# Sphere key terms: Debriefing notes

## Accountability

“Accountability refers to the responsible use of power (resources, decision making) by humanitarian actors, combined with effective and quality programming that recognizes a community of concern's dignity, capacity, and ability to be independent.” [UNHCR](https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/42554/accountability-to-affected-populations-aap)

“Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is an active commitment by humanitarian actors to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people they seek to assist.” [IOM](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/Two-page%20Brief%20on%20AAP.pdf)

The more resources you have, the more power you have. With power comes responsibility. The more responsibility you have, the more accountable you must be.

The Sphere Handbook helps you to behave in an accountable way. It defines best practise and provides guidance on how to involve all stakeholders – including minority groups – at all stages of the programme cycle.

Accountability should primarily be to affected populations, though we recognise that it is multidirectional: to host populations, partners, colleagues, local authorities, donors and others.

## Quality

Sphere is one of the longest standing of the “Quality and Accountability” (Q&A) initiatives in the humanitarian sector. A good quality humanitarian programme is one that is **effective**, **efficient** and **appropriate**.

Response will not be effective or appropriate unless affected populations participate actively.

Assessments are required to ensure initial **appropriateness**. Regular monitoring and evaluations are required to check the response is meeting its targets (**effectiveness**) and that the targets are still relevant (continued **appropriateness**). Sphere standards and indicators help to measure quality.

As we saw in the earlier activity (2.1: How well do you know the humanitarian sector?), the humanitarian sector is increasingly stretched – i.e., having to do more with less – so **efficiency** is also important. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance is growing, and funding is not growing at the same rate.

## Inclusion

Everyone affected by crisis must be given opportunities to participate actively, including at-risk and marginalised groups. Seek out hidden voices.

Identify and work with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs): they are experts in disability and inclusion. Recall the slogan of the disability community: “Nothing about us without us”. Revise the social model of disability which states that disability is the product of impairment and social barriers.

Review the *Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities* (HIS) but remember that there are many reasons that people might be at risk including gender, sexuality, health status, religious beliefs, etc., as well as age and disability status.

The 2nd principle of the Code of Conduct is that “aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone”. Everyone experiences crises differently. Groups that were more at-risk before the crises are usually impacted more by the crises, are less able to access humanitarian assistance, and therefore have a greater need of assistance. Consequently, it is the responsibility of humanitarian organisations to identify at-risk groups and prioritise assistance for them.