The Sphere Project

Standards and Indicators in Relation to Persons with Disabilities

International Conference – "Disasters are always Inclusive! – Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Emergency Situations" Bonn, 7-8 November 2007

Right to life with dignity

Introduction

•It seems as though most people know of Sphere so I won't start from scratch

•Handbook (show it)

•"10 Years of Sphere in Action" report – copies available in reception

•I have 15 minutes so it'll be quick – also hopefully have time for questions afterwards

First part of presentation -

•**Introduction to Sphere Project**: history etc.

•**What is Sphere?**

2nd session -

•**Practical presentation of handbook**

•**Focus on Disabilities**

•**Some examples relative to disabilities**

Picture of the girl – in Koukou, SE Chad in 2005 in a child health care program for local community and displaced population

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Brief History

§ Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response

§ After the Rwanda crisis, pressure to perform up to expectations has grown

§ Extensive collaboration ð wide consultation

§ Trial version 1998; first edition 2000; second edition 2004; low cost version 2007

§ Next revision 2010, including "Companion Modules"

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Sphere emerged from the debates in the mid 90s, particularly around the Rwandan genocide, etc (2004 issue of Disasters article by Peter Walker and Susan Purden) -

•The drive to improve quality and accountability – therefore a handbook that would **gather** minimum standards and indicators on whether being reached.

•**The Sphere Handbook is not a 'how to' manual**

-The Rwanda 1994 multi-donor study

"Unnecessary deaths"

•Increasing complexity of disasters

•Numbers of disasters increasing

•Increasing numbers of actors, With different measures of success

Extensive collaboration and wide consultation – at field level – field driven (not headquarters)

First trial version of Handbook in 1998 (blue looseleaf folder); first edition 2000; second edition 2004; low cost (south Asia) version 2007

Next revision 2010 – process to start 2008; issue of 'companion modules' for those sectors/initiatives related to Sphere but not regarded as 'life saving' etc.

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What is Sphere?

The Standards Project for humanitarian response.
Sphere is about <u>Consensus</u>, seeking agreement on which existing texts could be used as universal standards.
Sphere is 3 things: <u>Process</u>, <u>Commitment</u> and a <u>Handbook</u>
3 Elements in the Handbook:
- ð Humanitarian Charter
- ð Common Standards
- ð Technical Standards:

(Watsan, Food Aid, Food Security, Nutrition, Shelter and Health)
Sphere terminology:
Standards, Key Indicators and Guidance Notes.

Right to life with dignity

• The Standards Project for humanitarian response.

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- ð Humanitarian Charter
- ð Common Standards
- ð Technical Standards:
  (Watsan, Food Aid, Food Security, Nutrition, Shelter and Health)

• Sphere terminology: Standards, Key Indicators and Guidance Notes.

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What is Sphere?

Rights-based approach:
Any set of "industry" standards must be first prefaced by a set of "consumer rights"; a beneficiaries or claimants charter which highlights what a person should have as "right" to in a humanitarian crisis.

Moves humanitarian action from being a supply-chain, Assistance-dominated endeavour to a movement concerned with the rights and dignity of those affected by disasters.

Sphere is as good as its users make it.

Right to life with dignity

- Rights-based approach:

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Goal of The Sphere Project

ü To improve the *quality* of assistance provided to people affected by disasters

ü To improve the *accountability* of states and humanitarian agencies to their constituents, their donors and their beneficiaries

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Goal: has remained the same from the inception of the project in 1997 . It is a joint project of **two NGO networks** – **InterAction** (US) + Mercy Corps and **SCHR** (Europe), plus several members from SCHR (Int. Federation, Save the Children Alliance, Care International, Caritas Internationalis, Oxfam International, LWF, ACT + **ICVA, VOICE + with new Board April 2005, three new members**: WVI, CRDA and ADH

One of a number of Q&A initiatives that emerged then and since: Quality Project -> Quality COMPAS, HAP-International, ALNAP, People in Aid. All have similar goals; increasingly trying to collaborate to achieve more coherence for users:

My *italics* on quality and accountability: often spoken together, but **can't assume one goes with the other**. Quality should include accountability, but often taken in a more 'technical' sense; accountability to whom? To 'beneficiaries', in the case of Sphere in practice so far, is far from frequent ; relevance of HAP-I

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Governance, Management & Financing

- Sphere Board composed of 16 members.
- A small secretariat (4½ people) in Geneva.
- Multi-donor to ensure that the Project is not owned by one donor.
- Large global network of Sphere users.

Right to life with dignity

• Sphere is not an NGO nor is it legal entity – 'hosted' by the IFRC

• Importance of **independence from political/donor influence**; value of **not being 'owned' by one organisation** one of the **key strengths** of Sphere

• Remains entirely **NGO owned**; criteria of Board membership

• Board annual contributions fund **1 post (Manager) + office costs in Geneva**

• These 'core' costs – **not dependent** on donor support. Will last therefore as long as Board committed enough to support it

• Donors support program activities – ToTs; e-learning; promotion; networking etc.

2007-9 new proposal:	CHF 3,106,403	(US$ 2,712,087 (Nov 2007))
Board contributions:	CHF 585,093 (19%)	(US$ 510,823)
Donors:	CHF 2,521,310 (81%)	(US$ 2,201,264)

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Critics of Sphere

O Each disaster is unique and must be treated as such.
O Perceived as more clinical professional approach.
O Reduces humanitarianism to an assistance 'business'.
O Supply driven instead of being value-driven.

Right to life with dignity

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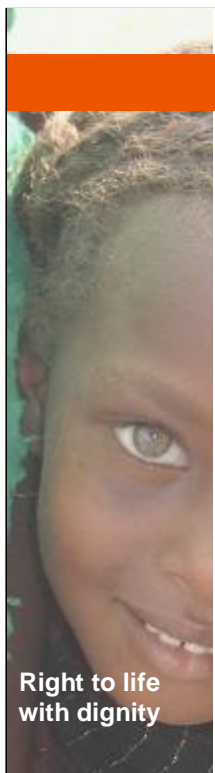- Supply driven instead of being value-driven.

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Supporters of Sphere

ü Allows meaningful discussions about people's rights.

ü Provides common language and common goals.

ü Professional Standards, interpreted restrictively as technical norms, grossly fail to support victim of war and disasters.

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2004 edition of the handbook: Principles and practice:

Humanitarian Charter + RC/NGO Code of Conduct as an annex – **the principles**

on the basis of which technical standards + indicators + guidance notes – **the practice**

Standards common to all sectors chapter – assessment and **project cycle** + **personnel**

New elements:

. Potential for coordination amongst agencies, of all sectors.

Food security added as an additional sector to go with food aid and nutrition. Recognises the development of this 'new' sector since 2000 edition,

'Cross cutting' issues included more strongly within each of the sectors, in the guidance notes: things to think about in relation to those made more vulnerable by a disaster. In particular:

- protection, a particular concern of donors, HIV/AIDS, gender:

Includes a searchable CD Rom

NB a key finding of the consultations on the future of Sphere:

the handbook needs to be regularly revised if it is to remain current.

Next revision is therefore scheduled for 2010 (preparation during 2008-9) – will need to respond to issues raised during first session, about relationship with other initiatives (+ more later) + developments in sector since 2003-4 (psychosocial, education, livelihoods/livestock; 'issues': military/other actors)

The Humanitarian Charter

The Right to Life with Dignity
(Human Rights Law)

The Distinction between Combatants and Non-combatants
(Geneva Conventions)

The Principle of Non-Refoulement
(Refugee Conventions)

Right to life with dignity

Two key points made in Evaluation, and ongoing:

- HC less well known than the standards

- Often confusion between standards and indicators

Therefore will spend a little time on those two points

'Rights based approach' (though essentially combined with needs based); foundation of rights set out in HC:

Right to life with dignity
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - Civil, political, economic and social
  covenants
 - The Geneva Conventions
 - Convention against Torture
 - Rights of the Child

The distinction between combatants and non-combatants
  - Geneva Conventions
  - Rights of the Child

The principal of non-refoulement
 - Convention on the Status of Refugees
 - Convention against Torture
 - Rights of the Child

There has been debate around the particular choice of these pieces of international law; Some criticise 'picking and choosing' laws; a product of its time.

It wasn't revised at the same time as the handbook (difficulty of reaching consensus again?), and that means there are still outstanding issues raised at the time of the 2000 edition – particularly it's validity legally??

Some question whether:

It should still exist in its current form?

A more widely acceptable form could be found of linking the principles international humanitarian law with humanitarian action?

This will come up in the next revision

HOWEVER IN PRACTICE:

In use of the handbook, the focus is very often on the standards and particularly the indicators – rather than the HC. For some that's regrettable (overlooking the principles underpinning the action), for others it's a good thing (lack of agreement on the HC, and it's the quality of the work that counts).

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Challenges

Sphere is better known for technical content than for the Humanitarian Charter

Strong advocacy is required at field level to reaffirm the importance of the Humanitarian Charter

Adoption of Sphere by UN agencies

Keeping Sphere relevant in an evolving humanitarian sector – Handbook revision?

Right to life with dignity

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Standards & Indicators in Relation to Persons with Disabilities

§ 'Cross-cutting' Issue
§ Standards common to all Sectors

Right to life with dignity

•It is clear from the presentations and discussions yesterday that Sphere is just a part of a much wider discussion around the disabled person in emergencies.

•However, Sphere does make an attempt to address the rights of disabled persons, within the wider context of vulnerable groups, while focusing on specific technical 'life-saving' sectors.

•Disabled persons are included as a 'cross-cutting' issue and in the standards common to all the technical sectors

•NB in the **guidance notes** the **context** is highlighted, and how this should/could affect the implementation of the standards and choice of indicators. E.g. of guidance note for the first water standard, on access and water quantity, breaks down water needs into survival, basic hygiene and basic cooking, to reach a guide of between 7.5 and 15 litres perpersonperday.

•**NB** It's here that **crosscutting issues** are highlighted: women, children, disabled people, HIV/AIDS, protection, environment, older people

•Likely to be here that much of the revision will take place – highlighting where contextual issues have changed: military/other actors: 'companion modules' etc.

•To put this into context, Sphere is 10 years old; the present Handbook is 2004 so was processed already in 2002/3; the context has changed so Sphere (and therefore the Handbook) should reflect this; many issues are now being 'mainstreamed' (even cross-cutting issues) so how to relate to these?

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'Cross-cutting' Issues

§ Children
§ **Disability**
§ Environment
§ Gender
§ HIV/AIDS
§ Older People
§ Protection

**Right to life
with dignity**

Disabilities falls within the cross-cutting issues –

• Children

• **Disability**

• Environment

• Gender

• HIV/AIDS

• Older People

• Protection

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Standards common to all Sectors

§ Participation
§ Initial Assessment
§ Response
§ Targeting
§ Monitoring
§ Evaluation

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In the Standards common to all sectors (watsan, health, shelter, food/nutrition etc.) focus is placed on –

• Participation

• Initial Assessment

• Response

• Targeting

• Monitoring

• Evaluation

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Vulnerable Groups (incl. disabled)

§ Participation – *representation of all groups*
§ Initial Assessment – *inclusion of all groups*
§ Response – *meeting actual needs*
§ Targeting – *include representatives of all groups*
§ Monitoring – *all groups regularly consulted*
§ Evaluation

Right to life with dignity

- Participation – *representation of all groups*

- Initial Assessment – *inclusion of all groups*

- Response – *meeting actual needs*

- Targeting – *include representatives of all groups*

- Monitoring – *all groups regularly consulted*

- Evaluation

There are also standards referring to aid worker competencies an d responsibilities and the supervision, management and support of personnel where the reference is made to 'paying attention to vulnerable groups' and having to be provided with appropriate training and orientation = increasing awareness.

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Vulnerable Groups (incl. disabled)

§ Suitable toilet and washing facilities
§ Water distribution points accessible
§ Access to food aid/nutrition
§ Disabled persons not neglected or overlooked
§ Adequate shelter provided, including privacy
§ Suitable roads/paths/ramps

Right to life with dignity

Some practical examples of supporting the rights of vulnerable groups (from the Handbook) –

- Suitable toilet and washing facilities

- Water distribution points accessible

- Access to food aid/nutrition

- Disabled persons not neglected or overlooked

- Adequate shelter provided, including privacy

- Suitable roads/paths/ramps

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Vulnerable Groups - Challenges

§ Engagement of vulnerable groups

§ Preparedness and Training

§ Specific 'Mainstreaming' of vulnerable groups

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Here are a few of the significant challenges with regard to vulnerable groups (including the disabled) from the Sphere perspective -

•How to ensure engagement of vulnerable groups in elements of common standards (assessment, response, targeting etc.) – it's more the approach than a technical standard

•It's necessary to consider how to engage vulnerable groups in disaster preparedness as well as increase awareness of NGO staff and Sphere practitioners during training programs

•Has the time come to specifically 'mainstream' the rights of vulnerable groups – and if this was to happen, how would Sphere relate to this mainstreaming? This is not an initiative to be started by Sphere and would surely be for discussion during Handbook revision process.

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www.sphereproject.org

ü Discussion fora
ü Contacts and documents database
ü Handbook in 12 languages
ü Training materials
ü Tools developed by Sphere users
ü Video clips / Sphere stories
ü Key reports

info@sphereproject.org

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Finally, some information about what can be found on the Sphere website - *www.sphereproject.org* –

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And if anyone would like to contact us, we're always happy to hear from you - *info@sphereproject.org*