Minutes of Quality and Accountability Initiatives Meeting
21st June 2010, hosted by ALNAP in London

Present: Dayna Brown (DB), CDA (chair); Erin Noordelos (EN), RedR/ELRHA; Jonathan Potter (JP), People In Aid; Matt Bannerman (MB), ECB; John Damerell (JD), Sphere; John Mitchell (JM), ALNAP; Katharina Samara (KS), HAP; Colin Hadkiss, ALNAP (minute taker).

Apologies: Nathalie Herlemont-Zoritchak, Handicap International/Coordination Sud; François Grünewald, Groupe URD; Tzvetomira Laub, INEE; Rory Downham, Bioforce/DRSS.

1. Approval of minutes and updates on previous action items
The minutes were approved and should be posted on all organisations’ websites. (ACTION POINT – all organisations)

FAQ document: ACTION POINT – JD: to follow up on this during the summer. ACTION POINT – all other organisations: send updates to JD by October 15th.

‘Taking the initiative – Exploring quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector: an introduction to eight initiatives’: ACTION POINT – JD: check status of training materials and advise others. JP reiterated that anybody interested in Q & A issues can attend the meetings but only those doing work on them can sign up to statements.

Communities of practice: this is ongoing, and will be presented to Sida in due course.

Introduction to Groupe URD Quality Module: JD confirmed that this had been sent to Sphere as agreed.

Summary of the state of the sector: JP had discussed with HAP and ALNAP: People In Aid will not be publishing anything on HR aspects in 2010. ALNAP’s learning review on the State of the Humanitarian System will include how it relates to other reports. Next report will be done in 2012.

ELRHA scoping study: A meeting had been held on competencies frameworks as proposed, and the next step will be the ELRHA forum on 22nd June.

2. Project updates

Sphere
• The revised Handbook is now due to be launched in April 2011. People In Aid material will be included in the People standard: there will also be a reflection of HAP standards.
• The publication in English will be followed by French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian editions. Several organisations have already agreed to translate into other languages. They have translation guidelines on how to do good quality translations available.
• Afterwards, training materials etc. will be updated in accordance with the revised Handbook.

HAP
• The first draft of the revised 2010 Standard is out for public consultation.
• HAP is working with the DEC on areas of commonality and how to limit the number of audits and assessments for the members they have in common.
• They have signed an MoU on training with Bioforce, and are building a group of training providers (for instance RedR in India)
• HAP is close to publishing a report on complaints mechanisms.
• Membership has increased to 56 and more organisations have achieved certification (including 2-3 since the last meeting and 5 more likely later in the year)
• NEP teams are or will be deployed to Haiti and either northern Kenya or Kyrgyzstan. 3 staff are in Haiti. HAP and ECB should consider joint deployments in emergencies (and this is now being done in Pakistan).
• The Annual Report and Humanitarian Accountability reports have been published.
They are advertising for an Executive Director, whom they plan to have on board by January 1st.

**ECB (highlights – see appendix for full update)**

- 5 country consortia are in place. They will also revitalize the standing teams to focus on quality and accountability issues (may be able to link with HAP roving teams).
- The ‘Good Enough Guide’ is still the main tool, including translations and supporting material, and it has been translated into a number of languages. They may also do a guide for disaster risk reduction.
- There are no plans for a 3rd phase. There will be evaluations of phase 2 mid-term and at completion.

**ALNAP**

- A meeting had been co-organised with OECD-DAC and UNEG on coordination of evaluative response in Haiti.
- The 26th ALNAP meeting will be held in Kuala Lumpur in November: the theme will be the role of affected states in humanitarian response.
- Research is under way on evaluation systems, humanitarian leadership, complex emergencies (lessons paper) and recipient feedback mechanisms.
- A learning review will be conducted into the process and methodology of the *State of the Humanitarian System Report*. The next edition of this work will be published in 2012, and thereafter triennially.
- A general guide to Evaluation of Humanitarian Action will be produced, in response to wishes expressed in HPN and ALNAP surveys.

**RedR**

- A lot of work with ELRHA on the scoping study and with People in Aid on leadership initiatives.
- An office offering training has been opened in Pakistan.
- A Haiti programme is underway with Bioforce, HAP, Sphere and InterAction.
- Training on advocacy and human rights is being developed with Amnesty International.

**People In Aid**

- Quality marks were recently awarded to Tearfund, Hijra Somalia, HAP, CESVI, Concern Worldwide.
- Member numbers are now over 180 (all Oxfam branches are joining).
- People In Aid InterActive was launched in June: discussion forums, wiki ++. [www.peopleinaid.net](http://www.peopleinaid.net)
- A study of retention in the Horn of Africa was produced.
- Projects ongoing include 2 pieces of work on leadership; on rewards (as affected by the financial crisis); competencies and curriculum development.
- Income: working on building a revenue stream besides traditional grant income and member support.
- Two successful Humanitarian HR conferences in Paris and Mombasa in May. Use of blogs and podcasts drew in 450 other people over the conference days themselves.
- The corporate sector is showing increased interest in the work.
- Seconded staff member to Tearfund for the immediate Haiti response.

**CDA**

- Steve Darvill is now in post as Executive Director of CDA.
- The 20+ Listening Exercise reports are complete and are on the website, apart from some translations.
- 7 Listening Project Issue Papers have been written, and several will be used in a Feedback Workshop in London on 24th June. 13 similar Feedback Workshops have been held in a range of locations to “test” the initial findings.
- The Listening Project is working on the final publication/book and planning for the next phase, as well as actively fundraising.
3. Haiti efforts, lessons learned, and potential for collaboration
   - JM reported on the ALNAP/DAC/UNEG meeting and plans to set up a task force to take forward activities aimed at bringing about a coherent evaluative response.
   - JM also reported that UNICEF are working on a methodology for recipient surveys, which may be able to feed into a system-wide impact assessment.
   - EN reported that RedR are running a series of trainings in different technical areas. They are working closely with ICVA and InterAction. One challenge was to recruit French-speaking staff with Q & A experience. They are doing a lessons learned on partnership quality and standards vs. Coordination.
   - JD reported that Sphere launched their DRSS in Haiti, although it was not really ready at the time.
   - A question was asked about length of planned deployments: HAP to September, RedR to at least December. All are dependent on funding.

4. Discussion of potential opportunities to collaborate and/or integrate among initiatives
   It was asked, both in the Haiti context and generally, whether there is a role for this group to work together, e.g. to overcome common obstacles. Due to lack of time, this was not discussed further.

5. Other business
   Arising from the People In Aid update, there was a suggestion to have a discussion at a future meeting on potential joint fundraising possibilities. This could particularly consider consortium funding, and a fundraising expert could be invited to address the group. ACTION POINT - JP to draft ToR for proposed discussion.

   Date and location of next meeting
   ACTION POINT – MB to make a proposal and chair the meeting.
Appendix: ECB UPDATE

The ECB Project will enter Year 3 of its 5-year second phase in August 2010. A full project report for Year 2 will be published to the project’s website in the summer. This short update includes a few highlights most relevant to the Q&A group.

**ECB in the field: Country Consortia**
The ECB Project supports five consortia in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Horn of Africa, Indonesia and Niger.

- The Bangladesh consortium, in partnership with the University of Dhaka, have translated the **Good Enough Guide (GEG)** into Bangla, making the concepts accessible to thousands of staff in field offices, with national NGOs and national and local government agencies across Bangladesh. Workshops were organised to share the Bangla translation in the field and at the national level, and a training module is currently in development.

- In Bolivia, 1,000 copies of the Spanish version of the GEG were distributed widely to ECB and CBHA agencies, while 2,500 copies of the Bahasa translation were printed and distributed widely by the Indonesia consortium, followed by training of trainers events in Jakarta and West Sumatra.

- The ECHO funded project for the development of a suite of **supporting materials** has now ended. Based around the concepts in the GEG, these materials include posters and leaflets for communities and staff using images developed by local artists, as well as a series of short training videos. These materials were developed and field tested in a range of consortia and non-consortia countries, including Bolivia, Kenya, Bangladesh, Lebanon and Myanmar. All these supporting materials can now be easily browsed and downloaded for field use from the Good Enough Guide ‘mini website’ at [www.ecbproject.org/goodenoughguide](http://www.ecbproject.org/goodenoughguide).

- Beyond the GEG, the Bangladesh Consortium hosted a consultation workshop for field staff on the ongoing revision of the **HAP and Sphere standards**. The ECB consortium in the Horn of Africa partnered with HAP to hold an accountability seminar for staff from all four countries, in which best practice and learning were shared, particularly around complaints and response mechanisms. Following the seminar, an accountability video was produced in partnership with Film Aid International and will be available on the ECB website shortly.

- **Joint Needs Assessments** have been carried out by ECB consortia in Indonesia, Bolivia and Uganda, with UN, national NGO and Government partners. Learning from these exercises has been captured in a case study (publication forthcoming), and the project facilitated a presentation from field staff from the Indonesia consortium at an IASC Needs Assessment Task Force workshop in Geneva.

- The Indonesia consortium conducted a **Joint Evaluation** of their collaborative response to the Sumatra earthquake. The principles set out in ECB’s Guide to Joint Evaluations (shared via ALNAP website) were used to inform the design and management of the study, and learning from the Sumatra evaluation will now be used to revise the Guide itself in order to improve the quality of future Joint Evaluations. Further joint evaluations are planned in the Horn - of cash transfer schemes in Kenya - and in Niger - of the response to the food security crisis.

**ECB at global level: the Accountability & Impact Measurement (AIM) Adviser Group**
The cross-agency group of AIM advisers have now developed a two year workplan, based around the following workstreams:

- Finalisation of a statement of the **Key Elements of Accountability** for ECB Agencies to use as the impetus for a shared understanding of the key elements for accountability work that we undertake together through ECB. The paper has already informed the baseline assessment of agency capacity to deliver programmes that are accountable to beneficiaries. The AIM Advisers now plan to use the paper to serve as a basis for defining capacity building areas for the ECB agencies and the ECB consortia with targets relevant to each context.

- Further development of the **ECB JNA** approach, in partnership with ACAPs. In Indonesia, this involves building on the learning to develop capacity in joint needs assessment and refining the on-line database tool to support it. Learning from Indonesia will then be used to seed the approach in other ECB consortia.

- Support for an inter-agency **Standing Team** of regionally based quality and accountability specialists, including training module development.
• Developing a holistic, credible, common/joint, ‘good enough’, field focused approach for **Impact Measurement** assessing the impact of rapid onset emergency interventions. Working with an academic partner, this will create frameworks that will measure what change emergency programmes have made – which may include unintended changes, but are attributable – and then to develop and provide a range of tools that staff can use to do this at a number of levels. This work may culminate in a GEG-type product.

• Revise the Guide to Joint Evaluations to reflect learning from e.g. Indonesia.

**Agency-level Self-Assessment**

Humanitarian management teams in each of the agencies participating in ECB have recently completed a self-assessment against each of the focus areas of the project. A full report of the findings will be published shortly. Relevant findings include:

• Four of the six agencies reported having an **accountability framework** in place; one other reported that a framework was in development. Where frameworks exist, the self-assessment suggests they are comprehensive: three of the four addressed all five of the Key Elements of Accountability agreed by the AIM Advisers (see above).

• There is, however, a clear gap between organisational statements of intent and actual field practice: the self-assessment suggests that in general, in the view of humanitarian management teams at HQ, only two-thirds of high-risk country programmes were aware of good accountability practice in emergencies, with only one-third actually implementing such practices in their responses. This gap will be a focus of agency-level activities in Year 3.

This self-assessment will be repeated annually for the remainder of the project’s life, to assess progress and triangulate findings from other components of the M&E system. A complementary self-assessment at consortia/field level is currently being implemented.

**Staff Capacity**

ECB is an implementing partner for the CBHA national staff capacity development programme. Oxfam is leading the component of the programme with which ECB will be engaged, and implementation has begun with the hiring of a project manager and initial scoping and planning work. The programme will last for eighteen months, and will be implemented in 4 countries, working with the ECB consortia in those countries. The CBHA programme includes the following:

• Agreeing common sets of core humanitarian competencies for both frontline and leadership staff

• Developing simple means to assess existing staff capacities

• Mapping capacity development resources that already exist

• Building a common framework and tools that can be adapted to suit specific contexts, including but not limited to joint trainings, simulations, distance support such as coaching or mentoring, action learning sets or buddy systems, distance/e-learning and self-paced learning.

• Developing a system to measure the impact of the programme, learning from it and adapting accordingly.