### Summary

An exploration of the accountability-related commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) (which replace Sphere Core Standard 1)



### Aim

This module aims to emphasise the importance of affected communities ‘involvement throughout all phases of the programme management to ensure that the assistance they receive corresponds to their needs.

### Learning objectives

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

* Describe in their own words what accountability means
* Give examples of accountability
* Explain why accountability towards communities is key.

### Key messages

* Affected communities’ involvement throughout a programme, from the beginning until the end is a right.
* All members of the community, even and especially the most vulnerable, can and should participate.
* Accountability towards community is essential if programmes are to respond to their needs.

#### Preparation & resources

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| For the facilitator | For each participant | For each group of 3-5 participants |
| * Posters adapted from the Handout (p.1 to 6), printed out in A3 format, in colour |  |  |

### You may also want to look at:

* **Module A10** – Depicting Sphere and the Humanitarian Charter
* **Module A11** – The Code of Conduct, a foundation for the Sphere Humanitarian Charter
* **Module C1** – Sphere and the stakeholders involved in the humanitarian response
* **Module C6** – Sphere and other Quality and Accountability (Q&A) initiatives

### To know more:

* **Browse** the Groupe URD COMPAS Board, specifically Criteria A ‘The project responds to a demonstrated need’ and Criteria F ‘The project respects the population’:   
  [www.compasqualite.org/en/compas-method/supports-compas-method.php](http://www.compasqualite.org/en/compas-method/supports-compas-method.php)
* **Do** the ‘Sphere Handbook in Action’ e-learning course, especially modules ‘Accountability to Affected Populations’ and ‘Participation and Building on Capacity’:   
  [www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/learning/e-learning-course](http://www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/learning/e-learning-course)
* **Read** ALNAP and the Groupe URD Participation Handbook: [www.urd.org/Participation-Handbook](http://www.urd.org/Participation-Handbook)
* **Read** HAP benchmark 4 on participation: [www.hapinternational.org/](http://www.hapinternational.org/)
* **Read** IASC commitment 4 on participation:   
  [www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsidi-common-default&sb=89](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsidi-common-default&sb=89)
* **Read** the Core Humanitarian Standard (and its guidance notes and indicators) which replaces Sphere Core Standards ‘Chapter

#### Session plan

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| Activity | Description | Timing |
| Introduction | The affected communities’ involvement throughout all phases of the programmes is crucial to ensure that the assistance they receive corresponds to their needs. | 5' |
| Brainstorm  ‘Understanding accountability’ | Show the poster ‘Involve people at every stage’. Ask participants what they understand about the poster. Guide the discussion and ensure that the group comes up with different aspects of involvement (consultation, listening to, working with, getting suggestions, receiving and responding to complaints and feedback, meeting, etc.). Write them down on a flipchart.  Ask participants for examples of interaction with communities in the past. Insist that this is a RIGHT for these communities. Ask what participants understand about communities’ rights and clarify using material from the Humanitarian Charter if needed.  Ask participants why it is important that communities are involved. Explain the notions of power (accountability is the responsible use of power). Insist on the fact that communities are the ones who best know what is good for them, and only with their participation will the project be a success. State that accountability (which involves information provision, complaints mechanisms, participation in all the phases of the programme) contributes to dignity and independence. Show the poster ‘Use feedback to improve project impact’.  Ask for and give examples of projects which have been positively adapted or changed based on community suggestions. | 20' |
| Group work  ‘Exploring the accountability-related elements in the CHS (which replace Sphere Core Standards ‘Chapter) | Ask participants to read individually Commitments 4 and 5 and 3 of the Core Humanitarian Standard which replace Sphere Core Standard 1: People-centred humanitarian response (p.15-18; page 19-22 of the CHS and p 11-14)). (Allow 10’)  Split participants into 6 groups.  Ask participants to discuss: Is this taking place? If not, why? What can we do to make this happen?   1. Are you using the community’s knowledge and capacity for your project? 2. Can the community provide feedback on your project? How? Have they tried already? How have you dealt with the suggestions or complaints? (Show the poster ‘Track changes and make feedback a two-way process’ to this group.) 3. Are representative members of the community present in discussions with your agency, including the most vulnerable ones? How do you ensure this is happening? How do you ensure that the community is not only consulted but is empowered and involved in decision-making processes? 4. Has your agency introduced itself and explained its project and the community’s rights therein? (Show the poster ‘Identify the changes people want to see’.) 5. To what extent are you involving community members to work with you on the project? Does the project use local materials? 6. Is your project respecting the community’s culture and tradition? (Show the poster ‘Profile the people affected by the emergency.) | 30' |
| Debrief | Let each of the 6 groups explain for about 3 minutes what they have discussed. Allow for questions and answers from the group and for more experience sharing. | 30' |
| Wrap-up | Conclude by explaining that all the points which have been discussed are an expression of the communities’ rights, and that their active participation is essential to ensure the quality of the intervention from which they can benefit. | 5' |

### Tips for facilitators

* With regard to feedback mechanisms that may be in place, it is important to ask questions regarding the specific process for handling complaints or feedback. Agencies should not allow the possibility for raising or receiving feedback if they do not have a concrete system in place to answer the feedback provided.
* While communities typically best know their needs, technical agencies often claim that they bring innovation to the communities about which the communities would not otherwise have known. Do not hesitate to engage this interesting debate or to discuss how the community should still be involved in ensuring the success of the innovation introduced by technical agencies.
* Collect in advance good practices in accountability towards the community from the training context.
* Please refer to the document ‘The Core Humanitarian Standard and the Sphere Core Standards Analysis and Comparison’ and the CHS Guidance notes and indicators (see Annexes to the Sphere Training Package) should you to learn more about the CHS.