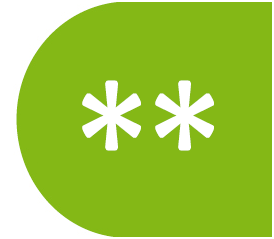
### Summary

An overview of Sphere and other Quality and Accountability (Q&A) initiatives launched in the humanitarian sector with a common objective to enhance quality and accountability.



### Aim

This module aims to illustrate how the Q&A initiatives complement each other in order to improve humanitarian response. It also explores the opportunities and challenges of joint implementation.

### Learning objectives

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

* Describe some of the main Q&A initiatives
* Explain the common approach and complementarity of the initiatives in both theory and practice
* Demonstrate opportunities for joint implementation of the initiatives.

### Key messages

* As field practitioners involved in humanitarian action or in the development sector, our first priority is to enhance the quality and accountability of our projects to provide better work and services to the communities.
* While the Sphere Project is one of the most well-known and popular Q&A initiatives, many others have been launched and should be considered as well.
* The Q&A initiatives have a common goal to promote the well-being of crisis-affected populations.
* Joint implementation of the Q&A initiative tools can create opportunities and should be an objective as such.

#### Preparation & resources

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| For the facilitator | For each participant | For each group |
| * Sphere Handbook, and handbooks of other Q&A initiatives (as many as possible, or print the abstracts), to be put on a display table * Slides printed with notes | * Choose the handouts you find most relevant and print in colour: distribute to participants as a take-away (optional) | * A flip chart, marker pens, post-it notes |

### You may also want to look at:

* **Modules A1-A2-A3** – What is Sphere?
* **Module A11** – The Code of Conduct, a foundation for the Sphere Humanitarian Charter
* **Module C5** – Sphere and its four companions

### To know more:

* **Browse** The Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) Website, Resources section: [www.jointstandards.org/resources](http://www.jointstandards.org/resources)
* **See** especially: ‘Mapping Exercise on Quality and Accountability Initiatives in the Humanitarian Sector’ by Liza Cragg and ‘Humanitarian Standards – too much of a good thing’ and ‘Standards: A stick to beat us with?’ by John Cosgrave
* **Browse** the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Website: [www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard)
* **Read** ‘Messages clés Universités d’Automne de l’Humanitaire sur la qualité’ by Groupe URD, septembre 2014: [www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/UAH\_2014\_Messages\_cles\_Fr.pdf](http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/UAH_2014_Messages_cles_Fr.pdf)
* **Read** ‘Norma Humanitaria Esencial: un indiscutible paso adelante en la definición de una acción humanitaria de calidad’, IECAH, Nussbaum, Camille, Noviembre de 2014: <http://goo.gl/VHepFt>
* **Read** ‘Quality and Accountability for Project Cycle Management’ by Astrid de Valon and Sylvie Robert, published by CWS-P/A: [www.cwspa.org/sidebar-items/quality-and-accountability-for-project-cycle-management](http://www.cwspa.org/sidebar-items/quality-and-accountability-for-project-cycle-management)
* **Read** ‘20 years after the Rwandan Genocide: The unfinished accountability revolution – An interview with John Borton’: [www.sphereproject.org/news/20-years-after-the-rwandan-genocide-the-unfinished-accountability-revolution-john-borton](http://www.sphereproject.org/news/20-years-after-the-rwandan-genocide-the-unfinished-accountability-revolution-john-borton)

#### Session plan

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Description | Timing |
| Introduction | The Quality and Accountability (Q&A) initiatives have been launched in the humanitarian sector with a common objective to enhance quality and accountability. | 5' |
| Hands up  ‘Which Q&A initiatives do you know?’ | Ask participants who are familiar with some of the Q&A initiatives to raise their hands. It will give you a good sense of the knowledge in the room.  Ask participants to name the Q&A initiatives they know and briefly state what they are and whether they know about them in theory or in practice.  While they are responding, list the Q&A initiatives they mention on a flip chart.  Ask the participants with previous knowledge of Q&A to contribute during the slide presentation. | 10' |
| Slide presentation  ‘Q&A: origins, definitions and initiatives’ | Give the slide presentation in a very interactive manner. Use the notes below the slides to guide you throughout the presentation which aims to: Review the origins of Q&A; Provide the Sphere definition of Q&A, and List some Q&A initiatives.  Review together the existing tools (select a few which you know well and are appropriate for your context) and prompt participants to share their experiences using them, if any, and be specific. | 30' |
| Group work  ‘The opportunities and challenges of joint implementation’ | In advance, select the initiatives most well-known by the participants as indicated in the pre-survey, divide participants into 4 balanced groups of 3-5 participants each, and list their names on a flip chart.  Ask participants to reflect on the following two questions:   * What standards or benchmarks do your agencies use (to the best of your knowledge)? * In your local operating context, what are/might be the opportunities and challenges of using or jointly implementing Sphere and tools from other Q&A initiatives?   The groups will have few minutes to present their feedback in plenary. | 25' |
| Plenary feedback | Ask first for a group feedback in plenary and proceed group by group. When groups start to repeat the same answers, ask them to share only new findings. | 15' |
| Wrap-up | Highlight the key opportunities and challenges for joint implementation (Handout ‘Opportunities and challenges of joint implementation’) and conclude by emphasising the need to mitigate the challenges and enhance the opportunities for successful implementation.  Remind that as field practitioners involved in humanitarian action or in the development sector, our first priority is to enhance the quality and accountability of our projects to provide better work and services to communities in need. | 5' |
| Handbook display | Put the Q&A initiative handbooks and other tools on a table and allow participants to consult them during the break following this session. |  |

### Tips for facilitators

* Prerequisite for facilitation: in order to facilitate this session you must have background knowledge of some of the Q&A initiatives mentioned and have experience using their tools. You should be familiar with at least 3 or 4 so that you can provide information and input on the nature of complementary and joint implementation.
* This module can serve as either an introductory course or a concluding course on Sphere. We advocate that it be used as an introductory course as it provides a big picture of Q&A, including its origins and definitions.
* Conduct a pre-training survey to determine which initiatives/tools participants know and use so you can know in advance what expertise will be in the room. You may also want to find out which initiative/tool they wish to learn about first and prioritise.
* Throughout this session, rely on the participants’ experiences using the approaches and tools of the Q&A initiatives.
* In preparation for the course, you may want to ask participants to bring their own resources and tools from Sphere and other Q&A initiatives and add them to the display table.
* Make sure to mark your Q&A handbooks and tools with your name and stick a note on it that says ‘For display only – Do not take away’. They must be of value as they disappear so easily!

**Acknowledgement**: this module has been built using, adapting and complementing training materials on Quality and Accountability developed by Sylvie Robert with Astrid de Valon, independent consultants.