### Summary

A look into the way the Sphere approach can support practitioners to deal with the opportunities and challenges of improving quality and accountability while working with implementing partners.



### Aim

This module aims to explore the opportunities and challenges linked with the Principles of Partnership (PoP) and will emphasise the importance of the implementing partners’ commitment to Sphere.

### Learning objectives

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

* List at least three principles of partnership and explain how Sphere can support them
* Give examples of actions which improve quality and accountability when working with partners
* Explain how Sphere can concretely support quality and accountability strategies when working with partners.

### Key messages

* Implementing partners are essential in the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected communities.
* The Sphere rights-based and people-centred approach, and references on partnership (PoP), etc. insist on the role of implementing partners, who are often neglected or solely considered as executing bodies of the strategies our agencies design; the Sphere rights-based and people-centred approach provides the necessary framework to work with partners.
* Our agency’s commitment to Sphere standards will be realised only if our implementing partners share the same commitment.

#### Preparation & resources

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| For the facilitator | For each group of 3-5 participants |
| * Flip chart with the definition of ‘partnership’ (from handout). * Print the 5 PoP posters and stick them on the wall for the group work: ‘Sphere to support the Principles of Partnership’: [https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles of Partnership Poster OCHA.pdf](https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20Poster%20OCHA.pdf) | * Post-its, colour cards (red, green and blue), blue tack * Handout ‘Quotes on partnership’, printed from the original document (p.5, 7, 8): [www.christianaid.org.uk/images/building-the-future-of-humanitarian-aid.pdf](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/building-the-future-of-humanitarian-aid.pdf) * Print the 5 PoP posters: [https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles of Partnership Poster OCHA.pdf](https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20Poster%20OCHA.pdf) * Handout ‘Sphere and the principles of partnership’ * Handout ‘Examples of strategies working with partners’ |

### 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 from the community

### To know more:

* **Read** ‘Partnership in principle, partnership in practice’ by Christine Knudsen: [www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-50/partnership-in-principle-partnership-in-practice](http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-50/partnership-in-principle-partnership-in-practice)
* **Read** ‘Partnerships what do they really mean’ by Anne Street: [www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-50/humanitarian-partnerships-what-do-they-really-mean](http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-50/humanitarian-partnerships-what-do-they-really-mean)
* **Read** ‘Principles of Partnership’: <https://icvanetwork.org/resources/principles-partnership>
* **Read** ‘The guide to the 2010 HAP standards’: [www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/guide-to-the-2010-hap-standard-printer-friendly-version-new.pdf](http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/guide-to-the-2010-hap-standard-printer-friendly-version-new.pdf)

#### Session plan

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| Activity | Description | Timing |
| Introduction | The Principles of Partnership (PoP) highlight both the opportunities and challenges of working with others; it is key that implementing partners commit to Sphere. | 5' |
| Brainstorming  ‘What is partnership?’ | Ask each group to discuss and write down keywords to summarise:   * Challenges of partnership on red cards * Opportunities of partnership on green cards   Each group will then come and stick their cards on the two flipcharts on the wall, according to the appropriate headings (opportunities/challenges). Ask the groups following to only complement the other groups findings.  Wrap up by explaining that while Sphere does not explicitly provide guidance about how to work with partners, the rights-based and people-centred approach provide the necessary framework. Demonstrate this point by asking participants to read two articles before they move on to the next exercise:   * The Code of Conduct, Article 6 (p.371): We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities. * The Humanitarian Charter, Paragraph 8: We will endeavour to support local efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to disaster, and to the effects of conflict, and to reinforce the capacities of local actors at all levels. | 20' |
| Group work  ‘Sphere to support the Principles of Partnership’ | Distribute one poster with one principle of partnership to each group.  Tell participants to discuss the following question in groups:   * How can the Sphere Handbook help you to respect the principles of partnership when working with implementing partners?   Provide support to each group by showing them where to look in the Sphere Handbook, based on the references suggested in the Handout ‘Sphere and the Principles of Partnership’. Each group should write down ideas with keywords on blue cards. They have 15’ to do so.  Let each group present their principle and their findings in regard with guidance in the Sphere handbook to support the principle. Allow 3’ per group. You can display the information by sticking the groups’ blue cards on the corresponding principle posters. | 25' |
| Group work  ‘Partnership strategies to improve quality and accountability’ | Provide each group with one example of strategy to improve quality and accountability when working with partners (from the printed handout).  Each group will read its example, and then discuss how using Sphere could help turn this strategy into a reality with implementing partners.  Groups should then prepare a 3’ role play, and they have 20’ to do so.  Have each group perform their role play. Ask which type of strategy was presented by group 1, group 2 and group 3, and get feedback on the type of support provided by Sphere for each.  While the exercise will mostly touch upon the Core Standards, you can wrap up by highlighting that respecting the technical standards is also key when working with partners, to ensure that we can fulfil the following commitment in the Humanitarian Charter: ‘We commit to making every effort to ensure that people affected by disasters or conflict have access to at least the minimum requirements for life with dignity and security.’ | 35' |
| Wrap-up | Conclude by emphasising that our agency’s commitment to Sphere will be effective only if our implementing partners share the same commitment. We especially need to ensure that local partners are familiar with codes of conduct and standards as well as topics such as accountability and protection. | 5' |

### Tips for facilitators

* A question which may arise: who are the implementing partners? In fact it is a question of point of view: There is always a chain of implementing partners: donors give money to the UN, who give to an NGO (UN implementing partner), who gives to a local partner (NGO implementing partner), who gives to Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), etc. In the end, it all depends on where on the chain you are focused.
* This module is especially adapted for participants who are working with implementing partners.
* The discussion would be richer if implementing partners themselves are participants in the training.
* It may be best to split up any implementing partners within the various groups (as opposed to keeping them in the same group), but it would be good to ensure that such voices and opinions are heard during the session.