to ecology or economy. These can be measured through **society results.** The measurement of **key performance results** and **learning** are supported by checklists that supplement the framework.

COMPAS Rose

Enablers	→	→	Results	→

Leadership	People	Processes	People results	Key performance results
	Policies, plans strategies		Beneficiary results	
	Resources and partnerships		Society results	

←	←	←	Learning	←

Two key messages

'*Rather than conducting only final evaluations, humanitarian actors need to adopt a quality assurance approach, thereby preventing errors from occurring through the management of critical points.' (Groupe URD)*

'*While it can be used by individual aid workers for their own work, [the Quality COMPAS] requires commitment at every level, from the field to top management.' (Groupe URD)*

Further information at Annex 1

Quality COMPAS

Madera: COMPAS Rose and learning in Afghanistan

In 2008 the French NGO Madera used the COMPAS Rose to carry out an internal project evaluation in Afghanistan.

Field staff, who had been working on the project for a year, met for a one-day lesson-learning workshop. The COMPAS Rose criteria made it easy for field team members to think about the project and structure their analysis without the need to bring in an external evaluator.

Using the 12 COMPAS Rose criteria helped them to assess the quality of their project, speak about the difficulties they had encountered and make recommendations for the future.

Véronique de Geoffroy, Groupe URD

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

The INEE network aims to ensure that safe, relevant and high quality education is available to children, young people and adults during and after emergencies. The INEE Minimum Standards are companion standards to and complement those of the Sphere Project. They are the network's main quality and accountability resource. INEE sets standards on four aspects of education:

o   Access and learning environment
o   Teaching and learning
o   Teachers and other education personnel
o   Education policy and coordination

INEE's common standards cover community participation (participation by the affected community and use of local community resources in projects) and analysis (assessment, response, monitoring and evaluation).
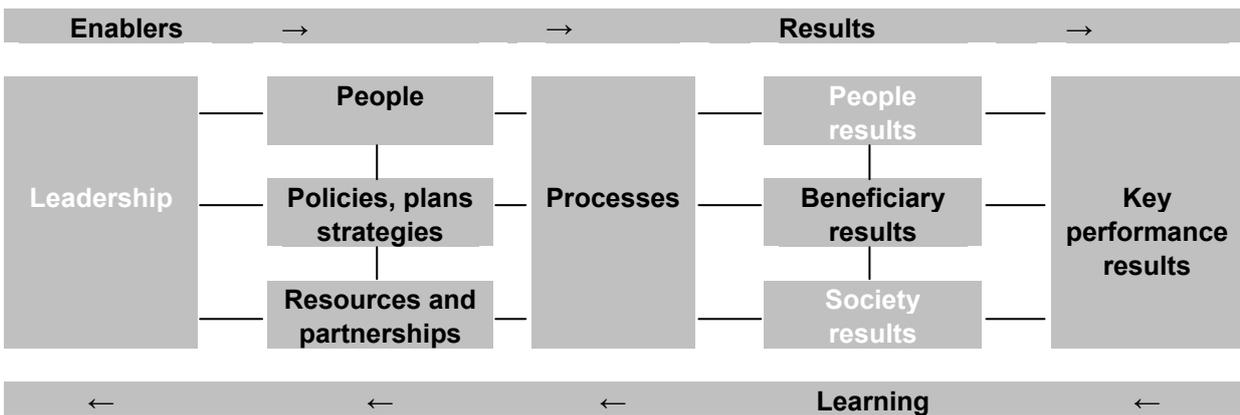
INEE Minimum Standards

The INEE Minimum Standards focus on **policies, plans and strategies** in education. Its standards underline the importance of **people** management**,** particularly in recruitment, working conditions, support and supervision of teachers.

INEE emphasises **partnership** with local community and existing providers, such as local education authorities, when implementing projects. For example, the Norwegian Refugee Council used INEE Standards when it developed a Code of Conduct for teachers and Ministry of Education staff in Somaliland.

INEE's common standards emphasise participation by members of the affected community in project design and implementation and in monitoring **beneficiary results** and **key performance results**

INEE Minimum Standards

Enablers	→	→	Results	→
Leadership	People / Policies, plans strategies / Resources and partnerships	Processes	People results / Beneficiary results / Society results	Key performance results
←	←	←	Learning	←

Two key messages

'INEE does not implement projects or co-ordinate agencies, but works to enable members to be more effective.' (www.ineesite.org)

"The INEE Minimum Standards are based on education good practices, lessons learnt and rights; as such, they are the first global tool to provide guidance on safe, quality and relevant education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction" (INEE Secretariat)

Further information at Annex 1

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

The INEE Minimum Standards in Iraq

Al-Anbar continues to be one of the most insecure regions in Iraq. In recent months, crises have arisen on an almost weekly basis, affecting the main cities as well as smaller villages.

As a result, a huge number of displaced persons are constantly fleeing their places of residence. During every military operation, people are forced to leave their homes in search of safe shelter in the surrounding areas, either close to a relative's house or somewhere in the desert in collective displacement locations. Some populations in these locations have suffered displacement more than once. Al-Anbar has been an unstable area since April 2004 owing to the presence of a very strong armed opposition to the Multi-National Forces and Iraqi Army.

Due to the many crises, thousands of IDPs have been displaced. Some return home as soon as the clashes stop, but many stay away for longer. As a result, the children are not able to continue their studies at school. Many displaced children lack access to education facilities in their new locations of displacement.

In the rehabilitation of public schools in Fallujah, we made use of the Common Standard on Community Participation within the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook: 'Emergency-affected community members actively participate in assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the education programme.' We involved returnees in the prioritization of needs as well as the local communities who had stayed.

Students, teachers and parents participated in small focus groups and shared their priorities. Most of the families insisted on the need to rehabilitate the water and sanitation systems in the five schools targeted, and the priority of preparing classrooms for the coming winter.

The beneficiaries then decided amongst themselves to form representative Community Education Committees. This too accorded with the INEE Handbook. The Committees proved very helpful in ensuring the successful implementation of the programme. For example, the rehabilitation of schools proceeded safely and smoothly as the community committees provided advice on security and also helped to negotiate fair rates with local contractors.

Ali, Iraq agency

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP)
Monica Blagescu, HAP

HAP is a self-regulatory body of member agencies that share a formal commitment to strengthen programme quality and accountability to disaster survivors through implementation and monitoring of the Principles of Accountability. Accountability to beneficiaries helps to ensure that programmes meet their needs both in concept and execution; and reduces the possibility of error, corruption and the need for complaint. The HAP Standard of Accountability and Quality Management was developed to assess compliance with the Principles in a consistent, fair and agreed manner. Interested agencies are audited and certified using the Standard, which covers:

o   Quality management systems to implement standards and other commitments
o   Information sharing with beneficiaries and other stakeholders
o   Beneficiary engagement in programme decisions and informed consent
o   Competencies and development needs of staff
o   Complaint handling and safe redress for beneficiaries, staff and other stakeholders
o   Continual improvement processes, including when working with partners
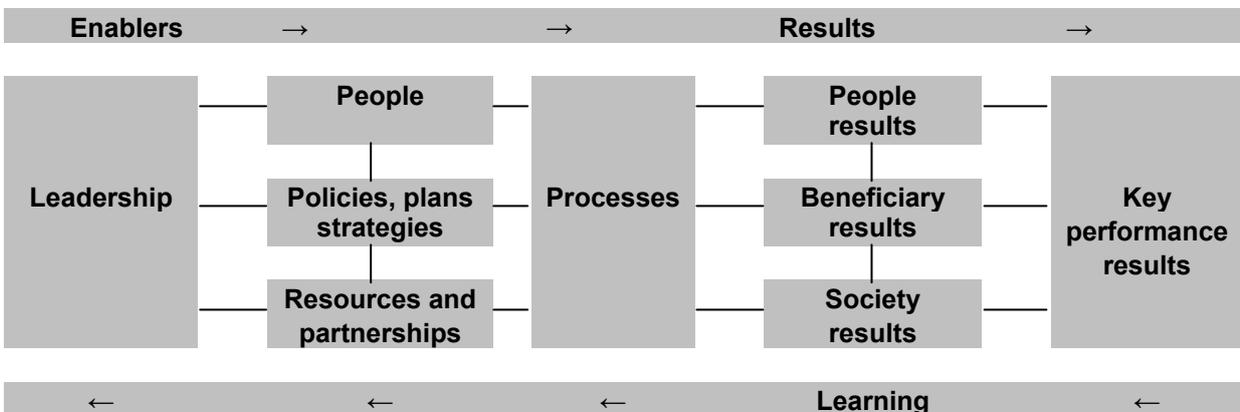
The HAP Standard

Accountability and quality management **processes** that enable agencies to deliver optimum **beneficiary results** are at the core of the HAP Standard. By making quality and accountability a corporate priority, the **leadership** supports **policies, plans and strategies** for assuring the quality of programme delivery and accountability to survivors of disasters.

Agencies committed to the HAP Standard have systems in place for recruiting competent **people** and providing them with development support. **People results** and **society results** are regularly monitored alongside feedback from beneficiaries. **Learning** is integrated into policies and practice so as to drive continual improvement.

HAP offers tools, capacity building support and other **resources** on how to strengthen accountability to beneficiaries and assure programme quality. Member agencies and, increasingly, donors include the HAP Principles of Accountability or the HAP Standard in their policies, programme plans and evaluation of **key performance results**.

The HAP Standard

Enablers	→		→	Results		→
Leadership	**People**	**Processes**	**People results**	**Key performance results**		
	Policies, plans strategies		**Beneficiary results**			
	Resources and partnerships		**Society results**			
←	←	←	Learning		←	

Two key messages
"The essence of humanitarian accountability is to respect the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of those we seek to assist, and to be answerable for our actions and decisions to

interested parties, especially disaster survivors" (The HAP Standard,
http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/hap-2007-standard(1).pdf, Preamble in the Covenant)

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"The application of accountability principles through effective quality management systems results in improved delivery of services and fulfillment of an organisational humanitarian mandate."
(http://www.hapinternational.org/about/core-documents.aspx)

Further information at Annex 1

Tearfund in the Kashmir earthquake[5]

Tearfund has been certified compliant with the HAP Standard. After the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, Tearfund recruited support personnel to guide field staff in strengthening accountability and quality management, with a specific focus on four of the six HAP Benchmarks: information sharing, participation, staff competencies and complaint handling.

Because communities were informed about project design early on, they were able to identify and involve those most vulnerable: widows, orphans and children. Access to timely and relevant information from the outset of the intervention resulted in a higher level of engagement with those affected by the earthquake and representatives.

Because Tearfund listened to suggestions and complaints, affected communities felt that their opinions were valued and respected. Feedback received was subsequently used to facilitate and inform necessary changes to the project plan and make it more relevant to the needs of the community.

The relationship between the community and Tearfund strengthened with the increased interaction between them, which also improved Tearfund staff security in the project area.

Shaukat Iqbal, Sarah Dilloway and Eleanor Tuck, Tearfund

- See page 21 for another case which shows how the use of Sphere and HAP standards and ECB resources can be combined.

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[5] Full text of this case at
 http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/tearfund-accountability-to-beneficiaries-in-kashmir.pdf

Synergie Qualité

Synergie Qualité is an initiative of Coordination SUD, the umbrella organisation of French NGOs. Synergie Qualité stresses that approaches to humanitarian quality must address ethical values as well as organisational issues and technical competences. Chapters in its handbook, the Guide Synergie Qualité, emphasise five themes which should prompt self-questioning. These are:

- o Humanitarian ethics
- o Corporate governance
- o Human resource management
- o The project cycle
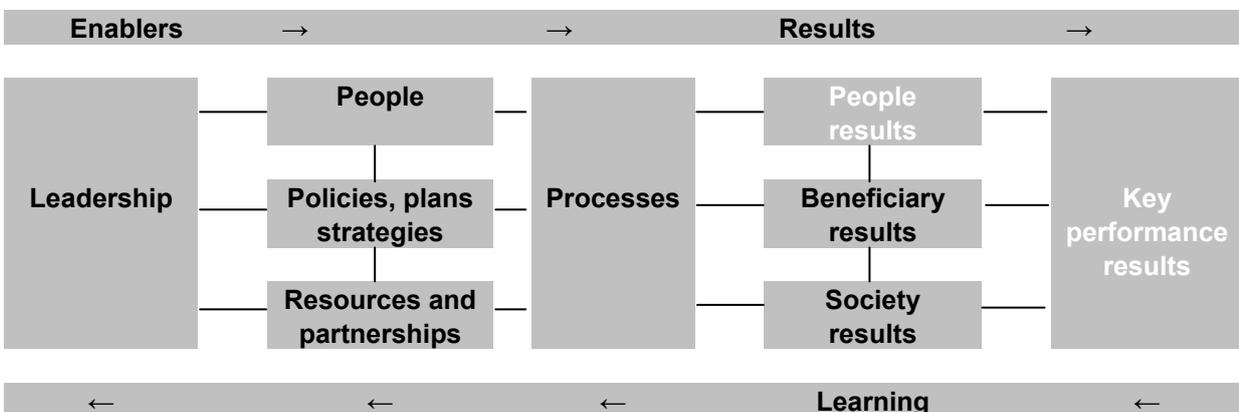- o The role of the affected population

Guide Synergie Qualité

Guide Synergie Qualité supports quality in agencies and projects of all kinds. Humanitarian ethics and good governance should inform **policies, plans and strategies** and agency processes.

Leadership is central if the five themes are to be considered and addressed throughout the organisation. The Guide is aimed at agency leaders, human resource managers, programme planners and evaluators, and field teams. The theme of **people** management includes extensive guidance on human resource policy and strategy, employment law in different jurisdictions, recruitment, pay, performance assessment and training in the field.

The Guide Synergie Qualité incorporates the Compas Rose (see page 12). This address issues such as **partnerships and resources,** the monitoring and evaluation of **beneficiary results** and **society results and** the translation of these into **learning**. Participation by beneficiaries is essential for quality.

Guide Synergie Qualité

Enablers	→	→	Results	→

Leadership	People	Processes	People results	Key performance results
	Policies, plans strategies		Beneficiary results	
	Resources and partnerships		Society results	

←	←	←	Learning	←

Two key messages

'Synergie Qualité does not replace other approaches to the quality of humanitarian actions; it acts as an additional approach.' (Synergie Qualité)

'Quality criteria vary according to the contexts in which the actions occur … that is why this approach deals with the right questions to ask oneself rather than with responses to apply whatever the context.' (Synergie Qualité)

Further information at Annex 1

The Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)

The Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB) is being implemented at a global level by six international NGOs, along with local and international partners, in a number of countries. ECB's goal is to improve speed**,** quality and effectiveness in saving lives, safeguarding livelihoods and protecting the rights of people affected by emergencies. ECB has three current priorities:

- o Staff capacity
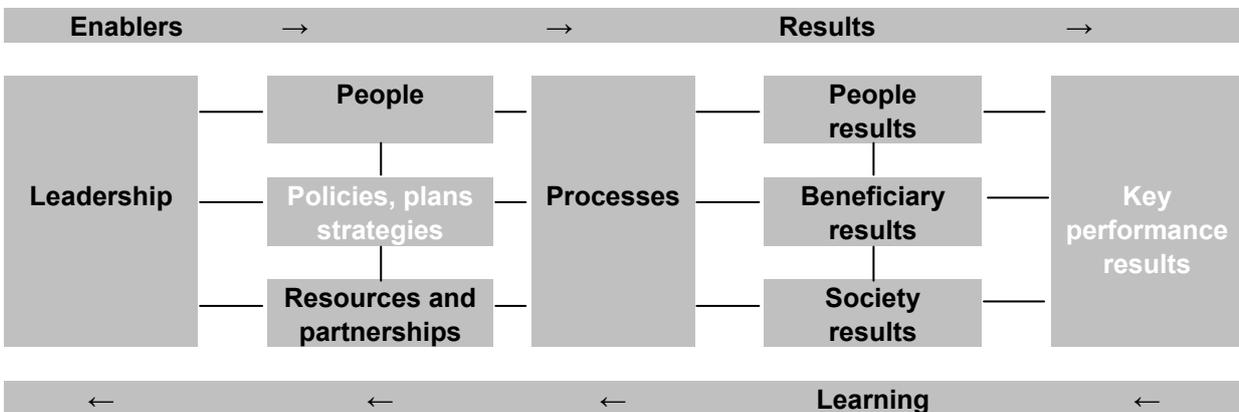- o Impact measurement and accountability
- o Disaster risk reduction

ECB priorities

ECB looks at how best to put existing standards, codes and principles into practice rather than developing standards itself. It aims to improve humanitarian projects through more effective recruitment and training of **people**, and through monitoring staff feedback and **people results.** With partners, it has developed tools to strengthen **leadership,** recruitment, retention, development and deployment of field staff.

In its focus on impact measurement, accountability and **results,** for **beneficiaries** and the communities which host them, ECB promotes a quick and simple approach and has a pocket guide for field staff. In addition, an online database gives summaries of agency and joint agency evaluations, allowing **learning** to be quickly shared.

Collaboration on disaster risk reduction, as with other ECB priorities, means building links and developing **resources and partnerships** with key stakeholders in communities, governments and other organisations. Risk reduction projects aim to contribute to beneficiary, environmental and **society results** in the longer term.

ECB priorities

Enablers	→		→	Results		→
Leadership	**People** — **Policies, plans strategies** — **Resources and partnerships**	**Processes**		**People results** — **Beneficiary results** — **Society results**		**Key performance results**
←	←	←	Learning			←

Two key messages

"We have three current objectives: the field, the agency and the sector."
(http://www.ecbproject.org/phase2)

 "The sector faces a chronic problem of a lack of pragmatic tools and training."
(http://www.ecbproject.org/phase2/objective1)

Further information at Annex 1

- See page 21 for another case which shows how the use of Sphere and HAP standards and ECB resources can be combined.

QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVES: THREE QUESTIONS

Enablers	→	→	Results	→

Leadership	People	Processes	People results	Key performance results
	Policy and strategy		Beneficiary results	
	Resources and partnerships		Society results	

←	←	←	Learning	←
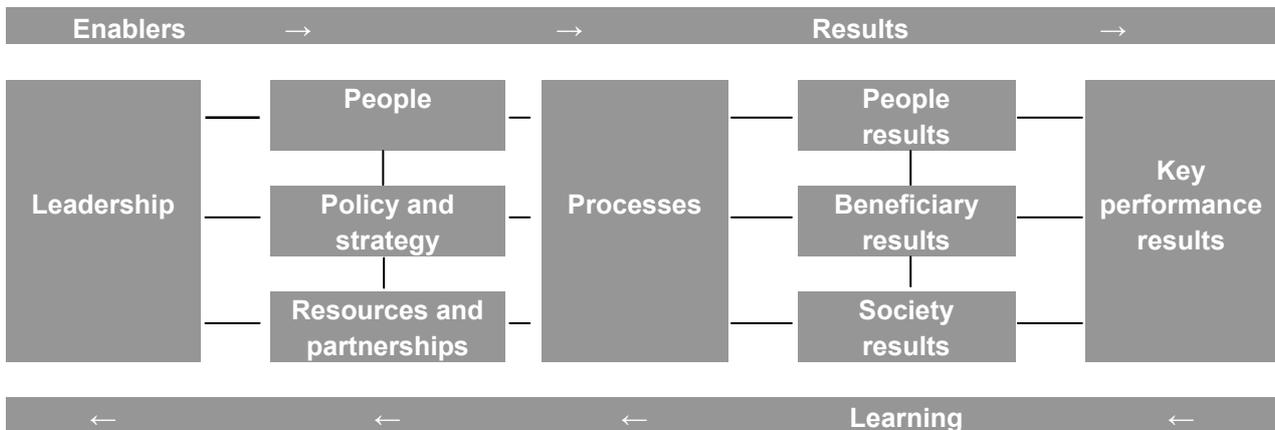
1. What do the Quality and Accountability Initiatives have in common?

There are many similarities between the initiatives. Though they have different starting points and highlight different aspects of humanitarian quality and accountability, they have many elements in common. For example,

- People In Aid first highlighted the importance of good people management and this is an area on which all the initiatives agree.

- The Sphere Project developed technical standards and policies in four specialist areas of response. INEE members similarly developed standards and policies in the area of education.

- All the initiatives agree about the importance of learning.

2. Do the initiatives complement one another?

Several of the initiatives are intended to complement one another. For example,

- The Guide Synergie Qualité incorporates the COMPAS Rose.

- ECB tools and resources were developed with assistance from HAP, People In Aid and Sphere.

- INEE Minimum Standards are formally recognised as companion standards by Sphere

3. What are the differences between the Quality and Accountability Initiatives?

But there are differences too. For example,

- Sphere's Common Standards emphasise commitment to participation and measuring beneficiary results; HAP believes such commitment should be externally verified.

- Most of the initiatives set standards; but ECB has developed resources and builds people capacity to help agencies adhere to standards and policy that already exist.

- Quality COMPAS sees quality and accountability as part of a comprehensive organisational framework: Synergie Qualité reminds staff that the context in which they work must determine the quality and accountability tools they select and how they use them.

All the same, the generally high level of agreement between the quality and accountability initiatives reflects the experience of the initiatives, their member agencies and field staff, and the learning of one initiative from another. The similarities between initiatives can work to an individual agency's advantage.

Firstly, they show that that there is common understanding across the humanitarian sector about how to improve quality and accountability. This can reduce the work a single agency has to do if it wants to improve its performance because many resources already exist that it can adopt or adapt.

Secondly, an agency that is already part of one initiative will find it easier to think about the issues highlighted by another: for example, organisational learning requires similar tools and processes whether the starting point is concern about field staff and commitment to People In Aid or response to a critical evaluation on the ALNAP website. That is one reason why many agencies belong to more than one initiative. The case from CARE in Peru on the following pages shows how the use of Sphere and HAP standards and ECB resources can be combined.

CARE Peru: putting three initiatives into action

CARE International's involvement in **Sphere**, the **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership** and the **ECB** Good Enough Guide has resulted in our own Humanitarian Mandate Statement. This holds us accountable to the international standards and principles we have adopted and demands that we turn rhetoric into practice.

On 15th August 2007 a magnitude 8.0 earthquake struck the coast of Peru, killing over 500 people and leaving more than 75,000 families homeless. Before the earthquake, CARE Peru had identified that accountability was an organisational priority: one of our own programming principles states: "We seek ways to be held accountable to poor and marginalised people." The Peru emergency response was an important moment for ensuring our project plans made accountability to disaster affected communities a reality.
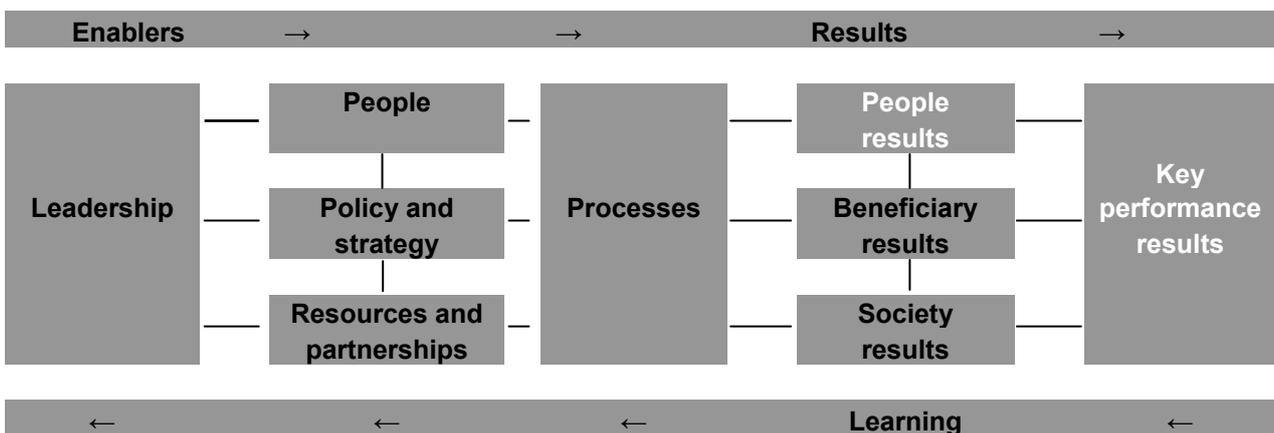
CARE Peru recruited dedicated staff: a Monitoring, Evaluation and Standards Advisor, supported by two field-based officers, and a Complaints Officer, based in Lima. The team reviewed the different international standards and guidelines. Qualitative monitoring and listening to communities was a key task of the two field officers. Not only did this provide an opportunity for feedback for communities, but helped us in learning about our impact during the emergency response, not just at the end of it.

A team of key staff from programme, IT and communications departments developed a simple project accountability framework. This summarised the purpose of CARE's commitment to accountability. The framework was used as an internal communications tool as well as a basis for building up a set of accountability mechanisms, covering four key linked components that were part of project processes:

1. Public information to the affected populations;
2. Mechanisms for participation of affected people in CARE's decision making
3. Feedback from affected communities, and adapting our response accordingly
4. Application of Sphere standards in our response

First activities included a workshop for CARE staff on humanitarian principles and standards, and the distribution of a checklist of Sphere standards to all staff members. This checklist was used with suppliers in monitoring the quality of the goods they were supplying.   Sphere was also successfully used with donors and funding partners to advocate for a temporary shelter design that complies with Sphere standards.

CARE Peru: Sphere Standards, HAP Standard and ECB tools

Enablers	→	→	Results	→

Leadership	People	Processes	People results	Key performance results
	Policy and strategy		Beneficiary results	
	Resources and partnerships		Society results	

←	←	←	Learning	←

To help field staff communicate key information in a clear and consistent manner, the monitoring advisor created a generic information sheet on CARE using ECB's Good Enough Guide *Tool 1: How to present your agency, a need to know check list.* Project managers adapted this for their project teams by adding more specific project information and identified opportunities for information sharing during continuous project implementation and monitoring.

In accordance with our commitment to the HAP Standard, a complaints and response mechanism was launched in the third month of the response. Communicating clearly to communities and government institutions about what the complaints mechanism is for and how it works was made a priority, through public meetings, workshops, radio, leaflets and posters. Channels of complaint included a newly

established free telephone line (with recorded message outside office hours), CARE's web page, visits to the CARE office in Lima, and face to face in the communities themselves.

CARE received and responded to 300 complaints over four months. More women than men used the free telephone line. There were very few calls from the highland areas, and in this region the complaints mechanism was supported by focus group sessions and individual interviews by field-based monitoring staff. The results of feedback included both compliments and complaints. Some examples:

'Families who have received tents from CARE are on my land. After verifying that the land was indeed private land, CARE helped negotiate an agreement with this member of the wider community or society.

'We have been poorly treated by CARE staff.' Managers spoke to one staff member in confidence. The field team recognised that a pressurized situation meant they had not always acted in a respectful manner toward community members than they had intended. CARE leadership recognised the need to support emergency staff by ensuring minimum wellbeing in emergency contexts. This approach was consistent with our commitment to HAP's benchmark on human resource capacity.

'I am grateful to CARE as they visited me and attended to my problem.'' There were several calls of gratitude to CARE, and it is generally felt that the complaints mechanism contributed to improved relationships between CARE and communities. CARE's follow up and communication on decisions made, even when investigations resulted in no further action by us, was very much appreciated.

We learned that

Accountability made a difference

In Peru, strengthening our accountability enabled us to reach vulnerable populations we may not have reached, resolve problems we may not otherwise have been aware of, and contribute to greater dignity of the affected population.

Organisational commitment to accountability is essential

Even with CARE Peru's organisational commitment, a great many practical obstacles were encountered; without top-level commitment from leaders the challenge would have been even greater, perhaps insurmountable.

Early efforts must be made to embed accountability into project processes

Accountability however must also be seen as part of the core work of project teams, and not as something that is parallel to be carried out by dedicated accountability staff only.

A complaints mechanism risks always being seen as a threat to staff

Fear amongst staff that the complaints mechanism would threaten their jobs was an obstacle that needed to be overcome. This was eventually overcome through learning by doing, reassurance that a complaint received did not mean that staff would lose their jobs, and a gradual acceptance that the complaints mechanism actually improved the quality of our work.

Trust in the complaints mechanism helps build relationships

Despite CARE's information campaign, many people in the community only learnt about the system by testing it out. Of fundamental importance is how those making complaints are treated, showing real levels of respect, calm (in the face of often initially very strong feelings of anger and frustration) and kindness.

Although important, accountability is not just about having a complaints mechanism

A complaints mechanism is the newest and most visible part of an accountability system. As a result, it can grab the attention of those keen to strengthen their accountability to disaster affected populations. However, having a complaints mechanism should not mean that we put less emphasis on our ongoing efforts to involve women, men, girls and boys from day one of our response.

Clare Smith, CARE International

ANNEX 1

EIGHT INITIATIVES: FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

ALNAP

'ALNAP was formed as a result of discussions arising from the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR) which evaluated the international humanitarian response to the Rwanda genocide. The JEEAR highlighted that the humanitarian system had failed to learn lessons from previous experiences and update practice and policy accordingly. The evaluation noted the absence of a system-wide forum to create collective approaches to common problems. It also highlighted a serious lack of accountability in the system.

ALNAP was designed as a standing forum which could regularly bring together the key actors from the humanitarian sector to identify common problems and collective approaches to solving them. It was also seen as a way of enhancing the role of evaluation to improve both accountability and performance in humanitarian action.'

Structure	International membership body for organisations and selected individuals
Key resource:	*Annual Review of Humanitarian Action*
Available in:	English, French, Spanish
	ALNAP Secretariat ▪ Overseas Development Institute ▪ 111 Westminster Bridge Road ▪ London SE1 7JD ▪ UK Tel: + 44 (0)20 7922 0300 ▪ Fax: + 44 (0)20 7922 0399 ▪ Email: alnap@alnap.org ▪ www.alnap.org

Emergency Capacity Building Project

'The Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project is a collaboration between six global NGOs - CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision International – working together to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian community in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Our accountability to people affected by disasters and emergencies is a central theme in the Project's work. Many principles and standards for humanitarian accountability now exist. The focus of the ECB Project is on ensuring that these commitments translate into changed practice in the field.'

Structure	Inter-agency project of CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, Oxfam GB, Save the Children, World Vision International
Key resources:	a) *Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: the Good Enough Guide (2007)*
	b) *Building Trust in Diverse Teams: the Toolkit for Emergency Response (2007)*
	c) *Leaving Disasters Behind (2007)*
Available in:	English, French, Spanish, Arabic
	Email: http://www.ecbproject.org/contact ▪ www.ecbproject.org Publications a) and b) also at: http://publications.oxfam.org.uk

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)

'HAP's founders envisaged a truly reformed humanitarian system made accountable to disaster survivors through the development of a global quality assurance system based upon HAP's Principles of Accountability.

Members of HAP commit to:

- o *Complying with the Principles of Accountability;*
- o *Preparing an accountability workplan;*
- o *Reporting annually to HAP on the implementation of the workplan;*
- o *And to monitoring of compliance.*

To this end, HAP is mandated by its members to research and set standards of humanitarian accountability and quality management and to verify their compliance through HAP's certification scheme.

HAP is also mandated to investigate complaints of non-compliance with the Principles of Accountability made against member agencies.'

Structure	Membership organisation (full and associate members) of national and international NGOs and donor agencies
Key resources:	*a) HAP Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management Standard (2007)*
	b) The Guide to the HAP Standard: Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management (2008)
	c) Humanitarian Accountability Report (annual)
	d) Building Safer Organisations Guidelines (BSO Project at ICVA, 2006)
	e) Investigations Training Handbook (2nd edition, 2008)
Available in:	English, French, Spanish, Urdu
	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 Email: secretariat@hapinternational.org ▪ www.hapinternational.org
	Publication b) also at: http://publications.oxfam.org.uk

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

'The INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction are both a handbook and an expression of commitment that all individuals – children, youth and adults – have a right to education during emergencies. The INEE Minimum Standards Handbook is a codification of education rights, lessons learnt and good practices. As such, it presents a global framework for coordinated action to enhance the quality of educational preparedness and response, to increase access to safe and relevant learning opportunities, and to promote partnerships for inter-sectoral linkages.'

Structure:	Open membership network for international organisations and individuals
Key resource:	*The INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*
Available in:	English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Bahasa, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, Japanese, Khmer, Russian, Thai, Urdu
	Email: minimumstandards@ineesite.org ▪ www.ineesite.org

People In Aid

'People In Aid is a global network of more than 140 international development and humanitarian relief agencies working throughout the world. People In Aid's mandate is to improve the quality of human resources management within the development and humanitarian sector, and to this end, it offers a wide range of resources and quality tools, including the People In Aid Code of Good Practice (2003).

Launched in 1997, and revised in 2003, the People In Aid Code of Good Practice was created by a varied stakeholder group (including many INGOs). The Code is a set of principles relating to good human resources management; implementation is through a process of stakeholder engagement and social audit, and typically leads to improvements in organisational effectiveness and accountability, particularly towards staff and volunteers. Today, the Code is widely recognised as the sector standard for human resources management and People In Aid remains dedicated to "helping agencies enhance their impact through better people management".'

Structure:	International membership network for NGOs
Key resources:	a) *People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel (2003)*
	b) *People In Aid Code of Good Practice: Implementation Manual*
Available in:	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Sinhalese, Tamil
	People In Aid ▪ The Resource Centre ▪ 356 Holloway Road London ▪ UK N7 6PA ▪ UK
	Tel: +44 (0)20 3095 3950 ▪ Fax: +44 (0)20 7697 9580 ▪ Email: info@peopleinaid.org ▪ www.peopleinaid.org

Quality COMPAS

'Humanitarian contexts are diverse, complex and often dangerous. Each crisis situation is different - drought, famine, political upheaval, Tsunami, open or dormant conflict, etc. In all these contexts, the central challenge concerning quality is to respond to the 'real' needs of the affected population. This is a complex issue and simplification is not a solution. On the contrary, to design quality humanitarian projects, which put into practice the idea of accountability towards beneficiaries, it is absolutely essential to take complexity and diversity into account.'

Structure:	Project coordinated by Groupe URD
Key resource:	a) *Quality COMPAS including the COMPAS Rose* b) COMPAS Tutorial
Available in:	French, English, Spanish
	Le Groupe URD en France ▪ La Fontaine des Marins ▪ 26170 Plaisians ▪ France Tel : +33 (0)4 75 28 29 35 ▪ Fax : +33 (0)4 75 28 65 4 Email: qualitycompas@urd.org ▪ http://www.projetqualite.org/en/index/index.php

The Sphere Project

'Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. Sphere represents a broad process of collaboration, and an expression of commitment to quality and accountability through the development and continuous improvement of the Sphere Handbook. The aim of Sphere is to improve the quality of assistance to people affected by disaster or conflict, and to improve the accountability of states and humanitarian agencies to their constituents, donors and affected populations. The means to achieving this aim is appropriate use of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards.'

Structure:	Open access resource for humanitarian organisations and individuals
Key resource:	*Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (2004)*
Available in:	Arabic, Assamese, Azeri, Bahasa, Bengali, Chinese, Croatian, Dari,Farsi, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Orriya, Pashtu, Russian, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu and Vietnamese
	Sphere ▪ Box 372 ▪ Geneva 19 ▪ Switzerland 1211 Tel: + 41 22 730 45 01 ▪ Fax + 41 22 730 49 05 ▪ Email: info@sphereproject.org ▪ www.sphereproject.org

Synergie Qualité

'Synergie Qualité is a methodology to help in implementing procedures of quality of humanitarian action within NGOs. The conviction behind the Synergie Qualité approach is that the quality of international solidarity actions must be grasped in a multi-dimensional way.

Quality includes ethical principles, organisational factors at NGO headquarters, technical know-how, and relationships between members of the NGO, and between these members and the local actors (beneficiary populations and southern partners).

The ambition of the Synergie Qualité approach is to help NGOs implement their own 'quality approach' by suggesting that they incorporate five elements: Humanitarian Ethics; Governance within the NGO; Human Resource management; Project cycle (COMPAS quality tool); and Role of affected population.

Synergie Qualité was established by a voluntary and collective working group of French NGOs, most of them members of Coordination SUD (Solidarité, Urgence, Développement) but was also open to non-members. It was also established in a collaborative way with external experts: Groupe URD (Quality COMPAS), University (ethics), Human Resources expert (Human Resources Management).'

Structure:	Project coordinated by NGO umbrella group Coordination SUD
Key resource:	*Guide Synergie Qualité (2005)*
Available in:	French (entire Guide), English (Chapters 1 and 2)
	Coordination SUD - Solidarité Urgence Développement ▪ 14, passage Dubail ▪ 75010 Paris Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 72 93 72 / (0)1 44 72 80 03 ▪ Fax: +33 (0)1 44 72 93 73 Web: http://www.coordinationsud.org/spip.php?article447

ANNEX 2

SOME OF THE OTHER QUALITY OR ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVES AND TOOLS [6]

Accountability Learning and Planning System (ALPS)
Organisation/consortium   ActionAid
Started: 2000 (ALPS)
Key resource available in: English, Portuguese, Spanish

                                               http://www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageId=261

ACFID Code of Conduct
Organisation/consortium   Australian Council for International Development
Started: 1998 (Code)
Key resource available in: English

                                               Includes People In Aid Code and Sphere Charter and
                                               Standards

                                               http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct

BOCONGO Code of Conduct
Organisation/consortium   Botswana Council of Nongovernmental Organisations
(BOCONGO)
Started: 1995 (BOCONGO)
Key resource available in: English

                                               www.bocongo.org.bw
                                               Code also at:
                                               http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/codesofconduct/botswana-
                                               ngocode.html

CCIC Code of Ethics
Organisation/consortium   Canadian Council for International Cooperation
Started: 1995 (Code)
Key resource available in: English, French

                                               http://www.ccic.ca

*Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in
Disaster Relief*
Organisation/consortium   Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, International
                                               Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,
                                               International Save the Children Alliance, Lutheran World
                                               Federation, Oxfam, World Council of Churches, International
                                               Committee of the Red Cross, Steering Committee for
                                               Humanitarian Response
Started: 1994 (Code)
Key resource available in: English at www.ifrc.org and in other languages in the Sphere
                                               Handbook

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[6] This list is not exhaustive. See also
http://myanmar.humanitarianinfo.org/coordination/Reference%20Documents/Quality%20Accounta
bility%20References.pdf

InterAction PVO Standards

Organisation/consortium InterAction (USA)
Started: 1994 (PVO Standards)
Key resource available in: English

http://www.interaction.org/pvostandards/index.html

ISO 9001

Organisation/consortium International Organisation for Standardization
Started: 1987 (Standard)
Key resource available in: English, French, Spanish

http://www.bsi-global.com/Shop/Publication-Detail/?pid=000000000030135838

Listen First

Organisation/consortium MANGO and Concern Worldwide
Started: 2006 (Listen First)
Key resource available in: English

www.listenfirst.org

Listening Project

Organisation/consortium CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
Started: 2005
Key resources available in: English, French, Albanian, Bosnian, Portugese, Serbian, Spanish, Amharic, Bahasa Indonesia, Karen, Khmer, Oromiffa, Sinhalese, Tamil, Thai

Background documents are available in Spanish and French. Issue Papers in English and French and field reports have been translated into the languages of the countries visited.

http://www.cdainc.com

SANGOCO Code of Ethics

Organisation/consortium South African NGO Coalition
Started: 1995 (SANGOCO)
Key resources available in: English

http://www.sangoco.org.za/site/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=8&Itemid=30

Who Counts?

Organisation/consortium MANGO
Started: 2005 (Who Counts?)
Key resource available in: English

http://www.mango.org.uk/whocounts/index.asp