The 2011 Humanitarian Accountability Report

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Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AF	Accountability framework
AGDM	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CBHA	Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies
CDA	Collaborative Learning Projects
CDAC	Inter-Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CES	Charities Evaluation Service
CFLI	Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives
CFSI	Community and Family Services International
COAST Trust	Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust
CRM	Complaints and response mechanism
CODEC	Community Development Centre
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWS-P/A	Church World Service – Pakistan/Afghanistan
DEC	UK Disasters Emergency Committee
DECAF	UK Disasters Emergency Committee Accountability Framework
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission
ECOSOC	UN Environmental and Social Council

ELRHA	Enhanced Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERD	Evaluative Reports Database
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GHP	Global Humanitarian Platform
Group URD	Urgence Réhabilitation Développement
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HAR	Humanitarian Accountability Report
HERR	Humanitarian Emergency Response Review
IAS	International Aid Services
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICAI	International Commission for Aid Impact
ICN	In- Country Network for the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICVA	International Council for Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally displaced person
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDRL	International Disaster Response Law
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
INTOSAI	International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JSI	Joint Standards Initiative
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWSIT	Lutheran World Service India Trust

MAP	Medical Aid for Palestinians
MTPA	Mid-Term Progress Audit
MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFADEC	Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération
PCNC	Philippine Council for NGO Certification
PCP	Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy
PSEA	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
Q&A	Quality and accountability
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RTE	Real time evaluation
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SEA	Sexual exploitation and abuse
SEEDS	Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society
SGS	Société Générale de Surveillance
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United National High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VOICE	European Humanitarian NGO Network
WFP	World Food Programme
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission
WVI	World Vision International
YEU	Yakkum Emergency Unit

Summary

The 2011 Humanitarian Accountability Report describes progress towards achieving HAP's vision of an accountable humanitarian system. The review includes an overview of developments, reports from HAP members, the views of people affected by Kenya's food crisis, and perceptions of accountability from the humanitarian community collected from HAP's annual survey.

Chapter 1: An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability in 2011

The first chapter offers a review of progress made during 2011 towards achieving HAP International's founding vision of a 'humanitarian system championing the rights and dignity of disaster survivors'. Based on a desk review of relevant sources and interviews with key informants, it highlights eight highly significant developments in humanitarian accountability, which it concludes amount to the achievement of a 'critical mass of activity within the humanitarian sector in favour of accountability to affected populations'. These developments include the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s adoption of Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations; efforts to strengthen accountability linkages between international humanitarian actors and disaster affected states; activities by an affected population in Haiti to seek legal redress from the UN; the UK's Department for International Development (DFID)'s establishment of accountability to affected populations as a key policy commitment; progress in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to strengthen the 'voice' of affected populations and the accountability of humanitarian agencies to them; the increased use of cash transfer and vouchers as means of assisting beneficiaries; the commitments by Sphere, HAP, and People In Aid to explore options for achieving greater coherence among the three standards; and signs of renewed demand for certification among humanitarian agencies.

Chapter 2: Annual Reports from HAP Members

This chapter offers a summary of reports provided by HAP members on their accountability work during 2011. It offers an overview of key developments drawn from an analysis of the reports, which indicates that members are investing considerable effort in improving accountability practices; it notes they are establishing accountability frameworks, operational complaints mechanisms, codes of conduct for staff, and reporting significant positive impacts on the effectiveness of their programmes and their relationships with beneficiary communities. The chapter presents extensive highlights from the reports provided by HAP's diverse members, along with boxes that outline learning points and examples of good practice to share. Full copies of members' reports are available at www.hapinternational.org

Chapter 3: Voices from people affected by Kenya's food crisis in 2011

This chapter presents the views of people affected by the food crisis in north-eastern Kenya's Turkana central region, as collected by the Joint Deployment of HAP International, People In Aid, and The Sphere Project in collaboration with the In-country Network on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (ICN) of Kenya. It describes the methodology used for gathering feedback from the affected communities and staff—the Inter-Agency Accountability Mapping Exercise. It then reports on the perceptions of communities affected, and those of frontline agency staff, along with recommendations and suggestions on how the accountability and quality of the humanitarian assistance can be strengthened. It ends by drawing some conclusions for humanitarian agencies.

Chapter 4: Perceptions of Humanitarian Accountability Survey 2011

This chapter outlines findings from HAP's annual Perceptions of Humanitarian Accountability Survey conducted among members of the humanitarian community. It begins by outlining the methods used to collect the views of the 756 respondents, and then presents the detailed findings and a selection of comments. Among key findings in 2011 are that respondents continued to perceive that official donors are the stakeholder group to whom humanitarian action is most accountable; respondents in the Middle East showed the most pessimistic outlook for humanitarian accountability; respondents from HAP-certified agencies rated their organisations highest for doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability; respondents showed slight increases in their perception that the voices of disaster affected communities are considered in monitoring and evaluation; and respondents increasingly perceive that agencies foster an environment that allows disaster affected communities to raise complaints.

CHAPTER 1

An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability in 2011

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter[1] is to assess progress made during 2011 towards achieving HAP International's founding vision of a 'humanitarian system championing the rights and dignity of disaster survivors'.

As in previous years, the overview chapter is based on a desk review of relevant websites, news releases, publications, document sources, and evaluations published during 2011, as well as interviews with selected key informants.

In contrast to previous years, the chapter offers an overall review of highlights in humanitarian accountability instead of a compendium of developments reported separately for NGOs, the Red Cross family, the UN system, and donor organisations. This was decided because highly significant developments in 2011 involved combinations of NGO, Red Cross, UN and sometimes donor actors working together, and due to space limitations.

The highly significant developments in 2011 relating to humanitarian accountability were:

■ The adoption by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals of the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations, as part of the IASC's 'Transformative Agenda';

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[1] This chapter is authored by John Borton, an independent consultant and researcher focusing on humanitarian emergencies and the operation of the humanitarian system. John was the lead author of Study 3 of the influential 1996 Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda.
This chapter does not purport to represent the views of the HAP Secretariat or HAP Membership.

- An important step towards strengthening accountability, and other linkages, between international humanitarian actors and disaster affected states through the International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response and IFRC International Disaster Law programme;

- The important case of an affected population in Haiti seeking legal redress from the UN;

- The UK's Department for International Development (DFID), a significant humanitarian donor, establishing accountability to affected populations as a key policy commitment;

- Significant progress in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to strengthen the 'voice' of affected populations and the accountability of humanitarian agencies to them;

- The increased use of cash transfer and vouchers as means of assisting beneficiaries, while maintaining their dignity and choice;

- The commitment by Sphere, HAP, and People In Aid to a process that will explore options for achieving greater coherence among the three standards; and

- Signs of renewed demand for certification among humanitarian agencies.

The chapter begins with an overview of the principal political economic and humanitarian events in 'the year in question' (Section 1.2), and then reviews each of the key developments listed above. It ends with some concluding remarks.

1.2 The year in question

From a political perspective, a most significant feature of 2011 was the 'Arab Spring'. The wave of protests and uprisings that swept across the Middle East and North Africa resulted in the ousting of the government of President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia in January, and the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his government in February. In Libya, protests and government repression led to a rebellion that received NATO protection and support, and resulted in the overthrow and death of President Muammar Gaddafi in August. The upheaval created significant movements of migrant workers, leaving tens of thousands stranded at border

crossings and experiencing significant hardship[2]. Several thousand people are estimated to have died during the Libya conflict[3] and over 150,000 were internally displaced[4]. Humanitarian agencies responded, though access into Libya during the conflict was a particular challenge. Uprisings also took place in Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria where, by early 2012, government forces indiscriminately shelled civilians in cities opposing the government of President Assad, and the situation looked close to civil war.

From an economic perspective, many western economies remained stagnant for another year, and the threat of Greece defaulting on its debts posed a major threat to the Eurozone and stoked fears of a wider financial crisis. World food prices peaked in early 2011, when the FAO Food Price Index exceeded its highest level, previously set in 2009. Save the Children modelled the association between rising food prices and child mortality, estimating that an additional 400,000 children's lives are at risk as a result of the food price increase.

From a humanitarian perspective, two events stood out for their extraordinary scale and impact:

■ Japan's earthquake and tsunami

■ Somalia's famine and the Horn of Africa food crisis.

Japan's earthquake and tsunami of 11 March was one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world since modern record-keeping began in 1900. The earthquake off the Pacific coast of Japan was of magnitude 9.0 (Mw), and triggered powerful tsunami waves that devastated cities and communities along 600 kilometres of the north-eastern coast, and then caused several nuclear accidents. Severe meltdowns at three reactors in Fukushima forced the evacuation of people within a 20-kilometre radius. The earthquake and tsunami claimed some 18,000 lives,[5] damaged or destroyed over 125,000 buildings, and caused severe damage to roads and railways.

Famine was declared in two regions of southern Somalia on 20 July, the first time the United Nations had officially declared famine in nearly 30 years. Large areas of Kenya and Ethiopia, and parts of South Sudan and Uganda were affected by severe food insecurity. As many as 12.3 million required

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[2]   An estimated 135,000 refugees crossed the border from Libya into Tunisia. Tens of thousands became stranded at Choucha Camp, just inside Tunisia. (Internews 2012 p42)
[3]   The National Transitional Council claims as many as 30,000 people were killed. Karin Laub (8/09/ 2011). "Libyan estimate: At least 30,000 died in the war". Associated Press (San Francisco Chronicle).
[4]   'Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya' 22/11/ 2011 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1159247.pdf
[5]   Japanese National Police Agency. 11/11/ 2011.

emergency assistance in September. Some 250,000 Somalis are believed to have trekked into Kenya and Ethiopia, and the population of Dadaab camp in Kenya grew by 108,000 over three months.[6] Access by agencies to areas controlled by the Islamist group Al-Shabaab was extremely constrained, and most agencies managed their programmes 'remotely'. In November, Al-Shabaab banned 16 UN agencies and international NGOs from operating in areas they controlled in southern and central Somalia. A report by Oxfam and Save the Children later argued that warnings of a food crisis had been available in late 2010 but were not heeded in time.[7] While the full extent of deaths caused by the drought may never be known, DFID estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 people may have died due to drought-related causes from April to August 2011, and over half of them were children under five years old.[8]

In Côte d'Ivoire six months of political violence and armed conflict followed the November 2010 presidential run-off election between opposition leader Alassane Ouattara and incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo. Despite internationally recognized results proclaiming Ouattara the winner, Gbagbo refused to step down. The conflict between the opposing forces ended in May when Gbagbo's forces were overcome in Abidjan, and Ouattara took office as the elected president. At least 3,000 people were killed during the violence and conflict.[9]

Significant flooding affected several countries during 2011 including Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand and India. The flooding in Pakistan and Thailand had the greatest impacts. In Pakistan 509 people died and 1.8 million people were displaced by the flooding that began in August. The 2011 floods set back national efforts to recover from the severe floods of 2010[10] The flood in Thailand affected most areas of the country and resulted in over 250 deaths. They had a severe national economic impact due to the inundation of manufacturing and commercial areas of Bangkok. In December, the World Bank estimated economic damage and losses due to flooding at US$ 45.7 billion.[11]

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[6] Andrej Mahecic, UNHCR press briefing in Geneva 21/2/ 2012 www.unhcr.org/4f437d839.html
[7] 'A Dangerous Delay The cost of late response to early warnings' Joint Agencies Briefing Paper, Oxfam and Save the Children Oxford/London, 18/1/ 2012
[8] www.dfid.gov.uk/News/Latest-news/2011/Lifesaving-aid-for-the-Horn-of-Africa-over-Christmas/
[9] 'World Report 2012: Côte d'Ivoire' Human Rights Watch http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/c-te-d-ivoire
[10] USAID Pakistan Floods Fact Sheet #6, 13/12/ 2011
[11] 'The World Bank Supports Thailand's Post-Floods Recovery Effort', Bangkok, 13/12/2011 www. worldbank.or.th/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/THAILANDEXTN/0,,conte ntMDK:23067443~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:333296,00.html

Earthquakes also took a toll during the year. In February, 185 people died in an earthquake in New Zealand's second largest city, Christchurch. In October, over 600 people died in an earthquake in Turkey, near the eastern towns of Ercis and Van.

1.3 The IASC's 'Transformative Agenda'

1.3.1 The 'Transformative Agenda' Process

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the UN-led mechanism for the coordination of humanitarian assistance involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian actors, showed a remarkable increase in energy and attention focussed on accountability issues in 2011. This was part of its larger 'Transformative Agenda' driven by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the IASC Principals.[12]

Broadly, the 'Transformative Agenda' may be seen as a the successor to the 'Humanitarian Reform Process,' begun in 2005 but which by the end of 2010 was felt to have been largely implemented and whose title had become no longer appropriate. The appointment of Valerie Amos as the new Under-Secretary General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) in September 2010,and reflection on issues raised by the responses to the Haiti Earthquake and the flooding in Pakistan earlier in 2010, produced a new impetus. At the IASC Principals meeting in December 2010, it was agreed to initiate a process (initially termed Developing a new business model for humanitarian response) to prioritise the IASC's efforts to ensure a more predictable and high quality humanitarian response.

An initial set of papers were prepared by IASC member agencies for consideration by the Principals at a Retreat in February 2011, focussing on these key themes:

- Leadership and coordination

- Accountability for performance

- Accountability to affected people

- Building capacity for preparedness and risk reduction

- Advocacy and communications

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[12] The IASC Principals are the heads of all IASC member agencies or their representatives who meet physically at least twice a year and by ad hoc teleconferences for urgent matters. Meetings are chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. See www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/ for more information.

Following the Principals Retreat, the IASC structure, including the Working Group and many of its Subsidiary Bodies, undertook consultations and developed proposals on the key themes. Increasingly, the process was referred to as the "IASC Transformative Agenda". The process was driven and coordinated by the IASC Principals, the IASC Working Group two specially formed 'Task Teams' at the IASC Principals level and the IASC Directors level The whole process was brought together in December 2011 when, according to a 'Chapeau and Compendium of Actions' document, the Principals 'agreed to a set of actions that collectively represent a substantial improvement to the current humanitarian response model' (IASC 2012 p1). The headline agreed actions were:

■ *A mechanism to deploy strong, experienced senior humanitarian leadership to guide the humanitarian response from the outset of a major crisis;*

■ *The strengthening of leadership capacities and rapid deployment of humanitarian leaders at various levels, to ensure the coordination architecture functions well;*

■ *Improved strategic planning at the country level that clarifies the collective results that the humanitarian community sets out to achieve and identifies how clusters and organizations will contribute to them;*

■ *Enhanced accountability of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for the achievement of collective results; and*

■ *Streamlined coordination mechanisms adapted to operational requirements and contexts to better facilitate delivery.* (IASC 2012 p1)

The agreed actions document included the following clear statement:

> *The IASC Principals are committed to the ultimate objective of accountability to beneficiaries by ensuring that the humanitarian response delivers life-saving assistance to those in need as the result of effective and timely decision-making and planning.* (IASC 2012 p2)

1.3.2 Accountability to affected populations

Following publication of the Cluster 2 Evaluation in April 2010 (Steets et al. 2010), the IASC agreed on a management response to the evaluation and set up a Task Team on the Cluster Approach (TTCA) to coordinate its response and subsequent follow-up. In early 2011 the Task Team

established a 'Sub-Group on Accountability to Affected Populations,' with the following brief:

■ Organise a consultation workshop to develop practical tools that can be readily adopted and piloted in the field; and

■ Begin piloting an accountability feedback mechanism for affected populations in three agreed countries by all clusters over the next two years, and include such a mechanism in all future guidance and training.

The IASC Principals also considered the issue of accountability to affected populations at their meetings in February and April, where they took key decisions, gave further impetus, and broadened the scope of the Sub-Group. This was reviewed and approved at the Principals meeting in December.

The Principals meeting in February agreed that all IASC organisations should commit themselves to:

■ Include affected populations in programme and operations planning and review;

■ Facilitate the provision of feedback by affected people on the services and protection offered, including a complaints mechanism;

■ Provide affected people with information in local languages about the services and support available; and

■ Ensure that staff inductions agreements with operational partners include organisational commitments to, and systems for, accountability to affected people.

The Principals meeting in April put a timeframe on the commitments made in February and added additional commitments. They agreed that:

■ IASC organisations should include accountability to affected populations in all relevant statements/policies *by the end of 2012*; develop plans to put these commitments into practice; and reflect these commitments in their agreements with operational partners.

■ All needs assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation processes should systematically include the participation of affected populations.

■ In any new disaster, information on the emergency situation, availability and nature of humanitarian responses should be systematically communicated to the affected population using relevant communication mechanisms.

The Principals also added impetus to the work of the Sub-Group on Accountability to Affected Populations by requesting the Sub-Group to 'make a proposal for inter-agency mechanisms that enable improved participation, information provision, feedback and complaints handling' to be considered by the Principals in December 2011.

The Sub-Group held its consultation workshop in Geneva in July and invited non-IASC organisations such as HAP, Sphere, the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB), and Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC) to join the Sub-Group. Over the following months the Sub-Group:

■ Developed a draft Operational Framework for Ensuring Accountability to Affected Populations in Humanitarian Emergencies. The draft Operational Framework is aimed at field practitioners and is structured around different phases of the programme cycle (before assessment, during assessment, during design and planning, during implementation and during M&E). The existing 2011 Sphere Handbook and the 2010 HAP Standard were used to verify the framework.

■ Considered and adopted a set of five Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) that had been developed previously by ECB drawing on the HAP Standard and the Sphere Handbook.[13]

The CAAP and the draft Operational Framework were then presented to the IASC Working Group meeting in November and to the IASC Principals meeting in December.

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[13] ECB (2010) 'Accountability – Key Elements/Core Understanding for ECB Project Agencies', November ECB.
www.ecbproject.org/accountability-learning/basicelementsofaccountability

➔ **Box 1.** **IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP)**

LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE: Demonstrate their commitment to accountability to affected populations by ensuring feedback and accountability mechanisms are integrated into country strategies, programme proposals, monitoring and evaluations, recruitment, staff inductions, trainings and performance management, partnership agreements, and highlighted in reporting.

TRANSPARENCY: Provide accessible and timely information to affected populations on organizational procedures, structures and processes that affect them to ensure that they can make informed decisions and choices, and facilitate a dialogue between an organisation and its affected populations over information provision.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS: Actively seek the views of affected populations to improve policy and practice in programming, ensuring that feedback and complaints mechanisms are streamlined, appropriate and robust enough to deal with (communicate, receive, process, respond to and learn from) complaints about breaches in policy and stakeholder dissatisfaction5.

PARTICIPATION: Enable affected populations to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them through the establishment of clear guidelines and practice s to engage them appropriately and ensure that the most marginalised and affected are represented and have influence.

DESIGN, MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Design, monitor and evaluate the goals and objectives of programmes with the involvement of affected populations, feeding learning back into the organisation on an on-going basis and reporting on the results of the process.

The IASC Principals meeting in December began by acknowledging that the State bears primary responsibility for accountability to people affected by emergencies, and that the IASC's collective efforts on accountability to affected people should not substitute or erode national lines and mechanisms of accountability.

The Principals endorsed the CAAP and agreed to incorporate the CAAP into the policies and operational guidelines of their organisations[14], and to promote them with operational partners, within Humanitarian Country Teams and amongst cluster members.

The Principals also agreed that the Operational Framework should be piloted by the Sub-Group with relevant inter-agency feedback and complaints mechanisms in up to three countries during 2012. The intention was that, by the end of 2012, the IASC Working Group would review the results of the pilots, make necessary refinements, and endorse the Operational

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[14] The ICRC and the IFRC were exempted from incorporating the CAAP as, according to the meeting record, they "have their own mechanisms for this purpose", though the basis for this statement is unclear.

Framework so that it can be used by relevant IASC organisations and promoted to the wider humanitarian community.

The Principals recognised the need for donors to be in agreement with, and supportive of, both the CAAP and the Operational Framework. They agreed that the Sub-Group should conduct an ongoing in-depth dialogue with donors on the CAAP and the Operational Framework, to ensure its feasibility and to ensure that donors provide the necessary flexibility in funding streams.

Finally, the Principals asked the Sub-Group to prepare a paper on 'best practices' for consideration at the July 2012 Working Group meeting, and to report on progress to the Principals in December 2012.

In a presentation to a Humanitarian Practice Network event in November, the co-chairs of the Sub-Group on Accountability to Affected Populations identified three key unmet challenges:

1. How to develop mechanisms which are appropriate for a given environment and effective as mechanisms for specific complaints, which also reflect the interconnected nature of the humanitarian sector;

2. How to communicate effectively with communities, including by capitalising on new technologies; and

3. How to implement and fund programmes that are flexible and can adapt to feedback or changing requirements.[15]

1.3.3 Accountability for performance

The IASC Initial consideration of the theme of 'Accountability for Performance' focussed on 'performance management' and the establishment of a 'performance framework'. Country Humanitarian Action Plans and work already undertaken by the Needs Assessment Task Force and the Global Clusters were seen as the principal building blocks for developing a performance framework.

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[15] Gwyn Lewis and Brian Lander 'Accountability in humanitarian action: changes and challenges', Event Report, ODI London, 28/11/11 www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/hpn-event-reports/accountability-humanitarian-action-changes-challenges

These discussions eventually achieved agreement:

> *Mutual accountability would be enhanced within and between the HC, HCT members, Cluster Coordinators and other cluster partners, based on a clear, concise, time-bound and results-oriented strategy to deliver. Individual roles and responsibilities in contributing to the collective humanitarian response will be clearly outlined and can then be better communicated to all stakeholders, including donors. (…) Modalities will be established for referring cases of under-performance to the global level for swift resolution. Longer-term planning documents, including CHAPs and CAPs, will also become more strategic, Real Time Evaluations (RTEs) will become timelier and targeted, providing a greater contribution to operational decision-making to enhance performance.* (IASC 2012 p3)

From an early stage it was apparent that there were significant overlaps between 'Accountability for performance' and the parallel themes of 'Leadership' and 'Coordination,' and their implications for the authority and accountability of Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, and the Clusters.

The issue of the authority of the Humanitarian Coordinators was addressed by focussing on the initial response period (up to 3 months) within a Level 3 response[16] The December 2011 Principals meeting introduced the concept of 'empowered leadership'.

> *In the initial period of up to three months of a Level 3 response— the critical period for successful humanitarian action—the Humanitarian Coordinator should exercise "empowered leadership". This would enable the HC, in consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to make quick decisions in key areas, including strategic planning, setting overall priorities, the allocation of resources, and performance monitoring, and if necessary, propose changes in cluster leadership to the Principals concerned, in consultation with the agency/NGO concerned and HCT members.* (IASC 2012 p2)

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[16] A 'Level 3 Response' signifies a disaster of such magnitude that it require mobilisation at the level of the whole system rather than mobilisation at the national level (Level 1) or regional level (Level 2).

1.3.4 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Following publication of the 'Global Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel' in July 2010 (Reddick 2010), the IASC established a Task Force on PSEA in December 2010. The Task Force consists of over 25 UN and non-UN entities and is jointly chaired by IRC and UNDP. It met six times through 2011.

A report on its activities prepared in October 2011[17] noted that progress on key objectives had been hampered by agency representatives not being able to commit sufficient time to the Task Force. Similarly, work to develop a funding proposal to implement joint community based complaint mechanisms in three pilot countries had been delayed by the inability of any of the members to take responsibility for leading the proposal development process[18].

However, positive steps were taken by the IASC Principals at their December meeting. Following a presentation on behalf of the Task Force by the IOM Director General, the IASC Principals agreed to:

■ Designate a senior focal point responsible for prevention of, and response to SEA within each IASC organization by the end of January 2012

■ The senior focal point will "engage effectively and resolve problems with the organization's department for policy, human resources (including recruitment and staff training), audit, investigations, accountability and programming … and have a direct reporting line to senior management on PSEA".

■ A first meeting of the designated PSEA focal points to be convened by the IOM Director General to check on progress and report to the IASC Principals by the end of February 2012.

■ The sharing of work plans for addressing SEA among IASC members

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[17] IASC Working Group IASC Subsidiary Bodies 'Report on Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Activities in 2011',14/10/ 2011.

[18] The intention of the pilots is to enable communities to devise mechanisms with which they would feel safe to report misconduct by agency personnel. It is hoped to complete the funding proposal in early 2012 and secure funding to commence the pilots during 2012.

➔ **Box 2. An example of donor leadership in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**

As a condition of funding NGO partners, the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) requires them to incorporate into their staff codes of conduct the 6 core principles developed by the IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. As a follow-up to BPRM's work on PSEA in the humanitarian field and the InterAction Forum panel on SEA, in October 2011 Acting Assistant Secretary Robinson sent a letter to the 74 NGOs that had received BPRM funding during the preceding three years, requesting them to share with BPRM their plans for operationalizing their codes of conduct for preventing and managing sexual exploitation and abuse.

Other achievements during the years included:

■ The preparation and publication of a paper by the Task Force[19] which raised awareness of its work and included information on national level PSEA network such as the 26 member In- Country Network on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ICN PSEA) in Kenya and the PSEA Network in Liberia

■ The establishment of a new website for the Task Force[20]

■ The completion of self-assessments against PSEA by 10 Task Force members

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[19] 'Sexual exploitation and abuse by UN, NGO and INGO personnel: a self-assessment', Task Force on PSEA. Humanitarian Exchange 52, October 2011.
[20] www.pseataskforce.org

1.4 Stronger links with affected states

Linkages between international humanitarian actors and disaster-affected states were strengthened during 2011 by:

- The launch of an International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response; and

- Continuing development of IFRC's work on International Disaster Response Law.

1.4.1 International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership

The International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response is a process, which was initiated by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) in 2010 following the experience of Swiss disaster response teams responding to Haiti earthquake (see 2010 HAR p48). The teams had been shocked at the quality and approach of some of the international NGOs involved in the response, raising issues such as the ability of disaster-affected national governments to manage access by international NGOs to the affected populations as well as the coverage and effectiveness of existing quality and accountability mechanisms. By the end of 2010 SDC had been joined in the process by IFRC, ICVA, and OCHA, together devising an approach aimed at strengthening the partnership between the international humanitarian sector and national governments. Invitations were issued for a high level inter-governmental meeting (subsequently renamed the International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response: Bridging national and international support, scheduled to be held in October 2011. As preparation for the October meeting, an Expert Dialogue on the Role and Responsibility of the Affected State in International Disaster Response was co-convened by SDC, ICVA, IFRC, and OCHA and hosted by the Royal Institute of International Affairs - Chatham House, in London. The two central questions addressed were:

■ How can the affected state best facilitate humanitarian action?

■ How can the international community help the affected state to fulfil its regulatory and facilitating responsibility? (Lillywhite 2011)

More than 130 representatives from governments, regional organisations, the UN system, the Red Cross movement, and NGOs participated in the Dialogue meeting held in Geneva on 25-26th October. The meeting was conducted in two parts: an open session to which all permanent missions and Geneva-based humanitarian organisations were invited, and a closed session with selected participation. Three background papers were prepared for the meeting. The subsequent statement issued by the four co-convenors noted that the Dialogue was welcomed by participants as:

> '*an innovative initiative bringing together national, regional, and international responders with affected states to discuss joint challenges, increase mutual understanding and foster an enhanced complementary approach by all to better meet the needs of persons affected by disasters*.' (IDDR 2011)

The co-convenors statement listed the 'shared understandings' and 'key challenges' that emerged from the discussions. Key challenges included:

■ *The growing number and variety of international responders to some major disasters;*

■ *Parallel (or poorly integrated) national and international coordination structures that work at cross-purposes;*

■ *Gaps in domestic regulatory frameworks and procedures for facilitating incoming international assistance in many countries, leading to delays, barriers, and gaps in oversight;*

■ *Affected state authorities sometimes lack the capacity to play a primary role in coordination, particularly when these authorities are themselves significantly impacted by the disaster;*

■ *Some international actors provide assistance that is of poor quality, ill-suited to the needs of the affected population, and inadequately attuned to building local capacities for future disasters;*

■ *The increasing politicization of international disaster assistance;*

■ *A growing sense of mistrust between affected states, donors and other international actors; and*

■ *The risk that multiple and fragmented regional and international initiatives will neither take sufficient account of the primary role of the affected state, nor of the specific conditions of the affected population, and that they are not aligned in complement to existing structures and other initiatives.* (IDDR 2011)

The suggested next steps and actions included:

■ Building trust through increased mutual understanding and knowledge-sharing;

■ Legal frameworks and procedures;

■ Mutual assistance and cooperation arrangements;

■ Putting learning into practice;

■ Multi-stakeholder preparedness planning;

■ Complementary coordination frameworks; and

■ Quality and accountability.

The suggested action under 'quality and accountability' was:

> *Take stock of existing quality and accountability mechanisms, including those developed by states and humanitarian organizations, and including pre-qualification, certification, and accreditation schemes as well as quality standards. Better understanding and more consistent application of these mechanisms may be among the ways to ensure that disaster assistance is of an acceptable quality and delivered by competent agencies* (IDDR 2011 p3).

The co-convenors statement noted that:

> *this Dialogue has begun to fill an important un-met need in that existing consultative and policy-making fora have not provided an equivalent space for frank and detailed discussion between governments receiving and providing international aid and humanitarian organizations about their challenges* (IDDR 2011p3).

The prospect was raised of a second international Dialogue, to be convened in 2013, and preparatory meetings that might be held at the regional level to help prepare for a global-level meeting.

1.4.2 IFRC's International Disaster Response Law programme[21]

During 2011, IFRC's IDRL programme worked in three areas:

- Technical Assistance—collaborating with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners to assist governments in strengthening their domestic legal preparedness for disasters.

- Capacity Building—to develop the capacity of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to advise their governments on the development of disaster management law.

- Advocacy, dissemination and research—involving the development of partnerships at the international and regional level on legal preparedness, dissemination of the IDRL Guidelines,[22] and fostering new and innovative research.

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[21] In February 2012 the IDRL Programme was renamed the Disaster Law Programme
[22] IDRL's 'Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance' were approved by states and National Societies at the 2007 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

IFRC, in cooperation with OCHA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and with the support of a range of other organisations,[23] developed a pilot version of a Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Assistance—model legislation designed to assist states to integrate the recommendations of the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance (IDRL Guidelines) into their national laws. Recognising that legal systems and disaster response systems vary significantly from country to country, the Model Act is intended to serve as a reference tool and example to law-makers as they develop legislation appropriate to their national circumstances. The Model may be used as the basis for a stand-alone act or for amendments and additions to existing laws addressing the various regulatory questions at issue in international operations.

The pilot version of the Model Act was presented to states and National Societies at the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2011. The International Conference welcomed the development of the Model Act and encouraged states, in cooperation with National Societies, the IFRC, and other relevant partners, to review their national legislation in order to assess whether they adequately address listed issues regarding disaster risk reduction at community level and regulatory barriers to shelter after natural disasters.[24]

Also during 2011, the IDRL programme published analyses of disaster laws in Nepal, Uganda, and Vanuatu, as well as the report, Disaster in Africa: the case for legal preparedness. The government of Mozambique initiated a revision of its law governing medicines and included clauses relating to the delivery of emergency medicine.

In Sri Lanka, a multi-disciplinary team of experts from around the world was deployed from 12-25 November 2011, to undertake a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Disaster Response Preparedness Mission. IFRC was invited to be part of the team to provide technical expertise in the area of disaster law.

In November, IFRC participated in a UNDAC Disaster Response Preparedness Mission to Sri Lanka review to assess the capacities and capabilities of the Sri Lankan National Disaster Management System, and to provide recommendations aimed at strengthening national preparedness for disasters.

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[23] Including the World Customs Organization, the charity A4ID, the law offices of Allen & Overy LLP, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, Baker & Mckenzie and the legal department of Microsoft Corporation.

[24] www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/model-act-on-idrl/

1.5 Legal redress for Haitians

In October 2010, ten months after Haiti's catastrophic earthquake, the country experienced its first cholera outbreak in over a century. After initial reports of cholera in the Artibonite and Centre departments of Haiti, the disease spread rapidly to cause over 470,000 reported cases and 6,631 attributable deaths in the country.[25] Humanitarian agencies took steps to control the outbreak, with funding through a UN Emergency Appeal for US\$ 164 million in November 2010. According to the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the outbreak ranked as the world's worst cholera outbreak in recent history and one of the best documented.[26] A year after the initial outbreak, the case fatality ratio had been brought below the World Health Organization's one percent standard, indicating that the outbreak had been brought well under control; but cholera remained in the country and its transmission was expected to continue for years to come. Improvements in Haiti's water and sanitation infrastructure will be critical to reducing its spread.

Following the initial outbreak, rumours rapidly spread that the cholera had originated with a Nepali contingent of peacekeeping troops from the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) based at a camp in Artibonite. In early November, initial analyses by the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) in Haiti, and then by the CDC, indicated that the outbreak strain was 'most similar to cholera strains found in South Asia.'[27] Large demonstrations ensued against MINUSTAH and the UN in several locations, and violent demonstrations in Cap-Haïtien in mid-November 2010 resulted in the deaths of several people including one UN employee.

Several investigations to identify the source of the outbreak have since been undertaken by various organisations. One study on behalf of the French and Haitian governments, undertaken by the French epidemiologist Renaud Piarroux reportedly contained evidence that the outbreak was caused by contamination of the Artibonite river resulting from the poor arrangements for sewage disposal at the Nepali camp.[28]

On 8 November 2011, the Boston-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and its Haiti-based affiliate, the Bureau des Avocats

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[25] 'Cholera in Haiti One year later' 25/10/2011 www.cdc.gov/haiticholera/haiti_cholera.htm

[26] 'Cholera in Haiti One year later' 25/10/2011 www.cdc.gov/haiticholera/haiti_cholera.htm

[27] 'CDC Announces Laboratory Test Results of Cholera Outbreak Strain in Haiti' 1/11/10 www.infectioncontroltoday.com/news/2010/11/cdc-announces-laboratory-test-results-of-cholera-outbreak-strain-in-haiti.aspx

[28] 'Haiti cholera: UN peacekeepers to blame, report says' www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11943902

Internationaux (BAI) filed claims with the UN, seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in damages on behalf of more than 5,000 cholera victims and their families. The victims' petition claims that the UN and MINUSTAH are liable for:

1) Failing to adequately screen and treat peacekeeping soldiers arriving from countries experiencing cholera epidemics;

2) Dumping untreated waste materials from a UN base directly into a tributary of the Artibonite, Haiti's longest and most important river; and

3) Failing to respond adequately to the epidemic.

The petition states,

> The cholera victims demand individual compensation, an adequate nationwide response by the UN, and a public apology. They insist that the nationwide response include medical treatment for current and future victims and clean water and sanitation infrastructure, the only solution to the cholera epidemic.[29]

It is understood that the UN is claiming immunity as a result of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which it signs with the countries that host its peacekeeping forces. The first SOFA signed between MINUSTAH and the Haitian government in 2004 confers conditional but broad immunity on MINUSTAH and the UN, limiting civil or criminal pursuit in a judicial court. As observed by Kolovos and Lindstrom of Bureau des Avocats Internationaux:

> The irony of this situation is acute. The UN has long championed accountability and rule of law, and in theory will accept liability for damages the organization causes. By barring all mechanisms for victims to seek damages and accountability, however, the UN's broad immunity undermines the organization's own goals and principles.[30]

1.6 DfID commits to beneficiaries

Following the UK's change of government in 2010, major policy reviews were commissioned into DfID's Humanitarian Emergency Response and its Multilateral Aid. Both were published in March 2011.

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[29] Press Release: 'Over 5,000 Haitian Cholera Victims Sue UN, Seeking Justice (IJDH-BAI)' 8/11/2011 http://ijdh.org/archives/22789

[30] Maria-Elena Kolovos and Beatrice Lindstrom 'UN Must Take Responsibility for Haiti Cholera Outbreak' 23/2/2012 http://ijdh.org/archives/25377

The Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) was conducted by a team, led by Lord Ashdown (Ashdown et al. 2011). It presented findings under the headings: Anticipation; Resilience; Leadership; Innovation; Accountability; Partnership; and Humanitarian Space.

Key points made in relation to Accountability included:

> *'… there is an accountability deficit. The people who are on the receiving end or our assistance are rarely if ever consulted on what they need, or able to choose who helps them or how. This means that gender based issues and the needs of the vulnerable are too often overlooked. Whilst this has long been recognised as an issue, too little has been done about it'* (Ashdown et al. 2011 Executive Summary)

Referring to ALNAP, HAP, People in Aid, and the Sphere Project, the HERR comments:

> *These initiatives and others have improved standards, quality, learning and transparency in the sector but not enough progress has been made. It is time now to put these approaches at the heart of how the system works*. (Ashdown et al. 2011 p27)

> *Assistance has to be in accordance with what affected people have made clear they need, rather than what the system is prepared to offer. And the international system has to be held to account for that, and for learning how to deliver improved services. This can be done through better feedback loops with the affected population, through a range of mechanisms such as Listening Project-style assessments, HAP complaints mechanisms and perception surveys*. (Ashdown et al. 2011 p27)

Five recommendations were made to DFID concerning accountability:

- Promote and support mechanisms to give recipients of aid a greater voice;

- Promote the development of robust impact assessments;

- Work with others to create an over-arching set of standards to assess beneficiary accountability;

- Encourage the spread of best practice in this area; and

- Give greater emphasis to beneficiary accountability factors when making funding decisions (Ashdown et al. 2011 p30).

The British government's response to the HERR was published in June 2011. Virtually all its recommendations were accepted.

In September the British government's Humanitarian Policy, Saving Lives, Preventing Suffering and Building Resilience, was published (DfID 2011). Of the seven 'Policy Goals,' one related to 'accountability, impact and professionalism,' and included two key policy commitments:

■ Make beneficiary accountability a core element of DfID's humanitarian work; and

■ Invest more in measuring the UK Government's impact and the impact of our partners.

This is understood to be the first time that a major humanitarian donor has given such an unambiguous commitment about accountability to beneficiaries.

1.7 Progressive use of ICT

Following a dramatic increase in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in humanitarian operations in 2010, the scope of ICT utilisation and speed of take-up became fully apparent in 2011. The promise that such technologies hold for improving accountability to disaster-affected populations began to be realised.

Information on the scope and extent of ICT utilisation was reported in the many reviews, evaluations and best practice reports. The IFRC's Beneficiary Communications Evaluation in Haiti (Chazaly 2011), for example, revealed the scope of the IFRC Communications Programme in Haiti (See Box 4).

➔ **Box 4. Components of IFRCs Communications Programme in Haiti**

■ A partnership between the Red Cross movement and Trilogy International Partners allowed 45 million SMS text messages to be sent from January 2010 to June 2011.
■ A radio station (Radyo Kwa Wouj) was established and broadcast from the IFRC base camp in Port-au-Prince which aired 60 programmes via the Radio 1 network.
■ Nouala, a Haitian call centre, answered and logged complaints from the residents of 'Annex de la Marie,' a camp where IFRC provided shelter.
■ A Freephone information line provided recorded information on hygiene, cholera, hurricane preparedness, gender-based violence, and shelter. It received 877,000 calls.
■ Notice boards and posters
■ Community worker announcements and mobilisation.

(Chazally 2011 Beneficiary Communications Evaluation Haiti Earthquake Operation 2011)

Examples of ICT being used to improve accountability to disaster-affected populations include the work of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Mass Communications programme in Pakistan (see Box 5) a pilot SMS text-based feedback mechanisms on relief distributions in Pakistan (see Box 6) and a project in northern Kenya to establish two-way communications between the relief agency and the affected population using community radio and SMS (see Box 7). This work forms part of a larger, highly creative process now generally referred to as 'the humanitarian information agenda,' which is being carried forward by organisations such as Internews, Infoasaid, Frontline SM, BBC Media Action, and the CDAC network which links many of them. This work is often highly collaborative and undertaken in partnership with humanitarian agencies.

➜ Box 5. **IOM's Mass Communications programme in Pakistan***

In response to the 2010 flooding in Pakistan, the International Office of Migration IOM) established a Mass Communications Team dedicated to running information campaigns using a variety of channels based on the information needs and requests of affected communities. These services were continued and further developed during the response to the 2011 floods. Services provided included:

- radio campaigns in five local languages;
- a Humanitarian Call Centre using national toll-free numbers to relay issues and problems faced by affected communities to the relevant authorities and agencies;
- the development of communication strategies for agencies tailored to assessments of the local context and available channels for communication; and
- the development of a 'human information network' comprising over 10,000 'information focal points' including teachers, female health workers, religious leaders and volunteers who use SMS and other channels both to disseminate information and gather feedback from beneficiaries.

During 2011 IOM and HAP signed an MoU to jointly developed and disseminate a handbook of good practice and guidelines in the provision of information to, and getting feedback from, affected populations.

*Summarised from IOM Pakistan website http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pakistan and "IOM Pakistan Flood Response: Mass communications program Update 5, 22/3/ 2011.

During 2011 there were a number of significant reviews, evaluations and statements of best practice that contributed to the development of the humanitarian information agenda, including the following.

In January 2011 CDAC, Internews, and the Knight Foundation published a report, Media, Information Systems and Communities: Lessons from Haiti (Nelson, Sigal, and Zambrano 2011)[31] which analysed the local media and

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[31] www.reliefweb.int/node/380413

information environment in the immediate aftermath of Haiti response. It reported three key findings:

- Traditional humanitarian organisations are often open to the new technologies, but remain nervous about the implications of information and power-sharing through crowd-sourcing and other new media platforms;

- Joint humanitarian communities demonstrated that there are many beneficial ways to use digital media in a crisis setting, and particularly texting functions;

- Radio was still the most effective tool for serving the needs of the public. The first media priority in Haiti was to restore radio service, as it was in the Indian Ocean tsunami and other recent crises.

In March, the UN Foundation, the Vodaphone Foundation, OCHA, and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative published the report, Disaster Relief 2.0: The Future of Information Sharing in Humanitarian Emergencies (UN Foundation/ Vodaphone Foundation/OCHA/HHI 2011). It analysed how the humanitarian community and the emerging volunteer and technical communities—such as OpenStreetMap, CrisisMappers, Ushahidi, and Sahana—worked together in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. It recommended ways to improve coordination between such groups in future emergencies.

➔ Box 6. **Pakistan floods 2011: An SMS-feedback mechanism on relief***

The Pakistani NGO, Strengthening Participation Organisation (SPO),[32] set out to create a mechanism through which intended beneficiaries of its relief distributions could register issues that they encountered before, during and after each round of distribution. The UK-based group, Popular Engagement Policy Lab (PEPL),[33] partnered with Pakistan-based Rabtaa Consultants[34] to devise and establish the feedback mechanism, using Frontline SMS software and voice callbacks. A small SPO project with 475 beneficiaries across 24 villages in Mirpur Khas district in Sindh Province was selected for the pilot. An initial survey revealed that most beneficiaries had access to mobile phones, even if they did not own one themselves.

The system devised involved the distribution of leaflets, posters and cards to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the villages. These explained a numbering system from 0-9 (1 for food items; 2 for shelter; 3 for conflict; 4 for corruption; 5 for issues with SPO staff; 6 for issues with partner organisation staff; 7 for issues with village council; 8 for issues affecting women and children; 9 for issues affecting those with disabilities; and 0 as a means of saying 'thank you'). A register was compiled of all phones that might be used by the 475 beneficiaries in providing feedback, linking every message received to the name of the beneficiary whilst also enabling the identity of complainants to be protected.

Prior to each distribution, beneficiaries were sent messages alerting them of the arrival of the distribution. Following the distribution, feedback was actively sought via SMS. When a message was received, the response manager would call back asking for more information and SPO's internal complaints procedures were activated to handle the complaint. Over the three months of the pilot, a total of 725 messages were received, and 456 of them followed the numbering system. According to an account of the pilot:

'Awareness of the system among SPO project staff and partner organisations meant they knew they were being held to account for their actions so it ensured the quality of their work. … Fundamentally, we learnt that giving people a direct means with which to register a complaint or feedback empowered the beneficiaries of the relief effort to have a say in the way they were treated and furthermore to be connected with organizations who could offer further support.'

*Summarised from, Sending a Message of Accountability: *SMS Helps Improve Services After Pakistan Floods* Alex Gilchrist and Syed Azhar Shah
www.frontlinesms.com/2012/02/22/sending-a-message-of-accountability-sms-helps-improve-services-after-pakistan-floods/

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[32] www.spopk.org
[33] PEPL focuses on innovation in population engagement where population engagement is defined as 'the two-way use of persistent, open lines of communication between an organisation and a stakeholder population.'
www.pepl.org.uk
[34] www.raabta.pk

In July, IFRC published its evaluation of IFRC beneficiary communications programmes in Haiti (Chazaly 2011). The findings included:

■ Word of mouth and radio are the preferred methods of communication in Haiti, which highlights the importance of community workers and radio shows such as that established by IFRC;

■ Information is shared and disseminated widely among the community, where social cohesion is high;

■ Mobile phones are increasingly important for sharing information;

■ Women and people over 50 are the most information-deprived, so particular efforts are needed to reach these groups in communication campaigns; and

■ Access to electricity is the key determinant in the choice of media.

The evaluation stated:

> *Communicating with beneficiaries has many benefits for a humanitarian operation. It saves lives, promotes dignity and trust in the operation and gives people a voice in decision-making which in turn improves the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes*. (Chazaly 2011 p1)

In August, Internews published the report, 'Dadaab, Kenya Humanitarian communications and information needs assessment among refuges in the camps: findings, analysis and recommendations'. The assessment echoed many of the findings of the 2010 HAP deployment to Dadaab and the follow-up mission undertaken in 2011. The Internews assessment concluded that serious communication gaps between the humanitarian sector and refugees in the Dadaab refugee camps were increasing refugee suffering and putting lives at risk. Its findings included:

■ More than 70 percent of newly-arrived refugees said they lacked information on how to register for aid, and similar numbers said they needed information on how to locate missing family members;

■ Almost three-quarters of new arrivals surveyed, and around a third of long-term residents, said they had never been able to voice their concerns or ask questions to aid providers or the government;

■ Radio was by far the most popular source of general information, yet there was no specific regular broadcast for or about Dadaab;

■ Humanitarian workers, government officials, and the Kenyan army and police ranked lowest as sources of information for refugees; and

■ A small number of humanitarian organizations carried out positive communications initiatives, but there was an important need for resources, personnel, and coordination mechanisms to effectively and systematically communicate with refugee communities. Communications efforts faced significant obstacles, the most serious of which was the lack of local media platforms including local radio, newspapers, and ICTs that refugee and host communities could access.[35]

➔ **Box 7. Community radio and SMS in northern Kenya***

In late 2011, Save the Children established a project with support from Infoasaid to improve two-way communication with the largely semi-nomadic pastoralist population in Wajir County in Northeast Kenya. The main components of the project included:
■ distribution of 240 mobile phones and solar chargers to collaborators and community representatives;
■ establishment of two Frontline SMS hubs within Save the Children's field offices at Wajir and Habaswein; and
■ sponsorship of special programmes on Wajir Community Radio.

The sponsored radio programmes provide listeners with information on the Save the Children's relief programme (including a listeners' phone-in segment) and market information from the livestock markets in Wajir and Habaswein. The SMS component provided information on relief distributions and key messages on health and other sectors, and received messages from members of the affected population and beneficiaries which are processed using Save the Children's internal procedures.

*Summarised from 'Save the Children launches radio and SMS initiative in NE Kenya' http://infoasaid.org/story/save-children-launches-radio-and-sms-initiative-ne-kenya-0

In November, Infoasaid with support from Internews and the BBC World Service Trust published the report, Ann Kite Yo Pale (Let Them Speak): Best practice and lessons learned in communication in Haiti (Wall and Gérald-Chery 2011).Offering a rich source of findings and best practices in communications from the 2010 response, it concluded:

■ The provision of support to the communications sector as part of the emergency response is essential;

■ The most effective organisational model for implementing effective communication in Haiti was a standalone unit;

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[35] Internews (2012) 'When information saves lives 2022 Annual Report Internews Humanitarian Information Projects' Internews London.

- As the communication sector expands, the need for coordination is growing;

- The best communication strategies, whether highly localised or nationwide, were those that meshed a number of different communication channels;

- Face-to-face communication was particularly important, both for localised communication work and national campaigns such as the response to cholera;

- Those who made best use of communications technology were local responders and specialists, not international aid agencies; and

- There is an almost complete lack of methodology around monitoring and evaluating projects using communication technology, in particular capturing end user experience.

Noteworthy organisational developments during the year in relation to the Humanitarian Information Agenda during the year included:

- The partnership between IFRC and Infoasaid intended to support IFRC's institutionalisation of two-way communications with disaster-affected populations ('beneficiary communications' in IFRC terminology). Training materials developed as a result of the partnership include an e-learning package for field staff to provide the basic understanding and skills needed to communicate with affected populations (to be launched in early 2012), and a facilitators' training manual on communicating with affected populations.

- Internews' launch of a roster of humanitarian communication and media professionals and the procurement of standby production and broadcast equipment ready for immediate deployment;

Probably of greatest significance for coordination within, and the future development of, the Humanitarian Information Agenda was the strengthening of the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network.[36] In January 2011 CDAC appointed a full time Coordinator, and work began on conducting a strategic review and development process

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[36] CDAC is a cross-sector collaboration network between aid agencies, UN organizations, the Red Cross movement, and media development organisations that recognise information and two-way communication as key humanitarian deliverables. Current members of the CDAC Network Steering Committee are ALNAP; BBC Media Action; the British and Irish Red Cross; HAP International; International Media Support (IMS); the infoasaid project; Internews; Merlin; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair (OCHA); Plan UK; Save the Children UK; and the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

that will determine the network's priorities and activities over the next five years. The strategic review was completed at the beginning of 2012 and published in March at the same time as the launch of CDAC's website (www.cdacnetwork.org). The review clarified the Network's governance, management, and membership structure whist the CDAC Network's strategy for 2012-2016 sets out a framework for action toward stimulating change in the humanitarian sector such that effective two-way communication with crisis-affected people is integrated into mainstream preparedness and response

1.8 Increases in cash programming

Whilst most international humanitarian assistance is provided in the form of food, shelter materials, water and medicines, there is a growing recognition that cash transfers and vouchers can provide appropriate and effective alternatives or complements to 'in-kind assistance'. Cash transfers and voucher programmes can do more than in-kind assistance to stimulate local economies and markets, while helping to maintain the dignity of beneficiaries and enabling them to choose how they utilise the resources. Thus, cash transfers and vouchers contribute to HAP's vision is of a 'humanitarian system championing the rights and dignity of disaster survivors'.

WFP's use of cash transfer and voucher programming has grown rapidly since its 2008 policy statement, Vouchers and Cash Transfers as Food Assistance Instruments: Opportunities and Challenges. It has since adopted:

> A 'prudently aggressive' approach, seeking to balance the opportunity for expanded flexibility to respond to hunger with established standards for rigour and risk mitigation in programme design and implementation (WFP 2011 p2)

Growing from five cash transfer and voucher projects costing US$ 5.4 million in 2008, there were 35 projects costing US$ 140 million targetted at 4.2 million beneficiaries in 2010, and a further increase of such projects was expected in 2011. Of the 35 projects, over 60 percent relied on traditional delivery instruments such as paper vouchers or direct cash transfers; while electronic vouchers were used in seven projects, debit or smart cards in four, and e-money in two. The organisations most commonly used for handling the money transfers were banks or bank agents (40 percent) and NGOs (30 percent); but microfinance institutions, telecommunications companies, post offices, and security companies were also used (WFP 2011).

Cash transfer programming was used by UN agencies and NGOs in their response to the Horn of Africa drought crisis in 2011. In expanded

programmes in Kenya in 2011, WFP assisted 5,000 households with cash transfers, and in September, it announced plans to assist 80,000 households with cash transfers. Of the 80,000 households, a quarter set up bank accounts to receive the transfers, and those beneficiaries who had not yet received cash continued to be provided with food rations.[37] Cash Transfer Working Groups were established in Somalia and Kenya to assist with coordination of cash-based responses and to facilitate the exchange of market information and learnings from experience.

Another sign of the increased interest in using cash programming was a remarkable increase in the number of publications produced on the topic of cash programming, many of them published by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP).[38] These included reviews, guidelines, and explorations of particular issues and applications. Examples included:

■ 'Cash transfer programming in emergencies,' (Harvey and Bailey 2011) in the Humanitarian Practice Network's Good Practice Review

■ 'Ready or not? Emergency cash transfers at scale'" A report for the Cash Learning Partnership (Austin and Frize 2011),

■ 'New Technologies in Cash Transfer Programming and Humanitarian Assistance,' A report for the Cash Learning Partnership (Smith, Macauslan, Butters and Trommé 2011)

■ 'Cash Transfer programming in Urban Emergencies: A Toolkit for Practitioners,' A report for the Cash Learning Partnership (Cross and Johnston 2011)

■ 'Guidance for DfID country offices on measuring and maximising value for money in cash transfer programmes: A toolkit and explanatory text' (Hodges, White and Greenslade 2011)

The current state of cash programming is expressed by Harvey and Bailey:

> *The question is no longer whether cash is an appropriate way to meet the needs of disaster-affected people, but how organisations, donors and governments can use cash transfers to best effect, in line with their missions and mandates*. (Harvey and Bailey 2011 p1)

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[37] 'WFP Extends Nutrition Support, Boosts Food Distributions, Expands Cash Transfers In Horn Of Africa, 9/9/2011 www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-extends-nutrition-support-boosts-food-distributions-expands-cash-transfers-hor

[38] CaLP was formed in 2005 following the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Today CaLP's Steering Committee comprises Oxfam GB, the British Red Cross, Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Action Against Hunger/ACF International. In 2010, the CaLP partnered with the IFRC to develop and implement new activities with support from ECHO.

1.9 Standards Initiatives seek 'greater coherence'

Since the establishment of the Sphere Project, People In Aid, HAP, and ALNAP in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there have been calls for improved coherence between the initiatives. The 2006 ECB-hosted conference in Rome on humanitarian accountability and standards, for example, noted:

> *There are several quality and accountability initiatives, each with its own standards for accountability. The humanitarian sector needs better integration of these initiatives and standards* [It thus called for:]*a formal process led by CEOs to consider practical steps for greater integration of existing quality and accountability initiatives and their standards in light of the costs of the current fragmentation.*[39](ECB 2006)

Over the years, the original quality and accountability initiatives responded to such calls with both collective and individual activities. These included:

■ The establishment of the 'Quality and Accountability Group' in 2004—initially involving HAP, Sphere, People In Aid, and ALNAP, and subsequently expanding to include other humanitarian quality and accountability initiatives;[40]

■ The 2008 agreement between HAP and People In Aid to undertake joint audits;

■ The November 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between HAP and People In Aid;

■ Joint deployments by HAP and Sphere in support of humanitarian responses in Myanmar (2008-9) and Haiti (2010),

In late 2010, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)[41] began discussing internally the role that SCHR and its members might

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[39] It is not clear how this recommendation, one of the three main recommendations resulting from the conference, was followed up.

[40] In addition to the four founding members the following organisations also belong to the group: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects; CDAC - Communication with Disaster Affected Communities Network; Coordination Sud; Emergency Capacity Building Project; and Groupe Urgence Réhabilitation Développement. (Source: www.alnap.org/events/qualityandaccoutability.aspx

[41] Created in 1972, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) is an alliance for voluntary action of ACT Alliance, Care International, Caritas Internationalis, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam International, Save the Children and World Vision International

play in improving coherence between the Q&A initiatives.[42] In December 2010, the SCHR convened a workshop involving representatives of People In Aid, HAP, and Sphere[43] along with representatives of member agencies of Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), and SCHR alliances. The record of the workshop noted that:

> *much of the existing Q&A architecture is outside the control or remit of any of the agencies [involved] (…)* [But] *it is felt that there is great scope to improve the structure of Q&A's in terms of guidance, support and operational follow-through.*

And that:

> *There was a sense that the development of multiple norms and standards by different Q&A initiatives has led to some duplications. As a result, field staff is overloaded with information. In addition, insufficient efforts are put into operationalising these norms and standards and the lack of sanctions for not abiding to them is problematic. How can we make sure humanitarian organisations buy more firmly into quality and accountability?*

The workshop outlined a 'future model for supporting quality and accountability in humanitarian action (…) intended to inform further discussions' between inter-agency networks and quality and accountability initiatives. The model contained three principal elements:

- Placing 'people at the centre' by informing disaster-affected populations of the scope and the standards for the humanitarian assistance they receive;

- Consolidation of the different norms and standards into 'a single quality and accountability portal that would act as an umbrella custodian of these norms and standards with a clear Q&A brand.' The portal 'would repackage the existing tools and services and present them as a coherent, inter-linked, simpler whole' and 'include a flexible deployment capacity to support new humanitarian responses with strong links to in-country expertise and capacity'

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[42] SCHR had played a key role in the development of the 1994 "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief" and in the development of the Sphere Project. Created in 1972, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) is an alliance for voluntary action comprising: ACT Alliance; Care International; Caritas Internationalis; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Lutheran World Federation; Oxfam International; Save the Children; and World Vision International.

[43] ALNAP was invited to the December meeting but, due to the short notice provided, had been unable to send a representative.

■ The development and use of a common verification approach to assess what impact the assistance has made and whether activities complied with the agreed norms and standards.

It was agreed that SCHR would convene and lead a steering group aimed at developing a concrete proposal to further develop and implement the model. The steering group would comprise ICVA, InterAction, Caritas, CARE, Oxfam, ACT Alliance and World Vision and consult with the quality and accountability initiatives and their respective governance structures.

At the same time, the overview chapter of the 2010 Humanitarian Accountability Report, published in May 2011, highlighted the 'disjointedness' of current efforts to improve quality and accountability, and attributed this in part to 'insufficient collaboration within and leadership by the quality and accountability initiatives.' The issue was discussed at both the HAP General Assembly and HAP Board meeting in May, and the HAP Secretariat was encouraged to more actively explore ways of achieving greater complementarity between the quality and accountability initiatives.

In July 2011, SCHR hosted a meeting of the Executive Directors, Managers and Chairs of Sphere, HAP, People In Aid, and ALNAP. The meeting resulted in an agreed communiqué[44] in which the three initiatives primarily concerned with standards and verification (ie. Sphere, HAP and People In Aid) agreed to 'work closely together in an associative fashion to develop a common vision for developing and reporting on global standards.' ALNAP committed to providing objective supporting evidence and a forum for discussion. The three initiatives with ALNAP agreed to:

■ Establish a joint response to the Horn of Africa crisis (see Box 8)

■ Develop a common web portal

■ Develop a common field handbook[45]

■ Develop a common evidence-based study to demonstrate 'the added value of working to defined international standards'

■ Develop a common training module for field staff

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[44] www.hapinternational.org/news/story.aspx?id=264 5/8/ 2011

[45] It is understood that thinking in relation to the common field handbook and the evidence-based study has evolved since the original commitment was made and that these will not materialise in the form expressed here (Jonathan Potter personal communication 6/3/2012)

Following the July meeting, several subsequent meetings and phone conferences were held between the Executive Directors, Managers, and Chairs of the three standards initiatives.

In September, ALNAP's Steering Committee decided that decided that, as ALNAP is not a 'standard-setting organisation', and as ALNAP's membership also differs significantly from that of the three standard-setting organisations, the Network should not play a substantive role in the development of consolidated standards and verification mechanisms. ALNAP, it was felt, could best contribute to the initiative by providing a system-wide forum for the presentation and discussion of standards-related issues, and by supporting research aimed at better understanding the impact of standards on humanitarian performance, and the ways in which standards can be effectively applied to support improved performance.

In October, following a meeting of its Board, HAP issued a 'public statement' indicating that it is in the best interests of 'those we seek to assist, our membership, and the sector in general' that the coherence dialogue move 'as rapidly as possible towards a single Q&A standard and a single supporting organisation.'[46]. HAP suggested that one option to consider was the development of a 'single standard', to be developed through a process that:

> *(…) is inclusive across all those championing Q&A, without slowing momentum; is staged, ensuring we do not lose the strong momentum surrounding existing Q&A efforts; is geared to responding to the perspectives of those we seek to serve, as well as of member agencies; and, is inclusive of other thinking and action underway to improve quality in the sector more broadly.*[47]

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[46] 'Note from the HAP Board to the 'Q&A Group' and to HAP members' 14/10/ 2011 HAP Geneva.
[47] HAP ibid.

In December, an updated communiqué was issued by the three organisations indicating agreement on a process to explore the following:

■ *The delivery of a research project to determine to what extent standards are being used within the humanitarian and development sectors and what would enable better usage of standards(…);[48]*

■ *The options available for bringing the current standards together into a single coherent framework, the practical issues of how such a standard would work for the sector, and how other standards could also be incorporated;*

■ *The options available and implications for the creation of a single organisation related to the standard;*

■ *The move towards establishing a joint Board with a provisional agreement to hold a first such Board meeting in 2012;* and

■ *The convening of a Forum in 2012 to present and discuss progress made on greater coherence between standards initiatives in the humanitarian sector.*

The communiqué added:

> *All three initiatives are very aware of the significance of the steps that are being proposed. Were a single standard and single organisation found to be the optimal answer to the issues our stakeholders face, it could be a landmark moment in the history of standards setting within the humanitarian and development sectors. Such decisions are not taken lightly and will only be taken in the light of a well-informed, highly consultative, evidence-based process undertaken by experts who are grounded in their knowledge of the humanitarian and development sectors and are specialists in organisational structures.[49]*

A joint Steering Committee to oversee the process is being established[50]

A draft funding proposal for a process to 'achieve greater coherence for our stakeholders and users' was developed and submitted to SCHR for potential funding support in late December. Following feedback from SCHR, a 'leaner' proposal was developed. It is planned that the results of the process will be

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[48] Subsequently it was decided in conjunction with SCHR that this study was not a priority.

[49] 'Joint Update on Greater Coherence Amongst Standards in Humanitarian Response On Behalf of HAP, the Sphere Project and People In Aid', 16/12/2011.

[50] Originally it was envisaged that the Steering Committee would be made up of the three Board Chairs and an additional Board member from each of the three initiatives, with the executive directors and managers acting in an advisory role. However, it is understood that a broader group is now planned

shared with the three Boards in October 2012 and with the humanitarian community generally in December 2012

1.10 New interest in certification

Of the three organisations working to improve accountability through approaches including third-party certification (i.e. HAP, People in Aid, and the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) Benchmarking Service), the memberships of HAP and People in Aid grew rapidly during 2011. HAP's membership grew by 30 percent—the most rapid expansion since its creation in 2003 (see Box 9).

➔ **Box 9.** **Membership and Certification Statistics for HAP, People In Aid, and the SGS NGO Benchmarking Service**

HAP
HAP's membership increased by some 30 percent during 2011, bringing its total membership to 82 (64 full members and 18 associate members) by January 2012. During the year, four members achieved certification for the first time: COAST Trust, Church World Service Pakistan/ Afghanistan, Sungi Development Foundation, and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); and two members were re-certified:OFADEC and Mercy Malaysia. This brought the total number of HAP-Certified agencies to 13, while another 16 members completed their baseline analysis as a first step in the process of achieving certification. NCA was the first member to be certified against the 2010 HAP Standard, which was published in January 2011.[51]

People In Aid
During 2011, 17 new organisations joined People In Aid, bringing its total membership to 182. Five member organisations (ACORD Kenya; CESVI Italy; MAF International; Merlin UK; and the Brooke UK) were required to re-submit evidence for retaining People In Aid's Quality Mark 1 (QM1), and all were subsequently approved. Another three organisations (Tear, Australia; HelpAge International and the Sierra Leone Red Cross) were awarded QM1 for the first time. This brought to 16 the total number of members certified to QM1 level. Meanwhile, two organisations (Everychild and Womankind Worldwide) were awarded Quality Mark 2 for the first time, bringing the total number of members certified to the QM2 level to 15. Quarterly teleconferences were introduced to discuss the quality marks, with participation from agencies based in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

SGS NGO Benchmarking Service
During 2011, ten NGOs were re-certified by the SGS NGO Benchmarking service. The total number certified stood at 14,[52] including five Iranian NGOs, five Guatemalan NGOs, and one NGO each Switzerland, Spain, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. Whereas National Red Cross Societies had formed a significant proportion of SGS-certified agencies in the period 2005-2010, the Spanish Red Cross is currently the only certified National Red Cross Society.

The INGO Accountability Charter does not involve third-party certification, but it has developed significantly since 2010 when the Global Reporting Initiative launched its NGO Sector Supplement to the Global Reporting Initiative[53] (GRI) Guidelines. During 2011, it established a four-person Independent Review Panel to review members' reports and to set out

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[51] A summary of the new Standard was provided in ' The 2010 Humanitarian Accountability Report'
[52] Closer analysis of the SGS membership information this year revealed that a significant double and even treble counting had occurred in previous Humanitarian Accountability Reports. The error stemmed from SGS's practice of issuing a new certificate number to re-certified as well as newly certified NGOs and including all those with expired certificates in the 'List of Certified NGOs' on its website. www.sgs.com/en/Public-Sector/Monitoring-Services/NGO-Benchmarking/List-of-Certified-NGOs.aspx
[53] The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a non-profit organization promoting economic, environmental and social sustainability. GRI provides companies and organizations with a comprehensive sustainability reporting framework that is widely used. www.globalreporting.org

an ambitious vision of becoming the 'international NGOs' accountability framework of choice' over the next five years (see Box 10). The 25 current INGO Accountability Charter Members include many INGOs that are also members of HAP and People In Aid, and signatories to the Sphere Charter and Standards.[54]

➔ **Box 10. Recent Developments in the Global Reporting Initiative/INGO Accountability Charter**

Following a two-year development process initiated by the INGO Accountability Charter Company, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) launched its NGO Sector Supplement to the GRI Guidelines in May 2010.

As well as covering areas already included in the standard GRI Guidelines (i.e. reporting principles, management disclosures, performance indicators for economic, environmental, and social activities) the NGO Sector Supplement also covers the following:

- Programme effectiveness:
  - o affected stakeholder engagement
  - o mechanisms for feedback and complaints
  - o monitoring and evaluation
  - o gender and diversity
  - o public awareness and advocacy
  - o coordination
- Resources allocation
- Ethical fundraising
- Working with volunteers
- Marketing communications
- Customer privacy

The indicator listed for Affected Stakeholder Engagement is:

- 'Processes for involvement of affected stakeholder groups in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs'

The indicator for Feedback, Complaints and Action is:

- 'Mechanisms for feedback and complaints in relation to programs and policies and for determining actions to take in response to breaches of policies.'

Members of the INGO Accountability Charter began submitting their annual reports in accordance with the GRI NGO Sector Supplement during 2010. In early 2011, a four-person Independent Review Panel was established to review the members' reports. The Panel's assessments of the submitted reports and responses by members are published on the INGO Accountability Charter website: www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org.

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[54] Current full members are: ActionAid International; Amnesty International; Article 19; CARE International; Caritas Internationalis; CBM International Office; CEE Bankwatch Network; CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation; Consumers International; Cordaid; Earthrights International; European Environmental Bureau; Greenpeace International; International Council for Adult Education; Instituto de tercer Mundo; IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre; Malaria Consortium; Oxfam International; Panos Network; Plan International; Sightsavers; The Forest Trust; Transparency International; World Vision International; World YWCA.

During 2011, the INGO Accountability Charter Company published its Five Year Strategy for the period 2011-15. The overall objective of the Strategy is described in the following terms:

As accountability is increasingly seen as a key requirement every reputable INGO needs to fulfil and as the number of competing accountability frameworks mushrooms, it is important to establish one quality accountability framework as the standard of the sector's reporting. The INGO Accountability Charter aims at fulfilling this role. Over the next five years the Charter aims to become international NGO's accountability framework of choice, accepted by their key stakeholders (…)

The next five years will be decisive in establishing the Charter as our sector's accountability standard. Becoming the standard does not mean replacing all other accountability frameworks. On the contrary, specific frameworks for various sub-sectors (e.g. humanitarian aid) should be seen as complementary to the Charter rather than as competing. The Charter as the sector-wide overarching accountability framework will make every effort to coordinate with different accountability initiatives and to encourage ambitious standards of accountability throughout the sector.

In parallel to its role in the 'Greater Coherence' process, the SCHR also initiated an exploration of certification options for the humanitarian sector. A paper was commissioned to answer the following questions:

■ What should be certified?

■ Who/What should be the certifying body?

■ What level of certainty is required in the assessment process?

■ What would it cost to run a certification system?

The report was presented in August with the following key recommendations (Brooks 2011):

■ Existing standards (such as Sphere, HAP and People In Aid) should form the basis of any certification system;

■ New standards should not be developed, except where major gaps are identified, in order to avoid adding to the complex array which currently exist; and

■ The Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct should remain at the heart of any framework of standards and work undertaken to ensure that measurable standards are derived from this.

In October 2011, the Executive Secretary of the SCHR, writing in a personal capacity, contributed an article entitled 'NGO Certification: time to bite

the bullet?' for a special issue of the publication Humanitarian Exchange focussed on humanitarian accountability (Hoffman 2011).

Following consideration of the commissioned report, the SCHR established a Steering Committee on Certification to further explore the issue during 2012. By February 2012, the Steering Committee's terms of reference and workplan were being finalised.

At present, it is difficult to discern what these different developments mean for the wider use of certification schemes in the humanitarian sector beyond HAP and People In Aid. Considerable possibility remains, however, for unhelpful competition and duplication between established certification mechanisms and recent initiatives.

1.11 Concluding remarks

In overview chapters of previous years, the conclusions have generally been drawn along the lines of 'some progress but still a long way to go.' However, the range, significance, and likely impact of the developments described above point to the achievement of a 'critical mass' of activity within the humanitarian sector in favour of accountability to affected populations during 2011.

These developments are driven partly by significant leadership commitments concerned with accountability to affected populations. The IASC Principals' adoption of the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations has placed the issue of Accountability to Affected Populations centre-stage within the sector. Similarly, DFID's policy commitment to 'make beneficiary accountability a core element of DFID's humanitarian work' clearly legitimises beneficiary accountability as a valid policy objective for other bilateral and multilateral humanitarian donors. While such 'top down' commitments may fall out of favour as leaders move on and governments change, the developments in 2011 are also driven by rapid technological change, and by the development of applied information and communications technology to improving the voice of, and accountability to, affected populations. Such change is irreversible, and can only keep moving forward.

Pressure for greater accountability to affected populations also appears to be growing from legal quarters. The ongoing 'cholera class action' law suit, brought against the UN on behalf of Haitian victims and their families, sets a highly significant precedent. In future responses, egregious actions and substandard performance by humanitarian agencies may well face similar class action law suits. Just as the threat of legal action can have a galvanising effect on state institutions and private companies in Western

countries, the recognition that beneficiaries could take legal recourse is likely to increase pressure on humanitarian agencies to improve their performance. Perhaps it will be the threat of legal redress that finally achieves the necessary prioritisation of the PSEA agenda that has been so slow in coming over recent years.

In addition, the launch of the International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response, and continuing work by IFRC's Disaster Law Programme, is strengthening the legal framework within which humanitarian agencies operate. The considerable 'grey space' that once existed between international and national laws relating to international humanitarian actors is steadily being clarified and filled.

Positive changes are also underway in the way that aid is provided to beneficiaries. The use of cash programming, which has been increasing steeply over the past two to three years, looks set to accelerate further. This change brings positive benefits for beneficiaries, upholding dignity and expanding choice.

Finally, the process now commencing involving Sphere, HAP, and People In Aid may well result in the achievement of a single standard by the end of 2012. Though it remains to be seen how this process evolves, and how it relates to the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations, the INGO Accountability Charter, and to the SCHR's exploration of certification options for the humanitarian sector, it is clear that there is significant impetus for change, and that the time when humanitarian agencies are required to achieve certification is coming closer.

The extent of these changes may feel threatening to some, but they represent real and probably irreversible progress towards HAP's founding vision of a 'humanitarian system championing the rights and dignity of disaster survivors'.

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CHAPTER 2

Annual Reports from HAP Members

2.1 Introduction

By the end of 2011, HAP's membership comprised 64 Full Members and 18 Associate Members. Members represented a wide range of organisations, including many of the largest international NGOs and national organisations from the global South, which make up over half the membership. Between them, the HAP members were involved in all the world's major emergencies in 2011.

One obligation of full HAP members is to report each year on their accountability work. The key points from these reports are presented in this section along with boxes highlighting learning points and examples of good practice.

2.2 Overview of reports

Basic indicators of accountability, as reported across HAP's membership

Accountability frameworks: Of the 43 reports received from full members by the annual deadline, 54 percent report accountability frameworks effective across all or most of their activities. Ten percent report some coverage or a pilot accountability framework, 12 percent have developed a framework but not implemented it yet, and 19 percent are in the course of developing their framework. Another five percent have no accountability framework yet.

Complaints & response mechanisms: From the members' reports received, 56 percent have complaints and response mechanisms that cover all or most of their activities. Thirty percent have some complaints handling capacity or pilot complaints and response mechanisms, 12 percent are in the process of developing their policy on complaints handling, or have just completed the policy development stage. Another two percent have no complaints handling provision yet.

Staff code of conduct: Ninety-five percent of members have a code of conduct for staff. However, the HAP Secretariat has not yet had the opportunity to analyse how many of these include provisions for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

A review of members' 2011 reports shows considerable effort had been invested in improving accountability practices. The majority of HAP members have established accountability frameworks, operational complaints mechanisms, and codes of conduct for staff. Many are implementing innovations, even in the most difficult of circumstances, and reporting significant positive impacts on the effectiveness of their programmes and their relationships with the communities they serve.

From the reports, the following issues and practices are worth highlighting:

The scale of work

For larger international members, in particular, rolling out accountability practices can be a large-scale undertaking. For example, 33 country programmes of the Danish Refugee Council undertook accountability self-assessments in 2011. International Medical Corps trained almost 2,000 of their staff on the code of conduct and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. And Save the Children mainstreamed accountability in responses to 46 emergencies.

Positive impacts

Members report that they witness how introducing accountability measures improves programmes. CAFOD's partners collected feedback, suggestions,

and complaints from Ivorian refugees in Liberia in '*palava boxes*' and set up community forums. Problems raised with regard to shelter provision were thereby addressed, improving the safety of the refugees and enhancing their acceptance and integration within the host community. Medical Aid to Palestinians (MAP) increased beneficiary involvement in programme implementation and evaluation, and saw improvements in project design and meeting of targets in their community health and disability projects. Christian Aid remarked on how enhanced participation and information sharing practices have changes attitudes and behaviours, engaging and empowering the communities.

Working with partners

A large number of HAP members, including Christian Aid, CAFOD, Church of Sweden, and Merlin, have developed their accountability work with partners over the past year. The Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service (LWF DWS) defines the challenge: 'how best to reinforce and strengthen partners' accountabilities who have their own operating systems, management and boards?' ACT Alliance has developed a 'partnership assessment tool', Tearfund piloted a 'partner feedback' survey in Cambodia as a first step in making itself more accountable to its partners, and Oxfam GB will disseminate a 'statement of partnership principles' in 2012. Muslim Aid and Medical Aid for Palestinians remark on how sharing information translated into local languages has improved their partners' engagement with accountability. Many HAP members offered training and guidance to partners in 2011, with the most common focus being on complaints handling.

Remote management

A number of HAP members, including CARE and Tearfund, have tackled the issue of implementing accountability work in exceptionally challenging contexts. CARE has developed protocols for remote monitoring and accountability for Somalia, while other organisations, including Medical Aid for Palestinians, work in contexts where accountability measures could compromise the safety of beneficiaries, and accountability has to be supported within a framework of 'doing no harm'. The LWF DWS mentions the difficulties of working on accountability issues in emergency situations, citing their role as camp manager during the influx of Somali refugees to the Dadaab refugee camp in 2011.

Good practices and innovation

Save the Children's targetted 'Accountability Breakthrough' project and wider work has led to a number of innovations in accountability to children—a Global Children's Panel, a Children's Charter, beneficiary reference groups made up of children, and a pilot of child-friendly complaints desks in Dadaab refugee camp. COAST has established a People's Organisation that ensures beneficiaries are at the heart of decision-making in their organisation.

Staff and training

Members have found different ways to promote the involvement and engagement of their own staff in advancing accountability. Community & Family Services International has drawn up a Covenant, which staff sign and which is displayed prominently in every office. World Vision has introduced regional accountability communities of practice.

Use of technology

A number of HAP members have harnessed mobile phone technology for use in complaints handling, including both Oxfam GB and the Danish Refugee Council in Somalia. In northern Kenya, Save the Children broadcast information about their programmes on the local radio station.

Complaints mechanisms

The majority of HAP members had complaints and response mechanisms covering all, or most of, their work in 2011; and almost all the rest had partial coverage or pilot schemes. Yet there are still many challenges involved in effective complaints handling. DanChurchAid shared its experience of cultural barriers to complaining officially in Angola, where no complaints were ever submitted through the complaints mechanisms in the villages where they work. Its Angola team is continuing to work with the communities to find other acceptable ways to invite comments and inputs. LWF DWS shares its experience that attaining a fully workable complaints mechanism requires a process of work with staff and directly with communities, and working with national partners on their complaints handling is a particular challenge.

2.3 Highlights from reports

ACT Alliance

The ACT Alliance became a full member of HAP in 2008, and undertook a baseline analysis in 2009. In addition, 14 ACT Alliance members are themselves members of HAP, and five of them are HAP-certified. ACT has applied to HAP for a certification audit to be conducted in 2012.

In 2011, the ACT Alliance's conducted the following accountability-related activities:

■ Developed and approved a quality and accountability framework;

■ Integrated a quality and accountability improvement plan into the annual ACT activity and budget plan;

■ Approved the ACT Code of Good Practice and the revised ACT Code of Conduct. The Code of Good Practice provides principles for all ACT members, including overarching, organisational, programmatic, and relational principles. The Code of Conduct was expanded to cover the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, security breaches, and unethical business practices.

■ Developed an ACT Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Handbook to promote systematic and regular planning, monitoring and evaluation among members as a common reference;

■ Trained all ACT Secretariat staff on accountability issues and complaints handling, in a two-day HAP-facilitated workshop;

■ Revised and approved the pilot complaints policy. It established a dedicated email address (complaintsbox@actalliance.org), and a focal person regularly monitored complaints; and

■ Revised and approved the membership disciplinary policy.

ACT Alliance: Partnership Assessment Tool

As ACT's 125 members work in partnership with around 2,000 faith-based and secular organisations, the ACT Secretariat, in cooperation with the ACT Capacity Development Steering Group, developed a partnership assessment tool as part of the overall ACT Organisational Capacities Assessment. The tool is designed to promote good principles of partnership and assess sustainability and impact. The indicators used cover a variety of partnership relationships beyond those traditionally related to funding. It is expected that members' use of this tool will lead to more equal partnerships and greater mutual cooperation.

Act for Peace

Act for Peace has been a member of HAP since 2009, has now completed a baseline survey, and is currently working through the certification process.

In 2011, Act for Peace developed an Organisational Development & Effectiveness Plan, designed as an organisation accountability framework and implementation plan, with milestones for each commitment. It also developed a complaints policy and a complaints mechanism, which has been introduced and integrated into its partnership agreements, partnership satisfaction survey, staff orientation and volunteer policy. Its details are publicised on Act for Peace's website.

Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)

ACTED's guiding principles and values include the principle of accountability to its stakeholders. It is committed to 'involve, respect and react to the valuable inputs from local partners and beneficiaries to improve the quality of our response'.

In 2011, ACTED significantly increased the frequency and scope of internal audits conducted at its field missions, resulting in the building of capacity in terms of principles and practice in field missions—including for beneficiary involvement and satisfaction. Following these successes, it decided to create a sub-regional audit unit with a training capacity during 2012.

In 2011, ACTED in Sri Lanka—in line with its humanitarian accountability framework—set up an official complaints and response mechanism for beneficiaries, which it introduced to staff as: 'a formalised procedure and mechanism that provides a safe, accessible and effective channel for our beneficiaries and project stakeholders to raise complaints and for a response or redress to be given. It will help us to understand our programs from the beneficiaries' perspective, giving us the information to adjust our programs to best meet beneficiary community needs.'

ACTED accountability to beneficiaries in Myanmar

In 2011, ACTED reviewed its programming in Myanmar to ensure complied with the new 2010 HAP Standard:

■ Added a HAP information board in each village where ACTED operates, including information about the organisation and project, a contact list of staff at local and country office level, and details about how to lodge a complaint;
■ Conducted an awareness-raising activity at the start of each project to ensure beneficiaries and communities had all the information on project activities, budget, size, donor and beneficiary selection criteria;
■ Informed local administrations of its interventions, and associating interventions with them;
■ Partners were introduced to the HAP Standard, also, and then supported to meet the requirements, including the complaints procedures and information boards.
■ Informed current and newly-recruited staff about the HAP Standard;

Australian Lutheran World Service

Australian Lutheran World Service became a full member of HAP in 2011. It is in the process of developing an accountability framework, and reviewing its existing code of conduct using the HAP Checklist on Codes of Conduct. Its current code of conduct already contains provisions related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

CAFOD

CAFOD was awarded HAP Certification in 2009, and is preparing for re-certification in 2012. Its work on accountability in 2011 included the following:

■ Defined 'progress in partner accountability' as one of the six expected outcomes in its 2011-14 Programme Partnership Agreement with the UK Department for International Development;

■ Worked with 60 'strategic' and 'large grant' partners to achieve the completion of baseline assessments on 'minimum standards of accountability';

■ Established an accountability micro-grant with GBP 31,000 in funding provided to support 21 partners with their accountability initiatives. Most used these funds to support establishment of complaints mechanisms;

■ Streamlined the CAFOD Accountability Framework, and made it available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese;

■ Developed an Open Information Policy, which is now in its final drafting stage;

■ Trained more than twenty-five partners on accountability and complaints and response mechanisms; and

■ Identified and funded two partners to pilot the establishment of Codes of Conduct with support from CAFOD staff.

CAFOD: Complaints handling mechanisms in Liberia

When Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into political turmoil following a contested election in 2010, over one million people were displaced, and approximately 172,000 Ivorians sought refuge in Liberia. CAFOD's partners in Liberia established the Ivorian Refugee Emergency Response Programme, an integrated programme to address the immediate needs of 1,875 Ivorian refugees in Nimba County. Don Bosco Homes (DBH) and the Center for Justice and Peace Studies (CJPS) worked as a consortium to implement the protection component of the programme. Caritas Gbanga implemented the distribution of non-food items, food security, provision of water and sanitation facilities, and construction of basic shelter.

As part of CAFOD's accountability initiative, several of the partners had already undergone an accountability assessment which identified feedback and complaints mechanisms as a gap area. Therefore, it was agreed to initiate a complaints handling mechanism for the emergency response, and in May, a one-day complaints handling mechanism training was held for 15 staff of CAFOD partners (ten men, five women). During June 2011, DBH, CJPS and Caritas Gbanga rolled out complaints handling mechanisms in their organisations and programmes.

With support at Board level, the partners developed a complaints policy and provided *Palava boxes* at the entrance to their offices and in an established child-friendly space for the collection of feedback, suggestions and complaints. With growing awareness and coaching from CAFOD staff, the partners realised there was a need to modify their approach, and they established community forums as a way of generating complaints and seeking redress. In Glarley, the complaints handling mechanism was explained to community members, who unanimously applauded, agreed to adopt the mechanism, and arranged days, times, and processes for the community meetings.

Complaints were received relating to seed distribution, the location of hand pumps, refugee housing and shelter, and non-food items. A major change was implemented after community members reported various problems with the tents, ranging from the strength of the material and associated safety risks to the potential for victimisation from other members of the community. Following investigation, the project team decided to replace the tents with stronger constructions made from locally sourced materials. This change was linked to increased acceptance and integration of the refugees within the host community.

CARE International

Care International opens its report by stating: 'For CARE, putting our accountability into practice is about building two way relationships based on trust. This means involving our stakeholders in our decisions and activities, being open and transparent about our work and achievements, systematically listening to people's opinions and concerns, capturing and

using learning from our experiences, and putting right what may have gone wrong. It requires respectful and responsible attitudes, appropriate systems and strong leadership.'

In 2011, CARE implemented the following accountability-related activities:

■ Produced a draft Accountability Framework which will eventually cover all of CARE's programming. A full pilot version will be rolled out during 2012;

■ Approved the development of a common Information Disclosure Policy and a Feedback & Complaints Policy linking all members;

■ Completed a review of partnerships, and began integrating findings into relevant guidelines and agreements; and

■ Participated actively in the Emergency Capacity Building Project, where one key objective is to provide a means for quality and accountability networks to test their approaches, standards, and tools in the context of disaster preparedness or an emergency response.

CARE: Accountability in remote management

A member of CARE's team of quality and accountability specialists was deployed to support CARE Somalia with the development of Remote Monitoring and Accountability protocols to help track activities and resource allocations remotely, and to provide guidance on minimum accountability and technical (sector) standards, as well as gender and conflict sensitivity.

Church of Sweden

The Church of Sweden became a HAP member in 2010. It conducted the following accountability activities in 2011:

■ Developed a draft Accountability Framework;

■ Undertook a HAP baseline analysis at the Central Church Office and with four Church of Sweden partners in India;

■ Drafted a complaints management policy (approved and adopted February 2012), and appointed a Complaints & Response Mechanism manager at the Church of Sweden Central Office; and

■ Undertook a survey of partners on Church of Sweden's quality and accountability, receiving responses from 89 out of its 126 partners surveyed.

The Church of Sweden comments: 'The distinctive nature of the Church of Sweden as a church and as an actor without national offices in our partner countries has required special processing internally and with HAP. A considerable amount of communication with HAP has been necessary to understand how we can retain our authenticity at the same time that we meet the criteria for the 2010 HAP Standard. We addressed issues such as how to meet HAP's requirement for accountability in relation both to the people we intend to support and to our own staff. The 'Accountability through HAP' process has been useful in many ways. Topics we previously discussed with some vagueness had to be formulated in the text. This process helped us to better understand ourselves and how we work.'

Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan

Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS P/A) was HAP-certified in 2011. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with HAP International, accrediting CWS P/A to work with organisations across the region to provide HAP services and, when requested to do so, HAP certification audits, through its Humanitarian Accountability & Quality Assurance Unit;

- Provided quality and accountability management workshops at regional level in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Laos;

- Undertook quality and accountability needs analyses in 12 countries across Asia; and

- Introduced the 360-degree performance management system, demonstrating its internal accountability commitments.

Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan: The Information & Complaints Handling Center, Pakistan

The Information & Complaints Handling Center is established with Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan's partner, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in four districts: Swat, Nowshera, Thatta and Shahdadkot. It was launched in April 2011, following consultation with the communities concerned. It used different approaches appropriate to the context; in Swat, for example, it overcame access limitations to women beneficiaries by sensitisation visits from women volunteers. The Center's functions include:

■ Providing advice to complainants on various aspects of their complaints;
■ Facilitating the filing of complaints and collection of evidence;
■ Forwarding complaints to relevant offices and organisations and following up; and
■ Raising awareness of the response and actions relating to complaints.

Community groups concerned state they now have greater confidence to stand up to authorities, and a stronger appreciation of their rights.

Christian Aid

After Christian Aid became HAP-certified in 2009, it rolled out the HAP Standard across six country programmes in 2010 and another 12 in 2011. The roll-out process covers Christian Aid's country-level relationship with partners and beneficiaries in all areas of humanitarian, development, and advocacy work. Key successes in 2011 included:

■ Completed self-assessments in 12 additional roll-out countries, and developed contextualised accountability, open information, and complaints policies in each;

■ Included in its corporate strategy for 2012 and beyond the principal theme of tackling power imbalances and being more accountable; and

■ Incorporated accountability into evaluations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Philippines, and held review workshops in three roll-out countries: Burundi, Burkina Faso, and Tajikistan.

Christian Aid comments: 'Although progress has been good there are still challenges faced, particularly in striking a better balance between policy work (ie contextualising corporate policies) and programme work (integrating accountability into our community work and seeing visible benefits for the people that we aim to serve)'.

Christian Aid: Seeing the impact of accountability measures

Christian Aid's partner Réseau Marp is a Burkina Faso-based network organisation, whose core strategy involves working through participatory approaches to development. As part of its programme, Building Disaster Resilient Community (BDRC), Réseau Marp conducted a Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, integrating the HAP Standard-recommended accountability practices into the programme between 2008 and 2010. The community of Masbore reported to Christian Aid in 2011 on changes the programme had facilitated.

The community members of Masbore said that learning about their rights in the programme made them more comfortable and confident to influence government decisions that affect development in their village. For example, they felt able to ask questions about the planning and design of a government-funded school established in the village. When the government informed the Village Development Committee about the school project, the Committee set up a monitoring committee that monitored construction timeliness and material management. This would have been unlikely before the HAP work, as the community members were fearful that the authorities might stop or relocate the initiative if people asked too many questions. They no longer feel fearful, and consider it their right to be involved in key decisions.

The monitoring committee worked with an independent contractor to ensure that quality standards were met. As the contractor did not live in the village, the committee informed him of problems with the work so that he could rectify mistakes promptly. The committee's monitoring also increased knowledge of labourers' rights, as the committee and the contractor clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities of the contractor. This made the labourers aware that the contractor ought to provide them with water and a shaded area to rest. In previous projects, labourers were unaware of their labour rights.

Integrating HAP benchmarks into Christian Aid's programme work has had a lasting effect on changing attitudes and behaviours. One villager, Guiro Daowda, said, 'the project was just for two years, but we can still see the impact now. No other project from any NGO has been able to have such a great and lasting effect.'

Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust (COAST)

COAST became a full member of HAP in 2007, and achieved HAP certification in 2010. The organisation has an accountability framework in place, and its provisions are implemented widely at all levels of the organisation. Complaints mechanisms are in place throughout the programmes; most complaints are received by telephone and can be resolved quickly. Information about the organisation is displayed in its offices and distributed widely to beneficiaries and communities in the form of a leaflet, 'Right to know about COAST'. Through COAST's People's Organisation, local people play a vital role in making decisions about COAST's development and advocacy activities.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI)

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) became a HAP full member in 2009. Its Humanitarian Accountability Framework, approved in 2010, comprises five elements: rights, needs, standards, ethics, and the Covenant of the People of CFSI. In 2011, CFSI conducted the following accountability-related activities:

- Conducted regular and useful consultations with partners on expectations, commitments and accountability issues;

- Incorporated principles and standards in field activities at the community level, particularly during its selection of beneficiaries;

- Shared information on accountability with a number of implementing partners;

- Enhanced and expanded its feedback and complaints mechanism in the Philippines. All feedback and complaints were documented, analysed, circulated to the Senior Management Team and others, and addressed in a timely manner; and

- Included reference to compliance with the accountability framework in the ongoing evaluation of CFSI's Mindanao operations.

Community and Family Services International: Covenant

The practice of holding accountability workshops for new and long-serving staff members in all CFSI offices in the Philippines and in Viet Nam has proved to be useful in informing corporate-level and field-based activities, especially collaboration with partners and beneficiaries. The CFSI Covenant is signed by each staff member after completing an Accountability Workshop, displayed prominently in all CFSI offices, and attached to the employment contracts of staff. It reminds staff members of their commitments, and enables stakeholders and the public to understand what they can expect of CFSI and its personnel.

Community Development Centre (CODEC)

CODEC's development objective is to facilitate the participation of the coastal and riverine communities of the coastal districts of Bangladesh in mainstream development processes, and in the realisation of their social, cultural, and economic rights. CODEC comments that 'empowerment in terms of human rights and good governance needs to be defined (…) as the expansion of assets and capabilities of disadvantaged people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable, institutions (formal and informal) that affect their lives.'

During 2011, CODEC, in conjunction with Transparency International Bangladesh, organised and facilitated training for 24 leaders of national NGOs on development and good governance.

CODEC also applies a human resources management policy to ensure appropriate recruitment, orientation, coaching and job-based training. Staff members follow a set of Service Rules and sign a Code of Conduct that serves as a 'parameter of behaviour, morality, values and zero tolerance'.

Concern Worldwide

Concern Worldwide was HAP-certified in 2010. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Facilitated six regional accountability workshops, attended by staff from 20 countries, including sessions dedicated to complaints and response mechanisms, Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy, and Concern's Code of Conduct. By the end of 2012, all senior staff in its programmes are expected to have attended one of these workshops;

- Completed 16 country-specific accountability commitments, as well as 7 country-specific accountability implementation plans;

- Started to integrate the universal Concern competency framework into human resource processes in 15 country sites;

- Completed complaints and response mechanism review audits, and the complaints and response mechanism guidelines in two countries;

- Developed a template for a management response following evaluations and technical field support visits; and

- Scheduled Concern's mid-term progress audit to take place in Dublin and Tanzania in March 2012.

DanChurchAid

DanChurchAid was first certified in 2008, and is currently in the process of seeking re-certification. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Developed a context-specific humanitarian accountability framework for each of its focus countries;

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- Provided an induction to all new staff, requiring them to sign the DanChurchAid Code of Conduct. It is to support all its partner organisations to develop codes of conduct by 2013;

- Implemented the extensive use of information sign boards in Humanitarian Mine Action programmes in Congo and Angola;

- Published its annual anti-corruption report and annual complaints report for 2010 on its website;

- Provided humanitarian response workshops for staff from regional offices, which included training on sharing of information with beneficiaries;

- Held workshops on complaints handling in Palestine and Myanmar; and

- Maintained functioning complaints mechanisms in the Humanitarian Mine Action programmes in Angola and Lebanon, and was setting up complaints mechanisms in its Thailand, Myanmar and Albania programmes. In Sudan and Laos, political constraints have made it difficult to implement complaints and response mechanisms.

DanChurchAid comments, 'Complaints systems within projects in Ethiopia, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Haiti provided the most direct feedback for improvements in projects'.

In 2012 and 2013, DanChurchAid will focus on improving complaints mechanism implementation. It will also work on establishing clear agreements between DanChurchAid and its partners on obligations and responsibilities with regard to accountability.

DanChurchAid: Learning on complaints mechanisms in Angola

Complaints handling systems existed in the villages served by DanChurchAid's Humanitarian Mine Action programme in Angola, but no complaints were ever submitted. Following discussions with local communities and leaders, it transpired that cultural barriers constrained the lodging of official complaints. The DanChurchAid team continued to work with communities to find acceptable ways to invite comments and inputs.

Danish Refugee Council

The Danish Refugee Council was certified for the first time in 2007, and re-certified in 2010. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Revised its global Humanitarian Accountability Framework;

- Conducted accountability self-assessments in its 33 established country programmes between September and November 2011. This major undertaking paid dividends in terms of increasing awareness and developing local accountability improvement plans;

- Implemented a contextualised accountability framework in 25 of its country programmes;

- Launched a bottom-up Human Resource Management & Development change programme, covering staff performance appraisal and development, access to sector expertise and learning, Code of Conduct reporting, safety, and terms of employment; and

- Implemented functional beneficiary complaints mechanisms in 80 percent of its programmes, and developed a global complaints tracking system which will be applied in all programmes in 2012.

Diakonia

Diakonia became a HAP member in 2009, undertook a HAP baseline analysis in 2011, and now aims to achieve HAP Certification in 2013. Besides its baseline work in 2011, Diakonia conducted the following accountability-related activities:

- Developed an accountability framework in consultation with staff, and established a working group at head office level to revise and clarify its commitments and procedures as defined in the accountability framework;

- Developed further its Human Resource Handbook to include its Code of Conduct and details of consequences to expect if the Code is violated. The Code is now attached to employment contracts for employees and consultants; and

- Reviewed its complaints policy, which will be implemented in 2012, building upon the existing structures for 'internal incident' reporting.

HelpAge International

HelpAge International developed an accountability framework in 2010, after undertaking a HAP baseline analysis in 2009. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Provided accountability inductions at its regional office in Thailand, and with a partner organisation in the Philippines;

■ Undertook a baseline assessment and training on accountability in its Pakistan office in September, developing an improvement plan that was signed off by the Country Director, and designating an accountability focal point for monitoring the plan's implementation. It held discussions on accountability with beneficiaries in Nowshera, and with its partner in Peshawar;

■ Carried out awareness raising sessions in Gaza with staff and partners on its protection policy, complaints mechanisms, and the accountability framework. It developed an improvement plan which is being monitored by the programme manager; and

■ Provided an induction to the accountability framework at a global emergencies meeting in London, which was attended by staff from headquarters and international offices.

International Aid Services

International Aid Services became a member of HAP in 2009, and developed an accountability work plan in 2010. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ A HAP baseline analysis of its headquarters in Stockholm and a project site in Sudan;

■ Developed policy documents including an accountability framework, an information disclosure policy, a monitoring & evaluation policy, guidelines on whistle blowing, and a 'lessons learned' template; and

■ Staff and partners in all programmes undertook a HAP awareness workshop in 2011.

International Medical Corps

The International Medical Corps became a full member of HAP in March 2011. It conducted the following accountability-related activities during the year:

■ Created and staffed a Program Performance & Accountability department;

■ Completed a baseline self-assessment survey against the 2010 HAP Standard in June 2011;

■ Formally endorsed and adopted the organisational accountability framework, following consultation with stakeholders;

- Briefed all staff in its Los Angeles, Washington DC, London, and Split offices in sessions about the HAP process and the development of its Accountability Framework;

- Provided training to 1,858 staff, interns, volunteers and consultants in headquarter locations and countries of operation on its Code of Conduct, and how it can contribute to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people in developing countries, as well as the shared responsibility to report suspected breaches; and

- Established a learning and development working group to identify how the HAP Standard components can be incorporated into its learning and development activities.

International Medical Corps comments: 'A key lesson learned during our first year of membership is the importance of senior management regularly reinforcing to all staff that the HAP process is seen as an organisational priority and that all departments need to be involved in the development and implementation of the Accountability Framework in order for it to be understood, supported and progressed organisation wide.'

International Rescue Committee UK

The International Rescue Committee UK (IRC-UK) became a member of HAP in 2010. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Approved a Strategic Plan framework with six strategic priorities, of which one is 'accountability to beneficiaries in humanitarian settings';

- Formed an accountability working group, comprising staff from across its different sections under the leadership of the finance director;

- Carried out research into donor requirements, the accountability commitments of peer organisations, and the links between accountability and IRC-UK's commitments to other standards. It completed and presented draft reports. Next, it will look at IRC-UK's existing practice within countries and programmes in relation to accountability.

- After launching its new staff Code of Conduct in 2010, it worked to roll out the Code and embed it within the organisation's culture.

Lutheran World Federation-Department for World Service

The Lutheran World Federation-Department for World Service (LWF DWS) has been a HAP member since 2008. It undertook a baseline study at the end of 2009, underwent certification audits towards the end of 2011, and was certified against the 2010 HAP Standard in January 2012, with only two minor non-compliances. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Conducted accountability assessments in each LWF DWS country programme, and used the results to frame the specific country programme accountability work plans. This gave clear direction as to what actions should be taken to improve accountability in each location;

■ Developed and implemented an Open Information & Dissemination policy; and

■ Trained staff across its different country programmes in accountability and complaints handling.

Lutheran World Federation: Community handling of complaints in Burundi

In Burundi, the communities are actively involved in processing complaints received through the LWF DWS complaints and response mechanism. The scope of complaints received is limited to operational issues, which the communities themselves discuss how to handle.

Lutheran World Service India Trust

The Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) became a full member of HAP in May 2011. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ A HAP baseline analysis (for the Church of Sweden) at an LWSIT urban project site and at LWSIT's headquarters in Kolkata. It found the analysis a very useful way of assessing progress against the HAP benchmarks.

■ Established an organisational-level grievance redress mechanism in all 16 field units;

■ Developed complaints and response mechanisms at community, project and national levels. Invited complaints from rights holders and its staff pertaining to programmes, abuse of power, sexual exploitation, corruption, fraud, etc.;

- Shared activity plans with partner communities, including details of costs of materials and sources of funding; and

- Implemented a staff Code of Conduct, holding intensive discussions on the code during review meetings in 2011 at national office and field unit levels, and taking follow-up actions.

LWSIT comments: 'Conscious efforts are made by the management of LSWIT and its employees to serve the identified rights holders and selected communities in a dignified way. The HAP benchmarks are really good which has given space to listen to the people and provide importance to them and own the program. Rights holders are now demanding their due rights from different actors including government agencies and other stakeholders. HAP benchmarks can be used as instrument for effective management at the organisational level, ultimately this will lead to high quality program delivery.'

Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT): Quality management

When one partner community questioned the variety and quality of seeds provided by LWSIT, it brought the issue to their community complaints & response mechanism committee, which shared the feedback with LWSIT. The LWSIT project management committee considered the issue and took action to adjust the variety of seeds. The example was then shared with other partner communities, for their information and should similar action be necessary in future.

Medair

Medair was a founding member of HAP. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Made a presentation on accountability to beneficiaries at the Country Directors' conference, and at an annual conference for WASH field staff; and

- Reviewed field staff job descriptions to include responsibilities for accountability to beneficiaries.

Medical Aid for Palestinians

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) has been a HAP member since 2008, and is working towards certification in 2013. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Revised reporting formats on accountability measures to make them more user friendly for partners;

- Increased focus on staff appraisal to reflect on performance, as well as personal and professional development needs;

- Directly involved its beneficiaries in assessment, implementation and evaluation through workshops and other means. This has led to significant improvements in the project design and meeting targets in community health and disability projects;

- Increased sharing of documentation in Arabic, significantly improving the participation of partners and ownership of projects; and

- Provided all its partners' project staff with contact numbers for relevant MAP staff, ensuring they feel comfortable to contact the organisation and report problems and complaints.

MAP comments: 'MAP works in contexts where accountability standards could compromise safety of beneficiaries, partner organisations and/or staff, and therefore MAP has to support accountability within a framework of the principles of "do no harm", taking full account of risk.'

Mercy Malaysia

Mercy Malaysia is a certified member of HAP. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Held discussions department-by-department to revise the implementation plan for its accountability framework, and to ensure staff understanding of their responsibilities in relation to the framework;

- Rolled out an information and non-disclosure policy, developing contextualised information plans in each project;

- Implemented contextualised accountability frameworks for the majority of its projects, which have been embraced enthusiastically by partners and beneficiaries; and

- Implemented contextualised complaints and response mechanisms for the majority of its projects; and

- Achieved a high level of community participation in projects in Cambodia and Sri Lanka, deploying community volunteers who provided information and updates on projects, and presented the complaints and response mechanism, to every household in the project areas.

Merlin

Merlin has prepared a new strategy for 2012-2015, which defines accountability to patients, participants, and communities as an organisational priority. It intends to seek HAP certification in 2012, as a confirmation of progress made, and to ensure its continual improvement. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Developed key accountability activities across Merlin's programmes, particularly around information provision, influenced by its work in Haiti and Pakistan. Its teams worked with key partners to develop 'patients' charters' to be displayed at facilities and mobile clinics. These clearly define in appropriate local languages the services available and who is entitled to them, the behaviours and values of Merlin and its staff, and the means available to give feedback and raise complaints;

■ Rolled out a Programme Management Cycle guide, and a Results Framework which includes providing evidence on achievements against Merlin's accountability framework and the HAP benchmarks. It is developing Country Monitoring Plans, and each country will also have an Accountability Action Plan;

■ Produced guidelines on soliciting feedback and encouraging complaints, and disseminated these along with training resources to country programmes; and

■ Completed work on Merlin's Code of Conduct, ensuring synergy with key human resources policies, including its vulnerable people policy.

Merlin comments on complaints and response mechanisms: 'Our experience shows that clarity on what Merlin is and is not accountable for (and therefore what we can and cannot accept feedback and complaints on) needs to be agreed in all countries between Merlin and its partners. This analysis then informs the development of appropriate tools'.

Muslim Aid

Muslim Aid, which became a HAP member in 2008 and undertook a HAP baseline survey in the same year, hopes to achieve HAP certification by the end of 2012. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Reviewed its policies, procedures, and processes in relation to the HAP Standard, and included accountability provisions in its operations;

■ Recognised in its five-year strategic plan (2011-2015) the importance of the 2010 HAP Standard, and defined accountability as one of its objectives;

■ Included mention of the HAP Standard in its recruitment materials, job specifications, and staff induction programmes. It makes all staff members aware of its code of conduct;

■ Issued standard protocols to staff on sharing information with stakeholders. It shares project information using notice boards and other means, and its staff wear field jackets and carry identification cards clearly displaying the Muslim Aid logo;

■ Sought to ensure beneficiary participation at all levels, recognising the challenges and complexity of conducting field operations during emergencies, responding in remote locations, overcoming language barriers, respecting cultural diversity, and ensuring cultural sensitivity;

■ Documented full policies, procedures, and processes on complaints handling. It has trained managers in how to use the procedures. In 2012, it aims to extend this aspect to partner organisations. It is also in the process of reviewing its approach to working with partner organisations.

Muslim Aid comments: 'Muslim Aid would like to see a more holistic approach from the HAP Secretariat, integrating other international standards within its strategic plan. Muslim Aid also appreciates the HAP Secretariat's technical assistance, its timely sharing of information, and its organisation of training and learning opportunities with members'.

Muslim Aid: Information Sharing

In 2011, Muslim Aid started to translate its press releases, adverts (broadcasting and print) into the languages of the communities that traditionally support the charity. Its website now consists of sections with press releases translated in to Arabic, although it is not yet complete. It has also provided press briefings in languages appropriate for selected community media. It is currently contracting a Bengali newspaper to translate the Muslim Aid Bangladesh's Annual Review 2010 into Bangla and to publish it in five different issues.

Norwegian Church Aid

Norwegian Church Aid joined HAP in 2009, and was certified against the 2010 HAP Standard in November 2011. The certification audits took place in Oslo and Kenya. All Norwegian Church Aid representations have a Country Accountability Plan covering the period 2011 to 2013, and these will be updated in 2012, in response to input from the HAP certification audit.

In 2011, Norwegian Church Aid launched a complaints and response mechanism after approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Inspectorate, which put some restrictions on the referral of complaints to other organisations outside Norway.

Office Africain Pour le Développement et la Coopération (OFADEC)

OFADEC was the first organisation to become HAP certified, in 2007, and was re-certified in 2010. OFADEC highlighted as the biggest challenge a shortage of resources for training its staff on accountability issues. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Revised the human resources section of the OFADEC procedures manual to elaborate its approach to training and staff development. It amended the staff appraisal form accordingly, to include a section on follow-up and capacity building;

■ Developed a procedures manual for communications;

■ Involved staff in training sessions on HAP, including OFADEC's Code of Conduct;

■ Involved refugees and staff in a training session on sexual harassment and abuse;

■ Carried out a participatory needs analysis with refugees; and

■ Revised the staff and beneficiary complaints mechanisms, and integrated the revised versions into its procedures manual.

Oxfam America

Oxfam America conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Committed at the executive leadership level to having a formalised Accountability Framework in place and operational by the end of 2012. It will include all existing accountability commitments, including its HAP commitments.

■ Rolled out its Code of Conduct in English, Spanish, and French;

■ Made a formal complaint handling mechanism which is administered by a third party, accessible through its website;

- Conducted its Annual Impact Reflections, participatory processes through which its staff, partners and representatives of the primary change agents (communities) agree and report on a programme's progress each year; and

- Implemented its first formal complaints mechanism in El Salvador during the response to Tropical Depression 12E, with the regional office circulating flyers to implementing partners along with phone numbers for complaints to Oxfam and the government's complaints line. Volunteers from a partner organisation then conducted interviews with communities, asking for their specific feedback and concerns.

Oxfam America commented in their report: 'Since joining HAP, the overall understanding and awareness of the need for accountability and transparency in our work has increased throughout the organisation. Despite the commitment and full buy-in of staff and management, challenges remain to putting into practice formal accountability mechanisms. The key challenge for staff is adding the work required to create these accountability measures while managing existing work portfolios. Furthermore, it is challenging for field staff to formalise partnership relations and strengthen mutual accountability with outside organisations'.

Oxfam GB

Oxfam GB's accountability framework is outlined in its 2010-2013 Accountability Report, setting out three-year objectives and yearly priorities. In 2011, Oxfam GB included a global outcome indicator in its Global Performance Framework. It developed and piloted this methodology to enable measurement of its ability to meet partner and community needs, and to assess the agency's progress in meeting its Minimum Standards for Accountability.

In 2012, Oxfam GB plans to distribute a 'Statement of Partnership Principles' leaflet to all partners. The leaflet will explain to partners exactly what they can hold Oxfam accountable for, and will encourage them to do so.

Oxfam GB: Harnessing technology for effective complaints handling

In Somalia, where telephone coverage is relatively good, Oxfam GB provides a telephone hotline service, and the number and instructions for it are given out at distributions. Around 100 calls have been received so far, about 65 percent of which were from women. Many of the calls/messages received are to register thanks for the distributed items. Some lodge complaints or flag up problems, whilst others request information or ask for additional assistance.

People in Aid

People in Aid is an Associate Member of HAP. It conducted the following notable activities in 2011:

- Considered ten applications for certification to its Quality Mark One. Required the following re-submit evidence to retain Quality Mark One, before all were approved by the panel: ACORD (Kenya), CESVI (Italy), MAF International, Merlin (UK) and The Brooke (UK). Awarded Quality Mark One for the first time to three organisations: Tear (Australia), HelpAge International (UK) and the Sierra Leone Red Cross.

- Awarded Quality Mark Two for the first time to two organisations: Everychild and Womankind Worldwide;

- Introduced quarterly teleconferences to talk about the People in Aid quality marks. These have been attended by agencies (and country/ regional offices of global INGOs) from Belgium, Spain, Kenya, Honduras, UK, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal, and Myanmar; and

- Continued to engage in sector-wide accountability activities: attended meetings of the quality and accountability initiatives, worked with HAP and Sphere on the Joint Standards Initiative in the Horn of Africa, and commented on and contributed to new accountability-related frameworks and output from, for example, ALNAP, the Emergency Capacity Building Project, BOND, and the Disasters Emergency Committee.

PMU Interlife

PMU, which has been a member of HAP since 2009, underwent a HAP baseline audit at headquarters and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2011. It then decided to introduce the HAP Standard in PMU's humanitarian and development work, and developed a revised Accountability Framework for 2012-13. In addition to the baseline audit, it also conducted these accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Developed a new staff Code of Conduct, which applies to headquarters as well as field staff;

- Assisted its partner, CEPAC, with the introduction of a complaints and response system in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was introduced first in one of CEPAC's 15 nutrition centres, and expanded to five more by the year's end; and

- Produced a draft complaints and response policy and procedure document, which will be implemented in 2012.

PMU: Beneficiary participation in northern Kenya

In October 2011, when PMU's partner was distributing food in Isiolo, Kenya, one of the suppliers delivered a batch of sub-standard maize. The beneficiaries, who were well-informed about the project and about their rights, raised their concerns with the project manager. In response, the project manager immediately apologised to the beneficiaries and asked them to remain calm as investigations were carried out. Following the investigation, PMU's partner cancelled the tender on grounds of breach of contract, and engaged a new supplier. Learning from the incident, the partner now inspects the quality of all supplies prior to their delivery to beneficiaries.

Plan International

Plan International joined HAP in 2011. It completed a baseline assessment in relation to the six HAP benchmarks, and defined the development of an accountability framework as an organisational priority for 2012, committing funds for the purpose. The language of Plan's Code of Conduct will also be reviewed in 2012, as part of work to improve safeguarding processes and procedures.

RedR

RedR remarks on the difficulty of tracing the impact of its work, given its role as a second-tier provider of humanitarian services. It has begun work on a 'theory of change model' intended to identify how its work impacts on the work of their client agencies and, through them, to the ultimate beneficiaries. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

- Introduced a Code of Conduct for staff and trainees;

- Completed an analysis of membership by gender, age, etc;

- Investigated and responded to all complaints received; and

- Trained its trainers, in conjunction with HAP, to deliver training in accountability, thereby increasing overall capacity for providing accountability training in the UK, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Pakistan.

Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH)

The Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains of Haiti became a full member of HAP during 2011. During the year, they developed a draft code of conduct and a draft accountability framework.

Saibaan Development Organisation

Saibaan undertook a HAP baseline in 2008, and became a full member of HAP in 2009. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Developed an accountability framework on the basis of the HAP benchmarks, to improve the quality of existing systems and field operations;

■ Provided two training workshops for all field and office-based staff on staff performance evaluations, with technical assistance from Save the Children and Church World Service;

■ Established a procurement committee to ensure quality and accountability in relation to items for distribution to intended beneficiaries; and

■ Organised exposure visits for community members to learn from the practical experiences of other communities.

Save the Children UK

Save the Children UK has been a full member of HAP since 2007, on behalf of the broader Save the Children family. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Organised a Global Children's Panel, a group of young people from across the globe who work with Save the Children to influence its high-level decision-making, to hold it to account on what it has done for children, and to raise issues of importance to children globally;

■ Developed the Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction, working with children around the world and other agencies. It lists five key priorities identified by children for disaster risk reduction.

■ Produced a training film for staff on setting up complaints and response mechanisms. The film, produced by the Accountability Breakthrough project, documents experiences setting up information and complaints desks and Beneficiary Reference Groups in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya.

■ Conducted real-time evaluations of major responses in 2011, including Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. It carried out consultations with beneficiaries and other members of affected communities, and assessments of its accountability to beneficiaries. As a result, it developed action plans to drive improvements, with output trackers and quality checklists.

■ Conducted two after action review workshops with more than 30 staff from its humanitarian department and other key teams in order to explore, capture, and draw up action plans based on learning from the Côte d'Ivoire/Liberia crisis and the East Africa crisis.

Save the Children UK comments: 'Save the Children UK has made significant progress towards improving its accountability objectives in 2011, especially through its 'Accountability to Children Breakthrough'—its support to 15 country programmes to conduct pilots, training programmes and development of new guidance materials (including 'How to's' relating to community transparency, financial transparency, setting up complaints and response mechanisms, and consulting with children). Now in its second year, this breakthrough is enabling transformative change to the organisation's approach to accountability to beneficiaries (…).

It continues, 'Save the Children responded to 46 emergencies in 2011. Accountability was mainstreamed throughout all of the major emergency response strategies, and some strong efforts were made to establish complaints and response mechanisms (…). Programming in insecure contexts is an ongoing challenge for all monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning activities – this was re-emphasised in the East Africa responses in 2011.'

Save the Children: Child-friendly complaints mechanism in Dadaab

Following the HAP deployment in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, and based on consultations with children and adults in the camps, Save the Children established information and complaints desks in child friendly spaces in three camps. In addition, Beneficiary Reference Groups were established to provide liaison between Save the Children and the communities, and to channel feedback and complaints. Community volunteers were selected and trained specifically for the task. Save the Children documented the experience in a film, which it could share with other country programmes. Unfortunately, due to insecurity in the camps during the last months of 2011, several of the child friendly spaces were closed, and the complaints desks could not function. The Accountability and Learning Working Group continues to discuss the possibility of setting up a joint complaints mechanism in Dadaab.

Save the Children: Children contribute to annual planning in Myanmar

In Myanmar, children's groups were set up in communities where the agency works, and a process of consultation on its work took place at village, province, and national levels. The consultation concerned work done in the communities over the last year, and sought children's input for its priorities in 2012 across thematic sectors. Their views were incorporated in the Country Annual Plan. A child-friendly version of the plan was developed and distributed to the children's groups. The Save the Children Myanmar office documented the process, and worked with Save the Children's accountability team to produce a guide for its replication in other country programmes. The aim is to repeat the process on an annual basis.

Sungi Development Foundation

Sungi became HAP-certified in 2011. It undertook the following accountability-related activities:

■ Advocated, as the coordinator of the National Humanitarian Network in Pakistan, for empowered partnership and mutual accountability among donors, United Nations, international and national NGOs, and the community;

■ Developed and implemented a plan for delivering on its accountability framework commitments;

■ Shared its accountability framework with all staff in ad hoc sessions at project offices and through a briefing note. It provided new staff with an orientation on the HAP Standard and Sungi's staff Code of Conduct;

■ Developed Humanitarian Quality Management Committees in all humanitarian operations, and played a key role in advising project managers and disseminating information. In development and advocacy projects, Village Committees took on this role; and

■ Developed and disseminated a flow chart on how beneficiaries could lodge a complaint, using posters on notice boards.

Sungi Development Foundation: Community Accountability Committees

Sungi worked on its complaints handling capacity during 2011. Community Accountability Committees were formed at local level, and helped to develop local complaints processes under the broad guidelines of the Sungi complaints handling policy. In most of the areas, it was found that complaint boxes were not used. Instead, the most effective methods for receiving complaints proved to be verbal complaints presented at project offices and a complaints telephone hotline.

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS)

The Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) has been a member of HAP since 2009. It is preparing for HAP certification in the future. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Finalised a review of its 2009 accountability framework, which states SEEDS' accountability and quality management standards along with an implementation plan for these;

■ Shared the SEEDS code of conduct with existing and new staff members, consultants and interns, requiring them each to sign it;

■ Undertook a review of the organisation's structure for sharing information, and tasked the HAP workgroup with developing an information dissemination policy;

■ Finalised guidelines on beneficiary participation after discussions with staff; and

■ Developed a complaints and response mechanism policy, and incorporated it into its human resources manual. It provided orientation sessions to staff and beneficiaries, installed complaints boxes at the SEEDS office and at Bihar Health Centre, and formed a Complaint Response Committee.

Tearfund

Tearfund was first certified by HAP in 2008, and then re-certified in 2011. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Developed a corporate framework for quality commitments, incorporating it into operating systems for Tearfund and its partners;

■ Developed a whistle-blowing policy;

■ Rolled out a staff conduct policy and Code of Conduct for all staff in the UK and internationally;

■ Conducted a pilot 'partner feedback' survey in Cambodia. Following this, it prepared and accepted a proposal to outline steps needed to make Tearfund more accountable to its partners;

■ Further emphasised escalation procedures for serious complaints in Partnership Covenants and Grant Agreements with partners and with staff; and

■ Recruited an Impact and Evaluation Advisor to review and develop corporate outcomes, measurements, and capturing of learning across the organisation. It developed a draft organisational learning strategy.

Tearfund: Beneficiary accountability prioritisation in Afghanistan

In 2009, a dedicated Beneficiary Accountability Advisor was recruited to support the implementation and review of beneficiary accountability practices across Tearfund's humanitarian programme in Afghanistan. When the post ended in 2010, there was limited follow-up. In 2011, Tearfund decided that a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer (MEAL) was needed. The establishment of a MEAL Officer offered dedicated capacity to provide training on beneficiary accountability practices, to closely monitor the progress of accountability practices, and to suggest improvements based on learning collated. This remains a strong focus for MEAL officer, who works with local Project Managers in both directly and remotely-managed project locations. Beneficiary accountability has also featured more prevalently in project evaluations, which provide another opportunity to assess progress in accountability practices. As the process develops, there is an opportunity for the MEAL Officer to visit project offices and to liaise with project staff. Currently, a study into remote monitoring of beneficiary accountability and quality management is being carried out, funded by DFID's Humanitarian Innovations Fund, and a published report will be available by mid-2012.

Women's Refugee Commission

The Women's Refugee Commission has been a member of HAP since 2004. It conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Oriented all staff in relation to the accountability framework and quality management system;

■ Strengthened its commitment to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Its educational materials on PSEA for local and international NGOs are now sent out with a cover letter, from the Executive Director, emphasising WRC's commitment to PSEA. It also joined the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on PSEA, and conducted a PSEA self-assessment; and

■ Established Rescue Net, an electronic system for monitoring to ensure that all persons travelling on missions have read and signed off on the WRC's Ethical Guidelines for Working with Displaced Populations.

World Vision International

World Vision conducted the following accountability-related activities in 2011:

■ Disseminated its Programme Accountability Framework (PAF), along with a PAF self-assessment tool. The self-assessment tool is used by field teams to assess practice and to improve it. Drafted a Performance Framework for large scale emergencies. It planned testing and further development in 2012.

■ Held an Accountability Community of Practice meeting in Malaysia in October 2011, bringing together 27 World Vision staff from across all programme areas to assess progress on establishing good accountability practice in programmes;

■ Held learning labs to develop field staff competencies in accountability, design, and monitoring and evaluation in Bangladesh, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, and Indonesia. These involved more than 150 World Vision staff members;

■ Conducted a desk review of the types of complaints mechanisms used in different offices, with a view to aligning its complaints mechanisms. It presented and discussed the review at its accountability community of practice meeting in October, and will include the recommendations in the next revisions of its manual for integrated programmes;

■ Developed a complaints database system for its Food Programming & Management Group to manage complaints in large scale programmes. It is testing the system in four countries, is expected to release it for use in large scale emergency programmes soon;

■ Chaired the Horn of Africa Interagency Working Group (IAWG) sub-committee on quality and accountability, which facilitated the work of the Joint Standards Initiative (Sphere, HAP and People in Aid) in its 2011 Horn of Africa deployment, providing financial support and a platform from which to engage the IAWG's member agencies; and

■ Developed with HAP a terms of reference and scope for a HAP baseline analysis.

World Vision comments, 'The challenges faced in mainstreaming accountability are to ensure that (1) every staff member working in emergencies knows the PAF well and can find appropriate ways to work accountably in complex fragile contexts, (2) decision-makers in field offices provide the time, space and resources for PAF implementation, and (3)

World Vision support offices and donors allow flexibility in programme design so that field programs can respond to community input and feedback.'

ZOA

ZOA became a member of HAP in 2011. It conducted the following accountability-related activities:

■ Volunteered, through ZOA Sri Lanka, to act as a pilot country in applying the HAP Standard. It gave an introduction to the HAP Standard and benchmarks to ZOA management and field staff, who carried out a self-assessment to establish the current level of accountability practice and identify strengths and weaknesses. It then developed an action plan to enhance accountability to beneficiaries, prioritising the establishment of of an effective complaints and response mechanism for beneficiaries. ZOA Sri Lanka undertook a formal HAP baseline analysis in February 2012; and

■ Developed, at ZOA headquarters in the Netherlands, a draft humanitarian accountability framework, stating its commitments to key stakeholder groups, and especially beneficiaries. It will refine these with the country teams, test them on programme sites, and present them for approval by the ZOA management team.

CHAPTER 3

Voices from People Affected by Kenya's Food Crisis in 2011

3.1 Introduction

In 2011, HAP, the Sphere Project, and People In Aid under the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) banner undertook a deployment in support of the humanitarian response to the food security crisis in the Horn of Africa.

The joint deployment aimed to: 'support the humanitarian system in providing accountable programming that meets accepted standards of quality, both in the immediate humanitarian response, and in the development and implementation of organisational and operational strategies for short and long-term recovery and the prevention of future crises'. To that end, the activities of the deployment were tailored to record and amplify the views of people affected by the disaster, through a collaborative process of engagement with existing networks and ongoing evaluations, baseline studies and consultations in Kenya.

To achieve this, the JSI team and the In-Country Network on Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (ICN) collaborated to map out the state of accountability, to gather perceptions of staff and affected communities, and to identify gaps and areas for improvement. The ICN, under the auspices of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), takes steps to ensure enhanced coordination and communication relating to the prevention of, and response to, cases of abuse and exploitation by humanitarian personnel.

In early 2011, the ICN initiated a nationwide baseline study to identify the existing gaps and areas for further improvement. This baseline coincided with the JSI team's proposed visit to the Turkana region to undertake

consultations with communities. An agreement was reached to carry out the study jointly in the drought-affected areas of Lodwar and Kakuma; the ICN would continue its baseline study in other geographical locations independently.

The joint effort was also recognised as an opportunity to explain the linkages between accountability, quality, and PSEA, to increase the understanding of staff on these issues, and to gather feedback from affected communities. The findings were made available to the humanitarian community in Kenya, and disseminated more widely in the sector. Special efforts were made to share the findings with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Real Time Evaluation, which coincided with the joint deployment.

This chapter is divided into four sections. It begins with a description of the methodology used for gathering feedback from affected communities and staff, the Inter-Agency Joint Mapping Exercise with a focus on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is followed by a section on the perceptions of communities affected and those of frontline agency staff, along with their recommendations and suggestions on how accountability and quality of the humanitarian assistance can be strengthened. It ends by drawing some conclusions for organisations working in humanitarian assistance.

3.2 The JSI-ICN Accountability Mapping Exercise Methodology and Overview

To understand the impact and challenges of humanitarian assistance in response to the drought, the joint study was conducted in the region of Turkana Central, in north-eastern Kenya. The Turkana people are nomadic pastoralists whose livelihoods depend on livestock and seasonal small-scale farming. The district headquarters of Lodwar and Kakuma were selected because these sites were accessible, featured ongoing humanitarian assistance programmes for the drought, and UNICEF (Lodwar) and UNHCR (Kakuma) agreed to host and facilitate the study.

The aims of the study were to:

■ Understand the state of accountability and to find ways to address the existing challenges by identifying strengths and areas for improvement;

■ Provide a capacity-building opportunity to programme site staff, to increase their understanding and practice of accountability and PSEA measures;

■ Solicit recommendations and solutions from a variety of stakeholders especially NGO staff and affected communities; and

■ Facilitate a field-based network for exchange of good practice and learning.

Research methodology

The study was undertaken using the Inter-Agency Accountability and Quality Mapping Exercise, a methodology developed by HAP and participating agencies from Dadaab Refugee Operations in 2010. The Dadaab Accountability Mapping Exercise involved 32 staff members from 13 agencies and the consultation of 126 refugees; lessons learned were published in an article in *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, "Collective efforts to improve humanitarian accountability and quality: The HAP deployment to Dadaab."[55]

This methodology was adapted to the Turkana context, using some elements from other consultation methods, such as the one used for Voices of Disaster Survivors[56] of the HAP 2010 Humanitarian Accountability Report.

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[55] www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-50/collective-efforts-to-improve-humanitarian-accountability-and-quality-the-hap-deployment-to-dadaab.

[56] www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-52/local-perspectives-haiti-earthquake-response

Box 1: Summary of Methodology

Planning
- Selected location, identified hosting agency and field staff focal point for liaison

Inter-agency workshop
- Conducted introductory workshop open to participation by all agencies working in the location, and agreed on issues to be covered: The three Standards: People In Aid, HAP, and Sphere; And the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), power differentials, and gender-based violence (GBV);
- Discussed the key challenges in applying standards with staff
- Stratified community stakeholder groups according to levels of vulnerability, access, and relevance;
- Developed questions for focus group discussions with each stakeholder group, using relevant elements from the 2010 HAP Standard, Sphere Handbook, and People In Aid Code

Focus groups
- Undertook focus group discussions with affected community members, led by JSI-ICN Teams using the opportunity to engage in direct consultations, and to identify key challenges and gaps

Plenary discussions
- Shared consolidated findings and recommendations with participants of the workshop
- Proposed next steps: accountability action plans, opportunities for peer learning, establishing working groups etc.

Outputs
- Developed and circulated a report of key findings with participating agencies and the wider sector
- Developed and shared tools and guidance with participating agencies and the wider sector
- Reviewed and improved the mapping exercise methodology

Limitations and scope:

This exercise was intended to bring the voices of affected communities to the centre of the decision-making process and to raise awareness of accountability and quality-related challenges. The recommendations shared were those made by the affected communities themselves and have not been modified. The purpose of the exercise was to offer a snapshot of the key challenges, to gather recommendations from affected communities and frontline staff, and to identify salient action points in sample locations. The scope of the study is limited to the Turkana region.

The exercise was adapted to the circumstances, availability of staff, access to affected communities, location, and other contextual considerations.

The exercise was limited to drought-affected areas in the Turkana region, and focused on assistance and services provided since June 2011. In

Kakuma, only host communities were consulted, as refugee operations were outside the scope of the exercise. Owing to the absence of participants with expertise in consulting children, children were not included as a stakeholder group. Information was not requested about specific cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, or the identities of affected persons. The issue was dealt with in general terms to gauge the understandings of the various stakeholders.

Box 2: Participating agencies and stakeholder groups consulted

Inter-agency Accountability and Quality Mapping Exercise, with special consideration to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Conducted by the In-Country Network and the Joint Standards Initiative			
Location: Lodwar Host agency: UNICEF Dates: 14-16 November 2011		Location: Kakuma Host agency: UNHCR Dates: 17-18 November 2011	
Participating agencies	**Stakeholder groups**	**Participating agencies**	**Stakeholder groups**
1. UNICEF 2. Kenya Red Cross Society 3. Merlin 4. Oxfam 5. International Rescue Committee 6. Ministry of Education, Turkana 7. National Disaster Operations Centre 8. Nahdir Konlen child rights radio program 9. World Vision 10. Diocese of Lodwar 11. Turkana Women Advocacy Dev Organisation (TWADO) 12. Lodwar police 13. Lodwar Prosecution Office 14. UNWOMEN 15. IOM	1. People with disabilities (10) 2. Internally displaced persons (12) 3. Food Committees(7) 4. Field monitors (8) 5. District Government officials (6)	1. Lutheran World Federation (LWF) 2. UNHCR 3. National Council of Churches of Kenya 4. IOM 5. Film Aid 6. UNWOMEN 7. Oxfam 8. Jesuit Refugee Services 9. National Disaster Operations Centre 10. Ministry of Gender & Social Development 11. Ministry of Agriculture	1. Disability& elderly (13) 2. Internally displaced people (9) 3. District Government officials (7) 4. Women (15) 5. Youth (8) 6. Committees (7) 7. Men (14)
Total number of staff consulted: 17	**Total number of affected community members consulted: 43**	**Total number of staff consulted: 19**	**Total number of affected community members consulted: 66**

3.3 The perceptions of affected communities

This section presents the key findings that emerged from consultations with affected communities and district officials. Since the views of affected communities are often misrepresented as monolithic, the findings are disaggregated to reveal a broader spectrum of opinions and perspectives. In total, ten stakeholder groups were consulted: people with disabilities; internally displaced persons (IDPs); food committees; field monitors from a cash programme; district government officials; elderly people; women; youth; community committees; and men. The suggestions and recommendations made by these groups have not been modified or altered.

(***i*** *Communities deplore aid that creates dependency and unsustainable projects* The need for sustainable long-term programmes that lead to community empowerment, ownership, and self-reliance was strongly emphasised by every stakeholder group consulted in each location. This theme recurred in all discussions with affected communities and district government officials alike. Expressing concern and dissatisfaction, a group of men in Kakuma said 'hit and run projects' had been implemented which had left little trace or impact. Highlighting the need for a shift from food aid to food security, government officials lamented that 'dependency syndrome has been created by the flooding of food aid into Turkana,' pointing out that 'a sack of maize is sold cheaper in Kakuma than in Kitale (i.e. the bread basket of Kenya).' In the words of one senior district official, 'Relief is non-sustainable. We need to move towards a more sustainable and dignified approach. Relief, where it has reached people, is politicised. Moving people from relief towards self-reliance will be increasingly difficult. The mindset of people has become dependent and a "bring and deliver to us" attitude exists.' The affected communities struggle against the prevailing dependency and said 'we don't want to be beggars- we want to work for the aid/ assistance received, have sustainable projects, not relief or food aid; have cash for work projects instead.'

The categorised phases of 'relief', 'recovery', and 'development' do not necessarily reflect realities on the ground. While the humanitarian sector onerously moves from one phase of its response to another, the realities and needs of the affected communities shift and change far more rapidly. These categories appear arbitrary for the end user, who does not wish to be dependent on the next food distribution, but aspires to security and empowerment from growing their own food.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Implement long-term and sustainable projects, such as income generation or livelihood projects. These may include market stalls with semi-permanent structures for sale of products, micro-farming support, wheelchairs offering greater mobility for people with disabilities, re-stocking of livestock, irrigation farming, and the use river banks. (People with Disabilities Group)

■ Increase access to priority services: education, medical services, and employment opportunities (People with Disabilities Group).

■ Diversify assistance to include longer term income generation and livelihoods projects, as 'self reliance is the key to empowerment.' (IDP Group)

■ Prioritise the distribution of resources based on needs and with greater community involvement, and conduct joint programming with the communities for sustainable projects (NGO staff).

(ii) Communities perceive weak coordination and ineffective aid
The coordination of aid delivery was identified as an area of weakness by affected communities and district officials. Respondents acknowledged that the arrival and increased activities of NGOs had a positive impact in their areas, increasing employment opportunities, production and sale of items like food, charcoal, and firewood as well as creating new local markets. The government officials stressed an 'interest in establishing a closer relationship with the agencies based on better coordination and collaboration'.

However, respondents also remarked on poor coordination between the agencies and the government, with nearly all stakeholder groups repeatedly mentioning duplication of effort and lack of project sustainability. District officials and affected communities commented that the majority of organisations intervened in the same area, without taking into account programmes that had already been implemented there. Affected communities urged organisations to have inter-linked and holistic programmes for greater effectiveness and sustainability, while government officials pointed out that organisations came to the government as last resort or as 'fire-fighters' when they had problems with the communities arising from ineffective programmes. One senior district official commented, 'there is a lot of publicity about the Turkana region and increased humanitarian activity, but the coordination is poor and needs a better approach. There has been too much duplication. There is no central point, so feedback cannot be given. It is very scattered'.

Agency staff who participated in the workshop and district officials agreed that an effective coordination mechanism was lacking at the district level. While a District Steering Group has been established, it was seen as a weak forum by both groups since it did not adequately represent the various stakeholder groups involved in the response. District officials in Lodwar and Kakuma insisted that the District Steering Group 'lacks teeth and necessary powers to enforce regulations'. Concerns were also raised that issues of accountability, quality of services, aid delivery, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and protection were not on the agenda of the District Steering Group, and that these issues were not addressed collectively.

Communities and government officials made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Ensure that effective and robust coordination mechanisms are created through consultation with the district and emerging county governments.

■ Establish new systems or strengthen existing systems in order to have effective structures that encourage systematic information-sharing between the government and organisations, and to affected communities.

■ Make the District Steering Group effective through a stronger mandate and better representation of various stakeholders, including local Chiefs (representatives of the district government), relevant heads of district government departments, NGO representatives, and sector experts.

■ Ensure the county governments are empowered and equipped with an understanding of how to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and tools to available address these issues.

■ Increase decision-making and oversight powers at the district level to manage, administer, and oversee projects.

■ Establish a joint community and government of Kenya monitoring framework to ensure effective quality programmes.

(iii) Communities feel unaware of codes of conduct Agency staff seemed well-informed about their organisational policies, with a high level of understanding of their Codes of Conduct, but affected communities indicated that they were poorly informed about the types of behaviour to expect from aid workers and their codes of conduct.

Community groups highlighted that the reporting mechanisms available in cases for concern or complaint are unclear. They are not aware of the contact details for relevant persons within the organisations or how to reach them, and only the local chiefs are allowed inside the offices.

During the consultations, it was interesting to note that the INGOs are not referred to, or entirely understood to be, non-profit organisations, they are referred to as *Kompanies* or *MNCs* (multi-national companies).

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Provide information to affected communities about the role of organisations and the behaviour to expect from the staff of organisations; and

■ Address the issue of access for community members to organisation staff and offices.

(iv) Communities expect agencies to provide more timely and relevant information Various community stakeholder groups found the lack of information on project details, timeframes, and beneficiary selection processes challenging and de-motivating. People with disabilities and elderly people in Kakuma stressed the challenges they faced, saying 'we wait and wait, only to find out that the programme does not exist'. District officials echoed this concern, saying 'agencies come, intervene and leave, without informing anyone.' Members of the community emphasised their desire for predictability, and highlighted that project time frames were not shared with them. This caused them to wait in anticipation for the next food cycle or distribution of relief items, only to find out these had changed or stopped. Not knowing decreased their ability to cope for themselves or make alternative arrangements.

The vast geographical spread of the affected areas and the people's nomadic social patterns make effective sharing of information challenging. Another challenge is the frequent retention of information by chiefs, leaders, or community gate-keepers. Vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities and elderly, highlighted particular difficulties in accessing information, a situation which reinforces their sense of exclusion and marginalisation. They observed that little special effort was made to ensure that they received relevant information, while information was usually shared through *barazas* or councils. These channels remain susceptible to distortion and deliberate retention. The same perception that 'information is the monopoly of chiefs and leaders' was echoed by women and youth groups as well.

Changes in projects, such as time frames and distribution dates, are not communicated in a timely manner. One example was given of a scholarship programme that was changed right before it was due to commence. In addition, various stakeholder groups, particularly women, highlighted that critical information about how to utilise the distributed relief items was

not communicated well, thus reducing the impact of distributed items. An example was cited of food mixes distributed without instructions on how to use them. In another case, beneficiaries participating in a project were informed that they would have to pay for their own transport and accommodation only after the selection process, which meant that a majority could not attend.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Provide more timely information about the projects, entitlements, timeframes, as well as more diverse ways of channelling that information.

■ Provide guidance to staff on what information to share and when with affected communities across the project cycle, and how to ensure that vulnerable groups can access this information.

(v) Communities distrust beneficiary selection criteria and processes
All the community groups consulted perceived that beneficiary criteria are pre-determined and led by INGOs, although selection is done by chiefs, community leaders, or committees. Most groups felt that selection processes were unfair and nepotistic, and that leaders selected people from their own community. Some commented that they had not been given a clear explanation as to why they were not included on the beneficiary lists. In addition, some community members cited that the selection criteria were only explained on the date of distribution. Being pastoralist communities spread over large areas, accessing information and participating in *barazas* in which beneficiary selection criteria and processes are explained can be problematic for people living at greater distances. They therefore miss out in the selection process.

The food committee highlighted that an increase in number of community members requiring food could not be accommodated, because the lists had been pre-set and could not be altered. This led to community members sharing their food rations with the people not listed. They raised concerns that the criteria or number of people to be provided with assistance is pre-determined, and at times does not match real needs on the ground. Members of the community also explained that being selected put considerable pressure on the beneficiary, as community culture requires sharing. One woman said that she wished she had never been selected, as she was obliged to share her food ration with her relatives and neighbours and was left with very little in the end.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Involve and share information with the community at large, and not only the leaders.

■ Ensure the target numbers for assistance match realities and needs on the ground. When they are predetermined, there is a risk that people who are in need will be left out. If all the needs cannot be met, then the matter should be referred to another organisation.

■ Ensure beneficiary selection criteria and processes are transparent and fair.

■ Ensure that people in remote areas, those with disabilities, and other marginalised groups have fair access and representation in the beneficiary selection processes.

(vi) Communities perceive lack of consultation and feedback in programmes A common perception emerged from groups that affected communities are not well consulted, and that this resulted in unsustainable and unsuitable projects with no significant impact. District-level government officials strongly echoed this view, saying there was a 'lack of active and tangible involvement of district government in the assistance programmes— local capacities and expertise, which are available, have not been used.' For example, an organisation had not consulted district government agriculture specialists on the design and implementation of a seed distribution programme. The seeds distributed were unsuitable for the climate in the location, something the agriculture officer would have been able to point out to the organisation.

District officials also felt that poor consultation and communication with them had resulted in duplication and, in some cases, dumping of aid. Distributions have not reflected the population distribution, particularly in remote areas, or the actual needs of the affected communities. There has been a lack of clear consultation and involvement with the communities in project design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Agency staff members also highlighted how tight timeframes and parameters limited the opportunities to conduct consultations with communities about their needs and led to the parachuting in of pre-determined donor-driven projects. A senior district government official commented that wherever the news cameras filmed, the agencies started programmes, often without deeper analysis or consultations. He observed, 'we respond to journalist needs assessments'.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Consult communities at all stages of the project cycle, from design to evaluation and measurement. (Women's Group, Kakuma)

■ Conduct integrated planning with the government officials, local leaders, and communities to develop joint community action plans. This will also serve to avoid duplication of projects. (Women's Group, Kakuma)

■ Consult communities as soon as a crisis settles, in order to deliver appropriate and needs-driven projects, although opportunities may be limited for broad consultations during the initial phases of an emergency.

(v) Vulnerable groups feel exclusion and discrimination During the consultations, people with disabilities and elderly people highlighted their feelings of exclusion, sense of discrimination, saying that *'even if we are disabled, we are still human beings'* and held the view that no special effort was made to ensure their representation in project activities. They also highlighted concerns about accessing food distributions and difficulties in transporting food received; reported theft of their food ('snatching'), and the need to sell part of it to pay someone to help them carry the food to their shelter; and indicated they were 'not handled with dignity during food distributions, and this needs attention'. In addition, a lack of any specific projects that enabled them to use their skills and talents and a lack of employment opportunities adversely affected their sense of dignity and empowerment. The elderly stressed that their particular needs were often not reflected in agencies' categorisation of vulnerable groups.

People with disabilities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Ensure the representation of the affected community in committee meetings and humanitarian organisation meetings;

■ Sensitise INGOs about the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities;

■ Involve people with disabilities in programme design at all levels and provide support for project proposal writing;

■ Reserve food rations for people with disabilities, and support them with access and provide them with transportation for the food;

■ Involve people with disabilities in training sessions and capacity building workshops; and

■ Develop a comprehensive database about the needs of people with disabilities in Turkana county.

(vi) Communities think agencies rely too much on committees and community leaders Affected communities felt that aid agencies were over-reliant on committees and formal representatives of the community to select beneficiaries, to pass on information, and to provide feedback to about programmes. Various groups were not aware of the terms of reference, roles and responsibilities, and limits on the power of committees and community leaders. They expressed mixed views about their role; women's groups felt that more women attended the *baraza* but men made the final decisions, and people with disabilities said the community leaders and committees were largely nepotistic, unfair, not transparent, and unrepresentative of the communities.

The committees also felt their roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined by aid agencies. They often lacked terms of reference, were expected to perform arbitrary tasks when instructed by INGOs. The food committee members said they were only contacted on the day of distribution and asked to assist, and otherwise received no support, guidance, or technical training from I/NGOs. They did not receive information about programme changes, timeframes, and other details, or timely information on how to relay the concerns and complaints of community members, or on how to respond to them.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

■ Conduct better monitoring of traders and community leaders (Field monitors for cash transfers);

■ Provide community leaders with identification cards to facilitate their access to organisations' offices and managers (Women's Group);

■ Increase representation of people with disabilities in existing committee structures (people with disabilities group);

■ Mandate NGO staff to meet with the community and gather feedback, which should then be reflected in projects (People with Disabilities Group);

■ Increase participation through regular consultations, joint planning, updates, and involvement in decision-making processes (Committee members);

- Empower committees by providing them with terms of reference, details of roles and responsibilities, guidance and training, and regular updates on programme changes. Provide proper verbal and written schedules, distribution dates and criteria. (Committee members).

- Clearly explain complaints process, including how to register complaints, the time it will take to process the complaints, etc, so that the community can be informed Provide timely feedback on complaints. (Committee members).

(vii) Communities feel unaware of complaints handling and PSEA
A majority of community members said they did not know how to raise concerns and complaints safely with the organisations. Food Committee members approached staff without results, saying 'we talk, but there is no action.' They feared being struck off distribution lists and negative repercussions for future assistance. IDP Group members cited examples of complaints that had been lost or mishandled, leading to feelings of despondency and anger. Youth Group members said they would raise their concerns 'through demonstrations' because 'there is no avenue for dialogue.'

Concerning PSEA, there is limited awareness of the issue or reporting mechanisms. Some community members said they had their own monitoring mechanisms which prevented such incidents. Other groups confirmed that incidents had occurred and were reported, but were not handled in a confidential manner or the outcome of the complaint was unclear. At the same time, government officials confirmed that cases of sexual exploitation and abuse had been reported, most often within education and food distribution systems. Gender imbalance, fear of retaliation, and stigmatisation impeded reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse; the officers who received complaints in the area were predominantly male. At the policy level, protection issues in general were not included on the agenda of District Steering Group meetings.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

- Ensure that clear complaints handling policies and procedures are in place;

- Sensitise both agency staff and community members about how to raise complaints and handle them safely and effectively;

- Provide assurances to communities that they have a right to complain through identified channels, and may do so without fear of retaliation;

- Publicly display aid agencies' codes of conduct, and ensure they are strictly enforced;

- Raise awareness about the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse;

- Encourage reporting of sensitive issues through confidential and safe procedures;

- Ensure protection issues are included on the agenda of the District Steering Group agenda, and ensure adequate and fair representation of various stakeholders in the Group; and

- Ensure gender parity in staffing of government offices, to facilitate the reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse.

(viii) Communities feel unaware of rights, and powerless The various groups consulted had heard talk of rights and entitlements, but needed a better understanding of them to feel empowered and hold organisations accountable. A pertinent remark made a member of the women's group was 'you talk of my rights and entitlements, tell me what they are first'.

Communities made the following recommendations and suggestions to aid agencies:

- Continually empower the community through workshops, training, and strengthening of community-based organisations (Committee members);

- Respect the views of the community (Committee members);

- Raise awareness among communities about their rights and entitlements; and

- Empower communities through sustainable self-reliance projects.

3.4 The perceptions of frontline staff

Consultations were also conducted with frontline staff from aid agencies in order to collect their feedback, to hear about their challenges, and to map their awareness of accountability matters. A questionnaire was provided to the staff who participated in workshop and focus group discussions, and a total of 29 participants responded in Kakuma and Lodwar. Nine of the respondents were government officials, and their responses were not analysed since the questionnaire was made for INGO staff.

(i) Staff perceive gaps in policies and procedures Agency staff responded to questions about their induction, recruitment, job descriptions, accountability to affected communities, and provisions for the prevention of sexual abuse in their codes of conduct. A majority of respondents in

both locations said they had received an induction, and that their tasks corresponded to their job descriptions; however, 40 percent of them perceived that their job description did not reflect their current work, or said they were filling a staffing gap and doing more than their formally assigned tasks. A majority of the staff had signed a code of conduct, but some felt that their induction concerning the code had been poor.

Concerning agency policies, staff found the language used was too technical or vague to enable a clear understanding of how they related to their work. Staff perceived some polices to be excessively 'punitive', using harsh language that caused them negative feelings. They also felt these policies were only shared or highlighted reactively rather than in a transparent or timely way, and they could be too broad with too much room for interpretation. Other policies, they felt, were not relevant, because they had not been revised and updated or adapted to current circumstances in a specific context. They pointed out that the codes of conduct were not legally binding, so gross violations were seldom penalised. By way of improvements, they requested that policies be simplified to promote better understanding and more effective application, as well as revised and reviewed periodically to ensure their relevance and applicability. They also called for a better division of tasks, a stronger duty of care towards staff, and fairer recruitment processes.

(ii) Staff feel uncertainty about handling complaints One of the most remarkable findings was that that some 40 percent of respondents across both locations did not know what action to take if they witnessed incidents of exploitation, corruption, or breaches of an agency's code of conduct. Staff felt that the organisations did not have clear and documented mechanisms for handling complaints. By way of improvements, they requested that clear complaint polices and related procedures should be established for affected communities, along with the strong support and commitment of management. They also said staff should be trained on how to deal effectively and safely with complaints. Further, staff respondents stressed the importance of confidentiality in complaints, and the need for awareness within communities that it is their right to complain through the identified channels. They also recommended that a joint inter-agency complaints mechanism should be put in place so that every organisation could be on a similar level of accountability. They highlighted the need for staff to be assured that they are also protected against abuse and harassment by affected community members.

(iii) Staff feel unconvinced by PSEA mechanisms Almost all the staff respondents indicated that preventing sexual exploitation and abuse was an integral part of their organisation's code of conduct. However, fewer respondents felt their organisation's complaints mechanism was

appropriately organised for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse cases. In Kakuma, 70 percent of respondents indicated there was a PSEA focal person in their organisation, with only 20 percent saying this in Lodwar.

The Inter-Agency Protocols for the Prevention of Exploitation and Abuse in the Kenya Emergency Program (2008) outlines the processes required for PSEA in humanitarian operations, and were specifically developed for refugee operations in Kenya. The ICN, after a thorough analysis and consultations with relevant stakeholders, seeks to expand the remit and application of these protocols. Organisational policies will also need to evolve and reflect the changes in Kenyan law, such as the newly-promulgated Sex Offences Act. Staff respondents recommended that clear guidelines for PSEA should be adopted in every organisation, along with a complaints system developed in consultation with the affected communities. They also highlighted the need for a confidential inter-agency referral system, and expressed a hope that PSEA polices and systems will protect staff against poorly managed investigations, breaches of confidentiality, and malicious complaints.

(iv) Staff perceive inadequate understanding of needs Approximately 70 percent of staff respondents across both locations said they had clear guidelines and processes for consulting with the community during the project cycle. However, they also felt that more effort should be invested in needs-based programming instead of donor-driven projects that resulted in less impact or misdirected aid. They cited instances of malnourished children being provided with maize, drought-affected communities given dry foods to cook when they had no access to water, and food baskets that were not appropriate to the context. They said that the real needs of affected communities had to be better understood, and that aid should be delivered accordingly. They acknowledged challenges, including a lack of commitment by some organisations to achieve greater levels of participation, and a language barrier that prevented effective communicate with communities. They also observed that reports of 'lessons learned', monitoring and evaluation, and the outcomes of non-participation were rarely shared with staff to help them learn and improve. They requested that participation be prioritised, and that time be taken to identify the real needs of the community, rather than programmes being undertaken based on perceived needs determined by the organisation. Staff also stressed the need for agencies to undertake joint programming with communities if community projects are to be sustainable.

(v) Staff feel unclear about information sharing with communities Staff reported they rarely had clear guidance on what information to provide to affected communities and how to provide it. Only 30 percent of respondents said they were aware of what information to share, and only

30 percent were aware of what information was not supposed to be shared. Staff also identified the challenges of language barriers and access to communities, since communities in the Turkana are nomadic–pastoralist and move constantly, making it difficult to share information effectively. They recommended that methods of information provision to the Turkana communities be diversified. In addition, staff said they were not provided with clear guidance on how to use the information and feedback received from the affected communities.

Concerning information provision, staff respondents felt that agency policies and guidelines were inaccessible, sometimes in a language they did not understand or 'too technical'. They requested clarification as to the relevance of these policies and guidelines to their work, and that the relevant polices should be translated into local languages.

3.5 Concluding remarks

The consultations with frontline staff, government officials, and affected communities point to the need for improved coordination efforts among aid agencies and with government authorities, and the need for agencies to adopt a systematic approach to strengthening the accountability and quality of humanitarian assistance.

Respondents repeatedly emphasised that humanitarian assistance remains driven by concerns for publicity and donors, and does not adequately take into account the needs of the affected community nor adopt a longer term vision and approach to meeting those needs. Community respondents challenged the 'hit-and-run' approach to aid delivery, and repeatedly emphasised their desire for sustainable programmes that would support their empowerment and self-reliance.

Many humanitarian agencies might not be involved in development projects, but affected communities did not understand or accept the division of an emergency response into relief and development phases. A disconnect clearly existed between the humanitarian community's planning and execution of assistance programmes, and the community's coping with changed circumstances and rapidly working towards rehabilitation. This disconnect was linked to an absence of consultation with communities, and the resulting low impact and ineffectiveness of aid.

Agency staff and community members agreed that consultations with communities were not carried out systematically, and often overlooked due to external factors such as donor pressure, implementation deadlines, and delayed funding. In the words of one district official, 'projects are branded by

the INGO rather than owned by the community as a collective.' Community members repeatedly insisted that they should be involved in the programme design so as to identify and prioritise their own needs, stressing the need for funding to be used more appropriately rather than the need for more funding in itself.

Communities also highlighted a lack of information provided about their rights. Agencies may use a rights-based approach to assistance, but the communities consulted seemed unaware of their rights and entitlements, and requested further awareness-raising.

Agency staff highlighted their concerns about the lack of clarity on various policies and particularly on complaints handling and PSEA, as well as the difficulties in accessing them and language barriers to understanding them. Staff highlighted that robust commitment and support was needed from senior management to strengthen accountability, so that programmes can be designed and delivered, and safe avenues for handling complaints can be established through rigorous and improved consultation with the affected communities.

Through the mapping exercise, staff gained a better understanding of how the affected communities viewed the humanitarian assistance provided. Staff were also exposed to the standards maintained by HAP, Sphere and People In Aid, and the requirements for PSEA. For humanitarian action to be accountable, it will be necessary to raise staff awareness of the standards and related issues prior to a disaster, and to have in place organisational procedures, backed by robust commitments, that allow for proper consultations with communities, as well as transparent and timely sharing of information, and established avenues for raising concerns and grievances. Leadership from senior management will be needed to constantly strengthen these elements, along with frequent reviews of practice that include people affected by disasters.

Good practices and notable efforts in favour of accountability were evident, but these remained disconnected and disparate. A concerted and systematic effort was needed by agencies and actors in Kenya, as it is needed more broadly, to ensure that humanitarian action can become truly accountable to the people whom we seek to assist.

CHAPTER 4

Perceptions of Humanitarian Accountability Survey 2011

4.1 Introduction

Since 2006, HAP has conducted an annual survey on perceptions of humanitarian accountability among members of the humanitarian community. The main contribution of this survey and the longitudinal study is to track trends in the evolution of perceptions about humanitarian accountability and its practice.

- Respondents continued to perceive that official donors are the stakeholder group to whom humanitarian action is most accountable, following a general trend reported over previous years.

- Respondents in the Middle East showed the most pessimistic outlook for humanitarian accountability, with 11.1 percent indicating the level of accountability to beneficiaries would deteriorate in comparison to the global average of 3.2 percent.

- Respondents from HAP-certified agencies rated their organisations highest for doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability. Respondents who stated their agency had no relationship with HAP gave the lowest ratings.

- Respondents' this year showed slight increases in their perception that the voices of disaster affected communities are considered in monitoring and evaluation.

- Since questions relating to complaints were included in the survey in 2009, respondents have shown a steady increase in their perception that agencies foster an environment that allows disaster affected communities to raise complaints about the quality of programmes and staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

4.2 Methodology

Questions asked

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of 14 questions. The first five questions asked respondents to provide their perceptions about the past, present, and future state of humanitarian accountability. The next three questions asked for respondents' views about organisational practice, including the levels of participation by disaster-affected communities in performance assessments, and the extent to which organisations foster an environment in which communities feel they can raise complaints. The final two questions allowed respondents to provide additional comments on humanitarian accountability in 2011, and to indicate whether HAP could contact them in the future.

Before answering the questions, respondents were asked to bear in mind HAP's definition of accountability: 'Accountability is the means by which power is used responsibly. Humanitarian accountability involved taking account of, giving account to and being held account by disaster survivors.'

Who responded?

The 2011 survey was made available online and widely publicised[57]. A total of 756[58] responses were received during a five-week period (from 13 January 2011 to 16 February 2012), during which the survey was open.

The majority of respondents worked for international NGOs (63.1 percent). The rest worked for 'national civil society' (16 percent), UN agencies (8 percent), the donor community (4.7 percent), quality assurance initiatives (1.2 percent), research bodies (1.1 percent) for a host authority (0.8 percent), and a private donor (0.4 percent). Another 4.7 percent indicated their affiliation as 'other'.

The majority of respondents stated that their work was carried out at the global level (24.4 percent), in Asia (31.7 percent), and in Africa (26.5 percent). Other respondents worked in the Europe (8.1 percent), the Americas (6.5 percent), and the Middle East (2.7 percent). These figures show an increase in respondents working in Africa, and a decrease in the

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[57] HAP used SurveyMonkey to run the survey. Campaign monitor was used to distribute the survey to over 3000 recipients. Enhanced Learning & Research for Humanitarian Assistance also posted a link on their website.

[58] There were 781 respondents in 2010, 381 in 2009, 658 in 2008, 291 in 2007, 165 in 2006, and 320 in 2005

Americas; this likely reflects increased levels humanitarian action in the Horn of Africa in 2011, and the decreased activity in Haiti in 2011.

In terms of function, respondents were from both headquarters (40.6 percent) and from programme sites (35.6 percent). Programme site mangers were the single largest group of respondents (18.5 percent), followed by headquarters-based managers (15 percent), and headquarters-based senior managers (14.4 percent). As in previous years, the percentage of programme site staff engaged in policy work showed the lowest representation, with 5.1 percent. A further 12 percent declared their main function to be programme site staff, and 11.2 percent worked in headquarters-based policy/advisory work. Respondents who indicated that their main function was 'independent consultant' or 'other' made up the remaining 7.5 percent and 16.4 percent respectively.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they worked for a HAP member agency, a HAP-certified agency, an agency that received capacity-building support from the HAP Secretariat, a partner agency of a HAP member, or an agency with no relationship to HAP. Around half of the respondents (51 percent) worked for a member agency, while a further 25.7 percent worked for a certified member agency, 23 percent worked for organisations that had received HAP capacity building support, and 16 percent were partners of a member agency. Only 12.8 percent said they worked for an organisation that had no relationship with HAP. Another 14.4 percent were unsure.
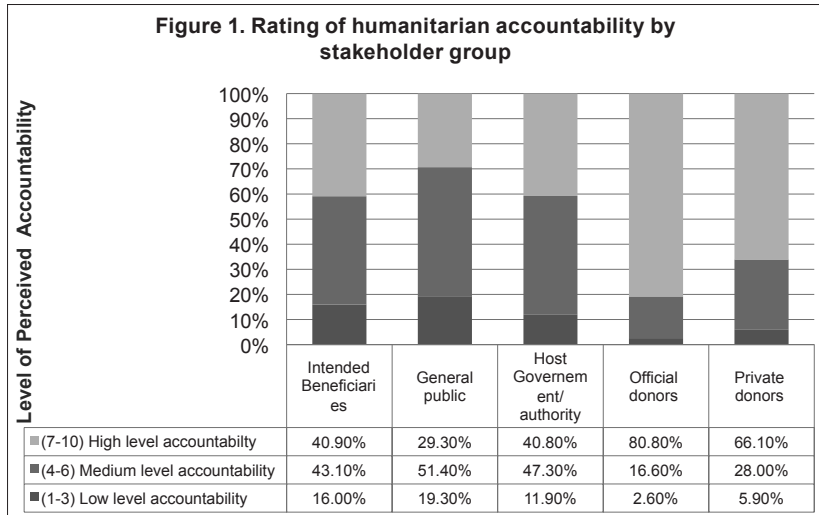
Respondents also had the option to indicate whether they considered themselves disaster survivors or if they had received aid in the past. From the total number of 756 respondents, 141 identified themselves as such, representing 18.7 percent of the total sample. This represents a figure that is almost double that of 2010 (13.6 percent), and triple the one for 2009 (7 percent).

4.3 Findings

**Perceptions of humanitarian accountability to different stakeholder groups**

Respondents were asked to rank the perceived accountability of humanitarian agencies to different stakeholder groups: intended beneficiaries, the general public, host governments, official donors and private donors; ranking them from 1 to 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest). The 2011 findings continue to support the trend set in previous annual reports, with lower levels of accountability to disaster survivors, the general public and host government.

As in previous years, official donors were perceived to be the stakeholder group to whom humanitarian action is most accountable (see Figure 1). In 2011, 80.8 percent of respondents indicated high levels of accountability to official donors. This is almost double the figure for accountability to intended beneficiaries (40.9 percent). Yet this does also represent a slight increase of 3 percent from 2010 figures in the high level of accountability to intended beneficiaries.

Figure 1. Rating of humanitarian accountability by stakeholder group

	Intended Beneficiaries	General public	Host Governement/ authority	Official donors	Private donors
(7-10) High level accountabilty	40.90%	29.30%	40.80%	80.80%	66.10%
(4-6) Medium level accountability	43.10%	51.40%	47.30%	16.60%	28.00%
(1-3) Low level accountability	16.00%	19.30%	11.90%	2.60%	5.90%

In 2011, 40.9 percent of respondents ranked accountability of humanitarian agencies to intended beneficiaries as high (7 or above), 43.1 percent as medium, and 16 percent as low. These results represent an increase from 2010.
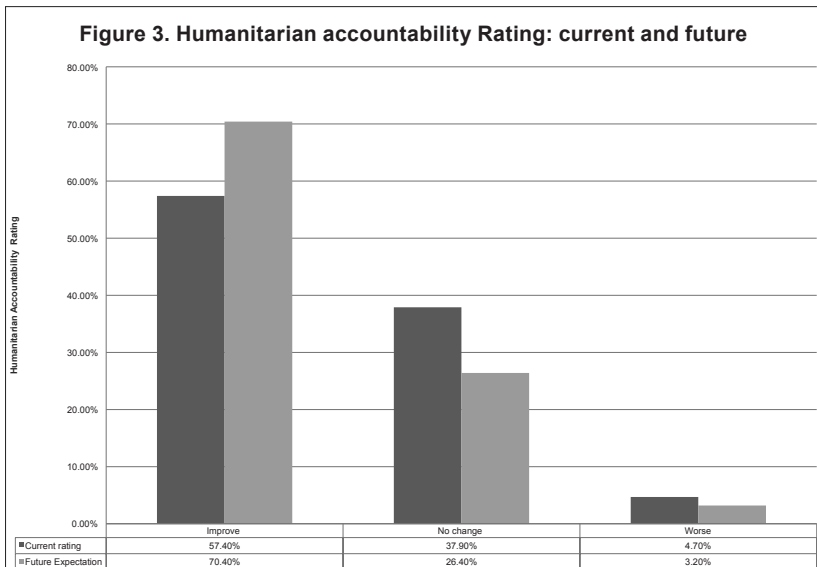
Figure 2. Cross-year comparison of perceived accountability rating to four stakeholder groups
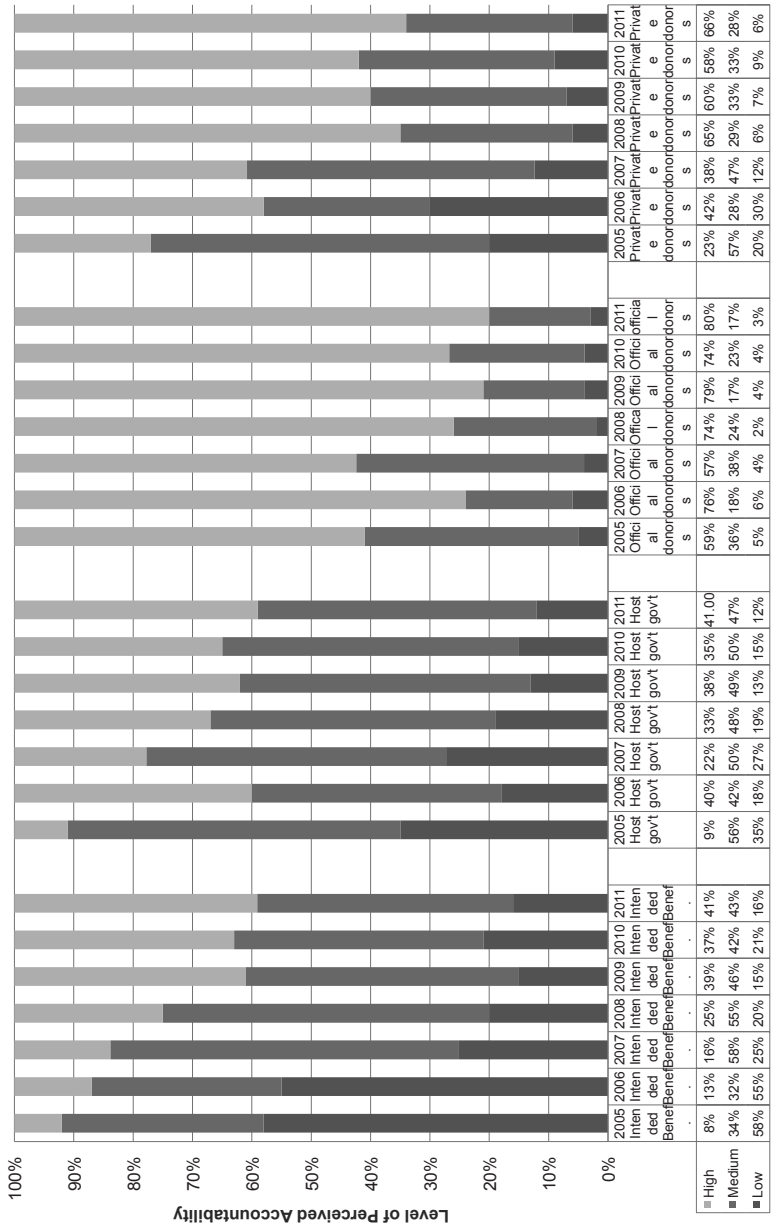
In 2011, the overall upwards trend towards greater accountability to intended beneficiaries regained traction, after it had decreased in 2010 for the first time since the annual surveys began. The new high point in perceived accountability to beneficiaries marks an increase of two percent above the previous highest percentage found in 2009 (see Figure 2).

Perceived accountability to intended beneficiaries, host governments, and the general public remained significantly lower than accountability to the donor community. HAP has traditionally identified this gap as the 'accountability deficit'—a situation where the principal stakeholders (the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian aid) sit at the bottom of the accountability hierarchy. A shift is becoming gradually visible, reflecting a steady increase in accountability to intended beneficiaries over the years.

Looking ahead, Figure 3 shows respondents' perceptions of humanitarian accountability in 2011 and their expectations for 2012. Some 57.4 percent of respondents stated that overall humanitarian accountability had improved since 2010, marking a slight increase from 54.2 percent in 2010. Only 4 percent believed it had worsened, and 37.9 percent saw no change. The percentage of respondents who perceived that accountability to intended beneficiaries would improve over the coming year was exactly the same as in 2010 (70.4 percent), while another 26.5 percent believed it would stay the same, and 3.2 percent thought it would deteriorate.

Figure 3. Humanitarian accountability Rating: current and future

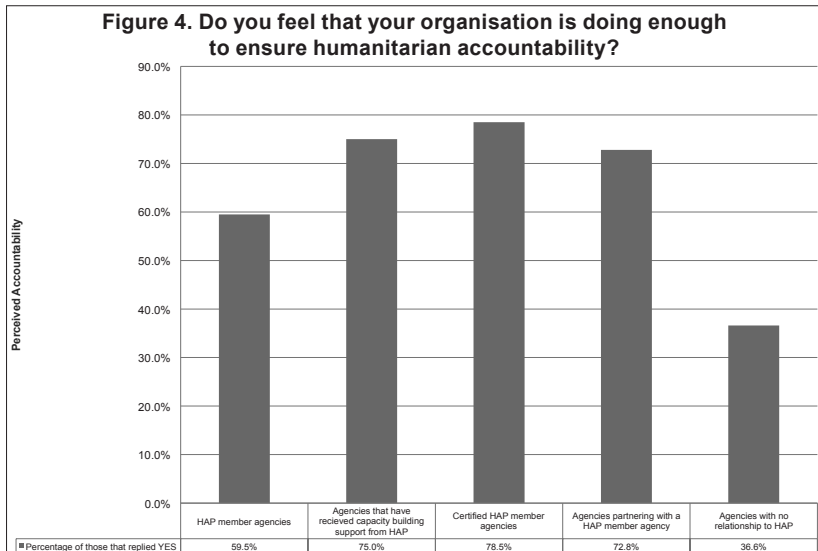|	Improve	No change	Worse
Current rating	57.40%	37.90%	4.70%
Future Expectation	70.40%	26.40%	3.20%

Regional analysis

Disaggregating the data by region, it is possible to compare respondents' perceptions of accountability in 2011 and their expectations for 2012. Last year, respondents in the Americas showed the least optimistic outlook for the year ahead, and showed the lowest level of perceived improvement for 2010. In 2011, respondents from Europe showed the lowest level of perceived improvement (only 43.4 percent), closely followed by the Middle East (44.4 percent) in contrast to the 57.4 percent average. Respondents from Europe and the Middle East were also less optimistic for 2012 than other regions, with 56.6 percent of respondents in both regions believing agencies' accountability to intended beneficiaries would improve in 2012, in contrast to the 70.40 percent average. Interestingly in the context of the 'Arab Spring', respondents in the Middle East showed a much more pessimistic outlook with 11.1 percent indicating the level of accountability to beneficiaries would deteriorate, almost three times the global average of 3.2 percent.

Organisational practice of humanitarian accountability

In answering whether their organisation had 'done enough to ensure humanitarian accountability,' an overall majority of respondents (58.3 percent) felt organisations had done enough. Disaggregating the data by region, the Americas showed a substantial number of respondents (47.6 percent) who perceived that their organisation had 'not done enough' to ensure humanitarian accountability.

Figure 4. Do you feel that your organisation is doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability?

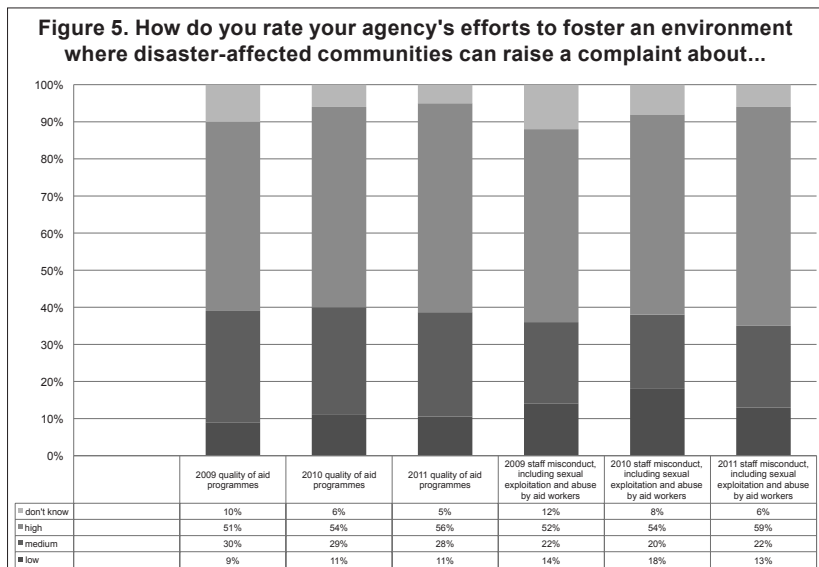|	HAP member agencies	Agencies that have recieved capacity building support from HAP	Certified HAP member agencies	Agencies partnering with a HAP member agency	Agencies with no relationship to HAP
Percentage of those that replied YES	59.5%	75.0%	78.5%	72.8%	36.6%

The results in Figure 4 show that respondents from HAP-certified agencies scored the highest approval ratings with regard to whether their organisation is doing enough to ensure humanitarian accountability (78.5 percent). In contrast, agencies with no relationship to HAP showed the lowest approvals (36.6 percent). Similarly to previous years, it appears that being a member of HAP, particular certified members, is associated with the perception of enhanced levels of organisational commitment to humanitarian accountability.

Voices of disaster-affected populations

When asked whether the views of disaster-affected communities are considered when an organisation monitors and evaluates its performance, a slight overall majority (56.4 percent) believe their views are considered. At the same time, more than a third (35 percent) believe they are not considered and 8.6 percent 'don't know'. This year's results show a slight increase in favour of considering the views of affected populations.

The second two-part question in this section sought to collect perceptions about the effort that organisations make to foster an environment where disaster-affected communities can raise complaints about the quality of aid programmes and about staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Here respondents were asked to rank the responses out of ten (1 being the lowest and 10 the highest).

Figure 5. How do you rate your agency's efforts to foster an environment where disaster-affected communities can raise a complaint about...

	2009 quality of aid programmes	2010 quality of aid programmes	2011 quality of aid programmes	2009 staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	2010 staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	2011 staff misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers
don't know	10%	6%	5%	12%	8%	6%
high	51%	54%	56%	52%	54%	59%
medium	30%	29%	28%	22%	20%	22%
low	9%	11%	11%	14%	18%	13%

Of the respondents, 56 percent rated their agency's effort to foster an environment that enables disaster-affected communities to raise complaints about the quality of aid programmes as high (7-10), 28 percent rated their as moderate (4-6), 11 percent perceived their agency was not fostering such an environment. These results represent a slight overall increase of 2 percent in medium to high-level perceptions that respondents' agencies foster an environment that enables disaster-affected communities to raise complaints on the quality of aid programmes.

Interestingly, 59 percent of respondents gave high ratings to their agency's efforts to foster an adequate environment to allow disaster-affected communities to raise complaints about staff misconduct including sexual exploitation as high, with notably fewer (22 percent) giving their agency medium ratings, and some 13 percent believing that their agency was not doing enough to fostering such an environment. Since the questions relating to raising complaints was included in the survey in 2009, respondents have shown a steadily growing perception that agencies are fostering an environment which allows disaster affected communities to raise complaints about the quality of programmes and staff misconduct.

In 2011, 170 respondents took the opportunity to elaborate on their answers by providing comments. The following a small selection of comments relevant to the findings and themes of this chapter:

■ The United Kingdom's government push on 'value for money' focuses attention away from beneficiary accountability. Coupled with a lack of funding for monitoring and evaluation, this makes true accountability difficult
■ As long as donors and NGOs choose when and how to render account to survivors, downwards accountability will remain a paper tiger with zero impact on ground level work. I don't see any real will by the donors and NGOs to surrender their power to choose. The only ones who cannot choose are the disaster survivors
■ The cluster system remains cumbersome. I am looking for the day when OCHA or an independent body of technical experts lead clusters, instead of agencies that have a vested interest in steering strategies in certain directions that serve their agency's objectives
■ Orientation on humanitarian accountability for all aid workers is essential
■ We still need to advocate to senior staff in the organisation to strengthen accountability practices in programming
■ Better understanding and acceptance of the consequences of being accountable is needed [as well as] willingness to change programming and strategies
■ Greater involvement of HAP in post-conflict countries where the context is evolving and the transition from relief to development is occurring; accountability needs to remain throughout the transition and development process

- In terms of improvements in the sector, or overall in the organisation, it is hard to assign overall scores as there are pockets of good practice emerging while others are lagging behind.