

Inter-Agency SPHERE Workshop Report Lusaka, Zambia 24 – 27 April 2006

The Sphere Project – Project Cycle Management Workshop Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response

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Context

The request for the SPHERE training came from ACT forum Zambia against the background that Disaster Response Organisations and Development Organisations need to utilise common standards and to apply common indicators in their efforts in the country, particularly in relation to the drought and shortage of staple food occurring in year 2005&2006. This calls for the articulation and dissemination of Minimum Standards and Key Indicators along with their Guidance Notes as are presented in the SPHERE Handbook.

This was the second workshop where Local and International NGOs met to share information and learn about the SPHERE Project - the first SPHERE inter-Agency training workshop in Zambia was conducted in 2004.

The Main SPHERE Project Workshop was held between 24st and 27th April, 2006 and focused on 'The Humanitarian Charter' (Module 1) and 'The Project Cycle' (Module 3).

Participants in the Main Workshop were selected from among the ACT members Operational Programme Staff holding middle operational positions in Humanitarian Organisations (see enclosed list).

At the end of the Workshop, a number of follow up actions were identified; the implementation of Minimum Standards in planning and appraising of projects; further training on Sphere for management; inculcating a deeper and practicable understanding on Humanitarian Law Principles; Politics of Disaster Management and general Capacity Building with emphasis on Quality Assurance through Project Planning training.

NCA Zambia in cooperation with ACT Forum, Zambia are to take a leading role in the follow-up programme and to coordinate the collection of reports from participants on how they will have utilised the knowledge and skills learned from the SPHERE Project Workshop and disseminate this to other NGOs and Churches.

Facts

1. The Norwegian Church Aid sponsored the workshop. The training took place at Adrews Motel, Lusaka, Zambia, from 24st to 27th April 2006. All parties worked in a participatory way and together produced a highly professional training event.
2. Jan Mosand led the training from NCA Zambia and Given Lubinda was the Co-facilitator with experience to facilitate future Sphere trainings in Zambia.
3. Personnel from NCA Zambia served as a resource for practical arrangements and excellent support in preparation and implementation.
4. Twenty-two (25) representatives from ACT Forum Zambia, CCZ, EVZ, ZEC and National Society for Red Cross Zambia participated.
5. The agenda consisted of the following:
 - Day 1 included an introduction to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards with discussions on how they may be used in Zambia and the Southern Africa region.
 - Day 2 was allocated to practical humanitarian work, and started with a review of the Project Cycle, as well as discussions on cause-effect relationships in project designs and the use of logical frameworks. Minimum Standards and Key Indicators were used in writing Terms of Reference for disaster assessments and in conducting diagnosis and analysis of assessments. Participants made presentations of their work in plenary sessions, which were followed by brief debates and discussions on emerging issues.
 - Day 3 consisted of a presentation from participants and group work on logical frameworks and follow up strategies for the SPHERE project. Action planning for next steps in a national process of improving quality through the use of the Sphere Handbook was discussed and agreed upon (see enclosed action plan). NCA Zambia will take a leading role in coordination / negotiation of follow up.
6. Participant evaluations reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the time spent in the training, and participants made a commitment to continuing to work with the Sphere Handbook in the future.

Issues and observations by facilitator

- Selection of participants should have been more specific to management positions in field operations.
- One concern was the practical use and technical implication in using tools like the logical framework in the right way. More time was needed to practice on these tools.
- Another concern among NGOs and management from the participants was how to strengthen and involve Governmental structures in future emergency preparedness follow-up training and coordination.
- The need for Minimum Standards in the political and regional context was emphasized. How to implement it in local, district, national and regional context.
- The systematic negotiation and coordination of humanitarian work was another concern raised specifically by those who want to work in a local perspective. While disaster preparedness is often

discussed, contingency plans need to be more concrete and updated. Special request for linkage between development, emergency and exit strategies. This was not discussed in full in the training.

- Donors and International NGOs have a strategic network with Vice President Office (DMMU) in Zambia. More coordination with DMMU is of importance.
- Some NGOs are prepared to be partners and are able to handle cooperate in the difficult national and regional context. However, linkages between the international legal instruments and the Minimum Standards, and moreover how to use the instruments in humanitarian work must be put into practice by involved partners. Participants in the coordination meetings and workshop can implement this. Follow up is required in this area.

Issues and observations by facilitators on the main training workshop

1. **Networking.** Many participants commented that this was a good opportunity to meet humanitarian workers from other Humanitarian organisations. There is a suggestion to conduct a more elaborate joint SPHERE Project training to include relevant Church management and Government Departments. This will be followed up by; Doras Chirwa doras@nca.org.zm
2. **Visit other NGO.** Participants wants a network in order to visit other NGOs and be able to visit organisations working with implementation of the Sphere..
3. **Sphere Zambia network.** There was a need to strengthen the networking among organisations and individuals being trained in sphere. Sphere Zambia network is formed. The network will identify the need for future training, meeting and ToT. Also a 3 months follow up questionnaire will be sent out from NCA Zambia office. Network Hosted by NCA Zambia. Contact person: doras@nca.org.zm
4. **Opportunities vs. constraints.** Discussions on applying the MINIMUM STANDARDS in Zambia and the region concluded with the opportunities outweighing the constraints. Facilitators made the following four points:
 - The HUMANITARIAN CHARTER, MINIMUM STANDARDS and key indicators are tools;
 - Using the MINIMUM STANDARDS is a “carrot” (to help improve the lives of people in disasters) and not a “stick” (to control humanitarian organisations);
 - The purpose is “empowerment” (of agencies to improve the quality of their work) not “compliance” (to standards); Specific attention to Gender issues.
 - The process of using the MINIMUM STANDARDS leads to “capacity building” of all agencies large and small not “exclusion” of small agencies by large ones.
5. **The HUMANITARIAN CHARTER and MINIMUM STANDARDS are tools.** A concerted effort was made throughout the training to emphasise how to use the tools in the Sphere handbook in practical work. Specifically in own organisations. Participants agreed that the three days of the workshop was the most practical and clarified how to use the handbook in their work. Introduction to the SPHERE handbook is essential.
6. **Process.** The process of discussing how to improve quality between agencies and individual humanitarians is as important in the Sphere Project as the first output of that process – the handbook. All agreed that the humanitarian community in Zambia has the common desire to help people affected by disasters in the most professional manner.

7. **Feedback.** Detailed feedback is available in the attached summary of participant evaluations. While a high degree of satisfaction was expressed, some would have more time and preferred more of the training to be allocated to practical examples and technical tools.

Annex II List of participants: SPHERE TRAINING WORKSHOP 24-27 April 2006 – Andrews Motel Lusaka, Zambia

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8	Canicious Sibuumbu	EFZ – Gwembe	097-141310	
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21	Charity Gondwe	Redcross	097-417523	
22	Doras Chirwa	Christian Aid/ NCA	01-226510	doras@nca.org.zm

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Photos from the workshop



Group Picture



Group work on Key Indicators



Presentation