### Summary

An overview of the eight cross-cutting themes: (1) Children; (2) Older people; (3) Persons with disabilities; (4) Gender; (5) Psychosocial support; (6) HIV and AIDS; (7) Environment; and (8) Disaster risk reduction, along with an exploration of the way they should be mainstreamed in all projects and programmes.



### Aim

This module aims to explore the eight Sphere cross-cutting themes and their implications in terms of actions, roles and responsibilities.

### Learning objectives

*By the end of this session, participants will be able to:*

* Recall the Sphere Project and Handbook structure, including its transversal aspects
* List the eight Sphere cross-cutting themes
* Describe how the eight Sphere cross-cutting themes can be mainstreamed in their work.

### Key messages

* The Sphere Handbook considers eight cross-cutting themes: (1) Children; (2) Older people; (3) Persons with disabilities; (4) Gender; (5) Psychosocial support; (6) HIV and AIDS; (7) Environment; and (8) Disaster risk reduction.
* All humanitarian agencies should mainstream these eight cross-cutting themes throughout their programme cycle.
* Being young, old, a woman, or a person with a disability or HIV, does not, in itself, make a person vulnerable or at increased risk. Rather, it is a combination of factors that does so.

#### Preparation & resources

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| For the facilitator | For each participant | For each group of 3-5 participants |
| * Handout ‘Answer sheet on mainstreaming versus programming’ | * Sphere Handbook, highlighter * Handout ‘Specific references to the cross-cutting themes for Sphere and its four companions’ as a take away (optional) | * A flip chart, marker pens, post-its * Handout ‘Exercise sheet on mainstreaming versus programming’ * Handout ‘Answer sheet on mainstreaming versus programming’ |

### You may also want to look at:

* **Module A1** – Sphere: a brief tour
* **Module A13** – Mainstreaming Sphere Protection Principles

### To know more:

* **Do** the ‘Sphere Handbook in Action’ e-learning course, Modules ‘Sphere essentials’ and ‘Impartiality and non-discrimination’: [www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/learning/e-learning-course](http://www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/learning/e-learning-course)
* **Read** the Sphere Handbook section on cross-cutting themes (p.14 to 17)

#### Session plan

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| Activity | Description | Timing |
| Introductory brainstorm | The Sphere Handbook takes into account eight cross-cutting themes.  Ask participants, grouped by table, to find the eight cross-cutting themes and write them down. When you see that most of them has found them, let one group list them and explain where they found the information. The other groups can complement the information. | 10' |
| Group work per table  ‘Understanding what mainstreaming means’ | Ask participants what ‘mainstreaming’ means for them and write keywords on a flip chart. Explain that we are going to explore the concrete meaning of mainstreaming. For this purpose, we will focus on activities related to HIV/AIDS.  Distribute to each table the Handout ‘List of activities related to HIV/AIDS’. For each activity, the group has to determine whether it is HIV/AIDS programming or HIV/AIDS mainstreaming.  Let participants derive their own definitions of mainstreaming.  Wrap up by sharing your views on what mainstreaming is and explaining that humanitarian agencies should mainstream the eight cross-cutting themes.  Explain that you will now explore where to find the relevant content in the Handbook. | 15' |
| Group work  ‘How the Sphere Handbook takes into account the cross-cutting themes’ | As a preparation, you will have written down on A4 papers the eight cross-cutting themes, and stuck them on different parts of the room’s walls. Ask participants to move towards the cross-cutting theme they are most interested in.  Ensure the groups are balanced (gender, experience, organisation, etc.), then ask each group to explore their Handbook:   * Find the index * Look at the various references that are made to your cross-cutting theme (you won’t need to look at all pages referenced, but at a sample) * Explore the content provided on your cross-cutting theme, understand where it is situated in the Handbook structure, and write down a summary of key points that you will present to the rest of the participants. | 30' |
| Debrief | You can either ask each group to present, or to avoid monotony, you can prompt some groups to answer specific questions, for instance:   * In which parts of the Handbook did you find the information related to your cross-cutting theme? * What type of information did you find? * What example of content did you find which could concretely help you mainstream the cross-cutting theme in your programme? * What type of content did you read that really struck you and you want to share with the rest of the group? (Anything new, major, innovative, and specifically relevant to your context, etc.?) | 30' |
| Wrap-up | Make the group reflect on how the various cross-cutting themes are linked.  End the session by reminding participants of the 3 key messages outlined above. | 5' |

### Tips for facilitators

* You can easily adapt this exercise on ‘mainstreaming’ versus ‘programming’ by using one of the other cross-cutting themes which would better suit the participants and the operating context.
* This module will be a success if participants understand that cross-cutting themes are relevant for all stakeholders, not only for disabilities or environmental specialists, for instance. Participants need to relate the exercise to their activities to see how they can improve the quality of their current work by better mainstreaming these eight cross-cutting themes.